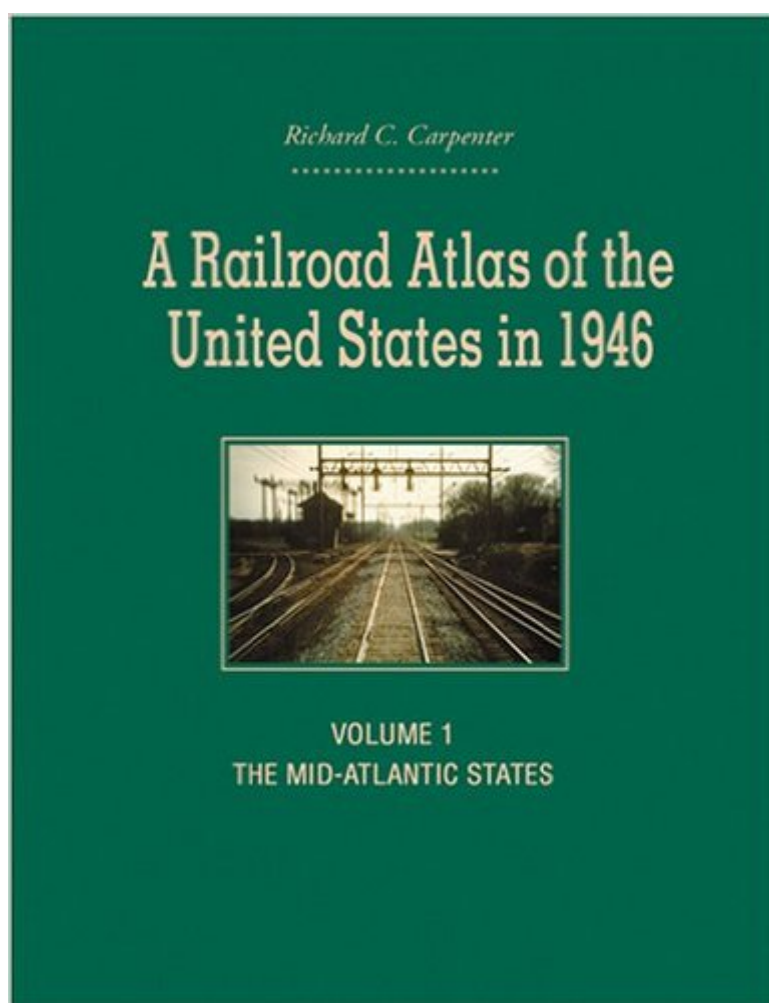


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A Railroad Atlas Of The United States In 1946: Volume 1: The Mid-Atlantic States (Creating The North American Landscape)



Synopsis

A pair of gleaming rails embedded in a farmhouse driveway. A wooded cycling trail that traces an oddly level path through suburban hills. An abandoned high fill that briefly parallels the interstate. Today, little remains of the vast network of passenger and freight railroad lines that once crisscrossed much of eastern and midwestern America. But in 1946, the steam locomotive was king, the automobile was just beginning to emerge from wartime restrictions, passenger trains still made stops in nearly every town, and freight trains carried most of the nation's intercity commerce. In *A Railroad Atlas of the United States* in 1946, Richard C. Carpenter provides a unique record of this not-so-distant time, when traveling out of town meant, for most Americans, taking the train. The first volume of this multivolume series covers the mid-Atlantic states and includes detailed maps of every passenger railroad line in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. When completed, the series will provide a comprehensive atlas of the U.S. railroad system at its post-World War II high point—a transportation network that many considered the finest railroad passenger system in the world. Meticulously crafted and rich in detail, these hand-drawn color maps reveal with skilled precision—at a scale of 1 inch to 4 miles (or 1:250,000)—the various main and branch railroad passenger and freight lines that served thousands of American towns. The maps also include such features as long-since-demolished steam locomotive and manual signal tower installations, towns that functioned solely as places where crews changed over, track pans, coaling stations, and other rail-specific sites. Currently, there exists no comprehensive, historic railroad atlas for the U.S. This volume, with its 202 full-scale and detail maps, is sure to remain the standard reference work for years to come, as will the others to follow in the series.

Book Information

Series: Creating the North American Landscape (Book 1)

Hardcover: 328 pages

Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press; 1st Printing edition (August 7, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801873312

ISBN-13: 978-0801873317

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 1.2 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,278,067 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #258 in Books > Arts & Photography > Vehicle Pictorials > Trains #454 in Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Historical Maps #550 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > History > Railroads

Customer Reviews

If you are interested in American railroads, geography, or cartography--and people who like any of these subjects tend to like them all--this beautifully produced, enlightening book could occupy a lot of your spare time from here on. It consists of hand-drawn maps, made with breathtaking detail and a wonderful imagination for the presentation of data. (Fans of Tufte's "Visual Display of Quantitative Information" will admire what the author has managed to fit onto his pages.) The maps follow standard USGS quadrangles for reference, but they show only railroad lines, neatly identified by color, and a wealth of associated railroad features. So there are stations (indicating passenger service or freight only); towers; yards; sidings; viaducts; mileposts; tunnels; track pans, you name it--all as they existed in the richly rewarding year of 1946. To enable you to situate the railroads there are map coordinates, rivers (when a river reaches the edge of a page, an arrow indicates the direction of flow!), and state and county boundaries. That's it. (Plus first-rate indexes.) Sit down with this book, an old copy of the "Official Guide," and a modern road atlas, and you have entertainment and instruction for hours. The maps in this volume cover just one region of the country--extending roughly from the southern tier of New York to the Virginia/NC border, and from West Virginia to the Hudson River and the Delmarva Peninsula. It is hard to imagine how a single author (who has apparently done a lot of other things with his life) could ever have found the time to cover even this much ground--the book is one of those rare products of obsessive genius from which the rest of us sometimes benefit--but his publisher implies that future volumes will cover the rest of the country. Long life to Richard C. Carpenter!

This volume is an outstanding example of a railroad atlas. It is pointed, clear, and communicates the status of the railroads of the Mid-Atlantic states at a time when track mileage, though past its peak, was still extensive. It is easy to follow and an invaluable resource for the transportation historian, railfan, and model railroader. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Anyone interested in railroad or US History will enjoy this series of books mapping the entire railroad system as it was in 1946. The maps are drawn with meticulous care and attention to detail, and

show virtually everything about the network as it was - terminals, junctions, connections, etc. It was fascinating to me to see how extensive this amazing network was 65 years ago. Even though much has been abandoned and torn up in recent years, what was once there is carefully documented for future generations of transportation and US History enthusiasts. Well worth the price, this book is now an important part of my transportation collection.

I absolutely love this series. The attention to detail and the information contained is unmatched by any other publication. If you love railroads, or cartography, or just admire the dedication it takes to make something this complicated by hand and want something beautiful to look at then this is the book for you. I hope that Mr. Carpenter continues the series to cover other parts of the country. I do have one question. My copy of Volume 1 does not have the overview map opposite the key map that shows the overview of the mainlines covered in atlas. This map in other volumes has the caption "Based on the map by Edward Ullman...". Every other volume has this map and I have found it useful to orient myself in the atlas along with the key map. I wasn't sure if my particular book was missing it or if it was something added to later volumes and not part of the first volume. Either way it does not keep me from giving 5 stars.

I have purchased numerous railroad atlases. They all have come up short on detail. This atlas is the most detailed I have ever looked at. A must have for any railroad buff!!!

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