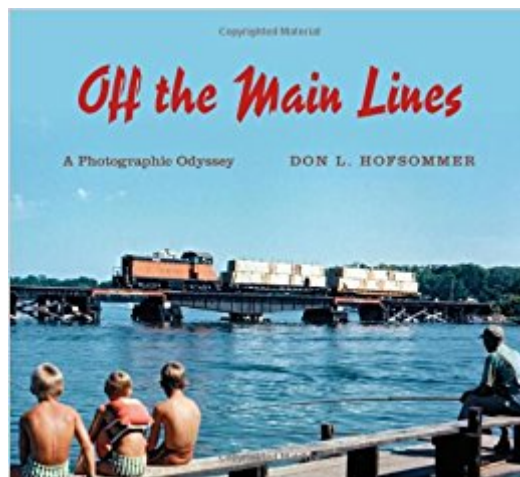




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Off The Main Lines: A Photographic Odyssey (Railroads Past And Present)



Synopsis

In this visually stunning and comprehensive photographic essay, railroad historian and photographer Donovan L. Hofsommer records the end of branchline passenger service, the demise of electric railroads, the transition from steam to diesel power, as well as the end of common carrier freight service on the Colorado narrow gauge. Off the Main Lines carries readers along out-of-the-way railways in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, Montana, and South Dakota to see the changes that occurred on these lines from the 1940s to the 1990s.

Book Information

Series: Railroads Past and Present

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Customer Reviews

"If American railroads float your boat, then keep an eye open for this gem. Within its 320 pages, there are 454 black and white pictures. Spanning from the 1940s to the 1990s, it portrays admirably, the vastness of the country, and how its railroad system has changed beyond recognition... With informative captions, this album vividly portrays a way of life no longer seen. A fascinating insight into historical American railroading." [Railways Illustrated](#)"[This] book is a fitting tribute to its subject; railroad enthusiasts across the upper Midwest and beyond will find Hofsommer's personalized history to be both edifying and immensely rewarding." [The Annals of Iowa](#)"This presentation should find a strong reception, not only for its coverage of lesser-known places, but also for its depiction of the evolutionary advancement of rail technology in the nation's Heartland." [J. Parker Lamb, author of Railroads of Meridian](#)Writing quality of the

introduction, photo captions, and brief conclusion is excellent. Relatively few points are in need of correction or clarification. I strongly recommend publication.

John Spychalski "If you miss the Milwaukee, recall the Rock Island, suffer from the loss of the Soo Line, maintain sadness for the Santa Fe, can't forget the Frisco, absent-mindedly buried the Burlington Route in oblivion or still maintain romantic recollections of the Katy, you'll find Dr. Hofsommer's *Off the Main Lines* exactly where you need to be!"

Lexington Quarterly "This volume presents a 'different' side of Don Hofsommer, an author perhaps best known for his thoroughly researched railroad history presentations. Judging by the superb collection of action oriented images presented here, Hofsommer was also an avid rail enthusiast photographer. The book's eight chapters of text material is an interesting blend of historical fact and personal reminiscence, and traces the author's own personal 60-year rail odyssey to a variety of 'off the beaten path' locations."

Michigan Railfan

Donovan L. Hofsommer is Professor of History at St. Cloud State University and president of the Lexington Group. He is author of *Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland* (IUP, 2005) and (with H. Roger Grant) *Iowa's Railroads: An Album* (IUP, 2009).

Well written and covers the transition of railroads, specifically in Iowa, from steam to diesel, through mergers and abandonment. The photographs are not the usual mainline action, but are almost nostalgic, bringing back memories of railroading in the late 1950s forward.

I like the pictures. The text is informative too. Good material here for those who like to model short lines.

I rated it a four, rather than a five, as a few of the captions are so light of a typeface they get lost in the photograph. This should have been caught before the book went to press. You get a lot of photos for your money even with this being a softcover book. Most of the photographic coverage is the upper midwest and Colorado narrow gauge. Photos are very well reproduced.

I chose to order the book because I have met Don Hofsommer and sat through an amazing slide and movie show of his several years ago. I recall stating that he should publish his works. This is not his movies, but since his childhood in Iowa less than forty miles from my home, I jumped at the chance to buy the book. Much of it is Iowa. Not all, but much. Regardless, the side notes and great

images make the price worth the purchase.

Good book for the cost

really enjoyed the memories , especially of the Spencer, Iowa area

Lots of local pictures. Many of things that no longer exist. Don always does a fine job with his books.

a good review of railroad operations in the midwest with an emphasis on Iowa. It is always amazing how different things were back then compared to the Railroads of 2014. easy to read, good writing style, and the photos were good. They are snapshots over the years and each of them tell a story

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