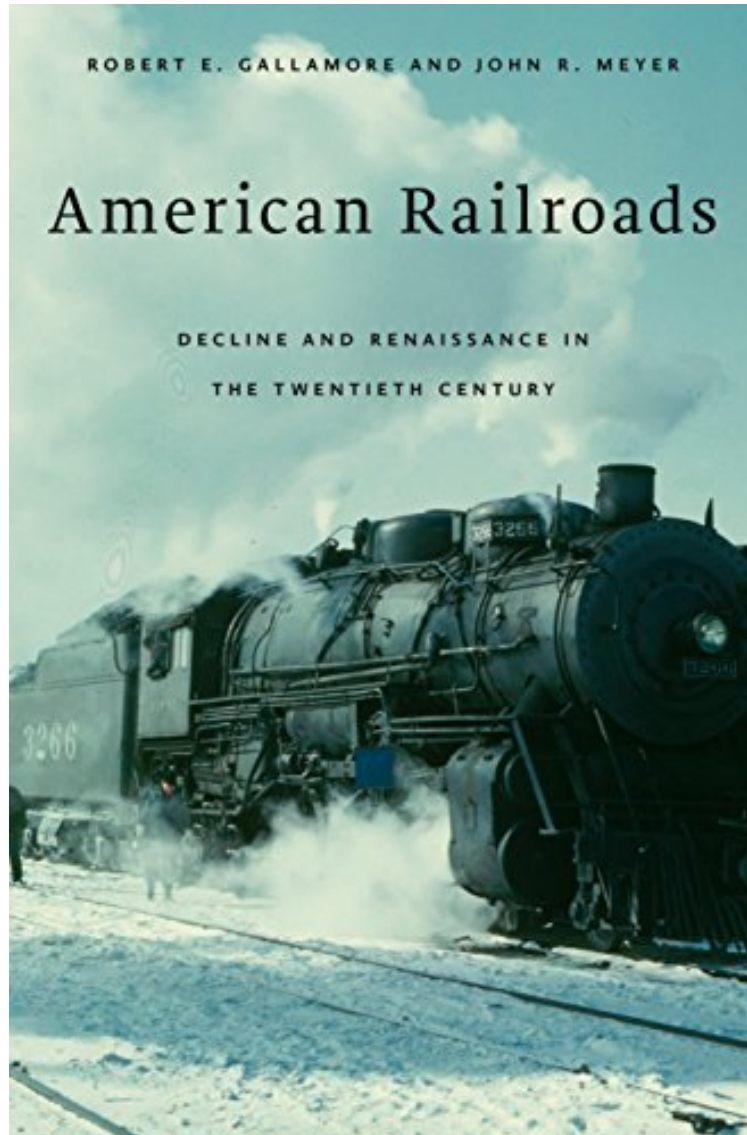


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## American Railroads

*Robert E. Gallamore*

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**Robert E. Gallamore : American Railroads** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Railroads:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. All about railroads By Peter G. Cook This book is a comprehensive review of the history of railroads and other modes of transport in the United States. The low rolling friction of steel wheels on steel rails is the underlying technology of railroads. The resulting transport system does not carry as much weight as water transport, is not as flexible as trucks, not as convenient as automobiles, efficient as pipelines, or fast as airplanes. But it is in second place of all of them for most markets, and served to open the vast

reaches of the country before all those (other than water) became viable. This book relates in great detail how the railroads overcame arcane regulation, modal competition, the vagaries of politics, and significant chicanery to become the viable industry they are today. It is a page skipper rather than a page turner, but different areas of specialization will skip different sections. I found the costing/pricing discussions, the many lists of names (in 1925), merger details, and specifics of government proposals numbing. Others might find the areas that interested me most, technology, and operating details, of less interest. Overall the amount of detail covered is impressive. The authors are economists, and it shows. Many of the technical segments indicate lack of detailed background. The word "microprocessors", for example, is used to the exclusion of the software, storage, and communication that makes them useful. "Information technology" or some similar term would be more appropriate. A "system" exists in two significant and tightly linked worlds, physical and information. Until recently the physical aspects have dominated, but now the information aspects have blossomed. Positive Train Control (PTC) can exist only if all traffic details are available in a central processing system. But with contemporary information technology every detail of every section of track can be transmitted continuously, and used to optimize effective capacity, immediately increasing revenue. That is using information technology to control real-world system components. It would appear that utilization of information technology is the most important technological innovation of the past fifty years. American Railroads is a major contribution to understanding an important transportation system. It tells a number of stories about operating trains, the life cycle of large organizations, the extreme burden of excess regulation, technology evolution, accounting, and the critical importance of excellent management. It would be better if it were about half the length, and the price is clearly higher than it should be. Overall, however, it is a very useful contribution, and I highly recommend it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. But there is one quirk!! By RLL Despite my 5 star review I do have some observations which may be of use to possible readers. This is a wonkish book. If you don't like that kind of non-fiction don't read it. My interest in railroads is mostly geography and economics. Given that it is really is a must-read. Yet the author cannot resist his acknowledged bias of RR management. He occasionally rants free market fundamentalism, despite also acknowledging that RRs are not a free market - cannot run without government rule making, subsidies, and et cetera. Adam Smith would know the type. He uses and seems to believe the silly aphorism, The government that regulates least, governs the best. (not exact wording), but he says the same sorts of things in any number of chapters. It is a more than a little irksome to filter out the crap, but: Don't let that stop you. The knowledge, history, comprehensiveness, clarity of writing makes this book a pleasure to read. If you are a free market fundamentalist, grow up! I quite believe that regulations have all sorts of problems, and can never quite work right - as does all the rest of life in a complex society. I also am a railroad fan, and am aware that just about all of our railroads are going to need government subsidies in the decades ahead.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A primer and case studies of 100 years of railroad regulation. By S. Sidner This book is a must-read for anyone interested in economists and public-policy. I am neither, but have always been curious about how government regulation can play out. I believe regulation is required in an effective capitalist system, just like rules are needed in sports. But how to do it? The authors are amazing at explaining and telling a story. All along the way, they explain economic and political theory so a lay person like myself can understand the issues. They cover 100 years of railroad regulation, tying it into the political/economic situation at the time. They are not afraid to voice an opinion, but they cover the various sides of an issue thoroughly and even-handedly. However, this book is not aimed at railfans, unless they are interested in the business sides of railroads. This is like the one article in Trains magazine every month that goes deep on business, regulation and economics. If you read Trains and like these articles, you will really like this book. If you skip over these articles, don't buy this book.

Overregulated and displaced by barges, trucks, and jet aviation, railroads fell into decline. Their misfortune was measured in lost market share, abandoned track, bankruptcies, and unemployment. Today, rail transportation is reviving. American Railroads tells a riveting story about how this iconic industry managed to turn itself around.

This book is a readable and provocative economic and business history of American railroads over the twentieth century. It draws together the themes of infrastructure development, regulation, stagnation and financial crisis, deregulation, and finally revitalization. It is a fascinating and instructive tale, very well told. (Porter K. Wheeler, Transportation Policy Consultant, and former Manager of P3 Projects, Maryland Transportation Authority) A remarkable book and an exceptional resource for a variety of constituencies in the transportation field. (Joseph M. Sussman, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) A comprehensive account... American Railroads is a readable history with a focus on freight rail. (Daniel Machalaba Wall Street Journal 2014-07-08) Detailed, sophisticated, occasionally technical, and provocative, [Gallamore and Meyer's] book provides a superb and often fascinating analysis of the economics, technological change, and the impact of public policy on an iconic American industry... Gallamore and Meyer have thrown down the gauntlet to policymakers. The burden may well now be on them to demonstrate, through a careful analysis of costs and benefits, that regulation of passenger and/or freight railroads is in the public interest. (Glenn C. Altschuler Philadelphia Inquirer 2015-08-09) About the Author Robert E. Gallamore is Adjunct Professor in

Rail Management at Michigan State University. John R. Meyer was James W. Harpel Professor of Capital Formation, Emeritus, at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.