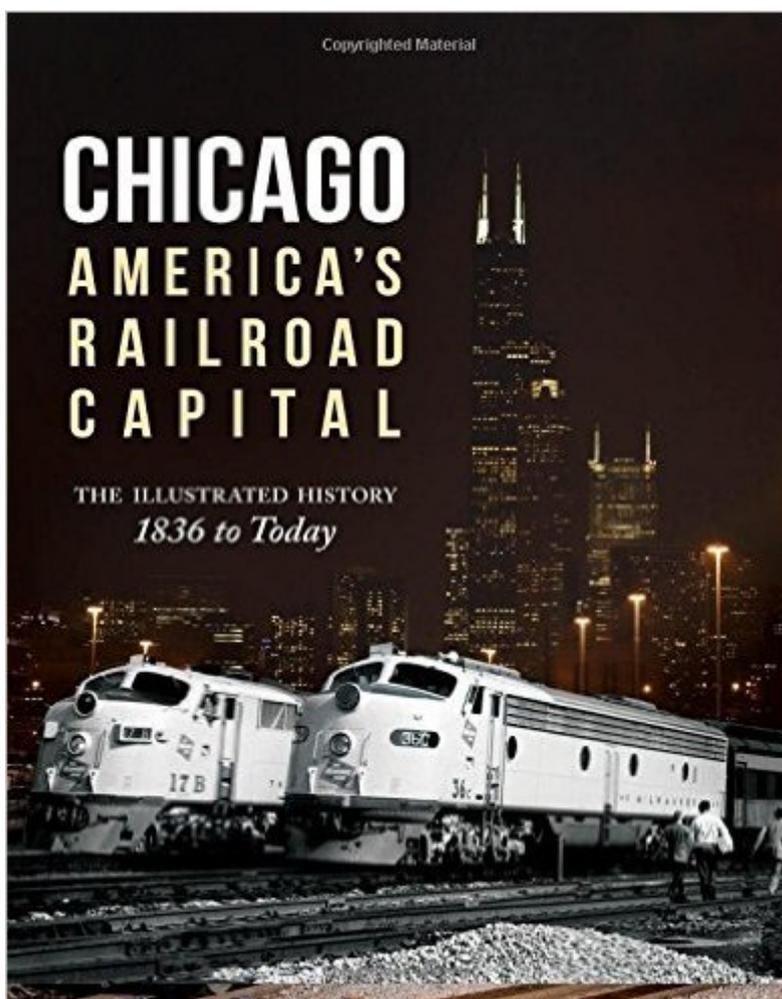


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# Chicago: America's Railroad Capital: The Illustrated History, 1836 To Today



## Synopsis

The first illustrated history of the people, machines, facilities, and operations that made Chicago the hub around which an entire continent's rail industry still revolves. In the mid-nineteenth century, Chicago's central location in the expanding nation helped establish it as the capital of the still-new North American railroad industry. As the United States expanded westward, new railroads and rail-related companies like Pullman established their headquarters in the Windy City, while eastern railroads found their natural western terminals there. Historically, railroads that tried to avoid Chicago failed. While the railroad industry has undergone dramatic changes over the course of its existence, little has changed regarding Chicago's status as the nation's railroad hub. In *Chicago: America's Railroad Capital*, longtime, prolific railroading author and photographer Brian Solomon - joined by a cast of respected rail journalists - examines this sprawling legacy of nearly 180 years, not only showing how the railroad has spurred the city's growth, but also highlighting the city's railroad workers throughout history, key players in the city and the industry, and Chicago's great interurban lines, fabulous passenger terminals, vast freight-processing facilities, and complex modern operations. Illustrated with historical and modern photography and specially commissioned maps, *Chicago: America's Railroad Capital* also helps readers understand how Chicago has operated - and continues to operate - as the center of a nationwide industry that is an essential cog in the country's commerce.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[View larger](#) 180 Years of Chicago's Unique and Fascinating Railroad History Chicago is more complex in terms of its history, infrastructure, and operations than any other railroad city. Despite innumerable changes in the railroad industry, it's still America's railroad capital. On any given day, about 1,300 trains carrying freight and passengers pulse across its urban landscape. As authors of this book, we have accepted the challenge of distilling this immense topic into one concise, illustrated volume. There's four independent approaches intended to give the reader a thoroughly detailed, if not all-inclusive, understanding of the railroad city that works. Together, the author and contributors have pored over hundreds of sources; met with dozens of railway experts, railroaders, and Chicagoans; and reviewed thousands of images. What you have here is a starting point for understanding how Chicago's railroads came to be and how they operate today.

[View larger](#) [View larger](#) [View larger](#) The book includes amazing b/w & color photos from all eras... Although elegant, Chicago's Grand Central Station was never more than a minor terminal. It served Baltimore & Ohio, Pere Marquette, Soo Line, and Chicago Great Western. Unlike the other Chicago terminals, it didn't host significant suburban services. When it closed in 1969, an average of only 210 passengers a day boarded or left trains there. (Philip A. Weibler) To promote Railroad Week in 1935, Chicago railroads posed five locomotives on Burlington tracks near Halsted Street: a historic CB&Q steam locomotive and fast-running locomotives of the Milwaukee Road, North Western, and CB&Q, competitors on the Chicago to Twin Cities run; and the Alton from Chicago to St. Louis. (John Gruber collection) The modern-day Chicagoland operations is examined Metra and Amtrak trains pass in the evening at Roosevelt Road on the approach to Union Station. This bridge spanning many tracks has been a popular vantage point for railroad photographers for decades. To the east of the main lines are Amtrak's 12th Street car shops. (Don Kalkman)

Brian Solomon is one of today's most accomplished railway historians. He has authored more than thirty books about railroads and locomotive power, and his writing and photography have been featured in the world's top rail publications, including Trains, Railway Age, Passenger Train Journal, and RailNews. He divides his time between Massachusetts and Ireland. Brian Solomon is the author of more than 40 books on locomotives and railroading. He splits his time between Monson, Massachusetts, and Dublin, Ireland. Chris Guss has been writing about rail-related topics for over 20 years and photographing trains for almost 30 years. After graduating college, he worked in various

operations and management positions for several railroads before becoming a freelance writer and photographer. Born in St. Louis, he has called Chicago home since 2000. Michael W. Blaszak was born into a Pennsylvania Railroad family in Chicago, his grandmother having gone to work in the 12th Street Coach Yard during the Depression. After graduating from law school, he joined the Santa Fe Railway. Throughout his legal career, he has represented many Class 1, short-line, and passenger railroads, as well as writing numerous articles about the railroad industry and taking railroad photographs for nearly 50 years.

This book is for train spotters, not a general audience. Even the historical chapter is nearly devoid of anything but modern photos of locomotives. There is no series of maps illustrating the sequence of railroad construction, only a couple of barely legible historical route maps. While the text exhibits a great deal of historical work, it is not united into a "story." One would have to copy out the information into a combined parallel chronology to understand what was going on. The chapter on terminals has NOT ONE picture of any facade of any of the many Chicago terminals -- only locomotives and cars on tracks in or near the train sheds. A badly-needed list of the abbreviations for railroad companies is missing, so if you can't memorize scores of abbreviations (e.g. C&NW, AT&SF, UP, ...) the text becomes very difficult to comprehend. Another missing part is a map of Chicago, only partly mitigated by the fold-out rail maps with correspondences to some of the many geographic references in the text. In short, this book badly needed an Editor -- not to correct the English, which is flawless, but to shape it into a book that lives up to the promise of its title.

This book is a splendid addition to a Chicago bound-train lover's library. The title says it all - good copy, great pictures and detailed maps should keep you in your favorite reading chair for many pleasurable hours. I'm surprised there wasn't more favorable buzz preceding C-ARC's release.

A very good book.

A very good history book. Most photos though seem to be from the 1950s and not from the beginning of the Chicago railroad history which began in the 1830s. But I enjoyed reading it. A lot of work by the authors went into this book.

Better than expected coverage of a topic that is way too big for a single book. Good combination of historic perspective and current operations, although a bit more on the latter would have been fine.

The book was a gift for my husband. He is extremely satisfied with the book. Thank you.

Brian Solomon never seems to fail in his books on railroading in this country of ours and this book is another excellent example of his fine work!

Bought as a gift for my brother who is a train buff and lives in Chicago. He loves it.

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