
Anyone who is at all familiar with the extensive transportation writings of economist-historian George W. Hilton will have learned to expect a carefully researched, thoughtfully organized, and finely tailored end product. Readers of the Monon Route will certainly not be disappointed. In 311 pages of tightly structured text and illustrations, the author tells the story of this modest midwestern carrier with dignity, verve, and affection, tempered with genuine candor.

An early twentieth-century assessment of the Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railway Company described the line as "a single-track, standard-gauge, steam railroad, located in the states of Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois. The owned mileage consists of two main lines and two branches in Indiana and terminal property in Chicago, Illinois, and in Louisville, Kentucky" (Interstate Commerce Commission Reports, XXV, 313). Bereft of its colorful history and stripped of its human component, this description of the Monon leaves it as stark and bare as some of its abandoned branch lines in the 1930s.

Hilton sets for himself the task of reviewing the Monon's more-than-a-century-old history and introducing the lively human influences and geographic characteristics that made the "Hoosier Line" practically synonymous with the state of Indiana. In some respects Hilton succeeds almost too well. His is the difficulty experienced by all those who would combine a picture book with serious history. How to present a magnificently profuse set of illustrations (almost all of which are sharp and clear and add immeasurably to one's grasp and appreciation of the Monon's style and service) along with a scholar's text must continue to be a perplexing dilemma to author and publisher alike. One is reminded of a frequently quoted dictum of Bismarck's that "when two ride a horse, one must ride behind." Unfortunately, it is not always clear which is "riding behind," text or illustrations.

Be that as it may, this is a beautiful and impressive volume. Almost everything that the lover of railroad history could wish for is here in one form or another. The thread of corporate development is clearly outlined along with examples of superior managerial leadership; i.e., the John Barriger years. The excellent locomotive roster which appears at the back of the book (along with a workable bibliography and a useful index) is an example of the attention given to matters of equipment, plant,
and operating detail. Certainly not least of all, the author succeeds very well in placing the Monon in the "here and now" and is not afraid to speculate a bit on what its future may be in a strange (and greatly altered) modern transportation environment. Having called attention to the difficult economic and engineering problems which complicate its survival, the author comments wisely that though "the Monon may have been unfortunate in its origins, . . . it was fortunate in its enthusiasts." Hilton is clearly one of those enthusiasts.

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The Civil War dominates this volume of the Calvin Fletcher diary. Its pages are filled with comments about military and political developments that are summarized from local and out-of-town newspapers, descriptions of various wartime activities in Indianapolis, and observations on the impact of the conflict in the Hoosier capital.

Fletcher's own war-related activities were limited. In April, 1861, at the request of Governor Oliver P. Morton, he went on a mission to Canada and New England to buy rifles for the Indiana troops then mustering. His most important later contribution was as chairman of the joint (national and local) Sanitary Commission for caring for wounded and sick soldiers. He was always a staunch supporter of the Union cause, becoming increasingly antislavery and anti-South as the war went on.

During the years 1861-1862 Fletcher was still concerned with the operations of the Fletcher and Thomas H. Sharpe bank, but on a routine basis. Much less space is devoted to the business than in preceding volumes. Fletcher was always thinking of his farm northeast of Indianapolis even though he no longer managed it directly. He continued to be the leading figure in the Indianapolis Benevolent Society. As an "original settler," he was in demand for addresses before pioneer associations.

Family matters receive much attention. Cooley, the eldest son, was, as earlier, a source of exasperation because he con-