

*The Electric Interurban Railways in America.* By George W. Hilton and John F. Due. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960. Pp. ix, 463. Maps, tables, charts, illustrations, notes, bibliographical note, indices. \$9.50.)

This volume reviews the intriguing history of a long neglected era in American transportation, that of the electric interurban. In this excellent economic analysis of the industry, Professors Hilton and Due define interurbans as railways that possessed the following four characteristics: (1) electric power, (2) primary emphasis on passenger service, (3) equipment both heavier and faster than urban streetcars, and (4) operation on city streets and at the sides of roads or on private rights of way in rural areas. In the development of intercity passenger service the interurban provided an important transitional step from almost complete reliance on the railroad to equally great dependence on the automobile. In the first years of this century as America witnessed the arrival of both the automobile and the electric interurban, the more enthusiastic reception was clearly given to the interurban. A major investment boom occurred in the interurban industry in the very years that bankers were refusing the financial requests of Henry Ford and W. C. Durant.

Between 1901 and 1908 more than nine thousand miles of interurban lines were constructed in the nation, and hundreds of local companies were dreaming of building intercity lines that would steal local passenger traffic away from the railroads. Many of the dreams were not realized, and others never should have been. Perhaps the instance in which the gap between intention and achievement was greatest was the case of the Chicago-New York Electric Airline Railroad, a line which hoped to offer ten-hour service over a nearly straight and level route between the two cities. The insistence on low grades helped bring financial disaster to the company as it built a colossal fill in crossing Coffey Creek, a small stream a few miles east of Gary, Indiana. In 1909 the short mileage completed on the Airline had cost over \$300,000 a mile to build, and the gross revenues per mile of road were under \$1,000! But many lines, with less stringent engineering standards, were soon in operation, most of them in the northeastern section of the nation. When the peak mileage of 15,580 miles was reached in 1916, nearly two-thirds of the total was located in the six states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. One could travel by interurban from Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, to Oneonta, New York, a distance of 1,087 miles. Indiana, which was second in mileage only to Ohio, boasted 1,825 miles of line and had thirteen different interurban routes radiating out of Indianapolis. Every Hoosier city of over 5,000 population was served by interurban except three—Bloomington, Madison, and Vincennes.

But the profits and prosperity hoped for rarely materialized. Even in the best years the rate of return for the interurban industry was a bare 3 per cent, only about two-thirds that of steam railroads. By the years of World War I the automobile was taking away some business, although C. L. Henry, a pioneer promoter of Indiana interurbans, in a speech in 1916 insisted that automobile riding was but a passing fad. After the war, expanding auto traffic brought increased operating

ratios, frequent deficits, and the start of extensive abandonment. Over 5,000 miles of line were abandoned in the years 1930-1934, and by 1941 a network of less than 3,000 miles remained. Today real interurban passenger service has entirely ceased, and the remaining freight service is not important.

This volume covers nearly every aspect of the interurban. The authors carefully trace the rise of the industry, review its technology, and cover both passenger and freight operations. Unlike railroads, the bulk of the interurban traffic was in the passenger field, but in the twenties as the intercity bus appeared, interurban freight business enjoyed a relative increase. Hilton and Due also examine the relations of the industry with local, state, and national government, pointing out that in those relationships regulation was far more common than assistance. There are also solid chapters on interurban finance and the decline and abandonment of the industry.

In addition to the chapters of economic analysis, a major portion of the book is given over to thumbnail accounts of more than three hundred individual interurbans in some forty states. Company histories of at least twenty different Indiana interurbans are found here, including the line that was reduced to such dire circumstances in the depression of the thirties that it paid its workers partly with fare tokens. The company histories are accompanied by excellent maps. Useful charts and tables are found throughout the text, and the volume is further enlivened by a section of some three dozen illustrations. George Hilton and John Due have written a book that should be welcomed not only by the student of transportation history but by anyone interested in the twentieth-century American scene.

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*The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941.* By Walter Galenson. *Wertheim Publications in Industrial Relations, Studies in Labor-Management History.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960. Pp. xix, 732. Tables, illustrations, notes, index. \$9.75.)

*American Labor.* By Henry Pelling. *The Chicago History of American Civilization.* Edited by Daniel J. Boorstin. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960. Pp. vi, 247. Illustrations, chronology, list of suggested reading, index. \$5.00.)

The period from the formation of the CIO to the entrance of the United States into the second World War was one of the most significant in the history of the American labor movement. Not since its struggle with the Knights of Labor had the leadership of the AFL been seriously challenged. Its refusal at the 1935 convention to accept the principle of industrial unionism, however, marked the beginning of a period of interunion conflict which was to last for two decades.

Under the dynamic leadership of the CIO, unions and collective bargaining were soon established in the mass production industries, and for a time it appeared that the CIO might surpass its older rival.