



A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946: Volume 5: Iowa and Minnesota (Creating the North American Landscape)

Richard C. Carpenter

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Driving across Iowa nowadays, one sees acres and acres of flat cornfields and hears little but the leaves stirring. But in the golden age of railroading, tracks crisscrossed the prairies and steam engines thundered by, carrying goods and people across the country. The sounds of the train could be heard for miles—the clickety-clack of the jointed rails and the haunting call of the steam whistle.

The fifth volume of *A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946* provides a comprehensive record of the railroad system as it existed in Iowa and Minnesota in 1946—the apex of America's post-war rail network, when steam locomotives still dominated and passenger trains stopped at towns all along the rail lines. Eventually railroad mergers, the automobile, and the airplane changed what many viewed as the world's premier rail system.

Richard C. Carpenter's hand-drawn color maps depict in precise detail the various trunk and secondary railroad lines that served scores of towns while indicating such features as long-since-demolished coaling stations, towns that functioned solely as places where crews were changed, tunnels, viaducts, and especially interlocking stations. In Volume 5, Carpenter traces every rail line from Thief River Falls, Minnesota, to Keokuk, Iowa. In this region seven railroads of the eastern network merged at Council Bluffs, Iowa, into the Union Pacific, the first transcontinental line to the Pacific Ocean. In Minnesota, the primary rail routes to the Pacific northwest—the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific—ran westward from Minneapolis–Saint Paul.

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