

Regional Railroads of the Midwest

Donald L. Hofsommer
St. Cloud State University

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a special form of small-town entertainment in which Toby and his sidekick Susie outwit the city slickers while providing their primarily rural audiences with clean, homespun humor:

Susie: Where's your barn?

Toby: I ain't got no barn.

Susie: You ain't got no barn?

Toby: No

Susie: Where do you milk your cow?

Toby: A little back of center (16).

Each chapter opens with a Toby and Susie routine that reinforces the essential theme of the book—rural values reflected in plays with humor as the driving force. The book's significant value is that it recounts the people, places, attitudes, trials, and tribulations of a once essential aspect of all theater, the small troupe that traveled from town to town, making a living by providing entertainment and glamour to thousands of rural folks who otherwise would never have had the opportunity to see a live show. Neil Schaffner's biography, *The Fabulous Toby and Me* (1968), recounts the Schaffners' experience as well, but it ends in 1968, when they sold the show and became semi-retired. Kramme's book continues the chronology until 1998, with Jimmy Davis's death. Davis, a Toby trained by Neil Schaffner, was a longtime member of the troupe, bought Schaffner's equipment, continued his routes, and maintained the Schaffner name until his death in 1998. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of Kramme's book is a taxonomy of the Schaffner Players' casts, plays produced, and towns where they performed. A separate appendix lists plays written or adapted by the Schaffners. There are also more than 50 illustrations.

There are, however, some significant problems with the book. The type is very small, which makes it difficult to read. It also could have benefited from more judicious editing, especially with regard to syntax and style. Those problems aside, it is a valuable introduction, especially for those who are not acquainted with tent repertory, as it chronicles the history of an Iowa-based troupe, reflecting an essential but largely forgotten chapter in the history of American theater.

Regional Railroads of the Midwest, by Steve Glischinski. MBI Railroad Color History. St. Paul: Voyageur Press, 2007. 160 pp. Illustrations (many in color), maps, bibliography, index. \$36.95 cloth.

Reviewer Don L. Hofsommer is professor of history at St. Cloud State University. He is the author of many books and articles on railroads in the Midwest, including *Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland: Iowa's Railroad Experience* (2005).

Iowa boasted 10,253 route miles of railroad in 1915; there followed a gradual erosion to 8,651 route miles by 1965. By that time, railroads long since had lost their dominance of the state's transportation landscape. Severe paring was required—including substantial line reduction and dramatic business combination that resulted in only a handful of major carriers. The shakeout continued until only slightly over 4,000 route miles remained in the state as the twenty-first century dawned. An alternative to line abandonment, at least in some instances, was sale of specified routes to short lines or regional roads. That process accelerated after the industry was finally partially deregulated in 1980. Iowa's experience reflected a national pattern.

Steve Glischinski's *Regional Railroads of the Midwest* offers a snapshot of this movement toward regional railroads, focusing on a dozen roads—including three that emerged to serve slices of Iowa's domain. Glischinski cites the Chicago Central & Pacific (which acquired Illinois Central properties in Iowa) as the "midwest prototype" of the national trend toward creating smaller carriers with restricted reach. He also includes as part of his study the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern (subsequent operator of certain former Milwaukee Road lines) and Iowa Interstate (successor to the former Rock Island main line across Iowa from Davenport to Council Bluffs). The success of these and other "regionals" has depended on their willingness to provide customers with a high-quality transportation product at an attractive price. This they have done. And, happy to say, their success has mirrored the renewed vitality of the nation's railroad industry at large over the past three decades.

Regional Railroads of the Midwest is beautifully illustrated, is an easy read, and offers a quick survey of an important element of the heartland's contemporary transportation package.

Rights in the Balance: Free Press, Fair Trial, and Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart, by Mark R. Scherer. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2008. xxi, 242 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth.

Reviewer David J. Bodenhamer is executive director of the Polis Center and professor of history at Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis. His books include *Our Rights* (2007) and *Bill of Rights in Modern America* (rev. ed., 2008).

When two constitutional rights collide, which one takes precedence? That question is at the center of *Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart* (1976), a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that pitted the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of a fair trial against the First Amendment's protection of free press. The case involved the murder of six family members in Sutherland, Nebraska, and the trial court's subsequent