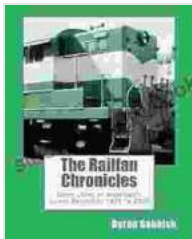


The Railfan Chronicles: Short Lines of Michigan's Lower Peninsula 1976 To 2000

During the second half of the 20th century, the railroad industry in the United States underwent a period of significant change. The rise of trucking and the decline of heavy industry led to a widespread abandonment of branch lines and the consolidation of larger railroads. However, in some areas, short line railroads emerged to fill the void left by the larger carriers. These short lines often operated on former branch lines, providing essential service to local businesses and communities.



The Railfan Chronicles, Short Lines of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, 1976 to 2000 by Byron Babbish

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Michigan's Lower Peninsula was home to a number of short line railroads during this period. These railroads played a vital role in the state's economy, transporting agricultural products, manufactured goods, and other commodities. They also provided passenger service to many communities.

In this article, we will take a look at some of the most notable short line railroads that operated in Michigan's Lower Peninsula from 1976 to 2000. We will discuss their history, operations, and locomotive rosters.

Ann Arbor Railroad

The Ann Arbor Railroad was one of the largest and most successful short line railroads in the United States. It operated a 293-mile network of track in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. The railroad was founded in 1878 and was originally known as the Toledo, Ann Arbor & Northern Michigan Railroad. It was renamed the Ann Arbor Railroad in 1895.



The Ann Arbor Railroad was a major carrier of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and coal. It also operated a passenger service between Toledo, Ohio, and Frankfort, Michigan. The railroad's main line ran from Toledo to Frankfort, with branches to Jackson, Michigan, and Cadillac, Michigan.

The Ann Arbor Railroad was purchased by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway in 1973. The C&O merged with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1987 to form CSX Transportation. CSX sold the Ann Arbor Railroad to the Huron & Eastern Railroad in 2001.

Detroit & Mackinac Railway

The Detroit & Mackinac Railway was another major short line railroad in Michigan. It operated a 307-mile network of track in Michigan and Ontario, Canada. The railroad was founded in 1883 and was originally known as the Detroit, Bay City & Alpena Railroad. It was renamed the Detroit & Mackinac Railway in 1899.



A Detroit & Mackinac Railway train crossing a bridge in Mackinaw City, Michigan.

The Detroit & Mackinac Railway was a major carrier of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and forest products. It also operated a passenger service between Detroit, Michigan, and Mackinaw City, Michigan. The railroad's main line ran from Detroit to Mackinaw City, with branches to Bay City, Michigan, and Alpena, Michigan.

The Detroit & Mackinac Railway was purchased by the Canadian National Railway in 1984. CN sold the railroad to the Huron & Eastern Railroad in 2001.

Grand Trunk Western Railroad

The Grand Trunk Western Railroad was a major short line railroad in Michigan and Indiana. It operated a 1,021-mile network of track in both states. The railroad was founded in 1859 and was originally known as the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. It was renamed the Grand Trunk Western Railroad in 1923.



The Grand Trunk Western Railroad was a major carrier of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and coal. It also operated a passenger service between Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan. The railroad's main line ran from Chicago to Detroit, with branches to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Grand Trunk Western Railroad was purchased by the Canadian National Railway in 1976. CN sold the railroad to the Huron & Eastern Railroad in 2001.

Huron & Eastern Railroad

The Huron & Eastern Railroad is a short line railroad that operates in Michigan and Ontario, Canada. It was founded in 1983 and is headquartered in Saginaw, Michigan. The railroad operates a 450-mile network of track in both states.



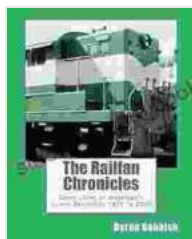
A Huron & Eastern Railroad train crossing a bridge in Saginaw, Michigan.

The Huron & Eastern Railroad is a major carrier of agricultural products, manufactured goods, and forest products. It also operates a passenger service between Saginaw, Michigan, and Alma, Michigan. The railroad's main line runs from Saginaw to Alma, with branches to Bay City, Michigan, and Port Huron, Michigan.

The Huron & Eastern Railroad is owned by the Railroad Development Corporation. The RDC is a private investment firm that specializes in the acquisition and operation of short line railroads.

The short line railroads of Michigan's Lower Peninsula played a vital role in the state's economy during the second half of the 20th century. These railroads transported agricultural products, manufactured goods, and other commodities to and from businesses and communities throughout the state. They also provided passenger service to many communities.

Today, many of these short line railroads are still in operation, providing essential service to businesses and communities in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. These railroads are a reminder of the important role that railroads have played in the development of the United States.



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