

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 72 | Number 3 (Summer 2013)

pps. 308-

Minnesota Railroads: A Photographic History, 1940-2012

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Byrne, Kevin. "Minnesota Railroads: A Photographic History, 1940-2012." *The Annals of Iowa* 72 (2013).

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.1732>

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tory, part cookbook—is a testament to a woman who became part of the American fabric not through protest or activism but through her amazing talents in the kitchen. Perhaps that should be a lesson to us all. Let’s solve all of our problems with Gudrun’s chocolate chip cookies.

Minnesota Railroads: A Photographic History, 1940–2012, by Steve Glischinski. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. xv, 298 pp. Illustrations (many in color), notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Kevin Byrne is professor emeritus of history at Gustavus Adolphus College. His research and writing have focused on military history and the history of railroads and technology.

Minnesota Railroads is one of a number of outstanding books relevant to railroad history in the upper Midwest that the University of Minnesota Press has published over many years. With photographs and text, Steve Glischinski helps readers comprehend and visualize the past 72 years of railroading in Minnesota. The book’s first 100 pages cover 1940 to 1960, an era of technological transition from steam to diesel and growing challenges from other modes of transportation. A second 100-page chapter surveys the following 20 years, when railroads struggled to survive, many succumbing to bankruptcy. Chapter 3 (44 pages) focuses on the last two decades of the twentieth century, years of revival as several railroads gradually returned to profitability. The concluding 35 pages consider twenty-first-century developments, emphasizing successful consolidations and newly created short lines. Glischinski presents this narrative through pithy four- to eight-page introductions that open each chapter. These are essential, but superb photographs of locomotives, trains, terminals, rail yards, and more—plus extensive, informative captions—provide the meat of the book. These visual documents brilliantly illuminate the railroad experience.

This impressive volume offers insights from many significant perspectives. One example: Glischinski’s choice of images sheds light on the labor force. Photographs of employees loading ice for refrigeration, servicing locomotives in maintenance sheds, sorting mail on fast-moving trains (while carrying firearms), learning telegraphy, and battling blizzards evoke a deeper appreciation for life in railroading, and for the times themselves. Overall, this book is a “must-have” for railroad enthusiasts in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. It is a rich resource about a colorful, turbulent era.