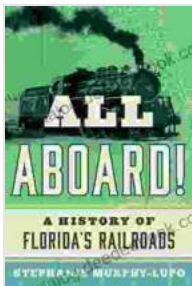


All Aboard: A Comprehensive History of Florida's Railroads

Florida's railroad history is a rich and complex one, dating back to the mid-1800s. The state's first railroad, the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, was built in 1858, and by the end of the century, Florida had over 2,000 miles of track. Railroads played a pivotal role in the development of Florida, opening up the state to settlement and commerce. They also played a major role in the state's tourism industry, transporting tourists to Florida's beaches and attractions.

In this article, we will explore the key moments and figures that shaped the development of Florida's railroads, from their humble beginnings to their role in the state's economic and social transformation.



All Aboard!: A History of Florida's Railroads

by Stephanie Murphy-Lupo

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The Early Years

The first railroad in Florida was the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, which was built in 1858. The railroad ran from Pensacola to Tallahassee, and it was used to transport cotton and other goods to the port of Pensacola. In the years that followed, other railroads were built in Florida, including the Jacksonville and St. Augustine Railroad (1860), the Florida Central Railroad (1861), and the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad (1862).

The development of Florida's railroads was slowed by the Civil War, but after the war, railroad construction resumed. In the 1870s and 1880s, several new railroads were built in Florida, including the South Florida Railroad (1870), the Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railway (1884), and the Plant System (1885). These railroads helped to open up Florida to settlement and commerce, and they played a major role in the state's economic development.

The Henry Flagler Era

One of the most important figures in Florida railroad history is Henry Flagler. Flagler was a wealthy industrialist who made his fortune in the oil industry. In the late 1880s, Flagler became interested in Florida, and he began investing in railroads and hotels in the state. Flagler's most famous railroad project was the East Coast Railway, which he built from Jacksonville to Miami. The East Coast Railway opened up the east coast of Florida to tourism and development, and it played a major role in the growth of the state's tourism industry.

In addition to the East Coast Railway, Flagler also built several other railroads in Florida, including the Jacksonville Terminal Company (1890), the Florida East Coast Railway (1895), and the Overseas Railroad

(1912). Flagler's railroads helped to transform Florida from a rural backwater into a major tourist destination.

The Seaboard Air Line Railway

Another major railroad in Florida was the Seaboard Air Line Railway (SAL). The SAL was formed in 1900 through the merger of several smaller railroads. The SAL operated a network of railroads in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. The SAL was a major competitor to the East Coast Railway, and the two railroads often engaged in fierce competition.

In 1967, the SAL merged with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad was later acquired by CSX Transportation in 1980.

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) was another major railroad in Florida. The ACL was formed in 1894 through the merger of several smaller railroads. The ACL operated a network of railroads in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. The ACL was a major competitor to the Seaboard Air Line Railway, and the two railroads often engaged in fierce competition.

In 1967, the ACL merged with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad was later acquired by CSX Transportation in 1980.

The Orange Blossom Special

One of the most famous trains in Florida history is the Orange Blossom Special. The Orange Blossom Special was a passenger train that ran from

Jacksonville to Miami. The train was named after the orange blossoms that were grown in Florida. The Orange Blossom Special was a popular train with tourists and locals alike, and it played a major role in the development of Florida's tourism industry.

The Orange Blossom Special was discontinued in 1968, but it remains a popular symbol of Florida's railroad history.

The Silver Meteor

Another famous train in Florida history is the Silver Meteor. The Silver Meteor was a passenger train that ran from New York City to Miami. The train was named after the silver meteor showers that are often seen in Florida. The Silver Meteor was a popular train with tourists and business travelers alike, and it played a major role in the development of Florida's tourism industry.

The Silver Meteor was discontinued in 1971, but it remains a popular symbol of Florida's railroad history.

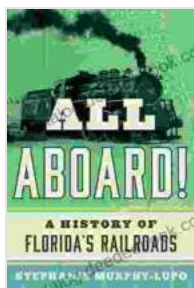
Florida East Coast Railway

The Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) was a major railroad in Florida. The FEC was formed in 1895 by Henry Flagler. The FEC operated a network of railroads on the east coast of Florida, from Jacksonville to Miami. The FEC was a major player in the development of Florida's tourism industry.

In 1963, the FEC was acquired by the St. Joe Paper Company. The FEC continued to operate as a separate railroad until 1984, when it was merged into the CSX Transportation system.

Florida's railroad history is a rich and complex one. Railroads played a pivotal role in the development of Florida, opening up the state to settlement and commerce. They also played a major role in the state's tourism industry, transporting tourists to Florida's beaches and attractions.

Today, Florida's railroads continue to play a vital role in the state's economy and transportation system. The state's railroads are used to transport freight and passengers, and they are an important part of Florida's infrastructure.



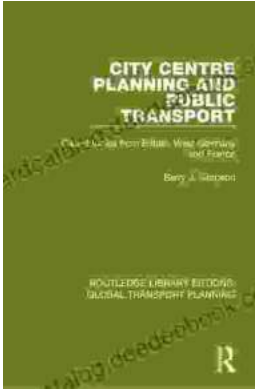
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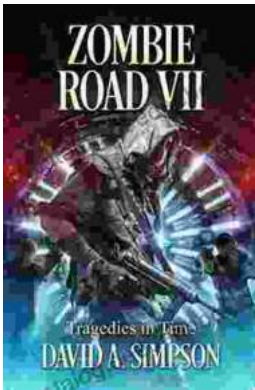
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