

RAILROADS IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY



Johns Hopkins University Press. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Railroads in the African American Experience: A Photographic Journey, Theodore Kornweibel, This captivating book takes readers on an illustrated tour of the black railroad experience from slavery to Amtrak. With almost 200 images-many never before published-Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., examines the significant contributions of African Americans to the building, maintenance, operation, and profitability of the American railway system. The history of American railroads, Kornweibel makes clear, cannot be separated from African American history. For over a century, railroading provided the most important industrial occupation for blacks. Brakemen, firemen, porters, chefs, mechanics, laborers-African American men and women have been essential to the daily operation and success of American railroads. The connections between railroads and African Americans extend well beyond employment. Civil rights protests beginning in the late 19th century challenged railroad segregation and job discrimination; the major waves of black migration to the North depended almost entirely on railroads; and railroad themes and imagery penetrated deep into black art, literature, drama, folklore, and music. Kornweibel's visual presentation of this rich history brings to life the hundreds of thousands of blacks who toiled for decades on America's great rail systems. Each chapter of text focuses on a different occupation or railroading experience, some peculiar to blacks. Together, the evocative images and the complementary essays supply a comprehensive and powerful survey of the social, cultural, political, and economic influence of African Americans on railroads and of railroads on the black community. Few today recall the importance of blacks to the American railroad industry, even though most black families have railroading ancestors. These stories of hardship and heroism, exploitation and endurance, anger and artistry illuminate a rich heritage and fascinating chapter in American history.



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