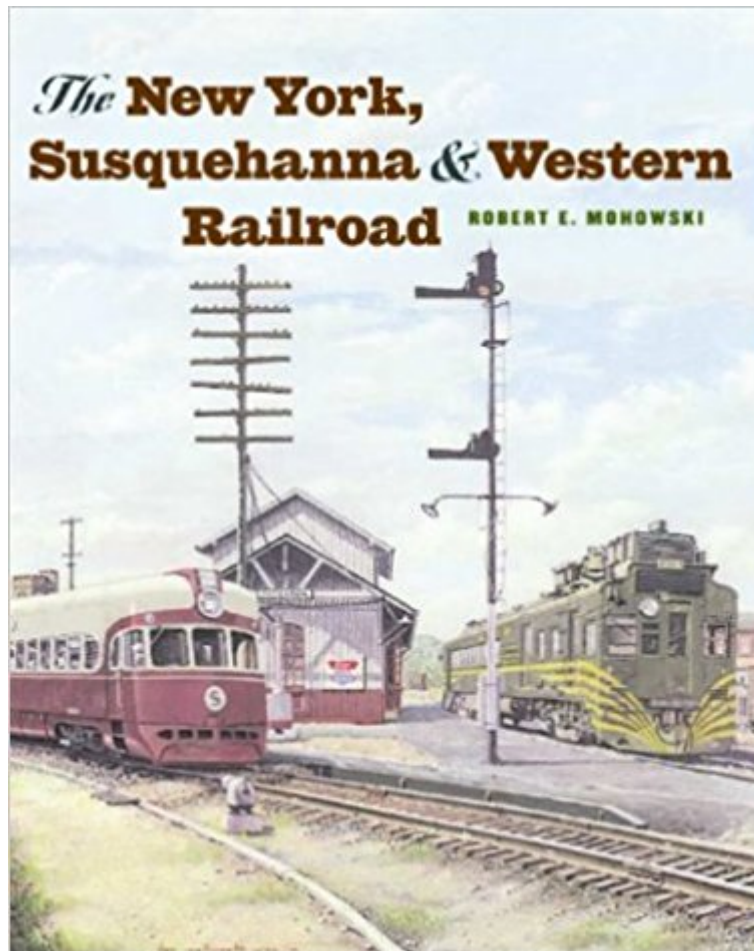




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The New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad



Synopsis

The New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad arose in 1881 through the merger of several smaller railway companies that linked the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania to the industrial centers of the New York–New Jersey metropolitan area. Immediately successful in the coal business, the NYS&W also attracted tourists by promoting the beauty and rural charm of the Delaware Water Gap and building picnic facilities for same-day excursions from both ends of the line. The company's fortunes rose through the 1920s, fell in the 1930s, surged in the 1940s as it became one of the region's busiest and most innovative passenger lines, and slowly declined from the 1950s until finally passing into bankruptcy in 1976 and reorganization into a regional freight hauler. As expertly and engagingly told in this heavily illustrated book—the first in-depth history of the line—the story of the NYS&W vividly illustrates the challenges faced by the many smaller railroad companies that contributed to America's industrial growth and the inventive solutions their directors devised to surmount these difficulties in the service of local and regional needs. Robert E. Mohowski traces the company's tangled history from the founding of its direct ancestor—the New Jersey, Hudson, and Delaware Railroad—in 1832 through its acquisition by the Erie Railroad in 1898, its reemergence as an independent entity in 1940, and its thirty-six-year-long struggle to keep the railroad in business. As Mohowski accounts, the NYS&W throughout its history aggressively sought out new sources of revenue, particularly as the traffic in coal dwindled. Commuter service became the most successful of these activities, and the line's management invested heavily in upgrading its locomotive and passenger car fleets. The company introduced streamlined, self-propelled cars that provided fast, comfortable travel in northeast New Jersey (a prototype for New Jersey Transit's present-day Midtown Direct service). These efforts, however, proved insufficient to prevent the company's demise. Beloved by railroad enthusiasts, the New York, Susquehanna & Western serves as a case study in technological innovation and creative management and stands as an important chapter in the history of American railroads.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This comprehensive work chronicles the actions through almost 100 years, to its bankruptcy in 1976. (Scale Rails)It's a case study in inventiveness brought about by determination. (Trains)This book is what a railroad history should be— a deft mix of corporate history with more than a dash, no, a generous dollop, of the operational details that bring a railroad to life. I highly recommend it. (Railfan and Railroad)Mohowski has an almost spiritual passion and innate ability to transform often-mundane decades of 'corporate' history into a living breathing entity. (Don Spiro Railroad Model Craftsman)Overall this is an enjoyable and interesting work... The author has undertaken an impressive amount of primary source research, and it is doubtful that anyone will ever write a more detailed history of this company... The author is to be commended for his accuracy, organization, and dispassionate objectivity... It is certainly a worthwhile read for anyone interested in railroading in the northeastern United States. (Albert Churella Enterprise and Society)Mohowski has studied extensively the little-known NYS&W. There is no question that he has made a contribution to railroad history. (H. Roger Grant EH.Net)A solidly researched narrative history of the railroad from the inception of its predecessors through to the present... Required reading for scholars of eastern railroads. (Colin Divall Journal of Transport History)An initiation into the realm of railroad histories and railroad enthusiasts... A must read. (Thomas A. Rumney Pennsylvania Geographer)This is a well-written, detailed history of a railroad that was, if not a major player in America's railway history, very much a conspicuous one by virtue of its location in the New York— New Jersey metropolitan region. Unusually— and for railway historians and enthusiasts, importantly— Robert E. Mohowski devotes much of his attention to the decline of the New York, Susquehanna & Western, and its managers' efforts to reverse the company's fading fortunes. Mohowski's discussion of the railroad's introduction of innovative self-propelled cars and their operational history in this regard is especially excellent. (George W. Hilton, author of *The Ma & Pa: A History of the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad*)The story of the New York, Susquehanna & Western is a fascinating addition to American railroad corporate history. During its

century-long existence, the company engaged in unusual efforts to develop the use of internal combustion engines and streamlined passenger cars, and this, too, is part of the NYS&W story. Those of us who enjoy railroad history owe Robert E. Mohowski a debt of appreciation for the research he has done and the generous act of compiling it for the rest of us. (John W. Barriger IV, from the Foreword) This engaging... volume is the first in-depth history of the line and is illustrated with historic black and white photos both of its freight and passenger operations. (Susan O'Brien S Gaugian / Sn3 Modeler)

Robert E. Mohowski is a railroad historian and a member of the Lexington Group in Transportation History, the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, and the National Railway Historical Society. He lives in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

I bought this for my dad because we always wondered what those abandoned-looking tracks were used for in Wyckoff, NJ. Several years before I was born the NYS&W terminated all passenger service on this line and freight was relegated to the very early morning. The NYS&W is one of the oldest, continuously operating railroads in the United States. It's notable for once being owned by the Erie but not disappearing into Conrail. Today, hauling local garbage and occasional freight and having lost intermodal business to the ex-Conrail parts of CSX and Norfolk Southern, this regional shortline railroad lurches into a future that's not quite certain. This book covers the deep history and innovations of the railroad. Its state-of-the-art passenger service tried to provide affordable commuter service on modern trains only to give up due to confiscatory local taxes and a severely backward federal government administration. The selling of the ultra-modern commuter trains overseas and replacement with 40-year-old antiques was especially disappointing, but not as much as the complete abandonment of passenger service. After a recent short-lived passenger service in Syracuse, NY, the NYS&W has been forced to give up all passenger service again. Now that railroads are in vogue again this oldest railroad may soon find new passenger business with New Jersey Transit. This book provides the fascinating background of a railroad that even the locals know precious little about.

This is the most comprehensive and interesting history of this railroad that has been written. The author has taken special pains to insure it's accuracy. It is detailed but not boring. The selection of photos is great. The history of this railroad is very interesting and Robert Mohowski has made it come to life with his research and the production of this book.

Well written. Well illustrated. Well researched Great book!!

the book comprises a complete history of this rail system. this is exactly what i wanted. it is a visual and intellectual treat.

Bob Mohowski has done an excellent job of taking the reader from conception through to the present (2003). Filled with captivating facts and photos. I looked forward to each of the 14 chapters as separate kernels filled with another adventure in NE Railroad history. I could not put this book down. I do have one regret I didn't buy it six years earlier. If you are an NYS&W fan or have a love for NJ & PA railroads in general, you will not be disappointed! SAM C.

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