

Railroads and the American People

Course #	21SRA
Format:	Seminar
Moderators:	Dean Poli, Chuck Aulino
Date and Time:	Wednesday, 9:30-11:30 AM 10 weeks, starting February 24
Location:	ONLINE, via Zoom
Maximum number of participants:	16
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to #2

Purpose: The purpose of this seminar is to study the impact of railroads on the culture, commerce and spirit of America, as well as the economic, military and social impact railroads have had on American society.

Description: Given the vast expanse of our country, the challenges of, and obstacles to, transportation were myriad from the nation's beginning, until the vast expansion of railroads was completed in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century. With this expansion came opportunities for national, even international travel and trade at speeds never previously dreamed of. Towns and cities located around railroad depots and junctions thrived or failed, their fates tied to the success or failure of the railroads that served them. For many Americans, employment opportunities meant entry into the middle class, and to many railroaders, their career was a source of great pride. Although, for more than 100 years, it was the common belief that railroads would always be the country's primary facility for transportation, with the advent of the automobile, truck, bus and aircraft, the role of the iron horse was eventually eclipsed. Role of participants: Each participant will make a 30-minute presentation on a topic that interests them, and then lead a 15-minute discussion. Suggestions for topics will be provided to participants in advance. Audio-visuals are encouraged but not required.

Resources: The primary publication has the same title as this seminar, *Railroads and the American People*, H. Roger Grant, Indiana University Press. Numerous sources for further reading appear at the end of the book.

About the Moderators: Dean Poli has moderated or co-moderated approximately ten LIR seminars, most of which have dealt with history. Chuck Aulino has participated in a number of seminars over the last 3 1/2 years, many dealing with history, and has been the moderator for one and co-moderator for two others.