



The Tootin' Louie: A History of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway

Don L. Hofsommer

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The Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M&StL), affectionately known as the Tootin' Louie, was founded in 1870 to serve a Minneapolis business community threatened by powerful railway interests emerging from both Chicago and Milwaukee. Although its goal of providing a direct rail artery to St. Louis proved elusive, the M&StL became a 1,600-mile road that supplied essential freight and passenger carriage to the Midwest over its ninety-year existence. In *The Tootin' Louie*, railroad historian Don L. Hofsommer offers a comprehensive biography of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway and its Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Illinois service areas from the dawn of the steamcar civilization into the post-World War II era. Incorporating an extraordinary collection of primary research documents, including station records and dispatchers' reports, Hofsommer brings the M&StL to life by vividly portraying the lives and times of the people involved in the railroad. His conversational style allows the reader to virtually see the workers, hear their stories, and sense their disappointments. *The Tootin' Louie* showcases the human dimension of railroading, emphasizing that the M&StL was long-lived primarily due to the loyalty of the communities and companies it served. Also a chronicle of business in the upper Midwest, this book reveals how the M&StL carried flour, lumber, even movie reels and beer between states and was often transportation for family reunions and other recreational excursions. Deeply connected to the Upper Midwest, the railroad company prospered and suffered with the communities it served. Essential reading for railway buffs and transportation historians nationwide, *The Tootin' Louie* is the ultimate guide to the M&StL and its place in an era of economic, social, and industrial change.

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