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Review of Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook

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A Life with the Union Pacific: The Autobiography of Edd H. Bailey. By Edd H. Bailey. St. Johnsbury, VT: Saltillo Press, 1989. ii + 150 pp. \$24.95.

As the title of this modest volume suggests, Edd H. Bailey, the late president of the Union Pacific Company, has written for us his life story. Like typical railroad officials of the past, Bailey climbed the corporate ladder by moving through various positions in the operating department. After a youth spent on a woebegone homestead in eastern Colorado, he joined the Union Pacific in 1922 as a helper in the car department in Cheyenne, Wyoming; by 1965, he was the president and director. Although Bailey lacked a college education, his various "hands-on" experiences made possible his rise to industry-wide prominence. At one point in his career he worked as a special agent in Utah; as he recalls, "Those years with the various Special Agent assignments were the best training period for me. I learned a lot about all facets of railroading from those years and got an over-all view of things most workers never had" (48). Later a brief demotion to freight conductor likewise opened his eyes to certain company practices.

This book offers some insights into American railroading and the Union Pacific for half a century. Bailey, in his chatty comments, indicates the on-going problems of personalities in a large multi-state bureaucracy. And, unusual for this kind of account, he sees religious prejudice as having an impact on promotion within company ranks. Unfortunately, Bailey fails to discuss fully this fascinating subject. Moreover, his commentary is marred by an unusually large

number of typographical errors, by faulty grammar, and repetitiveness. A good editor could have improved this work greatly. The illustrations are a disappointment; they include mostly family, especially Bailey's wife, Mabel. And an index is badly needed.

H. ROGER GRANT
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