

A decree went out from Woodrow Wilson that all the Railroads should be evaluated and taxed.

Valuations were reports made by the Interstate Commerce Commission in the early 20th Century to determine what a particular Railroad was worth as a basis for their rates and charges. Included in these reports were thumbnail histories of all of the predecessor companies, an inventory of all of their operating equipment and inventories of all of the Railroad Structures as well as maps of the railroads themselves. The field notes on these railroads got so detailed as to include the number of ties and what type of wood they were, what kind of rail was used and the weights used on those rails as well as the type of switch stands used for each turnout.

The Field Reports, maps and Railroad overviews that still exist are at the National Archives and Records Administration II in College Park, Maryland.

These lengthy reports have been distilled into brief histories for the Railfan and Railroad Modeler who is interested in their favorite prototypes.

These reports are a good snapshot of the Railroads in the USA between 1916 and 1932.

Downloading:

Go to the file that you wish to download and click on the name. There is no need to click on the "Buy Now" button. You will see that listed under the name is PDF DATASHEET ---> VIEW PDF DATASHEET. Click on it. This file should open to your Adobe Reader. After it opens in your Adobe Reader, click the top "Save" icon on the reader (the one that looks like an old floppy disk) and save it to your hard drive. We recommend that you open this file first (as you have), as it explains the way to obtain the files.

We ask no money for these files, just let us know if you appreciate them at:

info@labellemodels.com

These files are courtesy of LaBelle Woodworking Company for our friends and customers.

Richard S. Steele, the creator of these files is the President of LaBelle Woodworking Co.

Since most folks don't know what to do with these files as posted, here are the basics:

Downloading:

Go to the file that you wish to download and click on the name. You will see that listed under the name is an option to look at a .pdf file. Click on it. After it opens in your Adobe Reader, click the top "Save" icon on the reader (the one that looks like an old floppy disk) and save it to your hard drive. It's free for the taking. Courtesy of LaBelle Woodworking Co.

Why would you do this?

I have been a railroader for the last 30 years. When I was much newer in this business, I was "Cut off" from my employer (for laymen than means "laid off"). During that time I worked for a number of short line railroads. One of the individuals that I worked for, Byron Andrews, had a set of the ICC's published files. Since Byron used to practice before the ICC, he encouraged me to look through these books and I must say that I'm grateful that he did. As I began looking through them I began to realize what a trove of information that these files actually are. Thanks Byron!

I found a full set of the published Hearings, Dockets and Valuations at the State Law Library here in the city where I live. To check these books out, all I needed was to be a county resident with a library card. Like a kid in a candy store, I began to read about my favorite subject, Railroads. During this process, I began taking notes on my home computer (an old Atari 800). I developed a shorthand that has worked well for me in recording these brief histories.

Sometimes one will find that the files make sense as they cover a single Railroad. Sometimes you wonder why the Railroads were grouped the way that they were. That's why I have an alphabetized Table of Contents also listed. Let's say that you want to find the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. Look it up alphabetically. You then get sent to the New York Central Valuation. At the time that the Valuations were done, the NYC was the majority owner of the Indiana Harbor Belt.

I have done some updating to the files, but due to the renovations at the State Library, and the purchase of LaBelle Woodworking Co. I have been stymied for a couple of years. Rather than letting my previous work languish on a bunch of floppies, I have decided to share it with anybody who is interested in it.

As John Belushi said as "Bluto" in Animal House; "It don't cost nothin'".

Since all of this is my work, please, please, if you are going to use the information for publication or on another website or for anything but personal use, just acknowledge where you got it. That's all I ask, no money, no royalties, just an acknowledgment.

Thanks and Enjoy,
Rick Steele
LaBelle Woodworking Co.
July 27, 2009

How to interpret these files.

It is actually quite simple to read the format once it is understood how they are set up.

Remember that there is a legal difference when the same railroad name is used and the “and” is replaced by an “&” or “Railroad is replaced by “Railway” or some derivation thereof. That is why companies with the same names are listed as separate corporations.

Below is an example of the format that will be found in the files as written:

Name of Railroad Evaluated

NAME OF RAILROAD EVALUATED.....

Inc. in (STATE) , Incorporation Date (if listed)

Trackage, June 30, 191(?):

XXX.OO mi. First main track

XX.OO mi. Yard track and sidings

Equipment (on date of valuation)

Steam locomotives X

Freight cars XX

Passenger cars X

Work equipment XX

Amount of property constructed (if any) usually limited to main track

Controlled by:

People other than the Railroad Board of Directors, or Owing Company or Corporation

Preceding Company (Date of Reorganization or Inclusion into existing company)

Preceding Company (Date of Reorganization or Inclusion into existing company)

PRECEDING COMPANY. Succeeding Company

Inc. in (STATE) , Incorporation Date (if listed)

Amount of property constructed (if any) usually limited to main track

PRECEDING COMPANY. Succeeding Company

Inc. in (STATE) , Incorporation Date (if listed)

Amount of property constructed (if any) usually limited to main track

A Challenge to you:

I want to see how many Railroad Logos we can get to replace the “Adobe PDF” file icons. If you have some that you’d like to see replace these icons, attach them to an e-mail and send them to info@labellemodels.com . We’ll replace as many as we receive icons for. Yes, I’ll acknowledge your contribution in the file description.