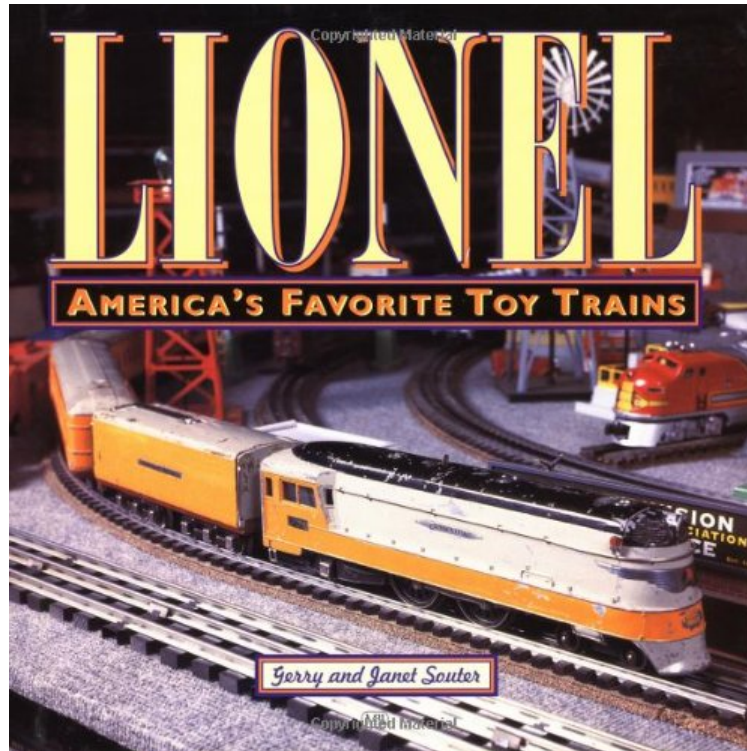


[Free pdf] Lionel: America's Favorite Toy Trains

Lionel: America's Favorite Toy Trains

Gerry Janet Souter

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Gerry Janet Souter : Lionel: America's Favorite Toy Trains before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lionel: America's Favorite Toy Trains:

68 of 69 people found the following review helpful. Favorite Book about "America's Favorite Toy Trains"?By WILLIAM H FULLERThe fresh, exuberant expression of the Souters' writing continues throughout the book as a look at a paragraph from Chapter 7 attests: "Lionel has survived competition, inflation, two world wars, the Great Depression, financial scandal, receivership, rampant nepotism, material shortages, off-shore production experiments, dubious corporate acquisitions, management blunders, marketing blunders, the decline of the railroads, Roy Cohn as CEO, loss of its distribution network, loss of its primary customer base, Sputnik, acquisition by a cereal company, spin-off to a toy company, purchase by a millionaire hobbyist, and the computer chip revolution. Today, the name Lionel still means `electric train'." Spicing the book further are enticing glimpses at the competition that Lionel often felt nipping at its heels. Here and there throughout the book, sidebars pop up to give views of Carlisle Finch, Ives, Hafner, American Flyer, Dorfan, Marx, and today's competing brands. Each of these peeks at the "other brand" relates that manufacturer's production to the fortunes of Lionel and helps the reader understand Lionel's response to the threat. The book does have some shortcomings. It really could have been proofread more closely. A photo caption describing the introduction of the operating cattle car states that it arrived in 1948 but goes on to say that it was pricey for 1947. If this weren't confusing enough, the typesetter mistook the year for the price, and the caption actually states that the car "was pricey for \$1,947 but sold well." And we thought that today's prices were high! Another gaffe comes when

OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, is twice misnamed the Occupational Safety Hazard Administration. Sharp-eyed readers will also catch other errors such as an occasional misspelled or repeated word. These are not often frequent or blatant enough to detract greatly from the enjoyment that the book offers, but they do suggest an inferior proofreading effort. Perhaps some readers will be willing to overlook the affronts upon the language from uncorrected typographical errors; however, they may be less willing to overlook factual errors in the history and description of Lionel's products. During the discussion of Lionel's brief post-war venture into HO scale trains, the Souters state that "Lionel came out with a strange three-rail HO gauge track that was anathema to its primary hobbyist market." The fact is that Lionel never "came out with" any such track during the Post War or any other era. In the late Pre War Period, the company did catalog and sell both two and three-rail track in OO gauge for a brief time. American OO gauge track is wider than HO and is not compatible with it. The book is confusing not only two different track gauges but also two different time periods. Discussion of Lionel's fortunes in 1959 includes a description of the No. 3435 Aquarium Car, part of which reads, "Inside, a strip of 35mm clear film with fish painted on it moves past the windows when the activation button is pressed as the car passes over the magnetic track section." The authors must be terribly impressed with the capabilities of Lionel's remote control track section with its electromagnet to ascribe to it the capability of activating the car's vibrating motor! In reality, the car is equipped with an off-on lever to start and stop the motor. With the lever in the "on" position, the motor moves the film strip continuously and with total disregard as to whether or not a remote control section of track is even installed on the layout. While these examples reveal some of the questionable historical research and knowledge of the authors, they are neither so severe nor so numerous as to sentence the book without parole. There is much that is very good about it: sharp, large photographs of prototypes and their O gauge models; a text that is replete with wonderful turns of phrase that make it a joy to read; an honest willingness to tell all; and the fact that the discussion extends to Lionel's current ownership. On the other hand, occasional textual errors, some factual discrepancies, and the absence of any citations or bibliographies identifying sources limit the extent to which the reader can trust the material. Is the Souters' book worth its cover price? Probably. After all, who can quibble with the accuracy of these observations from the concluding chapter: "Today's toy train market is driven by an aging population of nostalgia-loving adults who collect and run joyful remembrances of their youth. "Where Lionel will find itself in 2001 and the years to come is a guessing game, but whoever is making the decisions, whoever is designing the products and marketing them has one supreme advantage over all the competition. They have the name that has come to symbolize durability, value, and imagination for 100 years. They have the loyalty of fans around the world. They have Lionel--America's Electric Train."0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed reading about Cohen and his creative abilities and the ...By Jean BurkardI enjoyed reading about Cohen and his creative abilities and the difficulties he had to overcome to stay on top. I, for one, am glad he was able to keep the Lionel name popular.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Ken RosolMy son's favorite book.

In December 1900, a young inventor named Joshua Lionel Cowen devised a battery-powered train intended to help Manhattan toy-shop owners dress up their window displays. When the shops' customers began ordering the trains for themselves, Cowen launched Lionel Manufacturing Company. Beginning with those turn-of-the-century "cigar boxes on wheels," this colorful large-format history follows the world's most famous toy trains as they survive the Great Depression, bask in the height of their popularity in the 1950s and 1960s, weather several changes of ownership in the 1970s and 1980s, and celebrate their 100th anniversary at the end of the 1990s. The trains are richly illustrated with specially commissioned color studio photography, archival black-and-white images, and classic print ads. Also discussed are the business and marketing decisions, electrical innovations, and accessories upon which Lionel built its following. A definitive history for Lionel enthusiasts, railfans, and nostalgia buffs.

About the AuthorGerry Souter learned about trains at his grandfather's knee in the New York Central roundhouse at Buffalo, New York, and sprawled next to his own Lionel trains beginning at age eight. He met Janet, his wife, in a darkroom at the School of the Chicago Art Institute. Their cameras have visited many Lionel layouts bringing creative illustration to their words. The Souters currently live in Arlington, Illinois.