

Red Mountain Press



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***“Birmingham Rails”* Receives National Society Book Award**

The first book to chronicle the colorful history of Birmingham, Alabama railroads in the mid-20th Century has been selected for an award by the leading society of railroad historians in the United States.

“Birmingham Rails: The Last Golden Era” by co-authors Marvin Clemons and Lyle Key, has been chosen by the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society (R&LHS) as recipient of the Society’s prestigious George W. and Constance M. Hilton Book Award. Established by the Society in 1982 and endowed by the Hiltons in 1985, the award honors “an outstanding work of lasting value to the interpretation of North America’s railroading history.” Previous recipients include such noted railroad historians and authors as David Morgan, John H. White, and George Hilton, for whom the award is named.

A formal presentation of the Hilton book award is planned for Saturday, July 9 at the regular meeting of the R&LHS’ Mid-South Chapter at the historic Leeds (AL) depot. Mark Entrop, chairman of the R&LHS awards committee, will make the presentation to authors Clemons and Key, both Mid-South Chapter members. Clemons is chapter president and resides in Hayden, AL. Key is retired from CSX Railroad and lives in Nashville, TN.

Published in 2007 as a limited edition of 1800 copies, ***“Birmingham Rails”*** focuses on railroad operations in the Birmingham railroad district following World War II to the advent of Amtrak in 1971. The authors term this period in Birmingham history the railroads’ “last Golden Era,” as passenger train service staged a brief come-back followed by a steady decline from its wartime peak. At the same time, many iconic symbols of Birmingham’s once-omnipresent railroads, such as the city’s magnificent Terminal Station, disappeared forever.

“Birmingham Rails” was well received by railroad historians and enthusiasts, as well as the general public, and the limited edition sold out within 10 months of publication. No second printing is anticipated, although publishing rights may become available at a later date.

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