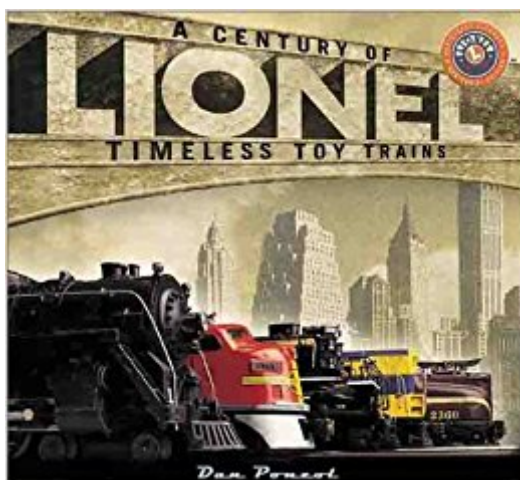


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Lionel: A Century Of Timeless Toy Trains



Synopsis

Happy 100th birthday to a true American classic! Celebrate the hundred-year anniversary of one of the most beloved toys of the 20th-century: the timeless Lionel train. Other playthings have left their mark on the pages of American history and some still evoke a misty-eyed nostalgia, but no toy has had as dramatic an impact as these miniature cars, tracks, and accessories. Their magic makes children wide-eyed with joy at Christmas and continues to inspire collectors of all ages. Enjoy the history of Lionel's rise to greatness in a splendid oversize tribute, featuring breathtaking images of perfectly preserved trains from every era, including some of the most famous and rare models, as well as reproductions of legendary catalogs and ads. A wealth of enlightening detail about individual pieces puts them in their proper place in the total Lionel output. The definitive tribute to a most cherished American institution.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This attractive, oversized book blends striking color photos with a history of the production of Lionel trains. For toy train enthusiasts, the photos will be the most interesting facet of the book. Most illustrated books of collectible toy trains are fairly straightforward, with endless pictures of locomotives and cars viewed side-on to show what they really look like. By contrast, commercial photographer Milne has produced almost impressionistic photographs. They feature selected details, limited depth of field, dramatic lighting, unusual angles, and train layout backgrounds. Given the large page size and high-quality paper, the pictures are particularly attractive. Fun to read, the text by dealer and collector Ponzol covers very familiar territory, but with the addition of comments

on the interrelationships between the toys and their times. It also has occasional errors, and it's sometimes uncritically enthusiastic, perhaps reflecting the role of the current Lionel company in the packaging of the book. Still, Lionel trains have a wide nostalgic and collector appeal, and Lionel should therefore have a large public library audience. Frederick A. Schlipf, Urbana Free Lib/GSLIS, Univ. of Illinois Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is best described as a "coffee table" book, both because of its large format of 11" by 12" and because of its content. While the text gives an adequate overview of the history of Lionel electric trains, it does not approach the depth and detail that has already been attained by other authors. Perhaps it is best compared to a textbook for a freshman level survey course, somewhat on the superficial side and with scant detail but adequate to provide a general understanding of the topic. While there is a bibliography, there are no citations within the text, so it is impossible to pursue the author's source for any particular claim or assertion. As disturbing as this are textual omissions; for example, while external socio-economic factors are often cited as causes for the decline of large-scale electric trains in the late 1950s through the 1960s, other authors have also called into question the competency of internal management once Lionel passed from its founder's control. Yet, there is no hint of mismanagement in Ponzol's book, and very few names are named anywhere in it. Inasmuch as the book is "officially licensed" by Lionel, one must wonder whether special pains were taken to avoid any innuendo or slight where the Lionel name might be concerned. Speaking of omissions, the list of model train clubs in the back omits one of the major ones, the Lionel Collectors Club of America, while including a listing for the defunct Lionel Ambassadors Club. The full-color photography occupies a major portion of the book, with quite a few full-page photos. Most of the pictures are of extreme close ups of Lionel locomotives, cars and accessories chosen to provide examples of the major manufacturing eras of Lionel trains, i.e., pre war, post war, and modern. This is not intended as a photographic inventory of all or even most Lionel production, and only a very minute percentage of that production appears. Many photos focus sharply on a front corner of the model, allowing everything else to dissolve into a blurry cloud. Considering the extensive depth of field achieved by using a pinhole lens, this blurring must result from a conscious artistic decision, one that should have been reconsidered. Better histories are available in Ron Hollander's "All Aboard!" and in Tom McComus and James Tuohy's six-volume set "A Collector's Guide and History to Lionel Trains," although neither extends to the present day. The "Collector's Guide" volumes also contain a fairly comprehensive photographic inventory of Lionel production through 1980. However, for those who want an overview of Lionel's history without committing the time required to study

multiple volumes, Ponzol's book does provide a satisfactory solution packaged in an attractive, well bound volume.

Gave as a gift, wonderful coffee table book with amazing illustrations. Perhaps not as informative as other more in depth historical reviews, but with the photography - it doesn't need to be. Very happy with purchase.

gift for a friend

Wonderful book. Great history, informative and insight into Lionel. Photos are well done and fun

I bought this for my older brother (54 y.o.) however, he said that his 2 y.o. daughter, who is infatuated with trains, loves it as well!

My son's favorite book.

The Lionel toy company celebrates its one hundredth year of supply the children (and adults!) of the country with toy trains, settings and accessories. Lionel trains are famous world-wide and the favored collectibles of legions of fans and collectors of all ages. In Lionel: A Century Of Classic Toy Trains, ardent and knowledgeable collector Dan Ponzol provides a wealth of detailed information on specific sets, rare models, a history of the company, wonderfully illustrated throughout with reproduced images from legendary catalogs and Lionel train ads, as well as representative models from his own expansive collection. This coffee table showcase book is a "must" for all true Lionel train fans.

I saw Dan Pozal's Lionel: A Century of Timeless Toy Trains on the shelf and opened it ever so gently and reverently. Those beautiful pictures of Lionel Trains reproduced from the old catalogs graced the pages. I went back in time for a few moments and tried to recall those days so long ago. I relived for a very fleeting moment that era and in a blink of the eye it was gone. But I savored the moment and put it away somewhere special to take out again perhaps on a rainy day as I gaze out my window in a bit of melancholy and think how long ago it was when I held my first Lionel Train. Flipping through the pages of this book is a moving experience if you grew up with Lionel Trains as I did. Collecting Lionel Trains and the catalogs was truly a family affair and one I will always cherish.

This is an important book for me. I don't have to take out my Lionel catalogs with their yellowing and brittle pages or pull out streamlined passenger cars or boxcars from my closet in orange boxes now crumbling at the edges. I can sit down and open this book and gaze into the past and just remember. Just remembering is good enough these days. Just remembering when.

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