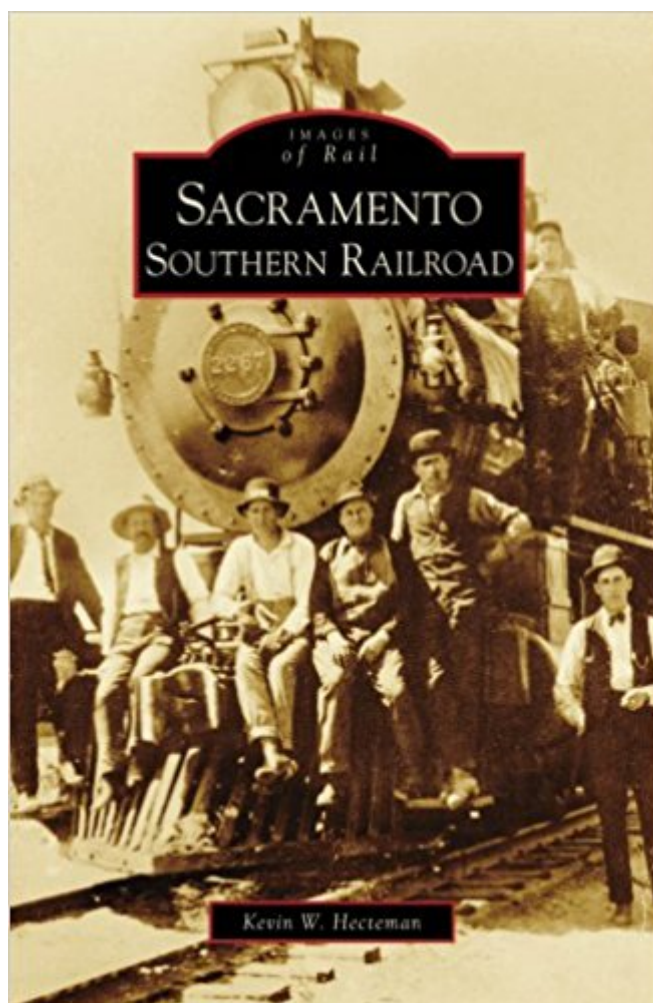


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# Sacramento Southern Railroad, CA (IOR) (Images Of Rail)



## Synopsis

The Sacramento Southern Railroad was born into a famous railroad family and a busy railroad town in July 1903. The mighty Southern Pacific, which controlled the new line from the outset, built south from Sacramento along the eastern bank of the Sacramento River into the delta's rich farmland area. At its zenith, the line was about 31 miles long, serving the communities of Freeport, Hood, Locke, Walnut Grove, and Isleton. Trains on what became known as the Walnut Grove Branch hauled pears, sugar beets, asparagus and other products from the agricultural region's packing sheds and canneries. Competition from trucking and damage from flooding took a severe toll on the railroad, and the Southern Pacific largely abandoned it by 1978, but a portion lives on as a labor of love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Title: Sacramento Southern Railroad Author: Juliet Farmer Publisher: BC Culture Date: 5/9/09 I was born and raised in Sacramento, California (not including four years in and around Portland, Oregon, when I was in third through sixth grades). I'm pretty sure that while I was learning about Lewis and Clark, my Sacramento peers were learning about the Sacramento Southern Railroad and how it changed the city I call home. I'm not a railroad buff. I've always assumed this was more of a "guy" thing, as my grandfather and my own father, as well as practically every man I've ever met, is fascinated by trains. To me, they are/were a way to get from point "A" to point "B". Then I had the

opportunity to read Kevin W. Hecteman's book, *Sacramento Southern Railroad*, which enlightened me about what I've been missing, as well as filled me in on some of Sacramento's interesting back story. (Although there was text, the book is heavy on photos with accompanying descriptions, which makes the reading both light and entertaining.) I live within walking distance of the southern end of the American River Bike Trail, which includes the leg from Miller Park to 25th Avenue and Riverside Blvd. I've run, biked, and walked this route many times, but I never before knew what the sign for "Baths" referred to, nor did I realize the significance of Miller Park itself and its role in Sacramento's railroad history. Baths was a railroad stop for the Riverside baths, a popular local swimming pool frequented in the early 1900s. In the '30s, the enclosed pool's roof was removed, and it was renamed the Land Park Plunge. This property is now partly occupied by B'nai Israel Synagogue and Interstate 5. Then there are "the tracks" (as I call them), a truss bridge above Riverside Blvd. just south of William Land Park's west side, which was built in 1907 for the train. Sacramento Depot, which is now an Amtrak station, opened in 1926. Miller Park was named for Alice Miller, who died in 1942. She bequeathed 38 acres to the City of Sacramento to use as a park and marina. Miller Park opened in 1958 and was a junction of the railroad until 1976, when it was abandoned, which also led to the abandonment of the Hood junction to Isleton in 1977. In its heyday, the line was about 31 miles long and served the communities of Freeport, Hood, Locke, Walnut Grove, and Isleton. Trains -- on what became known as the Walnut Grove Branch -- hauled pears, sugar beets, asparagus, and other products. The last Southern Pacific train journeyed to Hood Junction on October 10, 1978. The California State Railroad Museum opened in 1976, and the first steam powered excursion train set out from Old Sacramento to Miller Park on June 2, 1984. (This route was extended to include Baths years later.) Today, the California State Railroad Museum's excursion railroad, the Sacramento Southern Railroad, is in operation from mid-April through September, when excursion trains depart every hour on the hour in Old Sacramento on the weekends (Hecteman himself is a crew member). The train features a combination of vintage closed coaches with comfortable seats, and open-air "gondolas" with bench style seating. Since 1984, more than one million guests have taken a ride aboard the Sacramento Southern Railroad, served by all-volunteer crews fully trained and certified under Federal Railroad Administration regulations. Along the six-mile, 40-minute roundtrip excursion the train crosses Capitol Mall at Tower Bridge, passes under Pioneer Bridge, and rolls alongside the Miller Park Marina before stopping at Baths. At Baths, the steam engine uncouples from the front of the train, "runs around" the train on a sidetrack, and couples onto the other end of the train before sounding its whistle to begin the return trip to Old Sacramento. It's a sight to behold. Thanks to Hecteman's *Sacramento Southern Railroad*, I plan to check it out very

soon.

Author Kevin W. Hecteman is a volunteer on the "new" Sacramento Southern Railroad, assisting with operations of the steam-powered excursion trains that venture south from the capital city. Using images and ephemera from the California State Railroad Museum, his own collection, and those of other rail enthusiasts, Hecteman shows here a vintage rail line that still carries freight, passengers, and--a rarity in the railroad world--even its original name.

Mr. Hectman failed to accurately research the history of the Sacramento Southern Excursion Railroad. The author skipped mention of the original developers of the excursion and inaccurately gave credit to the second generation of railroad staff based on hearsay rather than the facts. It is shame that his basic research on the development of the Sacramento Southern Excursion Railroad was faulty, because his writing style and information on the railroad when operated by the Southern Pacific Railroad was excellent. I hope the author takes the opportunity to revise this book with the actual facts.

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