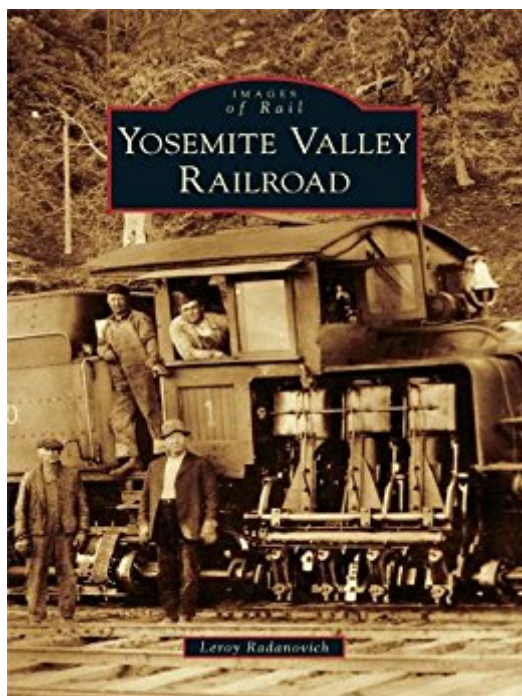


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# Yosemite Valley Railroad (Images Of Rail)



## Synopsis

The Yosemite Valley Railroad was constructed as a badly needed conveyance to Yosemite Valley in the days before the automobile. Visitation to Yosemite had been small, and the federal government wished to introduce the new park system to the public. A railroad through the Merced River Canyon from Merced was the answer to the challenging terrain. Thousands of acres of virgin timber forest and other natural resources along the way supported the building and operation of this rail line. From 1906 until World War II, timber, gold, barium, limestone, freight, and visitors rode the rails to Yosemite National Park on this line.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Another in the series of books on Railroads that I have purchased as gifts for my boyfriend, the railroad man. He reads them from cover to cover and has also enjoyed the videos that I have purchased for him as well.

For the train buff, the logging incline follower, the person interested in the accomplishments by

loggers and train workers, this book has amazing photographs of the area just outside the Yosemite National Park, the El Portal Incline operation and the machinery necessary to get the timber from on top of the mountain to the lumber mill. Text is well written, but to this reader, Leroy's photographs made this book a treasure.

Most enjoy the great photos; had never seen most of them in other subject books. Excellent description of events and history of the RR. Still rereading much of it. Well written and informative!

The Yosemite Valley Railroad (YVRR) ran freight and passenger service between Merced, California, and El Portal at the western entrance to Yosemite National Park, using Alco 4-4-0's, 2-6-0's from Baldwin and Alco, and a 2-8-0 acquired from the Pennsylvania RR. The engine on the cover of this book is a Shay type. The YVRR did not own nor operate a single Shay engine. The Yosemite Lumber Company, the logging operation that connected to it, independently owned and not in any way related to the YVRR, did operate Shays. Yosemite Valley Railroad engines bore the logos "Yosemite Valley" or "Yosemite Valley RR". Yosemite Lumber Company labeled its engines with "Yosemite Lumber Co." or "Y.L.CO." on the sides of the tender; thus the "O" you see in the cover photo. Specifically, the engine shown is Yosemite Lumber Company engine #1, a 2-truck Shay built in 1912 by the Lima company, as identified by the captioned full-frame photo of the same engine and crew on p.184 of *Railroads of the Yosemite Valley* by Hank Johnston. The book also contains a disproportionate amount of Yosemite history not relevant to the railroad. For correct and authoritative text and relevant archival photos, rely on '*Railroads of the Yosemite Valley*' or its abbreviated version '*Shortline to Paradise*', both by Hank Johnston. The definitive history of the YVRR is in '*Trains to Yosemite*' by Jack Burgess, a thick book, extensively researched, well written, and heavily illustrated.

This book mentions about the history of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. It has interesting pictures in it. Here is some of the information that this book mentions: From 1906 to 1944, the Yosemite Valley Railroad went through the Merced River Canyon for many purposes. For a certain time period, there was no direct all year road route from Merced to Yosemite Valley. In 1926, the all year Highway 140 was opened from Merced through Mariposa to El Portal. A lot of the construction of Highway 140 was done by convict labor. During construction, workers were placed in tent cabins. Construction of Barrett Bridge resulted in the highest railroad bridge in the Western United States at that time. This was necessary because of the flooding of the river canyon. In 1937, a huge flood damaged the

tracks to such a degree that they couldn't 100% completely recover. Some of the pictures in this book include pictures of the following: Del Portal Hotel, El Portal Inn, El Portal Market, El Portal School, Yosemite Lumber Company Sawmill, Sentinel Hotel in Yosemite Valley, David Curry, and Stephen Mather.

I own hundreds of railroad books, but until I received a review copy of Leroy Radonovich's Yosemite Valley Railroad, I had never seriously considered modeling the line. However, the Yosemite Valley Railroad quickly won me over: introducing me to not only one of the most interesting shortline mountain railroads in the country, but also the story of the people and the industries that it served--and the challenges that it had to overcome. That the Yosemite Valley is one of the nation's most picturesque areas is obvious; Ansel Adams creating some of his most beautiful photographs at Yosemite. One of earliest national parks, Yosemite defines dramatic mountain scenery and was an early tourist destination. The Yosemite Valley Railroad carried met the mainline trains and carried vacationers to the huge Hotel Del Portal, one of the largest national park hotels. But, as this book shows, there's far more to the Yosemite Valley Railroad than its passenger trains and its huge trainshed at El Portal. Until I read the Yosemite Valley Railroad, I had not been aware of the line's extensive freight operations from the area's extensive mining and lumbering operations. And, I was certainly unaware of the line's incline created to bring loaded log cars down from the various lumbering camps in the area. The incline exceeded 80 degrees, and there are numerous photographs of the 12-foot in diameter trees that were lowered by cable to the railhead. There are numerous photographs of the incline being built and at work. The steam-powered hoist, for example, had to pull itself up to the top of the incline on wooden skids. There are also great photographs of employees and their families happily riding the incline in the pre-OSHA days. There are also the sad photographs of runaway cars and severed cables. If you're a railroad lover, and you spent most of your time on today's Burlington Northern Santa Fe, or, you focus on the Fallen Flag lines of the pre-Amtrak 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, you'll appreciate this fairly-priced, high-valley book will introduce you to a whole new railroad, and a new way of railroading, set in one of the most beautiful locations in the world. The photographs of the huge hotel, itself, are worth the price of admission! Note, Arcadia has also released a postcard selection that perfectly complements this book. *Yosemite Valley Railroad (Postcards of America)*

Leroy Radonovich's YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD joins others in Arcadia's 'Images of Rail' series, providing a lively documentation of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. It comes from a

photographer and historian who's been a lifelong resident of Mariposa county, and who pairs over 200 images of the Railroad from his personal archives and other collections with observations of the trains in operation and interviews with those who worked them.

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