



The Pennsylvania Railroad at Bay: William Riley McKeen and the Terre

Richard T. Wallis

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William Riley McKeen and the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad

Richard T. Wallis

The first complete study of William Riley McKeen and the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad.

The Pennsylvania Railroad at Bay is the story of an independent and creative 19th-century Indiana businessman, William Riley McKeen, and the railroad that he built based in Terre Haute—the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad. It is also the story of a small-town entrepreneur who held the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad at bay, refusing to sell out before he was ready to do so. Until now, the TH&I has been something of an enigma for historians of the Pennsylvania Railroad. They have often ignored or failed to understand the fact that the Terre Haute road remained independent for so long. Unlike similar relations with its other western lines—such as the Indiana Central and the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago—the Pennsy's early courtship of the TH&I did not lead to the usual "smothering embrace," as author Wallis puts it. Instead, what he calls an "arm's length's partnership" endured between the two vastly different organizations. This volume is a long-overdue look at that partnership and the man who, against all odds, kept it in balance. Wallis has made a fascinating contribution to the railroad history of Indiana, to the story of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and to the history of Terre Haute and one of its most interesting businessmen.

Richard T. Wallis, raised in a Pennsylvania Railroad family in New Jersey, studied history before embarking on a career in broadcasting. It was in Indiana that he rediscovered his railroad roots and was introduced to the distinctive differences of its Lines West heritage. Wallis is a member of the Indiana Historical Society and the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society.

Railroads Past and Present series—George M. Smerk, editor

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