



SQUARE CIRCLE PRESS LLC
137 Ketcham Road
Voorheesville, NY 12186
(518) 432-6657
www.squarecirclepress.com
bookinfo@squarecirclepress.com
Media inquiries please use this contact info

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**RAILROAD HISTORY BOOK EXPLORES LIFE AND TIMES
OF WORLD'S LARGEST TURNTABLE AND ROUNDHOUSE**

Back in print after selling 3,000 copies of original print run

In 1827 the frontier village of Oneonta, New York was described as “a dingy, wood-covered place with hardly anything there.” The railroads transformed Oneonta into a thriving city, connected to the state and the nation by six steam railroads and a trolley line. At the very heart of this birthplace of the railroad union movement was a massive feat of engineering—the Oneonta roundhouse. In 1993, railroad historian Jim Loudon published *The Oneonta Roundhouse* to historical acclaim. Sold out of its initial print run of 3,000 copies, the book has been digitally recreated and reprinted and is now available through Square Circle Press.

The Oneonta Roundhouse provides the definitive account of the birth, life, and death of the world’s largest railroad roundhouse, built in the early 1900s in upstate New York’s southern Otsego County. Jim Loudon, a founding member of the Leatherstocking Railway Historical Society, describes in detail the earlier roundhouses built on the site by the Delaware & Hudson Railroad, and how the company’s rapid growth led to the turntable’s expansion. He provides specific information about the background politics and the construction of the primary roundhouse, and the improvements made to the monumental building over the years. The book is heavily illustrated, with 122 photos and 53 maps and diagrams, including full schematics for the roundhouse, turntable, and adjacent buildings. Other chapters focus on the D&H’s Challenger locomotives, and the coal pocket fire of 1946 that ultimately ended in tragedy. The book’s epilogue chapter includes Loudon’s photographs of the building’s twilight, taken only months before the remaining structure was dismantled.

After selling out of the original print run, Loudon was forced to let the book go out-of-print after learning that the original printing plates were lost. Failed attempts to get the book’s pages adequately scanned for republication eventually led the author to Square Circle Press. After initial discussions with the independent publishing company, Loudon decided that the best way to get the book back in print was to create a new digital version of the manuscript. “Jim’s situation was quite unique,” stated Richard Vang, owner of Square Circle Press. “The major problem with scanning whole pages of the book was that each page held various types of text and images, including grainy old newspaper photos and clippings, white-on-black engineering blueprints, black-on-white maps, and higher-resolution modern photographs—and some pages with all of them.” Each type of image requires a different scanning setting to achieve optimum print quality. Further adding to the complexity was that the source images were slightly yellowed pages from a dismantled copy of the book. “Eventually, Jim came to understand that to provide him with the best quality product, we had to completely reproduce the book. We are both extremely pleased with the results.” Square Circle Press reset the type and scanned each image individually, using proprietary scanning techniques developed over twenty years of graphic design and imaging experience. Loudon stated, “I was amazed at the quality of the reproduction. In some cases the images are better than what was printed in the first edition.”

Loudon was quick to add that Square Circle Press was very easy to work with. “From the initial analysis of the project, I was kept informed of every step of the process, and everything was explained in understandable terms. I came to learn that there was more to it than just creating the book. Square Circle Press also brought to my attention the nuances and requirements required for today’s complex retailing and distribution industry. It was a truly holistic approach.” Square Circle Press has also taken over the marketing, retail, and distribution aspect of Loudon’s publishing venture. “I just wanted to be the author,” Loudon quipped. “Now I’ve got someone to handle that for me, and I can concentrate on other projects.”

In addition to *The Oneonta Roundhouse*, Square Circle Press has added Jim Loudon’s second book to its catalog, *Leatherstocking Rails: A History of Railroad Along the Upper Susquehanna*, was published in 2005. Covering

primarily the Otsego County area, the more ambitious project is over 260 pages of narrative, and is lavishly illustrated with over 600 photographs, documents, and maps. “Both of Jim’s books are important works of upstate New York history,” Vang commented. “We are so pleased to have added these to our catalog and to make them available to bookstores, libraries, and individuals everywhere.”

BOOK REVIEWS:

The Oneonta Roundhouse

“I had always heard about the legendary roundhouse in Oneonta, but with the building long gone I couldn’t conceive of its size. Jim Loudon’s fascinating narrative, along with his incredible compilation of images and their informative captions, brought the roundhouse to life for me. This book is an indispensable resource not only for railroad buffs, but also for those interested in engineering on a massive scale. It is a valuable document of upstate New York history.”

—Richard Vang, Publisher, Square Circle Press

Leatherstocking Rails: A History of Railroading Along the Upper Susquehanna

“Loudon is an excellent researcher—a major benefit and challenge. He seems to have found every illustration, fact and detail about Otsego County railroading ... *Leatherstocking Rails* is not confined to the railroad right of way. Loudon offers many details about people and businesses along the railroads. These details put a story behind many place names and landscape features on an Otsego County map. After reading this book I want to win Lotto and open a trolley line.”

— John Rowen, *Kaatskill Life* magazine

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jim Loudon is a native of Otsego County and currently resides in the West End of Oneonta, New York. He graduated from the State University of New York College at Oneonta in 1972 with a BS in Liberal Arts, majoring in art and history. In 1982 Jim organized the Leatherstocking Railway Historical Society, which currently operates the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley Railroad tourist train ride, and for which he has served as Conductor, Engineer, and Brakeman. For over two decades Jim has devoted his time to researching the local area’s railroad history, authoring several articles on the subject, as well as two books. A practitioner of the visual arts, the subjects of Jim’s paintings, drawings and photographs include wildlife, landscapes, locomotives and antique tractors.

BOOK INFORMATION:

Both books are available in paperback, and are available for sale both online and through retail bookstores. For more information about how and where to purchase *The Oneonta Roundhouse*, *Leatherstocking Rails*, or other titles, products and services available from Square Circle Press, visit the publisher’s web site at www.squarecirclepress.com.

Title: The Oneonta Roundhouse

Author: Jim Loudon

Publication Date: ©1993, Leatherstocking Railway HS

SCP Reprint Date: 2009

ISBN-10: 0-9641119-0-X

ISBN-13: 978-0-9641119-0-5

Retail Price: \$19.95

Physical: 100 pages; 8.5" x 11", black & white interior, softcover, perfect bound, 175 illustrations

Retail & Library Distribution: North Country Books; Square Circle Press

Title: Leatherstocking Rails: A History of Railroading Along the Upper Susquehanna

Author: Jim Loudon

Publication Date: ©2005, Leatherstocking Railway HS

ISBN-10: 0-9641119-2-6

ISBN-13: 978-0-9641119-2-9

Retail Price: \$39.95

Physical: 264 pages; 8.5" x 11", black & white interior, softcover, perfect bound, 615 illustrations

Retail & Library Distribution: North Country Books; Square Circle Press