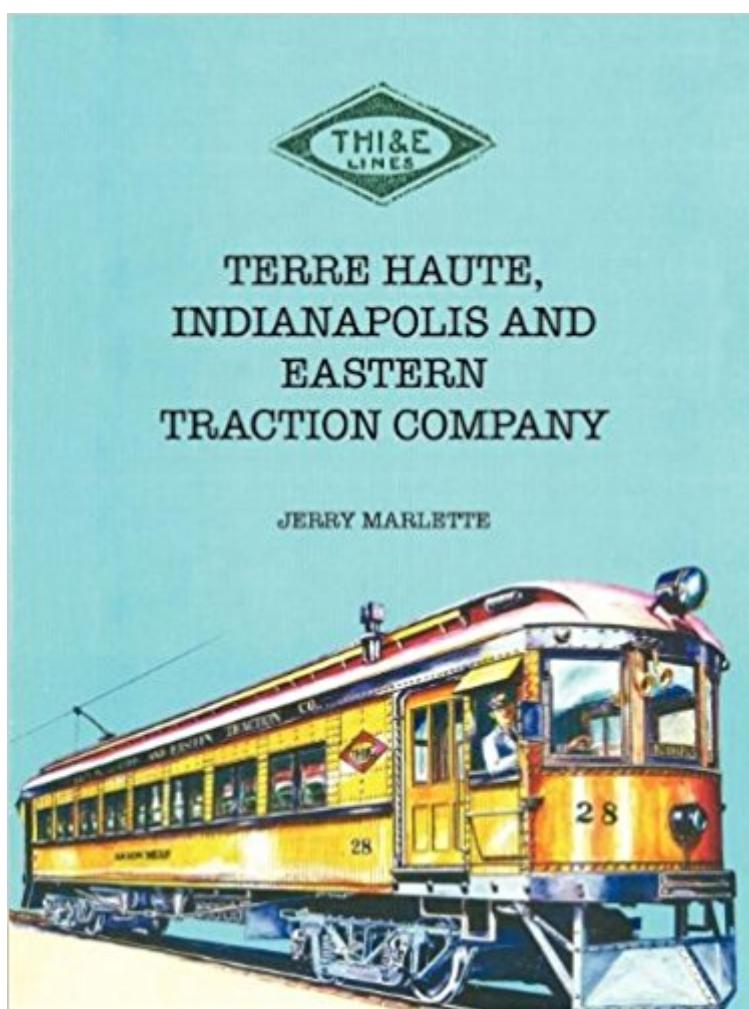


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# Terre Haute, Indianapolis And Eastern Traction Company



## Synopsis

The Terre Haute, Indianapolis & Eastern Traction Company was the ultimate survivor of the more than forty smaller companies which organized, struggled to exist, and finally became a part of the actual operating system popularly known as THIE. From its conception in 1907 as the lessee of several existing larger companies, the THIE system became a worthy competitor for the state's other large interurban company, the Union Traction Company of Indiana. While the mileages operated by the two concerns were roughly equal, and continually changing, THIE did outperform UTC in several categories, such as stock hauling and safety (the THIE safety record far out performed UTC's, both in frequency of accidents and number of fatalities). The history records THIE's growth from a tiny city installation in Brazil to a multi-county system serving areas of large population such as Indianapolis down to tiny Amo and Dunreith. Covered too are city lines in Crawfordsville (and its pitched battle to originally build!) New Castle, Richmond, and Terre Haute, along with the connecting Lebanon and Thorntown Traction as well as a line which started but petered out five miles out of town - the Covington and Southwestern Traction Company. Other subjects covered are the THIE passenger and freight service, despatching practices, stations and terminals, rolling stock rosters, mileage tables, and other necessary ancillary data to round out the line's history.

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## Customer Reviews

The Terre Haute, Indianapolis & Eastern RR., and its successor, the Indiana Railroad, haven't

turned a wheel in 70 years. Most physical remains of them have vanished from sight along with first-hand memories of it. A half dozen or so books have been written about it, the last one more than 20 years ago, so you'd think there'd be little that remains to find or uncover about it. But leave it to interurban and trolley historian Jerry Marlette to do it. A little of what is between the covers of this 350+ page soft-cover book has been published before, but much of it is new and a very welcome addition to what we know about this electric interurban system. Marlette previously gave us his Electric Railways of Indiana book, which was an ambitious, all-inclusive identification and brief factual summation of each and every one of the interurban and trolley railroads in the Hoosier state. It gave us the facts, the bare bones, but not the story, the narrative history, that this new book does. I only wish Marlette had chosen a higher-quality reproduction of his photographs in this new book than what he did, which appears to be hotocopier copies. Nevertheless, any images are welcome and better than none. Marlette does a good job of retelling the stories of the start of each of the trolley and interurban railways that eventually made up the THI&E and the men behind them, adding some new facts and anecdotes to what we know. Most of his photos also appear to be new. And his maps showing street and track layouts in many locations along the rail lines are a great addition for the historian and modeler, and an invaluable aid to anyone attempting to trace the routes or identify remains. The book is printed on uncoated paper, which no doubt kept down the cost and, consequently, the retail price, which is welcome, but doesn't help the photographs one bit. There's much valuable data in this volume. Some might call it minutia, but that's exactly what other books lacked and what we've needed to fill in gaps and help answer questions. Details such as passenger traffic by division; inventory of rolling stock by division; length of sidings; bridges and their length by division; specifications for car controllers; and more. I think Marlette must travel with a copy machine or a scanner and makes copies of the typewritten correspondence, reports and other original documents he comes across. He likes to share them with his readers by reproducing them in this book. Unfortunately some reproduce lightly and are hard to read and should have been enhanced. Still, it's valuable data, even if you have to use a magnifying glass to read it. Also, the proofreading of the book could have been better. As with many books, the errors tend to increase toward the back of the book, almost as if everyone who proofread it grew tired and missed more as he read on. That may be nit-picking, however. This might not be the best first book to read about the THI&E, but it will serve if it is. It definitely merits a place in every serious Indiana interurban fan's library, who'll find it well worth the price.

Book was very poorly printed to the point of being unreadable in many places. I expected some

more insight into the operations of the THI&E. Some of the company documents were interesting (when readable) but the book is largely a disorganized slap together of photocopies. The book is a dud. For example, a well constructed equipment roster would have been very useful.

This history of the THI&E fills a long needed hole in the interurban history of Indiana. It is quite detailed and thorough in its treatment of the subject with lots of data and details. I only wish it were hardcover, and that the paper was better suited for photographs. Nonetheless, there are certainly many photos that I had never seen before. I have not finished reading all the material, so I may have more comments later.

The book is evenly divided between corporate correspondence, (construction details, legal entities) a general history and if there is any weakness, it is the lack of more operational details as well as the understandably somewhat poor quality of the photographs due to their age. The Indiana Railroad takeover in terms of further operational details as well as the proposed Illinois Terminal connection at Paris Illinois is given just a very brief outline. I had to research other source material for this. Overall, it's a good book but far from a definitive account and that is taking into consideration that there are few if any other resources on the subject.

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