Mr. Henry Posner III

who will explore the topic:

You Have Nothing to Lose But Your Trains: Jewish Leaders in the Salvation of America's Railroads

Henry Posner III has spent his career in the rail industry, his first job being selling Amtrak tickets while in college, and now serves as chairman of Railroad Development Corporation where his responsibilities range from the Iowa Interstate Railroad to RDC Deutschland. Along the way RDC’s interests have included Estonian Railways and Ferrovias Guatemala (z"l).

He has historically considered himself a student of railroading but has taken up teaching roles in recent years, with an undergraduate course at Carnegie Mellon and a graduate course at the Denver Transportation Institute, both relating to his favorite subject, railroad deregulation.

In his talk Mr. Posner will discuss the evolution of rail deregulation, which saved the industry, focusing on its roots in the 1950s. This decade saw the emergence of the basic elements of deregulation, and Posner’s argument will be that there was a significant impact by a diverse range of Jewish personalities, including:

Al Perlman, who served as President of the New York Central on the precipice of catastrophic decline. The bankruptcy of its successor Penn Central would provide the shock value that triggered deregulation.

Ayn Rand, whose novel Atlas Shrugged included a heavy dose of railroad imagery that balanced its Libertarian ideology. Dagny Taggart, President of her family’s railroad was depicted in a setting largely inspired by Perlman’s New York Central.

Samuel Pinsly, an anomaly as a short line entrepreneur in the era of regulation, was as much a merchant as a railroad operator, buying and selling marginal railroads and keeping many of them going despite the industry’s steady decline. He was a pioneer in establishing what is now the widely accepted model of locally owned railroads recognized as the modern short line movement. His grandson John Levine now leads the company.

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives proudly presents

Henry Posner III

NOVEMBER 12, 2020 4:00PM - 5:15PM (EASTERN TIME)
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