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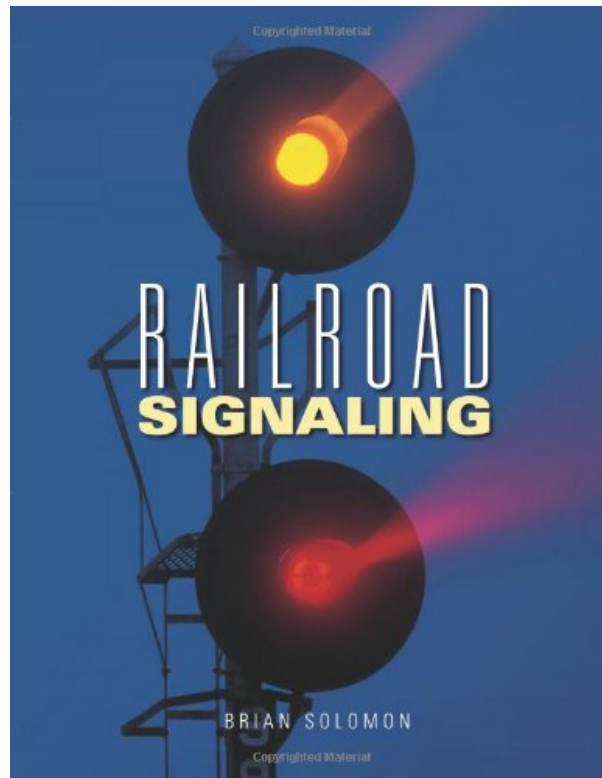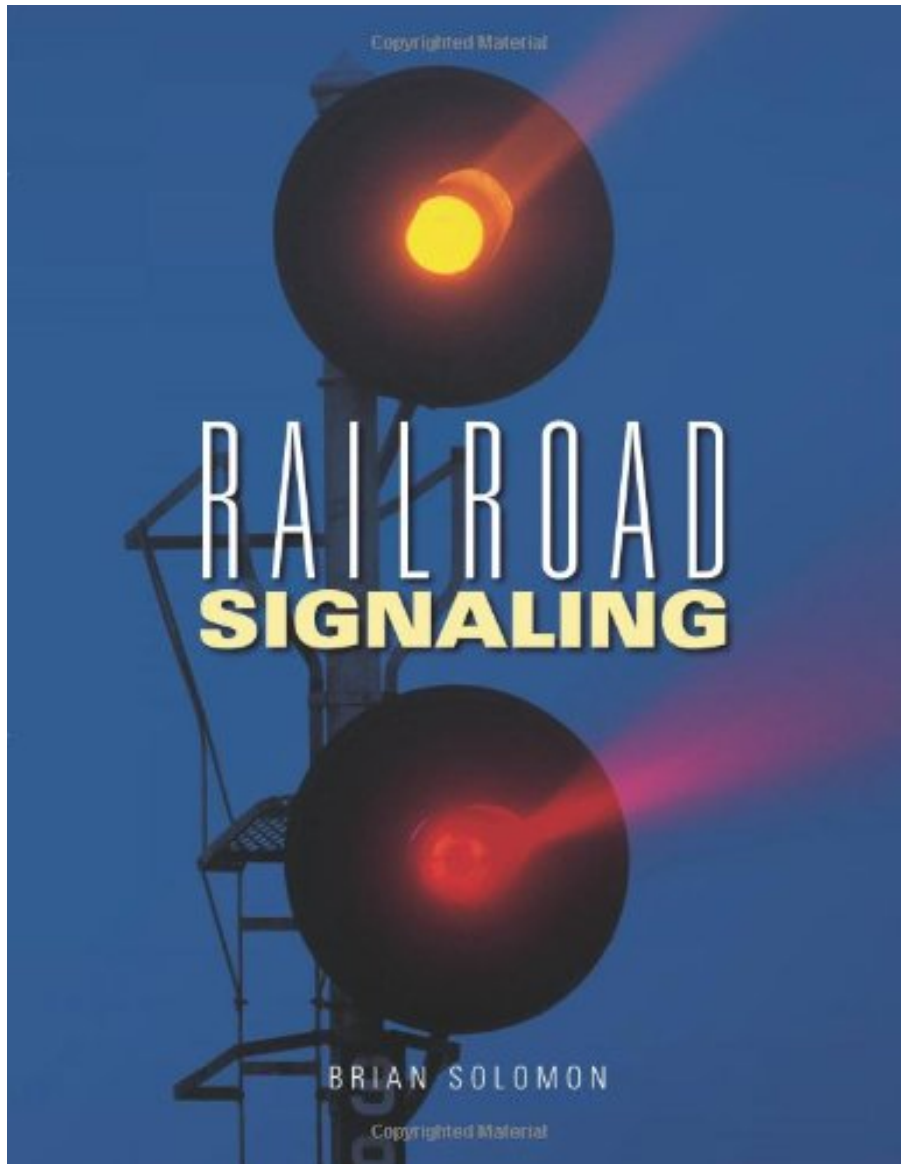

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From the 1830s to today, the railroad industry has developed myriad complex mechanisms to help keep North America's railroad rights-of-ways safe, efficient, and relatively accident-free. In this paperback rerelease of the successful 2003 title, the otherwise-arcane world of railroad signaling is explained in concise language and brought to life with nearly 200 fantastic photographs that depict signaling history and all aspects of modern operations. Author and photographer Brian Solomon brings his wealth of knowledge and photographic talent to a subject that has not often been tackled in book form, yet is integral to the American railroad experience.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

65 of 66 people found the following review helpful.
Signalling Sorted Out
By N F Grant
An interesting mixture of 'coffee table' photographs of the usual railroad type but with a text attempting to straighten out the great complexities of (primarily US) railroad signalling. Adequate acknowledgement is given to the UK roots of the subject while the major part of the book focuses, rightly, on the US scene. Does it work ? Brian Solomon makes a valiant attempt and certainly my knowledge has improved greatly however, whether the fault of the author or the editor/publisher, the flow is sometimes confusing, with perhaps too much extraneous railroad history mixed in with the signalling story. A rather odd chapter introduction style is used, leaving one constantly thumbing back to check what the last chapter break looked like. In addition, typos crop up far too regularly, particularly in the photo captions. Also, the track circuit diagrams are electrically incorrect - the misplaced resistors would cause the battery to explode at the passing of the first train ! On the whole it's a book I enjoyed and did learn a great deal from the wide research done by Mr Solomon - perhaps a revised edition would tighten up on the layout and editing (and correct the typos).

34 of 36 people found the following review helpful.
Almost a good book
By N. Wallach
Brian Solomon's Railroad Signaling book is one that has been missing from the ranks of books about railroads for many years. There has not been a general publication about the sometimes perplexing and

interesting world of railroad signaling aside from GRS's book of many years ago and an article in Trains magazine from 1957. Anyone who really wanted to understand these things, had to either befriend a railroad signaling engineer or maintainer, or become one!

So, while the need was great, and this book could have been a welcome addition to a serious railfan's or modeler's library, there are enough troubling points about this book that make me want to caution you about it.

Mr. Solomon decided to take a historical approach to the development of the art and science of signaling. While that is as good an approach as any, the unfortunate result was that about two thirds of the book discusses things that are seen only occasionaly in museums. Also, he is obviously fascinated by the old semaphore signals as the vast majority of the pictures in the book are of those rather than the newer types that are in use today. He also spends a lot of time developing the history from the 1870's to the 1970's and then has a very brief chapter about the advances that the computer age has brought to bear since then. The is one small subsection on such an important topic as PTC and none on CBTC which are the two main technological deployment of the early 21st century.

Another irritating problem is the frequency of typos throughout the book. At one point I was totally confused as to whether the signal protecting a grade crossing of old was called a wigwaG or wigwaM since both appeared interchangeably in the same paragraph.

The layout of the text was also rather confusing with some concepts being given after descriptions of how they were used. I had to look in advance of my reading for the technical diagrams to try and figure out what he was writing about. Unfortunately, some of his diagrams are incorrect as well.

On the good side, he does cover both American and British practices which therefore explain over 90% of what is used around the world today. Being an American author it is no surprise that he focuses most of his attention on American practice. It would have been nice though, to have more of an explanation of the differnces in, for instance, the use of divergent routes vs American speed routes.

The author does provide many of the rules that are in use in various locations and points out that these are examples as each railroad and transit property essentially following their own preferences.

So my conclusion is that while this was an excellent first effort, it needs to be thoroughly revised and recast to be the premier book explaining the arcane art of railroad signaling.

20 of 22 people found the following review helpful.
"Railroad Signaling" Gets a "Highball"
By M. Lewis
Brian Solomon does a wonderful job at explaining the complexities of railroad traffic control in his book "Railroad Signaling". Rather than just explain how modern systems function, he starts with a history of how railroad signal systems began and then goes through a step by step process of how the systems evolved in Great Britian and in the United States. As a result, it provides the fundamental principles upon which modern signaling systems are designed today.

Although signaling rules vary across the country (and the world), and not every detail can be discussed, I find the book explains the subject completely.

I found all of this information and the illustrations very helpful in understanding the meanings of modern

railroad signals. This book is well-designed and jam-packed with beautiful photographs that any railfan will enjoy. (My book resides on the coffee table!)

I believe this book is also a good resource for model railroaders who intend to duplicate prototype signaling systems on their layouts.

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