



Rails Around Houston (TX) (Images of Rail)

Douglas L. Weiskopf

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Several railroads were chartered by the Republic of Texas, but the first line built was the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado, which began construction near the Port of Houston Turning Basin in 1851. The BBB&C would become the oldest segment of the country's first transcontinental railroad under sole ownership: the Southern Pacific's Sunset Route, connecting New Orleans and Los Angeles and completed in 1883. By the time oil was discovered near Beaumont in 1901, Houston was such a transportation hub that it became the heart of the petrochemical industry. Houston saw narrow-gauge lines, two interurban lines, light rail, and even a monorail. For many years, the chamber of commerce proudly proclaimed that Houston was the place "where seventeen railroads meet the sea." More than 30 beautiful trains with names like Sunset Limited, Sunbeam, Sam Houston Zephyr, Twin Star Rocket, Bluebonnet, Texas Rocket, and Texas Chief would serve three depots.

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