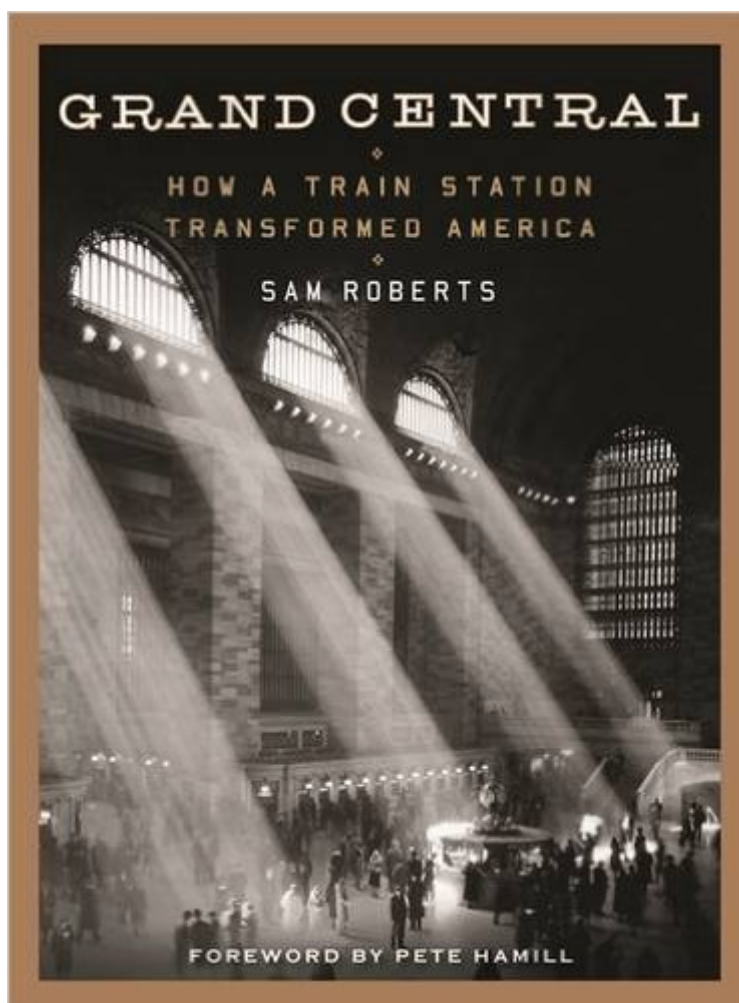


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Grand Central: How A Train Station Transformed America



Synopsis

A rich, illustrated - and entertaining -- history of the iconic Grand Central Terminal, from one of New York City's favorite writers, just in time to celebrate the train station's 100th fabulous anniversary. In the winter of 1913, Grand Central Station was officially opened and immediately became one of the most beautiful and recognizable Manhattan landmarks. In this celebration of the one hundred year old terminal, Sam Roberts of The New York Times looks back at Grand Central's conception, amazing history, and the far-reaching cultural effects of the station that continues to amaze tourists and shuttle busy commuters. Along the way, Roberts will explore how the Manhattan transit hub truly foreshadowed the evolution of suburban expansion in the country, and fostered the nation's westward expansion and growth via the railroad. Featuring quirky anecdotes and behind-the-scenes information, this book will allow readers to peek into the secret and unseen areas of Grand Central -- from the tunnels, to the command center, to the hidden passageways. With stories about everything from the famous movies that have used Grand Central as a location to the celestial ceiling in the main lobby (including its stunning mistake) to the homeless denizens who reside in the building's catacombs, this is a fascinating and, exciting look at a true American institution.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a well researched, insightfully written paean to an iconic building -- one that in many ways transformed the city of New York as much as the experience of arrival and departure by rail. The writing is superb. My only criticism is that I would have liked the book to be more lavishly illustrated

with better photographs of the contemporary state of the building. There are, however, many good historical pictures and you will certainly get a sense of the terminal through post-restoration photos, even if you have not been there in person. Highly recommended.

A wonderful review of the life of a place where I once actually worked (for a summer) in an era different from now. We had passenger trains other than on commuter lines, and the aspects of glamor associated with them. It's hard to believe that Amtrak exists, and that it does not use GCT, but the terminal itself is much smarter and more interesting than it was, even in the days of the 20th Century Limited, and Roberts' careful description makes this work a real page-turner. I thank him for his effort. Excellent photographs are generously displayed. I wish the book were larger, though.

I was born and raised in New York, where I resided 45 years of my life. For most of those years, there are certain illuminating memories one can never forget. 'Grand Central Station' is one of them. I recall for several years as my dad commuted from Long Island to NYC five days a week to work in Con Edison for 33 years, and all the trips I made for many different reasons to use it for transportation. He always spoke about Grand Central Station as being a part of his life as a commuter, running from train-to-train with hundreds of busy people who were able to work good jobs, because the transportation was available. With over 10 million people who live in NYC, combined with tourists, Grand Central has become a valuable landmark in history. I knew conductors and several commuters, who were personal friends, and I remember that Grand Central was a popular topic for conversation. Sam Roberts of the New York Times and Pete Hamill highlight the history of the famous Grand Central Terminal, celebrating its 100th anniversary. The authors take the reader on a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour as they guide you through tunnels, passageways, the command center, and much more. Tourists and commuters have their own stories, but the most interesting are stories from commuters who traveled on it half their lives. The legend of its opening to modern day, and the influence upon suburban expansion and growth in the nation is incredible. Its history with stories and cultural effects is amazing, and certainly an unforgettable landmark in our memories. Millions of people share their own personal stories about this elite, historical railroad, including the homeless. Interesting, educational, and enjoyable read. Highly recommended!

I don't live in New York City. I'm a huge fan of Cornelius Vanderbilt's, and America owes him an enormous debt of gratitude. I was interested in this book, and there were some great Vanderbilt

quotes in the beginning of the book. But once we got into all the celebrities turning out to "save" Grand Central... yawn. Telling me what socialites and dinner party savants think about Grand Central Station is meaningless. The information on Terminal employees and commuters was interesting.

Having frequently passed through both Penn and Grand Central terminals this book conjured up fond memories of the environments, if not the visits. The purpose of the building when viewed through the lens of its majesty creates unforgettable memories. Of the many thousands of buildings we visit in our lifetimes few are truly memorable for their construction. The Smithsonian, for example, is a wondrous place due to the contents but, the buildings are little more than a series of warehouses. Grand Central is memorable to both its visitors and anyone who has watched a movie or TV show with New York City as a backdrop. The information booth and clock are familiar to many of us. The story is occasionally overburdened with minutiae but, overall it provides a super look into the creation and results of a great American landmark.

I got this as a gift for my husband and he loved it. It is not quite a coffee table style book - there are others out there that have more and probably larger, better photos- but it is a great narrative and story. And that was what I was looking for. The photos included are also lovely.

I do not live in New York City but have been a frequent visitor since my college days (mid 1960s). I first visited it toward the end of the PennCentral railroad. I witnessed the terminal's decline when one could not venture into the lower gate level and one of my favorite bakeries (located on that lower level) closed. I have also been to the terminal many times since its renewal. At least two or three times a year my wife and I just visit the terminal to walk around, have a meal (the Grand Central Oyster Bar is my lunch favorite), go through the markets, etc. I have always been impressed with GCT as a building and as a functional organism. Mr. Robert's book has added greatly to my appreciation of the terminal and makes me yearn for yet another couple of hours there. The book is an "easy read." The text font is easy on the eyes and large enough for even older eyes. The layout is good. There are lots of pictures, though I wish they were bigger. However, the images are clear and add to the text. I wish there was a little more on the technical aspects of moving trains in and out of the terminal and images taken during the building of the terminal. However, these criticisms are minor. I enjoyed the book and recommend it to anyone with an interest in this monument.

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