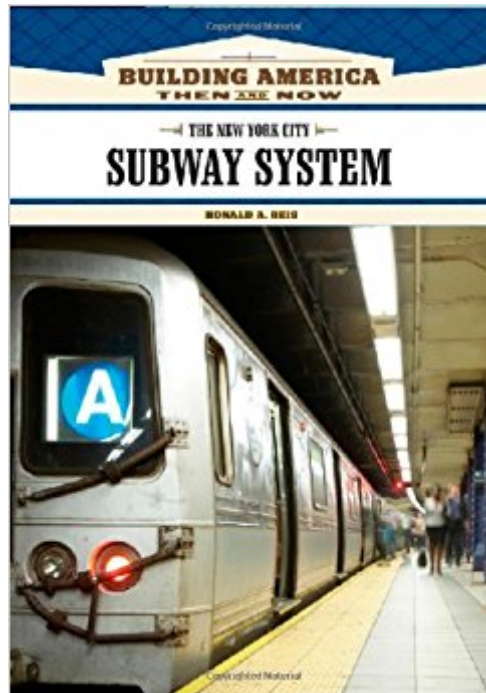


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# The New York City Subway System (Building America: Then And Now)



## Synopsis

This book provides a history of the New York City Subway system from its beginnings at the start of the 20th century to the present day. From one line in 1904, it now operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with 6,400 cars, 468 stations, 4.5 million daily users and 842 miles of track - a longer distance than New York to Chicago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"...tightly focused, offering a detailed picture of the construction of the projects by concentrating on the people who were involved...Middle schoolers will find plenty of history...attractive choices for reading assignments." -School Library Journal"

Ronald A. Reis has written young adult biographies of Eugenie Clark, Jonas Salk, Mickey Mantle, and Ted Williams, as well as books on the Dust Bowl, the Empire State Building, African Americans and the Civil War, and the World Trade Organization, all for Chelsea House. He is the technology department chair at Los Angeles Valley College.

"The New York City Subway System" by Ronald A. Reis. Chelsea House Publishing, 2009. This is a slim little book, some 136 pages long, that was written at some distance from the New York City Subway System, by a Californian. The book is a concise little history of the New York Subways; the

book draws heavily from material that is generally available on the WEB. I doubt that the author consistently rode the subway s during rush hour. The book is in chronological order, beginning with the initial construction and opening of the first subway in NYC in 1904. Sorry to say that Boston had a subway before New York City, as the author notes on page 16, when he notes the construction of the MBTA. In fact, the author has scattered throughout the book little boxes, which note the construction of other subway systems, e.g. Atlanta (p.47) and Los Angeles (p. 53). The book traces the construction of the many miles of the NYC subway systems: the Independent Line (IND), the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) and the BMT = Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit. In his history of the lines, the author misses so many opportunities to tell the more of the lore of the subways, not just a minimal, but accurate history. For example, the IND line had the "A" train which ran up into the North of Manhattan, right through Harlem. This was the genesis of the famous song, "Take The 'A' Train" by Duke Ellington. Then, on page 44, he has a photo of the sinking of steel tubes for the two track line that left Manhattan, ran under the Harlem River and rose up on the main land (still part of the Borough of Manhattan). Centuries ago, the Dutch called that part of the river, "Sputyn Duvil", meaning "Spit At The Devil", since it was such a dangerous place to navigate. It is just east of the Henry Hudson Bridge. In 2009, we are celebrating Henry Hudson' 1609 voyage on the "Half Moon", and the author could have embellished his book with some tidbits like that. I wonder if the IRT 155th Street Station still has the ceramic sign announcing the "Polo Grounds", where the New York Giants (Baseball) played? To check that, the author would have had to ride uptown to The Bronx, although he does write about the "Subway Series". He missed so much more. Another example: Manhattan College was founded in lower Manhattan in 1853, taking the formal name of Manhattan College, in 1863, when the school received its charter of the New York Board of Regents. Later the College moved to 131st Street and Broadway, in the middle of Harlem, but was forced to move again in 1922, when the IRT constructed its north-bound line. So, Manhattan College moved to the Riverdale section of The Bronx, and now, more than 150 years later, you have the trivia question: "Where is Manhattan College? " Answer: "In The Bronx!" All because of the NYC Subways. By the way, the author also missed an interesting fact. Generally, credit is given to Mayor Rudi Giuliani for cleaning up the graffiti on the subway cars. This book does not mention him. Rudi Giuliani is Manhattan College, Class of 1965.

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