

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Just Fine the Way They Are: From Dirt Roads to Rail Roads to Interstates.

Wooldridge, Connie Nordhielm (Author) , Walz, Richard (Illustrator)

Mar 2011. 32 p. Boyds Mills/Calkins Creek, hardcover, \$17.95. (9781590787106). 388.0973.

In 1805, a Pennsylvania tavern keeper opposed the National Road. In his opinion, “Things were just fine the way they were.” But the National Road was built, and it was well used. Reacting to a proposed “rail” road in 1830, the owner of the stagecoach company felt that “things were just fine the way they were.” Step by step, the narrator brings us up to the present and opines that, despite “a pack of crazy thinkers” objecting to pollution and coming up with new ideas for fueling transportation, “things are just fine the way they are.” The look of the setting changes considerably over two centuries, shown in nicely composed, often panoramic paintings laced with dramatic and occasionally comical details. The fine, folksy tone of the narration works equally well when relating similar attitudes in the early 1800s and early 2000s. Great for discussion, this well-conceived picture book illustrates an interesting point about resistance to new ideas.

— *Carolyn Phelan*