



# **The Moffat Line: David Moffat's Railroad Over And Under The Continental Divide**

*John A. Sells*

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By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the railroad was king. Railroad lines crisscrossed the North American continent, allowing for the long-distance transportation of oil, coal, lumber, gold, and other valuables. Despite high operating costs and fierce competition, the search for better and more profitable routes was constant. David Moffat, a banker and railroad executive, dreamed of a direct route across the Rocky Mountains, a route that would allow him to tap into Colorado's vast mineral wealth. There was, however, one major obstacle standing in his way-the 13,660-foot Continental Divide. The Moffat Line tells the story of David Moffat and the impossible dream that led to the 1927 completion of the Moffat Tunnel. The story is also about the men who drove the trains and built and operated the railroad under incredible weather and equipment challenges-day and night. Together, Moffat's vision and the exploits of the railroad workers combine to produce a fascinating chapter in the history of the American West.



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