

here is the risk of such aggressive play. You can force a bankruptcy. Bankruptcy immediately ends the game.

Thus, the aggressive play which may set up a win can backfire forcing you to lose, since usually it is only after the trap is completely sprung that you come out in the lead. Oh, well!



 DREW	CASH :\$497 STOCK :\$1320 TOTAL :\$1817	 KRATZER	CASH :\$363 STOCK :\$905 TOTAL :\$1268
 GOULD	CASH :\$100 STOCK :\$705 TOTAL :\$805	 WESTINGHOUSE	CASH :\$0 STOCK :\$730 TOTAL :\$730

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 3:45 PM

Here is the review a friend of mine wrote about **1830**: "Undeniably SimTex' most underrated game, **1830** is a complex and faithful PC conversion of Avalon Hill's popular boardgame. As with SimTex' other games, strong computer AI keeps the gameplay fresh and interesting even in the beer-and-pretzel design (a normal game here lasts 8-10 hours). In addition to conventional decisions found in other railroad-building games, e.g. laying tracks, **1830** features a unique and challenging stock market model that truly is the best I have seen in games of this type (and, being a Finance person with a passion for business sims, I've seen quite a lot). Before the "Operation Round" can begin, you must first decide on which stocks to buy and what companies to float in the "Stock Round," using a very clever stock bidding interface. The game isn't all about planning routes, either: as opposed to most railroad games in which the focus is on matching supply and demand (e.g. Sid Meier's classic **Railroad Tycoon**), the focus in **1830** is clearly on a more macro-level decision making. Instead of worrying about what types of goods to carry and how soon to replace obsolete trains, here your concerns are about cutthroat competition, hostile takeovers, and being ousted from the CEO chair. As can be expected from the designer of **Master of Orion**, the AI in this game is top-notch, and accurately reflects history: fearsome speculator James Fisk will concentrate on buying up stocks of other companies and taking them over, while famous engineer Westinghouse will concentrate on the operations of his company and laying the most efficient routes.

In the end, whether or not you'll like **1830** depends on your preferences. If you are a fan of miniature railroads who likes to watch the trains go by your designed route, **1830** isn't a game for you. On the other hand, if you are a business sim buff like me who loves *managing* the company and keeping an eye on the Treasury Stock as much as doing the job, **1830** is simply a must-have. Two thumbs up!"

And here is how that same friend described SimTex a number of years ago: "Microprose, without a doubt, is one of the top strategy game companies today. Among the best games the company published-- alongside **Civilization** and **Pirates!** are 3 innovative strategy games that implement Alan Emrich's "4X" principles (eXplore, eXpand, eXterminate, and eXcellence) to perfection: **Master of Orion 1 & 2** and **Master of Magic**. Curiously enough, the *developer* of these games never became very well known despite the fact that they deservedly sold very well in stores and received glowing reviews from the press.

This page, therefore, is born in hope that inimitable Steve Barcia and his company SimTex will finally get the recognition they deserve for these outstanding games. The strongest point of SimTex games is the amazing computer AI, which is not only shrewd but, in contrast to most strategy games, *does not cheat*: computer players do not start out with more resources than you do. The combination of this AI with great strategic depth, good interface, and cool backstory results in truly classic games that are almost infinitely replayable and will stand the test of time for years to come.

- SimTex seems to have quietly disappeared from the industry. The latest game the company was working on, **Guardians: Agents of Justice**, was in development for over 6 years (the game made all the "top 10 vaporware" lists in game magazines), but was never released.
- You could also download **Starlord**, a little-known precursor to **Master of Orion**, from [the Starlord page](#) at **MOO3** official site."

While **1830** isn't one of my favorites like **Master of Magic** and the **Master of Orion** series are, I still recognize it as an excellent PC game conversion of a board game.

<MESSAGE EDITED BY GREYBRIAR ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 07, 2008 3:46 PM>

[i]This war is not about slavery.[/i] --Robert E. Lee

 Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 4:05 PM

Well, I put a large part of 1830's greatness on designers Francis Tresham and Bruce Shelly.

What 1830 PC illustrates is (two key lessons for all those making strategy games):

(1) You have to start off with a good rule set (mechanics) if you want a good game. No amount of power programming will turn cr*p into a gem of a game.

(2) Do I think SimTex's programmers were way beyond average? No. I think that having a game programmed by people who designed the original and played it for 5 years as a board game (out of love) results in the type of solid AI which we never see. Most game designers/developers/programmers don't know much more how game is going to play than the customers do given the time frames of most projects.

* Russ Williams was one of the programmers behind 1830's superb AI. Yet, to illustrate my point, the same Russ Williams was a major factor behind RAA (Rails Across America) which was a dog of a game with a poor rule set and poor AI if ever there was one. (I played it for two weeks and then moved on. Fortunately, I only paid \$3 for it.)

** The closest one comes to designers having a lot of hands experience with the game before before releasing as a product is for games which have evolved an incremental series over time.

There is one final lesson which 1830 yields. A simple, but well architected rule set can lead to a game of subtle and fascinating complexity. I'll repeat:

SIMPLICITY OF DESIGN CAN LEAD TO RICH AND WONDEROUS COMPLEXITY.

Too often games are mired in complexity for complexity's sake. Complexity is to the strategy gamer what 3D graphics is to the mass market FPS gamer. If 3D graphics is eye candy, then complexity is often mind candy. 1830 does not have mind candy, but instead it has balance, richness, variability, ... 1830 has true and lasting beauty which like chess is for the ages.

 Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 6:42 PM

When I originally introduced 1830, I stated that the investor who finished with the greatest net worth would win. There are two approaches to achieving that. First, you can increase your own net worth. Second, you can destroy the net worth of others. What follows is a concrete example where it is better to destroy another investor than polish my own portfolio.

Okay, here is an example where I have 2 RRs and 3 permanent trains. Thus, one extra.

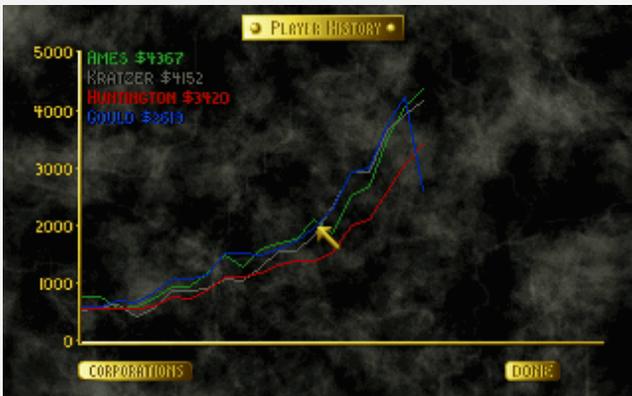
Have a look the train situation. My extra is in NYC. C&O has no rolling stock; it and Ames are in trouble.



If you look at the Stock Market, I could buy up shares of C&O and take control of it. Why? Well, Ames would probably gladly dump it on me.



Now, look at the net worth graph. I just knocked Gould out of the competition, but Ames is clearing beating me. In fact, he is quite likely to widen his lead as the AI will begin depress the value of my portfolio in the end game.



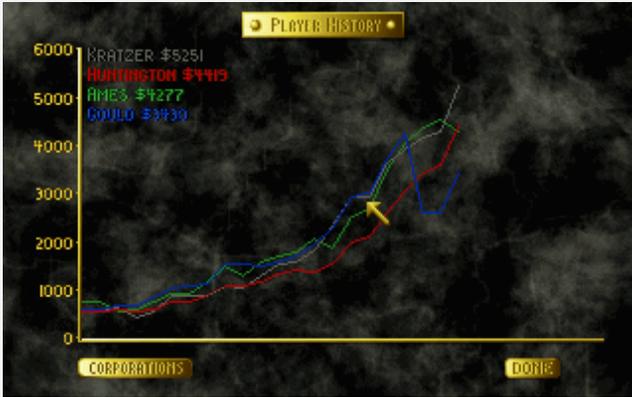
Clearly, if I take control of the C&O, I will probably increase my net worth. On the other hand, if I don't, then Ames has a real problem which he will have to deal with by using his own cash. Once that happens, the game will be over for him. So, I will pass on the chance of taking control of the C&O and instead let Ames choke on it.

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 6:52 PM

There you go! Ames is forced to buy rolling stock for C&O and the company dips into his pocket. The game's announcement follows:

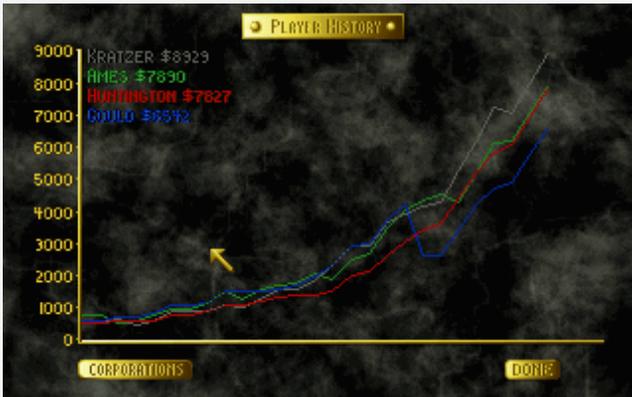


Now, look at what it does to the net worth graph for Ames and myself:

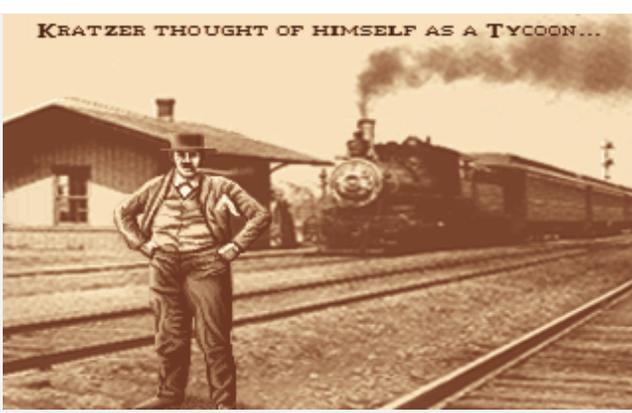


Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 7:16 PM

Despite the AI slamming my portfolio in the last round of stock trading, Ames cannot undo the damage. I come out as top investor, and the game rates my trading skills at the Tycoon level. Highest level is Robber Baron which I have only achieved like 3 or 4 times in the last two years of play.



WINNER! 	KRATZER CASH :\$5315 STOCK :\$4530 TOTAL :\$9845		HUNTINGTON CASH :\$4337 STOCK :\$4366 TOTAL :\$8703
	AMES CASH :\$4326 STOCK :\$4249 TOTAL :\$8575		GOULD CASH :\$3726 STOCK :\$3625 TOTAL :\$7351



Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 7:21 PM

Dale,

So, how are these little game snippets as opposed to a full AAR?

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 07, 2008 8:13 PM

1830 is a game of calculation and prediction.

You want to avoid sitting on cash. Cash does not make money. Only investment makes money. This happens via dividends, stock appreciation, and/or sale of stock. (In a special case, selling private companies to raid your RR's treasury.)

You are always safest never owning more than 10% of a RR which you are not the president. At 20% and above, the RR may be dumped on you. Basically, as soon as another investor has a greater equity stake in the RR than the President, then the Presidency is transferred. A special certificate worth 20% is used to denote the presidency and is known as the President's share.

You have see them always listed first (left) in portfolio displays with the number "2" for 20% on them.

So, if you never purchase more than 10% of a company which you are not president of, then you are safe. On the other hand, you often want to hold more than 10%, since the particular RR is paying nice dividends or figured to appreciate nicely. In 1830, it is not possible to simply park your money only in your own RRs. In fact, to do so may be a bad move, since it makes your more vulnerable to market attacks, since such attacks hurt you (greatest position) more than other investors. When you invest in other investors RRs, your portfolio may be safer, since anything that hurts the company hurts the president (usually 50% or 60% equity position) more than it hurts you.

Thus, you will often buy more than 10% into someone else's RR. The challenge is to figure out what are the safe investments which you can profit from; which investments to steer clear of; and which investments to get out of before the roof caves in.

Sometimes, you may exercise bad judgement. Here is an example of my exercising such poor judgement. Scott dumps the B&O on me! This pretty much knocks me out of the game. I end up with two companies with poor trains and no money in their treasuries. Originally, I was going to float a second company at \$100/share and use its surplus cash to pull my first company, PRR, out of trouble. That is typically done by buying a train with your second company from your first. The train will soon rust (obsolesce) anyway, but this allows money to be transferred.

Now, my plans are dashed! In fact, I will resign this game and there is no way I can win. Getting dumped on is a screw up that I have not made in a long time. Perhaps, later will cover how to rate investments.





Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Tuesday, September 09, 2008 5:09 PM

I've discussed Operating Rounds. During the Operating Rounds, the President's run their RRs:

- * Place track.
- * Place tokens (stations).
- * Pay or hold dividends.
- * Purchase rolling stock.

It is during the Operating Round that the President influences the evolution of the rail network for his own RR, other RRs which he may also be president of, and the remaining RRs (managed by other investors) in the game. As seen above, you do that by laying tracks and placing tokens.

When laying track, it can be put down both offensively or defensively. Offensively, you are increasing the value of your RRs' runs. Defensively, you are blocking the growth and revenue potential of opponent RR runs.

In particular, each hex can go through only three track laying transformations. Every turn, each RR is given one chance to lay track in a single hex which abuts its network. When there is nothing to be done on offense, one should always look at potentially boxing in opponents in the future. This is done moving a hex through its three transitions and placing the track such that there is no way an opponent can run a train through.

For example, note the yellow hex in the top middle. An AI player is looking to move his network's reach South. Now, I promote the hex right below the yellow one above the mouse pointer. The brown color indicates the final promotion. This hex is now locked, and you can see that there is no rail route which can be connected from North to South through it. I have boxed the AI President and his RR in.



Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 10, 2008 7:10 AM

So then are there options as in RR tycoon that he can lease the use of your track? Or is that it for him?

"The nations of the world will have to unite, for the next war will be an interplanetary war. The nations of the earth must someday make a common front against attack by people from other planets." ---General Douglas MacArthur- Oct. 8, 1955

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 10, 2008 10:01 AM

No leasing of track. There is no track ownership concept. Only stations matter:

- (1) A station with no marker or your marker, your train may pass thru and collect revenue.
- (2) A station with another RR's marker, your train may not pass thru. Instead it must terminate there, but you can collect revenue at the termination station.

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 13, 2008 2:40 PM

So, did I get anyone motivated to try out 1830?

Anyone placing ruthless trades on the 1830 Stock Market these days? :)

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 14, 2008 9:07 AM

I'm going to try it as I have a thing for financial games as well as railroad games- and it looks well balanced based on your excellent posts.

"The nations of the world will have to unite, for the next war will be an interplanetary war. The nations of the earth must someday make a common front against attack by people from other planets." ---General Douglas MacArthur- Oct. 8, 1955

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 14, 2008 10:55 AM

Ever since 2001 when I finally grounded myself from online air combat (and offline) + auto racing due to arthritis, I've been exploring other genres: tactical ground combat, operational ground combat, grand strategy games, nuke subs, WWII subs, naval warfare, RR games, economic games, and most recently geo-political games.

I happened across 1830 two years ago while doing my RR games thing. I was exploring at the time RT1, RTD, RT3, and RAA. I saw a reference to 1830 having provided part of the inspiration for RT1. Both Sid Meier and Bruce Shelly were players; and Shelly had worked on both the board game and the PC port. Sid's main vision and contribution to RT1 was an operational RRing game. Shelly saw that some of the stock market maneuvers and flavor of 1830 got carried into RT1. Thus, in RT1 you have bonds, debt, equity, market take overs, hostile take overs, trading, share holders, treasury transfers, and proxy management. In fact, for anyone who owns both RT1/RTD and the latest SMR, it is clear that RT1/RTD was the more sophisticated game by far. Now, PopTop's RT3 had a very nice market/economic model, but the AI is unfortunately totally uncompetitive.

So, I've been playing 1830 for two years. Originally, it was daunting and I was clueless (never played any game like it and the only board game I ever knew was Monopoly & Chess). However, I found about 10 strategy papers on the game (linked into this thread). I liked what I read. I have read those papers perhaps 5 times now (most recently just this last week). I keep finding different useful strategies. Also, most have different authors and some of them have some radically different assessments as to the strength and weakness of the various private (initial game opening bid/auction) and public companies (what I have mainly presented here). Still fascinating reading and gaming.

And if you ever master the standard four player game ... I play four players (3 AI, hardest, unlimited tiles), there are another 10 or so variations that completely alter play. There is even a random map generator (although I've read that the AI is best tuned for standard map play).

After two years play and 600 games, I am only averaging placing number #1 of 4 investors about 50-60% of the time. I know of no other game which given that level of effort:

(1) I would not be able to win 90-100% of the time.

(2) That a short game 45-75 minutes would not play out in very similar patterns over and over again.

This game is simply superb. Best rule design. Very well coded AI. Ever.

* Finally, it plays great under DOS Box and with a modern CPU the turns compute fast.

** No crashes. There is however an occasional bug where sometimes a player's cash goes negative (should not happen). I've seen this maybe in 1 out of 50-70 games. Very rare. In which case, I just restart ... 1830 games are short anyway.

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Monday, September 15, 2008 6:16 PM

Here is another little 1830 tip for you players out there.

Presidency do more than just give you control of the flow of the game. In the end game, they provide you with extra net worth.

How is that? Well, the game enforces a certificate limit on players (but for junk stock). In a four player game, each player may not hold more than 16 certificates of healthy stock. Of course, sometimes stock becomes healthy during the Operating Round, and thus you are forced to sell down to your certificate limit during the Stock Round.

Now, back to the concept of how a Presidency yields extra net worth. The President's certificate represents 20%; whereas all other certificates represent 10% equity. Thus, each Presidency you hold in the end game equates to 10% bonus equity. This is both worth something to you in terms of your stock valuation and also the extra dividends you receive.

Two examples from my just completed game where I held three Presidencies:



* Please note any game play tips I provide here are most likely learned from the 10 fine guides which I have read (see links in this thread). Very little is due to original thought ... but that hasn't diminished my fun at all or the joy of sharing it.

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Tuesday, September 16, 2008 2:12 PM

I am having a lot of fun with a fairly new approach I have taken to playing.

If I don't pick up a private company in the initial bidding or if I pick the B&O private, I've been doing the following:

* No Privates *

Rather than opening a RR for high ROI at a low PAR in the start of the game, I will invest heavily in a high ROI RR of a reliable President (small or no private position). This results in a rapid accumulation of wealth due to good dividends and fast stock appreciation due to no open interest.

* B&O Private *

Set the PAR at \$100/share and make sure that no one will buy into it; usually the AI won't. Then, I can sit back and collect the B&O private's dividend of \$30/certificate which by comparison to a public RR is the equivalent of an RR receiving \$150 revenue which is not bad in the opening.

(see above)

* All Cases *

Be careful to try to hold on to the Priority Deal so that you can trade first.

* After a Few Operating Rounds *

We reach a point where the other investors are finally reaching the time where they have enough cash or stock value to float their second RR. At this point, I dump my entire portfolio. (not the B&O presidency if I have it) For the one RR which I heavily invested in, I reap a major gain due to stock appreciation. In meantime, that stock price plummets. I then proceed to float two RRs simultaneously (remember upon floating and buying 60%, you sell back 10% to put into floating the second RR). This will lead to two RRs which are very well funded; looking at a PAR value of \$90-\$100/share. Also, depending on what RRs you select, you may well take advantage of track which has been laid already. Finally, such well funded RRs immediately puts pressure on the other investors who all in the opening started under funded RRs to maintain rolling stock

technology. Thus, if done right, you will avoid the risk of a bankruptcy, but either force other Presidents to withhold dividends (depressing share values and their portfolios) or having to pay out of their pocket eventually for rolling stock which will kill their net worth.

I've been experimenting with this and it looks like a very nice play when you don't have privates to sell to your RR and raid the treasury for cash.

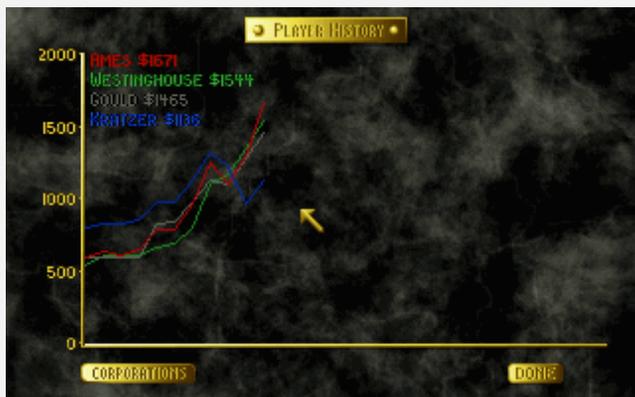
Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Tuesday, September 16, 2008 3:10 PM

Here is an example of the above strategy. (For those of you who haven't figured it out yet, I always play Fisk, the red head. No, I am not a red head ... gray & balding actually.) So, that is my two RRs, NYC and B&O on the bottom. Notice that all RRs have already been floated. The other RRs range \$30-\$290 in the treasury. Here I set with \$732 and \$746 in my treasuries. Now, the 5-trains and 6-trains (permanent trains; don't rust/obsolece) are just around the corner. A 5-train runs \$450 and a 6-train runs \$630. So, you can see that I am well positioned to acquire rolling stock which will take me through the remainder of the game.

Lastly, you will not in the net worth graph that I am behind in the early game. This is, of course, no suprise, since it is all over when the fat lady sings (in 1830 when the Bank breaks). So, in fact, I am in the process of making my move. Only time will tell as to whether it was "swift" or "sloth"! :)

YOUR SHARES	INITIAL OFFERING	BANK
\$82	ERIE \$290	\$0
\$54	PRR \$140	\$170
\$90	CAN PAC \$210	\$0
	C&O \$63	\$160
	NYNH \$240	\$200
	B&M \$30	\$220
	NYC \$732	\$120
\$67	B&O \$746	\$60

1830 TRAINS						
2 STOP \$80	OBSELETE	OBSELETE	OBSELETE	OBSELETE	OBSELETE	OBSELETE
3 STOP \$130	NEW YORK CENTRAL SYSTEM	B&O	NYNH	NYC	NYC	
4 STOP \$300	CANADIAN PACIFIC	NYNH	NYC	ERIE		
5 STOP \$450						
6 STOP \$630						
DIESEL \$800 \$1100						

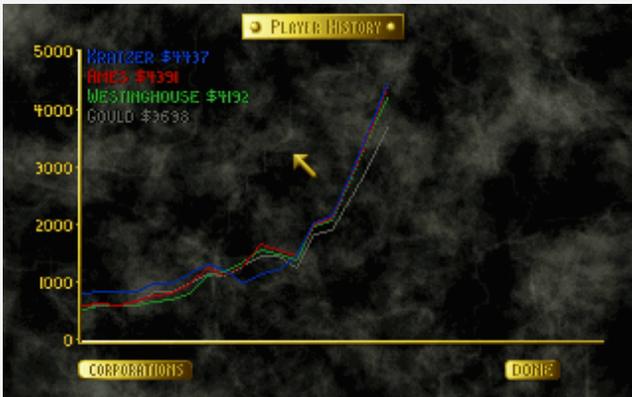


Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Tuesday, September 16, 2008 4:21 PM

Well, let's look how turned out. I made move as we see below. I am set with two 5-trains and money in my treasuries to place station tokens. And I do place stations token (blue & black above the mouse pointer) in the lucrative NY, NY location. This will make for some solid revenue.

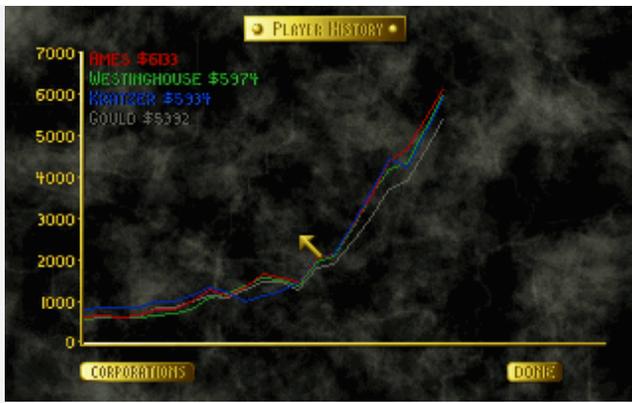


We see me tracking to win here.



However, in the end I lose. Remember, I had warned about the AI's collusive habit of knocking the player's stock portfolio by repeated share dumping. Well, that is the sharp zig which you see in my net worth graph. So, I come in 3 out of 4 investors.

As I said, this game is no piece of cake --- even for well experienced players. (I consider myself one by this point.)



Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 17, 2008 10:40 AM

One other thing that is going about this game (if you've been watching the DOW for the last couple of days) ...

You can trade a few times a day and win or lose, you still have a job and home to sleep at night when it is all over. Takes a lot of the stress of the simulated Stock Market! :)

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Thursday, September 18, 2008 1:41 PM

Did I mention that this game is DRM free? You simply answer a question on the very first run (line in the manual thing) and from then on you are unlocked and good to go. Want to play on another machine, then just copy the directory. Copies still available on Amazon for a reasonable price. Original copies come with a really nice color manual printed on high quality stock.

Of course, if you want an original board game of 1830, you are talking mega-bucks!

http://www.amazon.com/1830-Railroads-Robber-Barons-PC/dp/B0007Z17AA/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=videogames&qid=1221766672&sr=8-5

I am off to trade! :)

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Thursday, September 18, 2008 1:48 PM

Wow. Actually I was just checking and legal quality copies are somewhat dried up. That's a shame. I got mine for \$25 USD ... either word is spreading or I have been plugging this game too much.

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 21, 2008 3:21 PM

A key feature in 1830 is the Certificate Limit which is number of shares which a player can hold. Usually, each certificate represents 10% equity with the exception of the President's certificate which represents 20%.

For a four player game, the Certificate Limit is 16. The Certificate Limit only comes into play in the End Game. Prior to the End Game, the focus in the Opening is mainly on ROI (return on investment; usually through dividends or timely selling of shares). In the Middle Game, the focus is on steady growth while pulling off or avoiding dirty tricks. In the End Game, one is mainly looking to pad their portfolio with the shares which will show the greatest share price growth; and this also the time where the Certificate Limit comes into play (so one usually buys the highest priced shares until the limit is hit). The most expensive shares (if one examines the structure) of the Stock Market, then one will see these shares will yield absolute greatest appreciation.

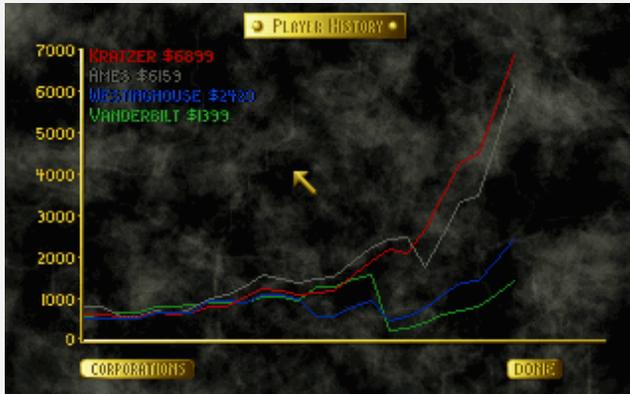
Of course, all of the above applies to "healthy" stock which is white. This highest possible share price in the game is \$350 and the lowest is \$10. "Unhealthy" stock is yellow, orange, or brown. Most importantly "unhealthy" stock does not count towards a player's certificate limit. So, one strategy heading into the end game is to fill your portfolio with extra "unhealthy" stock. Now, "unhealthy" stock does little in way of generating capital gains (appreciation) for your portfolio, but often such stocks which now have top end rolling stock can pay very handsome dividends.

In the screen shot below, the certificate limit follows the cash position in parenthesis. One may artificially keep a stock "unhealthy" by manipulating the dividend. Don't pay one and you drive the share price down. Pay it and you drive the share price up. But in the final operating round, no one worries about going over the Certificate Limit, since the game will end. Thus, you see the negative limits. If there was to be another Stock Round, you would be forced to sell off certificates until you got to the limit.

You see here that I end that game with 11 certificates over the limit. That is substantial when consider that the limit in a four player game is 16. That means that I have about 30-40% additional equity paying me dividends during the end game. Now, look at the Net Worth graph. You can

see from the slope that Ames if he had enough time would have overtaken me. If anything my extra certificates might have just held him off from a win.

(below: the stock market chart, the portfolios, and the net worth graph)



Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 21, 2008 3:26 PM

Just in case you haven't figured it out by now ... in this game if you get yourself in financial trouble no one steps in to bail you out.

Usually people say such things (like management being bailed out of bad investment decisions) only happens in a game. Well, on the contrary, such things only happen in real life. It seems PC gaming is substantially less forgiving than real life! :({Frustrated US tax payer here ... although I realized that there are millions being scr*w*d world wide with the toxic debt. We keep this up and we will end up becoming the largest Third World nation in this hemisphere.}

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 24, 2008 2:45 PM

For those of you have been following my daily trial and tribulations of one America's most colorful eras of publically traded securities, fraud, and scandals ... No, I am not talking about my 401K account and the last two weeks!

I am talking about the great history of the railroads and the men who made and stole millions and others who died destitute ... well, I am back to trading in 1830 again. Yes, I think I will play some while I still have a roof over my head and can pay the electric bill. For those who are less fortunate, this game plays great on a laptop and older machines.

PS: I listened to a 30 minute interview with Warren Buffet today about his deal with Goldman and the economic crisis. Talk about plain speak

and easy to understand discussions ... This guys knows something ... the rest of idiots on the TV are fiddling (show boating) while Rome burns. Well, I best launch another game before I find myself living in my own financial collapse that's not a game. Yikes!

Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 24, 2008 5:34 PM

Ding-ding-ding-ding-ding-ding!!!

Okay, a close trading session is over. I just scraped by with a victory and Tycoon rating as well! Was I scoundrel or a careful steward of corporate responsibility? I'll let you, the reader, judge. Congressional committees be d*mned!

Here is the play:

(1) In the third to last operating round, I am set to go into the next Stock Round with the Priority Deal (meaning I trade first; excellent for dumping a company).

(2) Rolling stock has stagnated (mean technology is not advancing). Everyone is sitting a 4-trains which if I can force them to rust (go obsolete), then I will create chaos in the markets! But how to do it?

(3) I hold three companies. In the final, rotation of the Operating Round, my company taking my final turn, buys up all the rolling stock of one my RRs that operated earlier in the rotation. This leaves me holding one empty RR shell. An empty treasury and no rolling stock. I used the CanPac (Canadian Pacific) to loot the B&O (Baltimore and Ohio). If you want to talk about toxic securities, the Presidency of the B&O now represents the most toxic shares in this game!

(4) We head into trading and I trade first. I dump my shares of the looted B&O which unloads the Presidency on someone else. Now, someone is going to have to dig into their own pocket to buy rolling stock for the B&O.

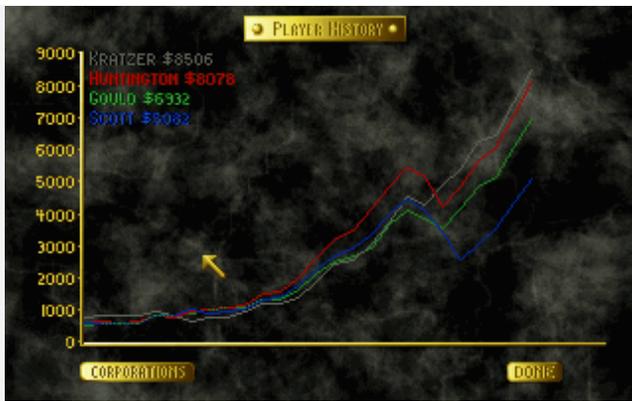
(5) The next Operating Round begins. As predicted the B&O situation causes a crisis. 4-Trains go obsolete ... everyone is forced (but me) to buy diesels for which their RRs have no money in the treasury for. Pure chaos! This starts an immediate downward trend among all the other investors (but me).

(6) Guess who walks away with a pile a cash and the title of being the most ruthless investor? Yes, moi! :)

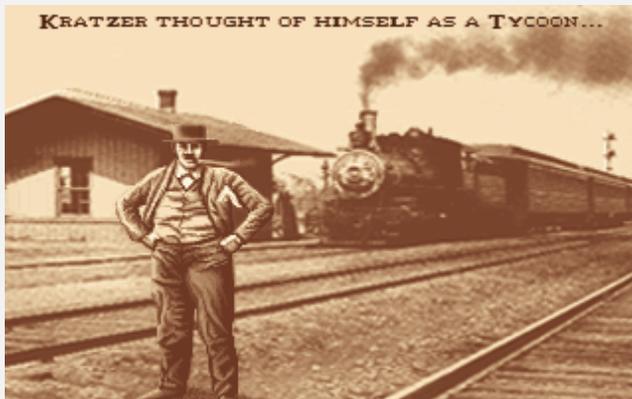
Here we see final trains (I am #2 from the top). Every diesel train you see here was bought under duress! :)



We then see the net worth graph. You can see the exact point that chaos hit. You see final portfolio values and my Tycoon rating (which is one below the maximum rating of ruthlessness, being a "Robber Baron"). Oh well ... I'll just keep playing until my power gets cuts or the PLA (PRC troops) deploy to New York and D.C. to quell civil chaos and ensure that Chinese debt holders receive ten cents on the dollar for all T-bills they have bought! :(



Player	CASH	STOCK	TOTAL
WINNER! KRATZER	:\$5804	:\$3694	:\$9698
HUNTINGTON	:\$4745	:\$4364	:\$9109
GOULD	:\$4173	:\$3612	:\$7785
SCOTT	:\$4485	:\$4380	:\$8865



Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 24, 2008 5:42 PM

What level of difficulty did you play on?

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Wednesday, September 24, 2008 5:59 PM

Playing 4 players (3 AI), hardest diff, but with unlimited tiles set in the options.

And before anyone asks ... I will not suspend playing 1830 until The Bailout AKA Save Our Country from total collapse ... I shall play on!

Sometimes, I think that it is perhaps bad that few if any in the USA remember having lived through WWI or WWII. Well, I am thinking today ... it's sad few have lived through the 1920s and 1930s. If they did ... people would stop worrying about Bin Laden & Pakistan and start thinking if there will be a soup kitchen for them to eat at by mid-2009.

Buffet said today, this is an economic Pearl Harbor ... Kramer said the fools are calling this a bail out and Americans hate Wall St. I worked on Wall St. 2/3s my career and I hate Wall St ... but he said it's a question of jobs, homes, feeding your kids ... basic human survival. My wife just looked at me and said the USA will never come back if it goes down now. The World has been parking their money in the USA ... not because they love us or our values, but the stability of our markets. If it all collapses no one will ever park their wealth in the USA again. Can you say "has been" ... sorry, I am really upset - OUT (no more posting tonight)

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Thursday, September 25, 2008 1:27 PM

So, SpongeBob, you playing 1830?

The possibilities of this game never cease to amaze me. If I had designed this thing, I would have retired immediately afterward, since the rest of my career would most have certainly been downhill after 1830! :)

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Thursday, September 25, 2008 1:37 PM

Looks like there is a used boxed copy up on Amazon for \$36 USD. I would pay \$36 for this to get the manual and fold out too. The pirate scan of the manual looks like cr*p. It is also selling for \$80+, but despite being worth it, it feels hard to pay so much just because something is hard to find. This was the best \$25 I ever spent on gaming.

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 27, 2008 7:54 AM

GJK, Ghoshtryder, SpongeBob, or Rocksals ... anyone playing? Anyone got some questions or tips to add hear? I would love to discuss the game more, especially the variants. (I've done a little six player games and some with extended bank, but not much).

Thanks.

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 27, 2008 7:59 AM

Two questions:

(1) Anyone know an easy way I could archive this thread into a single PDF file?

(2) If I offer this "1830 Showcase" as a download a BG/Train/Strategy gaming site is this a violation of the Wargamer's IP right, since the content was posted here first?

Thanks.

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 27, 2008 4:11 PM

A most incredible win! In fact, this is the very first time I have achieved a win by this technique!

Bruce Shelly (Sid Meier partner and of Firaxis fame) and part of the design team of 1830, refers to an 1830 technique in his writings known as "swallowing the pill". This basically means a player intentionally buys a Diesel out of one's own pocket and still wins the game. This is the equivalent of forcing your own company into a financial mess and bailing it out in order to create an even bigger mess for other companies and your opponents. Shelly asserts that he personally does not think this can be done, and he hadn't seen it done in years of play.

Yet, he acknowledges that "swallowing the pill" is a viable technique, since Francis Tresham (the board game designer) has seen it done to good effect on multiple occasions.

I have never tried this approach. However, I found myself heading into the end game as such:

(1) My Net Worth was losing ground to my opponents.

(2) I was vulnerable to getting dumped on by being more than 10% vested in a number of RRs without the Priority Deal; opportunity to make the first trade.

Thus, it appeared to me that my only hope was to force chaos and the arrival of the Diesels. I did three things to get this win:

(1) Shifted a train from one of my RRs so I could pay about \$1000 out of pocket for a Diesel and force general chaos.

(2) Shifted a 5-Train back to the original RR having a Diesel which had the track prepared the (PRR) to yield very high revenues.

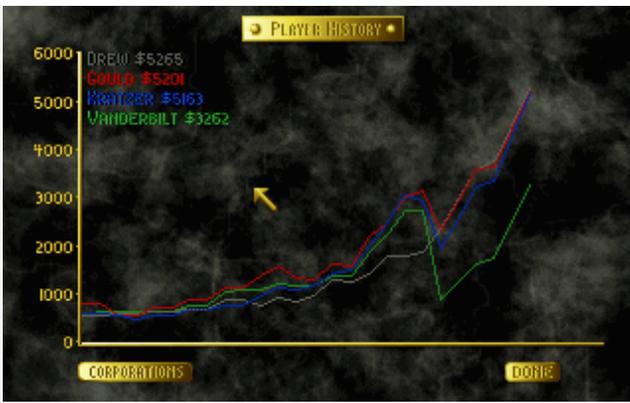
(3) Final turn after the PRR ran, I cut the track with a token (station) from my CanPac RR to reduce revenues by other RRs.

Results:

(1) As you will see, it was a very low Net Worth game for everyone. Remember in 1830, sc*w*ng your opponents and yourself is a perfectly valid strategy as long they get hurt more.

(2) I scraped by with one of my smallest victories ever. You'll see the Net Worth graph shows me losing. I ultimately won by simply \$15 which represents a mere 1/4% of the total Net Worth. (after creating chaos, I have faster Net Worth growth than my opponents)

Booya!!!



Player	CASH	STOCK	TOTAL
WINNER! KRATZER	:\$2606	:\$3470	:\$6076
GOULD	:\$3452	:\$2515	:\$5967
DREW	:\$3021	:\$3040	:\$6061
VANDERBILT	:\$1740	:\$2315	:\$4055

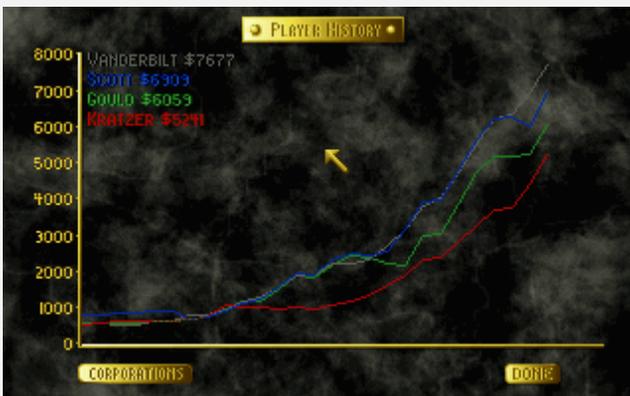
Okay, here is the quote from Bruce Shelly in an article written in 1987 "A VERY GOOD YEAR - Development Notes for 1830"

SWALLOWING THE PILL: Since I first started playing 1830, to be stuck buying a train or a substantial part of one out of your own pocket has been considered a serious, if not a terminal, setback to your chances of winning. I have since heard of several instances where players have done so deliberately and have gone on to win. Their strategy is to continually drive up their share prices and maximize the dividends they pay out. The money they lose out of pocket to pay for a train is apparently more than made up for in higher share values, and they ultimately get the larger train as well. I have never taken part in a game where this has been done successfully, but no less an authority than Francis Tresham assures me that it is quite possible and he credits one of his best playtesters with its conception. It may be that the "swallowing the pill" strategy, like the "big train" or "feeder line" strategies, only works so long as the other players let you get away with it or give you the opportunity. I still believe in the "balanced portfolio" strategy, but will be looking at this new idea in the future. There is always something new to learn in a game as elegant as this.

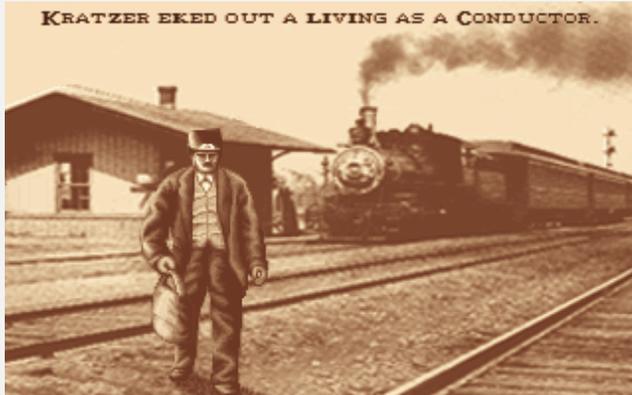
Booya! I did it! :) And consistent with Shelly's comments, I did close with the highest portfolio stock valuation.

Just to demonstrate that it is not all fame and riches. A humiliating defeat!

Nothing came together as planned. I guess I invested in the subprime of RR stocks! Rats!



	VANDERBILT CASH :\$3460 STOCK :\$4370 TOTAL :\$8430		SCOTT CASH :\$2978 STOCK :\$4845 TOTAL :\$7823
	GOULD CASH :\$3252 STOCK :\$3630 TOTAL :\$6882		KRATZER CASH :\$2995 STOCK :\$3095 TOTAL :\$6090



 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 27, 2008 8:37 PM

These last two games do illustrate an interesting point about 1830. It is about relative and not absolute wealth. You'll notice that game before last that I came in #1 of 4 with \$15 less than this last game where I came in #4 of 4. It's about having more money than anyone else when the game ends whether by honest management or lying/cheating/stealing. Whatever floats your boat or sinks everyone else's. This truly is a fun game which is as about as pure a strategy game as they come! If you subscribe to the notion that business is war, then you may loosely classify this as a war game.

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Saturday, September 27, 2008 8:38 PM

(oops duplicate)

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 28, 2008 7:40 AM

In part directly due to this topic, I wound up playing the boardgame 1846 this past weekend (and got thoroughly skunked :)). Lots of fun! Thanks, Mark!

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 28, 2008 7:59 AM

Don't know if that deserves a congrats or not, but glad you had a good time.

Actually, partly due to the Wall St. meltdown and partly due to this game (my wife is a real investor ... I am a systems/management guy) ... she has a whole library of investment/economic books ... I finally grabbed one to start reading. Who knows? Maybe one day this little game will have gotten me into the big game! :)

 Re:1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 28, 2008 6:35 PM

In a previous post, I spoke about a new technique I was working on "delayed start". Normally, you attempt to float your first company as soon as you have funds to do so.

The idea behind the delayed start technique is three fold (especially since you failed to pick up any private companies which can be used to loot your RR's treasury for cash):

- (1) Invest "all in" in a RR which is likely to have a dividend and a reliable President. A President is reliable if his primary source of income is from dividends and he has yet to have cash to float a second company.
- (2) Leave no "open interest" out there for the target RR. This means to buy up all remaining shares; leaving nothing still trading. Why? Due to the rules of the stock market this accelerates the capital gains (stock appreciation).
- (3) Once you establish your positions, hold the Priority Deal (make sure you will trade first; very necessary to dump stock).

At the appropriate time after receiving some dividends, you dump the greatly appreciated stock and go to float - NOT ONE - but two highly capitalized RRs for a PAR (IPO) of \$100/share (this is the max). This puts you in a very strong position heading into the middle and end game. Why?

(1) Money in the treasury is a wonderful thing when running a company. Following the standard route of float one company at a low PAR (\$67-\$76/share) immediately and later a second company at \$100/share while feeding some cash RR#2 into RR#1 leaves you with a lot less treasury cash. You are looking at the standard route having a combined treasury cash of around \$1300 versus \$2000 with the "delayed start".

(2) You spend less money on small irrelevant trains; 2-Trains at \$80 a pop. This can be a savings.

(3) Your two companies immediately start at a relatively high share price and may finish the game with highest share prices.

(4) The extra cash is insurance against having to buy more expensive 6-Trains.

(5) Depending on what RR you float, you will have extra cash to use on tokens (stations) to cut other RRs' runs (lines).

Okay, let me demonstrate:

Here we see the exact Operating Round I enter with the Delayed Start. Note, my CanPac and B&M heavy with cash:

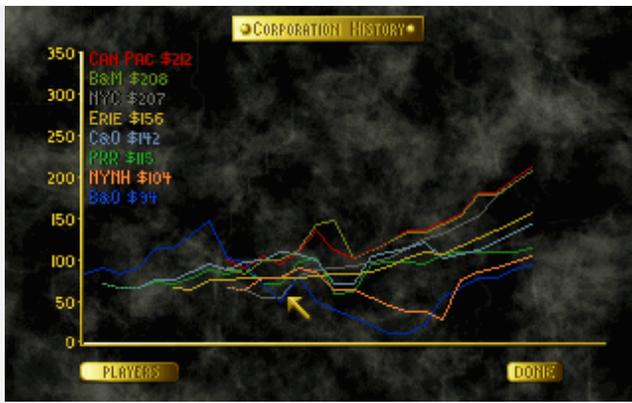


Company	Share Price	Cash	Trains
B&O	\$185	\$210	2
NYNH	\$670	\$0	1
PRR	\$215	\$120	2
NYC	\$670	\$0	1
CAN PAC	\$1000	\$0	0
B&M	\$1000	\$0	1
C&O	\$225	\$0	2
ERIE	\$418	\$80	2

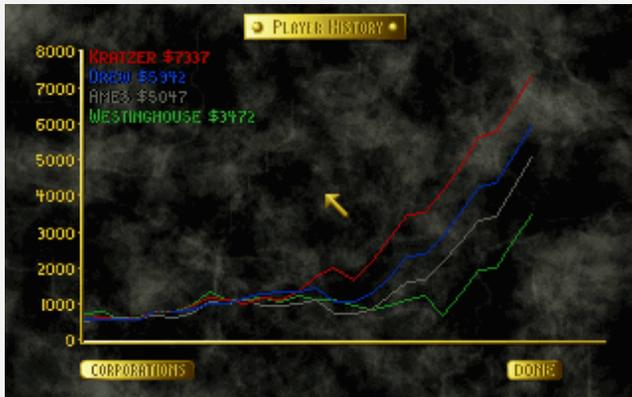
I am in the market now and immediately off to a power start:



Here we see corporate valuations. Note that my two RRs, CanPac and B&M, close the highest:



Finally, the net worth graph showing the victory:



<MESSAGE EDITED BY MARKSHOT ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2008 6:36 PM>

Re: 1830 - Best Strategy Game - Sunday, September 28, 2008 7:27 PM

Folks,

I just found a fantastic resource for 18XX Bgers who want to know how each game differs to compares and contrast all rules. Of course, only 1830 has a PC implementation which is what I play.

http://www.fwtwr.com/18xx/rules_difference_list/single_list.htm