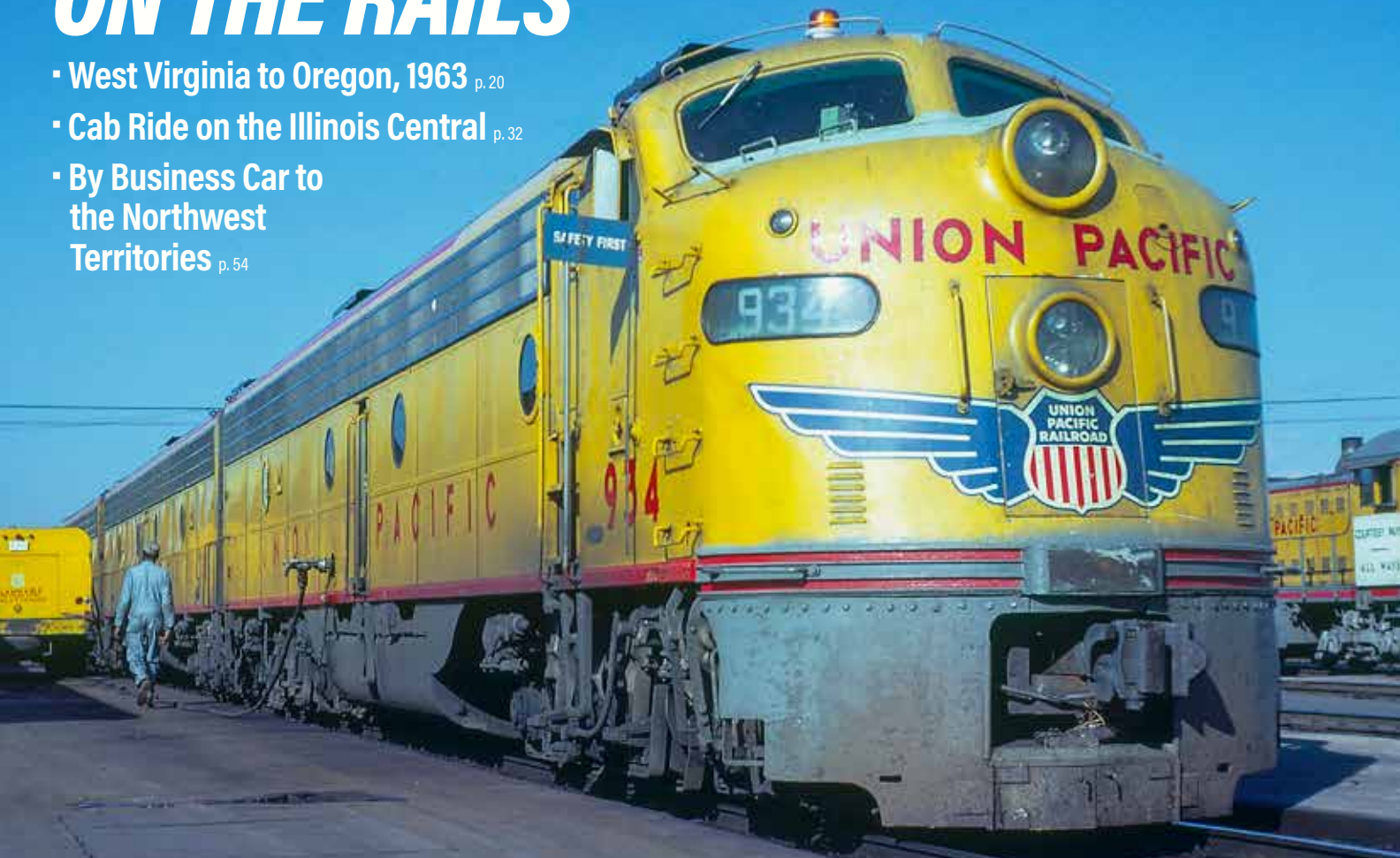


# TRAIN RIDING SPECIAL ISSUE



## GREAT TALES ON THE RAILS

- West Virginia to Oregon, 1963 p. 20
- Cab Ride on the Illinois Central p. 32
- By Business Car to the Northwest Territories p. 54



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Riding classic  
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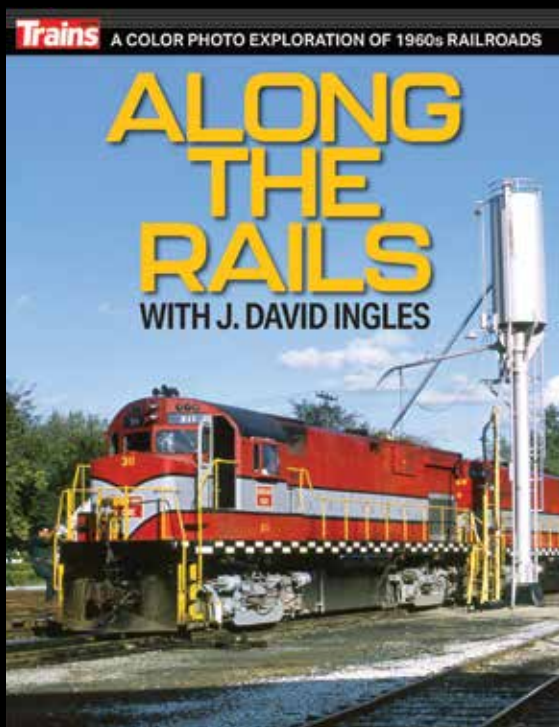
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Nebraska p. 18

Chicago &  
North Western's  
*Flambeau 400* p. 62

200+ COLOR PHOTOS

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# This Issue



**On our cover**  
Union Pacific E8 934 takes  
train 105, the *City of  
Portland*, out of Denver on  
June 5, 1967. Bob Withers

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BOB WITHERS

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BOB JOHNSTON

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# Go ride a train!

**Who among us does not have fond memories** of riding trains in years past?

This issue presents some of the best stories recently penned on the topic, from the Midwest (p. 32) to Canada (p. 40) and even the West Coast (p. 20). Each offers unique insights into the bygone era of classic railroading.

Even your (relatively young) editor has memories of train rides where “you can’t do that anymore.” That includes a 2003 ride on Amtrak’s *Kentucky Cardinal* — just weeks before its discontinuance — and a 2015 inspection trip over Conrail Shared Assets in northern New Jersey that all made special memories for me. In October 2015, my (future) wife and I rode Paxrail’s former Burlington Route dome *Stampepe Pass* on Amtrak’s *Hiawatha* route between Milwaukee and Chicago. It was a fine way to relive the glory days of rail travel: dining in a dome and photos out the Dutch door (before Amtrak sadly banned that practice in 2019).

Each year our train-riding opportunities change. Operations come and go. In my lifetime I’ve seen Amtrak drop service to Boise, Las Vegas, and Phoenix. Thankfully, Amtrak has added more routes than it has dropped in recent years, and Brightline has become a shining star in South Florida. Some of these still seem new and shiny, but 30 or 40 years from now, we will surely view them as the “good old days.”

So get out there and ride what you can. Today’s trips are tomorrow’s memories — and maybe someday yours will be found in the pages of *Classic Trains*, too!

*Kim M. Schmidt*  
EDITOR



**The northbound Amtrak *Hiawatha* traverses complex trackage at Tower A-2 in Chicago in October 2015. This scene was captured from a Dutch door on Paxrail’s former Burlington Route dome *Stampepe Pass*. Amtrak has since banned the practice.** Brian M. Schmidt

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A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

# HeadEnd



An old wooden caboose reposes in fresh, new Burlington Northern Cascade Green, a sure sign of the 1970s. Brian M. Schmidt collection

CABOOSE CORNER

## Rival rails



Railfans are used to seeing photos showing rivals Pennsylvania and New York Central lined up at Englewood Union Station, south of Chicago. Here's another take on that scenario. Pennsy 4-8-2 No 6810 and NYC 4-6-4 No. 5228 pose at Erie (Pa.) Union Station after World War II. But these trains have much different routes ahead of them. No. 6810 will wander down into its namesake state — Erie is but a branchline outpost on the mighty Pennsy — while 5228 will storm east on the famed Water Level Route across New York. Bob's Photo



## Journey to preservation

Only tenders are left of some 20-odd Chicago, Burlington & Quincy steam locomotives that were stored at Lincoln, Neb., until 1961. They're all cut up today, except for class O-5A 4-8-4 No. 5629 in the distance, hiding at far left. It was built by the Q at its West Burlington, Iowa, shops in 1940. After serving many years on freight and passenger trains over the Lincoln to Denver main line, it went on temporary boiler duty at the Lincoln station in late 1961. Today, however, it lives at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, a gift of the Burlington Route in 1963. Jim C. Seacrest



## Safety forward

In 1967, the New Haven experimented with different means to deter rock throwers along its route. Thus we have GE U25B No. 2501 with a section of chain link fence over its expansive windshield with hoods welded over smaller windows. Clearly, railroad vandalism is not a new concept in the 21st century. Paul B. Morse

New York Central class L-4 3137 brings the Queen City from Detroit into Cincinnati Union Terminal in September 1954. The 50 L-4 engines, built by Lima 1942-44, were the final group of 4-8-2s acquired by the Central, which had more of the type — 600 — than any other road. Philip R. Hastings



## Ultimate dual-service engine: NYC 4-8-2 Mohawks

The mighty Mohawks proved their worth across the vast New York Central network

**For some railroads in the steam era,** it wasn't enough to have success with a single example of a standard wheel arrangement. Instead, new competitive challenges and evolving technology often caused railroads to rethink a given locomotive class and turn it almost entirely upside down.

One of the best examples is New York Central, which went whole hog on the 4-8-2 between 1916 and 1930, buying 485 copies of a rather conventional freight engine in the L-1 and L-2 class, only to turn around a decade later and come up with a new, much more impressive 4-8-2 in the 115 examples of the L-3 and L-4 classes. The latter engines truly were dual-service machines, handsomely designed and capable of handling heavy freight as well as fast passenger trains. For all of them, Central chose the name "Mohawk." The 4-8-2's usual "Mountain" moniker just wouldn't do on the Water Level Route. In the end, NYC employed 600 Mohawks in various classes, by far the most of any U.S. railroad. The closest competitor was the Pennsylvania, with 224 engines in the M1a and M1b classes.

The 4-8-2 wheel arrangement was already popular around the world when Chesapeake & Ohio became the first to employ the type in the U.S. in 1911. The NYC, eager to improve upon the performance of its huge fleet of H-class 2-8-2s, quickly followed suit with an order to American Locomotive and Lima for 185 L-1 engines delivered from 1916 through 1918. The Central was impressed enough with the Mohawk's performance that it ordered 300 more from Alco, delivered from 1925 to 1930 in various iterations of the L-2 class. The latter engines were a significant improvement

over the earlier Mohawks, with larger boilers, larger tenders, and generally equipped with Elesco feedwater heaters installed either in front of the smokestack in a "beetle-browed" fashion, or countersunk into the contour of the smokebox.

It's a measure of the long tenure of the Mohawk that the first engines were designed to be hand-fired, as they were delivered before the large-scale use of mechanical stokers. Given the size and fuel appetite of the L-1, this situation soon proved untenable, and by the early 1920s older engines were refitted with duplex stokers, a



Class L-3 No. 3008 rests at Elkhart, Ind., on Dec. 7, 1941. Theodore Gay, Louis A. Marre collection



practice made permanent in future orders.

The Mohawk reached its fullest potential with the 115 engines in the L-3 and L4 classes, which arrived in two orders of 50 each in 1940-42 and 1942-44. Designed as true dual-service engines, they boasted 72-inch drivers to sustain 80 mph speeds on passenger trains. Other refinements included roller bearings on most axles (and on driving axles on those designed for passenger service), light-weight rods and reciprocating parts, disc drivers, and much larger tenders. There were 25 passenger engines in the L-3 order specifically outfitted with cast-steel pilots with drop couplers, giving the engines a close resemblance to New York Central's famous 4-6-4 J-class Hudsons; freight-only models kept the older footboard-style pilot.

The subsequent order of L-4 engines saw minor refinements. Interestingly, in order to reduce weight on the trailing axle, late-model L-class engines were designed with a substantial use of aluminum in the cabs, as well as placement of the stoker engines within the tender instead of under the cab. All of these improvements helped the later Mohawks reliably deliver about 60,000 pounds of tractive force, as well as deliver those much-desired passenger-train speeds.

The Mohawk's value to New York Central was unmistakable, as outlined by author Thomas H. Gerbracht in his two-volume history of the entire class of NYC 4-8-2s, published by the New York Central System Historical Society. "There was a time in the railroad's history when a roundhouse foreman was delighted if he had a few modern Mohawks that he could assign to any type of train," writes Gerbracht. "There was more than one chief dispatcher who would be amazed at the ability of a late Mohawk to get over the road with any tonnage assigned. And there was probably more than one finance guy at HQ who would truly recognize the economic impact that the late Mohawks delivered to the railroad's bottom line."

Despite their high performance, the New York Central 4-8-2 Mohawks suffered the same fate as nearly all of NYC steam: complete dieselization by mid-1957. Fortunately, two of the 4-8-2s escaped the torch. The National Museum of Transportation in St. Louis displays one of the older Mohawks, L-2d No. 2933, built in 1929; the National New York Central Museum in Elkhart, Ind., preserves L-3a No. 3001, delivered in 1940. — Kevin P. Keefe

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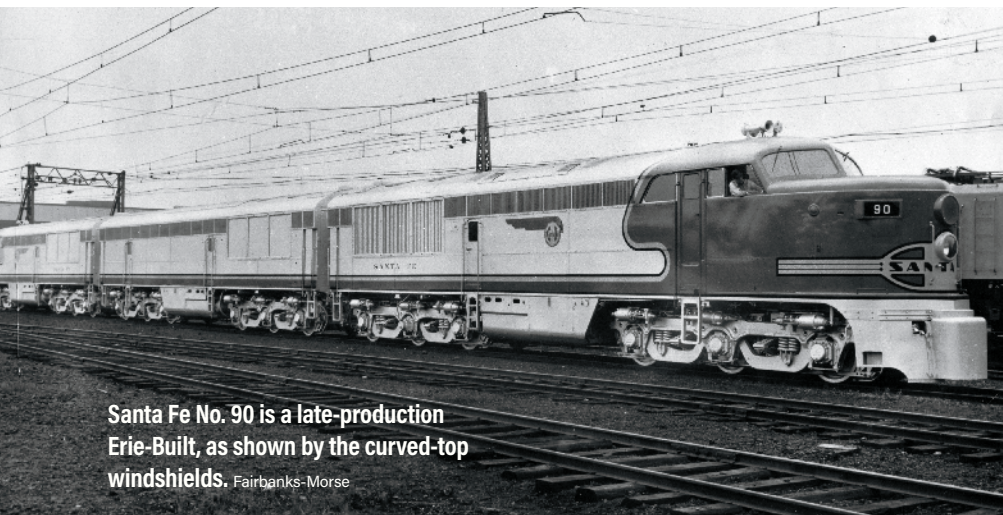


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# Fairbanks-Morse Erie-Built diesel locomotives

These distinctive streamlined diesels sold just 111 units in less than four years of production

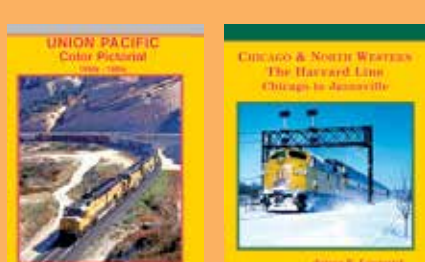


Santa Fe No. 90 is a late-production Erie-Built, as shown by the curved-top windshields. Fairbanks-Morse

**Fairbanks-Morse' distinctive** "Erie-Built" diesel locomotives were the builder's entry into the six-axle passenger locomotive market. FM sold 111 total units between December 1945 and February 1949. They were the best-selling FM cab unit models; second place went to the CFA/CFB-16-4 "C-Liners" with 90 units sold.

FM's big Erie-Built were named for being assembled at General Electric's facility in Erie, Pa., instead of FM's home of Beloit, Wis. This was due to lack of sufficient space at Beloit at the time. They rode on six-wheel, A1A trucks with unpowered center axles, like their competitors: Alco PAs and Electro-Motive E units. Each Erie-Built was powered by a single 10-cylinder, 850-rpm, opposed-piston diesel engine generating 2,000 hp.

They were designed by famous industrial designer Raymond Loewy, who worked on many FM diesel locomotive designs, and have a distinctive nose shape — "boat-nosed," some would say — and large, rectangular radiator intake grilles at the rear. Early units had rectangular windshields with square corners, while later units had curved windshields. Erie-Built diesel locomotives also came with two truck



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Photo by Stan Kistler



styles: FM-designed fabricated trucks or those supplied by General Steel Castings that also appeared under Alco PA units.

In spite of just 82 A units and 29 B units being built, they sold to seven railroads: Santa Fe, Chicago & North Western, Kansas City Southern, Milwaukee Road, New York Central (the last built), Pennsylvania Railroad, and Union Pacific (the first built). Pennsy had the most with 48 — 36 A units and 12 B units — and were used in freight service. All but C&NW

purchased cabless B units.

Some roads, including Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific, rebuilt their Erie-Built in the 1960s with EMD prime movers to extend their usefulness on rosters with few other FMs around.

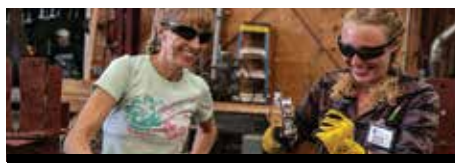
No Erie-Built diesel locomotives are preserved, although a set of General Steel Castings trucks from an unidentified Erie-Built was used under Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad's restored Alco PA, a project spearheaded by Doyle McCormack. — *Brian M. Schmidt*

## OBITUARY

**Carl Jensen**, manager of the Norfolk Southern Steam Program from 1986 to 1994, died on March 25, 2024, in Roanoke, Va. He was 87. His leadership was instrumental in guiding the program, and the travels of locomotives Nos. 611 and 1218, almost to its end. After graduating from Penn State University, Jensen began his railroad career with Norfolk & Western, hiring out as a clerk. Carl became a traveling freight agent based in Chicago in 1963 before arriving in Roanoke in early 1965 as an economist and later assistant manager of special services late that same year. He later moved on to his long-term home in the training department.



**Kansas City Southern was one of seven buyers of 2,000 hp Fairbanks-Morse "Erie-built" units. The units derived their name from their assembly at General Electric's facility in Erie, Pa., when FM didn't have capacity at its Beloit, Wis., plant. A three-year-old cab-booster set rests at Shreveport, La., in July 1949.** *Harold K. Vollrath*



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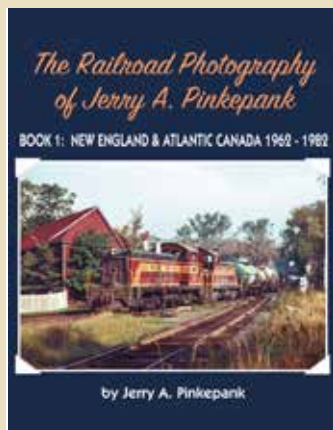


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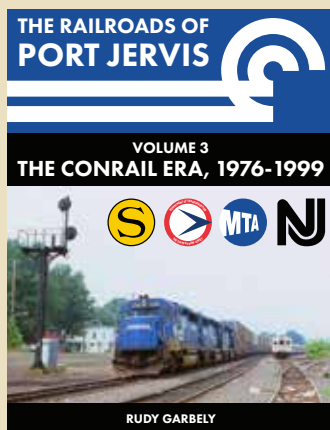
## Reviews



### The Railroad Photography of Jerry A. Pinkepank, Book 1: New England & Atlantic Canada 1962-1982

By Jerry A. Pinkepank, Morning Sun Books, Avon-by-the-Sea, N.J., 128 pages. \$69.95.

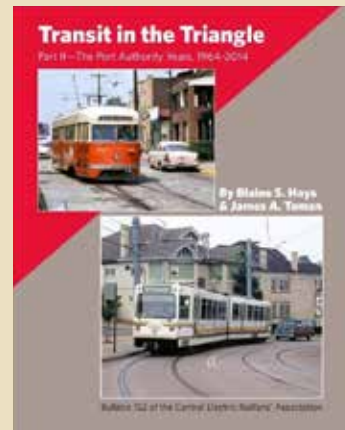
Author Jerry A. Pinkepank has turned out more than a dozen books with Morning Sun, largely highlighting the works of other photographers. Now, Jerry has started a series of books featuring his own travels and photography. Volume 1 covers railroads of New England and Atlantic Canada between 1962 and 1982. In Canada, the book makes stops for the Quebec North Shore & Labrador, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick, among other sights. U.S. coverage includes topics in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, including Bangor & Aroostook, Belfast & Moosehead Lake, Boston & Maine, Central Vermont, and Maine Central. Jerry's personal remembrances accompany the published photos. One note on continuity is in order; with Morning Sun ceasing to publish new hardcover books at the end of the year, Jerry Pinkepank will be self-publishing future volumes. — *Brian M. Schmidt*



### The Railroads of Port Jervis, Volume 3: The Conrail Era, 1976-1999

By Rudy Garbely, Garbely Publishing Co., Dingmans Ferry, Pa., 78 pages. \$50.

Conrail is solidly in the classic era, now having been gone longer than it existed. So it's no surprise that author Rudy Garbely would continue his series on Port Jervis, N.Y., looking at the time of Big Blue. (Two earlier volumes covered the Erie and Erie Lackawanna eras in Port Jervis.) Chapters include coverage of Conrail and Susquehanna freight operations, commuter service, the engine terminal, excursion trains, and the transition to Norfolk Southern ownership. Photographic coverage is all color, and the book includes four original maps showing Port Jervis railroads in 1950, 1976, 1986, and 2024. There are also tables of Conrail and Susquehanna freight train symbols and reproductions of various Conrail documents. A variety of equipment is covered, including Susquehanna Alcos, modern six-axle Conrail power, and distinctive NJ Transit U34CH commuter diesels. This book is a solid record of the Conrail blue era in Port Jervis. — *B.M.S.*



### Transit in the Triangle Part II — The Port Authority Years, 1964-2014

By Blaine S. Hays and James A. Toman, Central Electric Railfans' Association, Chicago, Ill., 216 pages. \$65.

Much of the published record of electric railways in the U.S. covers the prewar period when hope was high for the future of the interurban and streetcar. So this new volume covering Pittsburgh rail transit during a 50-year period of Port Authority oversight is a welcome addition to the historic record. The book is divided into six chapters and has two appendices. Of particular note, the book covers the transition from traditional PCC cars to modern light rail vehicles. Given the years of coverage, much of the photographic record is in color. The book includes 14 maps and diagrams, including two fold outs, and an equipment roster. Pittsburgh's fleeting commuter rail operations also make an appearance as they fit into the broader conversation about regional mobility. *Transit in the Triangle Part II* will be of interest to fans of Pittsburgh transit as well as those who follow electric railways of a later era. — *B.M.S.*

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### Passenger Perspective

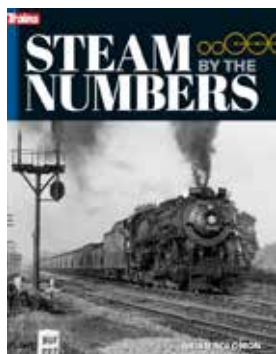
Join historian George W. Hamlin for a look back at railroad passenger service before the advent of Amtrak.



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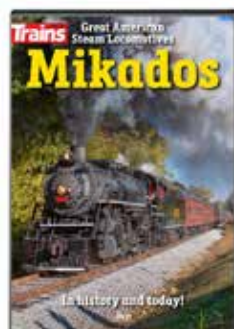
### STEAM BY THE NUMBERS

This book explores more than 30 wheel arrangements, uncovering the history, development, and operational significance of each arrangement, shedding light on why locomotives varied so.



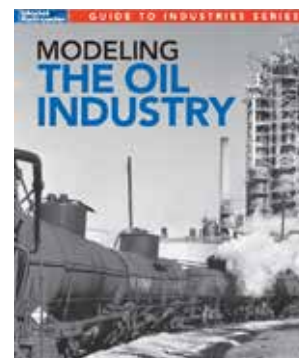
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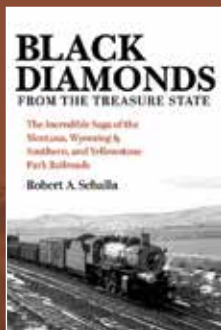
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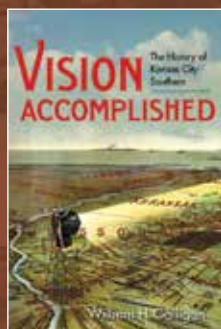
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## Fast Mail Letters from readers on our Spring 2024 issue



## Manufacturers' masterpiece

When I saw the Manufacturers Railway story, it reminded me of the changes that the sign over the doors had undergone through the years. In the mid-1970s, I assumed that the sign had been there since the enginehouse was built. However, sometime around 1979-80, the sign was removed to reveal the original, somewhat shabby, stone. Later, the background and lettering were cleaned and painted white and gold, shown here as of Nov. 12, 1984. The final change was painting the background green to match the color of its locomotives. — Mark K. Carron, Springfield, Mo.

## IPD enlightenment

I thoroughly enjoyed Jeff Wilson's informative article "IPD Boxcars of the 1970s." I first spotted some of these colorful short line cars on Atlantic Canada rails in the late 1970s, a visual relief from the perfunctory look of most rolling stock. I naively thought they were a promising rise of railroad traffic even from customers of tiny, obscure lines. Turns out they were a child of investor accounting tricks and complex per diem rules having little to do with their billboard logos, but fun while they lasted.

Mark Hymers, Fredericton, N.B.

Thank you for the article about incentive per diem boxcars. I really enjoy it when you explained the business side of the railroad industry. I always wondered why these little railroads that I had never heard of had so many boxcars.

Marvin Shrager, Columbus, Ohio

## Railfans in the sky

Thank you for the obit on my dear friend Mallory Hope Ferrell.

I worked several trips with Mal while

we were both based with Western Airlines in Salt Lake City on the 727.

On one occasion we took off to the west out of old Denver Stapleton Airport on a rare clear, calm day. Mal made a gradual climb over the Front Range and we called out the East Portal, Yankee Doodle Lake, and Corona Summit.

The second officer was puzzled and asked, "What are you guys looking at?"

Mal and I spoke simultaneously, "the Giant's Ladder."

Captain W. David Doiron (Ret.)

## "Loose-car" railroading

I enjoyed reading the humorous and hair raising account of the "Loose-car railroading" at Port Hueneme, Calif., in 1977 penned by Douglas Britton. I remember seeing both tri-level open and enclosed auto racks on the SP in Los Angeles in the '70s usually moving or stored on Alameda Street between downtown L.A. and the Port of Long Beach.

Although SP is long gone, some SP enclosed auto racks still soldier on, albeit in an increasingly battle-scarred condition. I witnessed one of the survivors



at the Union Pacific Dolores Yard in Carson, Calif., in July 2023 still doing what it was built to do and still bearing the name of its fallen flag parent.

Gerald Hunter

## Hank Griffith's Idaho steam

I enjoyed the Gem State Steam Gems article with some fine photos of Union Pacific and Northern Pacific steam action. After the Northern Pacific line between Wallace, Idaho, and Missoula, Mont., was abandoned, a portion was converted to a trail. From the layout of the trail, it appears there was a switchback roughly 7 rail miles east of Mullan and 1 mile west of the 4% climb up to the summit. If there was a switchback, located in between the two photo locations from the article, how could the locomotive be facing forward, at the head of the train, in all the photos?

Peter Munk, Santa Barbara, Calif.

According to author Jim Griffiths, the switchback was installed in 1963, after the date of the photos. — B.M.S.

What was called the *Yellowstone Express* in the photo captions is actually the

*Yellowstone Special*. While there was a *Yellowstone Express*, it disappeared in the Great Depression, couple of decades before these photos were made. This minor detail did not distract from this Hank Griffiths' spectacular photography.

Bill Anderson

## Cab-forwards, continued

The narrow gauge North Pacific Coast Railroad's inventive master mechanic, William Thomas, built a cab-forward 4-4-0 in 1901. Supposedly, an SP employee later remembered seeing this engine and suggested a cab-forward design as the way to provide Mallets that could operate through the tunnels and snow sheds over Donner Pass.

Starting in 1900, Italy built 43 compound cab-forward 4-6-0s for the flat (no tunnels) Po Valley.

The oddest cab-forwards were built in 1913 for the Antofagasta (Chile) and Bolivia Railway, 2-6-0+2-6-0 Kitson Meyer articulateds with a trailing tender but designed to be run as cab-forwards. The

four-man crew included engineer, fireman, and two porters to ferry sacks of coal from the tender up to the cab and firebox. Quickly converted to oil, they would have a long life.

Robert Ray, Irvine, Calif

I greatly enjoy Kevin Keefe's writings and always learn from them. I was surprised to find what appears to me to be a misstatement in his article about cab-forwards. He wrote that on later models the air pumps were moved to the platform in front of the smokebox. This would make sense on a normal steam locomotive, but on a cab-forward I suspect the platform referred to is probably behind the smokebox in regular operation.

Kyle Cudworth, Williams Bay, Wis.

## New Jersey geography

One nit to pick on Karl Zimmerman's Pennsy story. He and Steve caught their train crossing the Garden State Parkway at Allenwood, not Allentown.

Jeff Downing, Glassboro N.J.

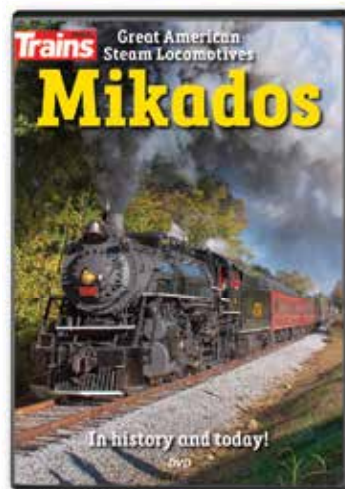
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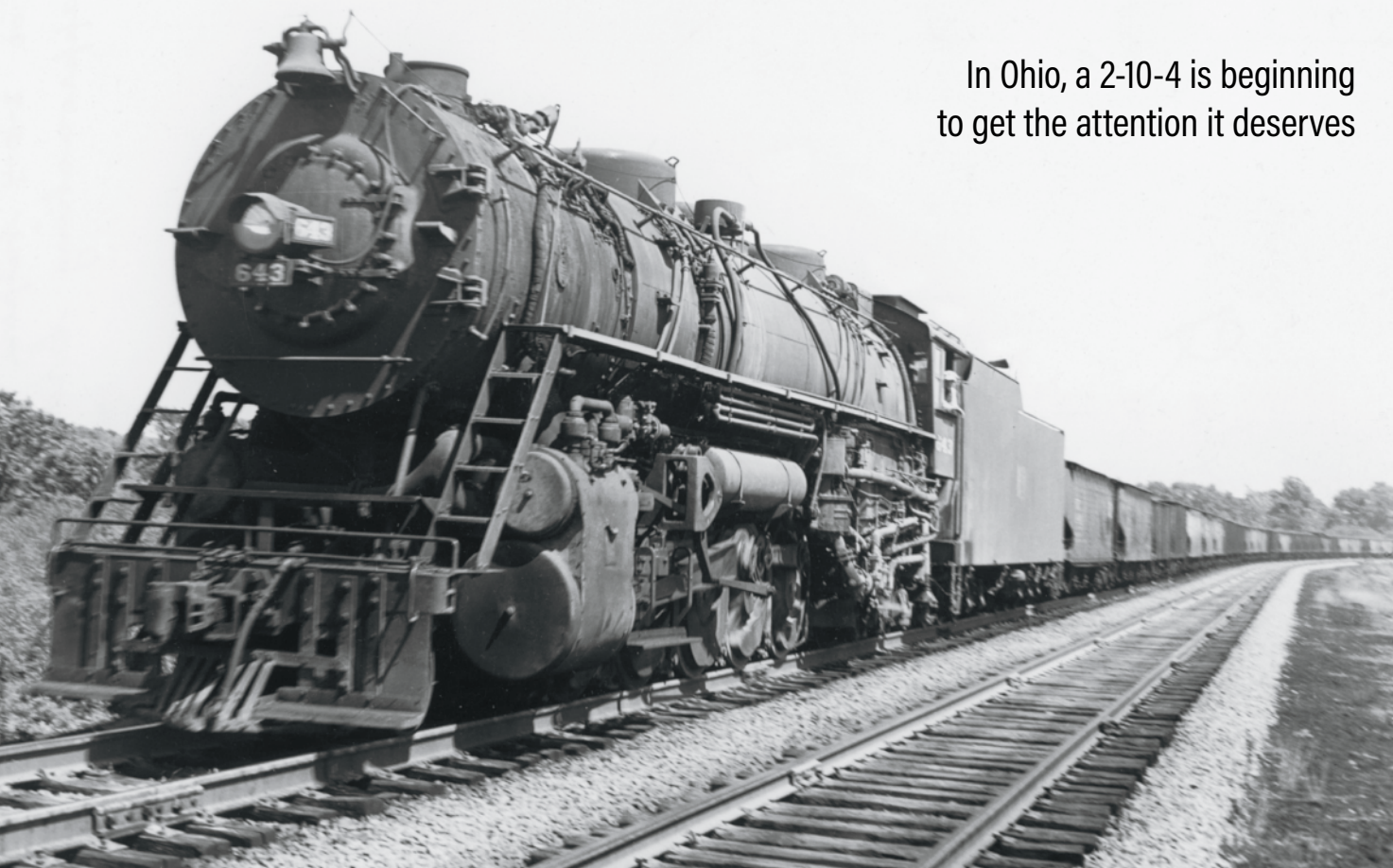
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# Contemplating the King: B&LE No. 643

In Ohio, a 2-10-4 is beginning  
to get the attention it deserves



**If there's one thing you could never** accuse the late Jerry Joe Jacobson of, it was thinking small. At every turn in his remarkable career as a railroader and preservationist, he went big. Really big.

When Jacobson got started in the shortline business 40 years ago, he began with a modest 35-mile former New York Central branch in eastern Ohio. Within a few years he'd created the 550-mile Ohio Central System, a powerhouse of a regional railroad made up of 10 separate properties. In 2008, he sold the operation to Genesee & Wyoming for an estimated \$234 million.

Next came Jacobson's stunning Age of Steam Roundhouse & Museum, which opened in Sugarcreek in 2011. It's not just a replica of a large-scale 1920s era engine terminal; it also houses a collection of 23 steam locomotives and a yard full of diesels and passenger and freight cars. Today, Age of Steam is one of America's pre-

miere railroad museums, with an 18-stall roundhouse, a busy backshop, and now selected hours open to the public.

But Jacobson, who died in 2017 at age 74, would not have been satisfied until he secured his most cherished quarry, Bessemer & Lake Erie No. 643, the last remaining example of B&LE's roster of 47 huge 2-10-4 Texas types. Today "The



**Bessemer & Lake Erie No. 643 towers over nearly everything else inside the Age of Steam shop.** Kevin P. Keefe

**During its heyday, No. 643 and two other 2-10-4s at the rear muscle 13,050 tons up the hill to Albion, Pa.** Bessemer & Lake Erie

King," as Jacobson called it, is home in Sugarcreek. It was delivered to the museum in January and awaits work in the Age of Steam shop, where I caught up with it recently.

To me, the 643 looks overwhelming inside the neat-as-a-pin shop, especially next to smaller engines being restored on adjacent tracks. The 2-10-4 will easily be the largest machine in the museum's collection and should look right at home when it's ultimately parked in the roundhouse next to Nickel Plate 2-8-4 763 and Grand Trunk Western 4-8-4 6325 there.

The story of how a huge engine like 643 even managed to survive is one of those unlikely tales so emblematic of steam. It starts with the Bessemer itself, one of several railroads owned by U.S. Steel, which was single-minded in its rail-



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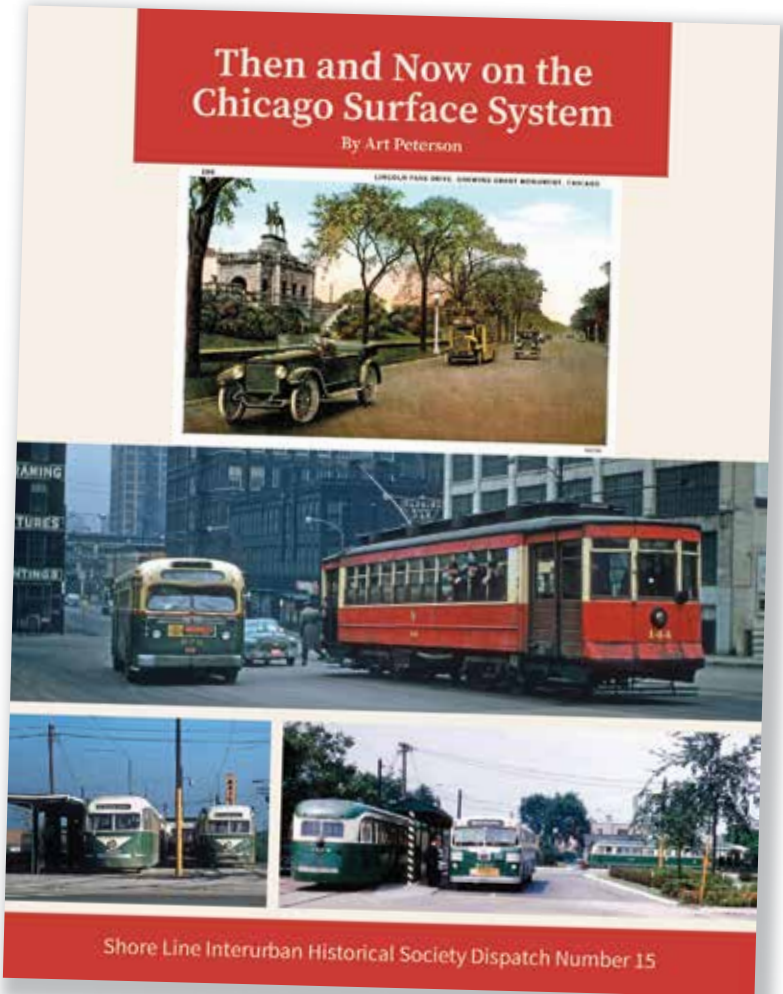
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In July 1969, 643 cools its heels inside the B&LE roundhouse in Greenville. John B. Corns

road operations. When B&LE began ordering 2-10-4s from Baldwin in 1929, the engine had a simple assignment: get iron ore loads off lakeboats at Conneaut, Ohio, head south and deliver them to the end of the railroad at North Bessemer, Pa., where they would be handed off to U.S. Steel's Union Railroad and subsequently delivered to the company's mills. Conversely, get northbound coal loads back to those same lakeboats.

The trick was negotiating the challenging grade between Conneaut and B&LE's main engine terminal at Albion, Pa. Distance wasn't a problem — only 13 route miles — but the elevation was: Conneaut sits at the bottom of the Lake Erie basin at 572 feet above sea level; Albion is at 905 feet. The resulting 333 feet may not sound like much until you're trying to get over it with a 13,000-ton train. A single 2-10-4 on the head end often was matched with a pair of identical helpers at the rear. Think of that — a total of 30 64-inch driving wheels digging in on a single train.

By all accounts, the H-1 engines were hugely successful. "The booming exhausts and massive stature of these powerful machines made an awesome spectacle as they trudged confidently through the hills and small towns of rural western Pennsylvania," wrote steam historian Bert Pennypacker. "As examples of their great size, just consider that the overall total heating surface of their monstrous boilers, including firebox, flues, tubes, and superheater came to a whopping 8,390 square feet, while the weight per driving axle amounted to 74,000 pounds. The combined total weight of engine and ten-

der came to 901,340 pounds, more than that of many articulateds."

Actually, the B&LE's H engines were knockoffs, virtual duplicates of the Burlington's Baldwin-built M-4 2-10-4s. They weren't B&LE born and bred, but that was fine by U.S. Steel. "The railroads owned by U.S. Steel have never given a fig for prestige so long as their owner's ore was hauled to the mills efficiently," concluded *Trains* Editor David P. Morgan.

Dieselization swept over the B&LE by 1952, and soon all the 2-10-4s were retired. Only No. 643 was saved, stored for many years in the B&LE roundhouse at Greenville, Pa., and later moved to various locations around Pittsburgh after its sale to private owner Glenn Campbell.

Meanwhile, Campbell and the 643 had a suitor: Jerry Joe Jacobson, who never really let the 643 out of his sights. Although Jacobson died before the sale of the engine to the museum in 2019, in many ways the crew at Sugarcreek sees 643's acquisition as a personal victory for the founder.

"Jerry's intent to add B&LE 643 to his collection was one that called for the correct alignment of factors to be in place," explains museum Executive Director Pete Poremba. "These all came together after Jerry had passed, but this was still Jerry's plan and ambition. Without that inspiration, Age of Steam may not have undertaken this formidable challenge."

"Formidable" is an understatement. The transfer of 643 from Pittsburgh to Sugarcreek involved months of planning, sorting through clearance and weight restrictions and finding the right contractor partners. In the end, the crew and a crane

operator had to separate the 643 into two huge basic pieces: the boiler, to be transported in a depressed-center flatcar, and the locomotive's frame and running gear, moved atop a standard flatcar. The whole shebang arrived at Sugarcreek on Jan. 31.

Now, the 643 is beginning to get the attention it deserves. Not to run again, mind you. Age of Steam has a good relationship with its current Ohio Central connection, but the line through Sugarcreek is not up to supporting something so monstrous as the 643. There are no plans to steam up the 643.

Instead, in the months ahead, the 643 will gradually come back together as all major parts and assemblies are cleaned, painted, and reinstalled on the engine. They are stored just outside the backshop, carefully arranged in rows and numbered.

At the moment, shop crews are busy on other projects, notably the restoration to steam of Yreka Western 2-8-2 No. 19, a 1915 Baldwin that kicked around in Arkansas and Mexico before ending up on the McCloud River Railroad in northern California, and later Yreka Western. Age of Steam purchased it in 2016 and the goal is to fire it up some time this summer and run it next year.

Then the attention will return to the 643. Its restoration will be meaningful to Chief Mechanical Officer Tim Sposato, who sort of grew up with the engine. He helped owner Campbell retrieve the engine from B&LE's Greenville roundhouse in 1983 and later lived in the Pittsburgh area, helping Campbell with the 643 at various locations around the city.

"Jerry and I spent numerous hours and many trips up to Pittsburgh to talk with Glenn Campbell over the years. For Jerry, the engine was very elusive," recalls Sposato. "Now I get to marvel at it every day when I see it in the backshop. I don't have to drive to Pittsburgh to see it. Isn't that something!"

Indeed, it is. Standing there in the shop, Bessemer & Lake Erie No. 643's massive boiler looming over you, it's easy to identify with the CMO's sense of wonder. Not to mention that of the founder. Mission accomplished, Jerry. ■

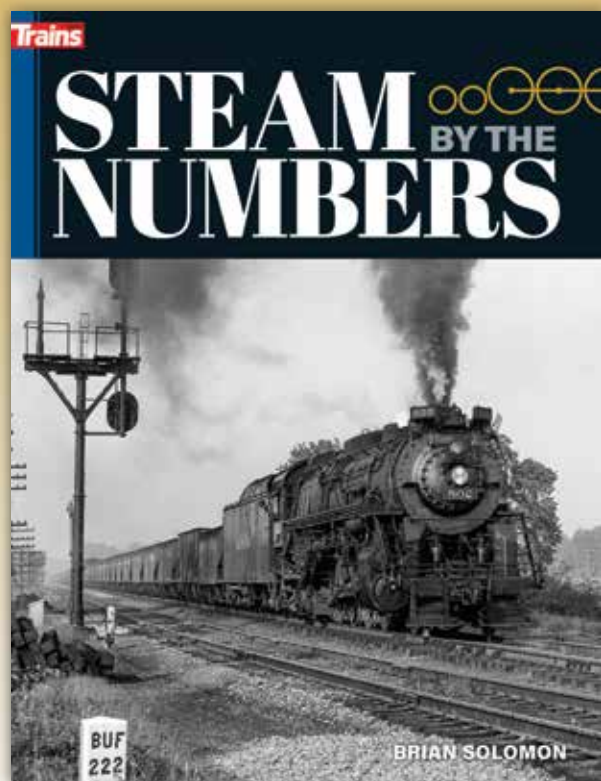


**KEVIN P. KEEFE** joined the *Trains* staff in 1987, became editor in 1992, and retired in 2016 as *Kalmbach Media's* vice president, editorial. His weekly blog "Mileposts" is at *Trains.com*.





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# Smoking mixed on the prairie

In summer 1958, Detroit-area railfan John S. Ingles and his teenage son J. David Ingles ventured west to capture on film the last hurrah of big-time Union Pacific steam in Cheyenne, Wyo. En route, they caught mixed train 248 on its 60-mile run from Loup City to Grand Island. Heavily smoking, 2-8-0 No. 428 is in charge of the train on this day, but it only had a few months to operate before retirement. Happily, this locomotive is preserved, and is being restored to operating condition at the Illinois Railroad Museum in Union.

John S. Ingles, Denny Hamilton collection









Riding with a flagman in UP coach 512 offers an opportunity to shoot an extremely long deluxe train in Wyoming's wide open spaces.





A fourth unit — added to its three sisters at Denver — is ready to face the Rocky Mountains with a 21-car *City of St. Louis* because of a mail train having been added in Laramie, Wyo. E8A 926, E9B 962B, E8B 941B and E8A 941 will be equal to their task.

## » JUNE 1967.

I was 22 years old. I had already worked the previous summer as a Baltimore & Ohio brakeman out of Parkersburg, W.Va. Before that, I had taken a circle trip around the B&O to ride all the remaining passenger lines I had missed before they would become memories. I was getting ready to attend the ROTC Advanced Summer Camp at the brutal Indiantown Gap Military Reservation near Annville, Pa., and be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army. The Vietnam War was raging, and I entertained horrible thoughts about being slaughtered in a rice paddy. But there was one thing in my bucket list I wanted to do, in case the worst happened.

Ride passenger trains to the West Coast!

*Circle trip to the*

# WEST COAST

LATE IN THE PASSENGER-TRAIN ERA, A YOUNG WEST VIRGINIAN

FINDS FASCINATING VARIETY ON SEVERAL WESTERN RAILROADS

BY BOB WITHERS // Photos by the author



## » SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Bags packed, I got up at 2:35 a.m., and my mother took me to the lovely 54-year-old Georgian-style Chesapeake & Ohio passenger station at 935 7th Ave. in Huntington, W.Va. This is the hallowed spot for me where, when I was a second-grader, Mom and I boarded the *George Washington* on my first train ride — Nov. 12, 1952 — for a three-week trip to Florida, recommended by my doctor to clear up my chronic bronchitis.

I quickly noted that business cars 7, 21, and *Chessie* 29 were being powered by generators on the “Carolina” spurs near the west end of the platform, so named because the Carolina Pine & Lumber Co. once existed adjacent to them between 8th and 9th streets.

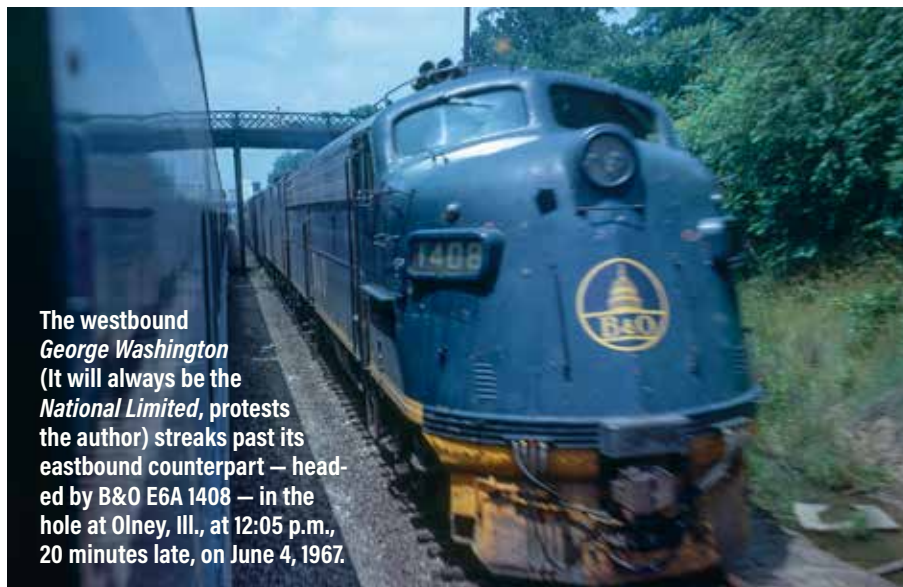
Mom was probably already back in bed, getting ready to face another day of teaching at Guyandotte Elementary School, when, after the *George* rolled into Huntington with three units and 18 cars, I took a seat in St. Louis-bound coach 1620 (one of 58 lightweight cars built by Pullman-Standard for C&O in 1950) and we departed on time at 3:51 a.m. My bucket list was being filled!

In Ashland, Ky., the crew of Alco S4 switcher 5106 split the train into three *Georges* — one section to continue westward first, one to depart for Detroit next, and finally one to depart for Louisville. By the time several cars were removed and added to our train, we departed at 4:35, four minutes late. I snoozed a lot once out of Ashland, but not enough to prevent me from going to diner/lounge car 1920 to enjoy a tasty breakfast that cost only \$1.44.

But it was obvious the Cincinnati-Chicago Division engineer didn’t sleep at all because, after leaving four minutes late, we arrived at Cincinnati Union Terminal at 7:33, seven minutes early!

Having made friends at CUT on an earlier visit, I was allowed to roam the platforms at will. I noted the six cars of B&O train 54, the *Cincinnatian*, ready to depart at 9 a.m., and saw B&O 31, the *National Limited* (nicknamed by fans the “Little Nash” after through cars east of Cincinnati were diverted to the C&O) arrive at 7:55, 15 minutes late, with E7A 1421 and six cars.

Soon it was off to the races — almost literally — when B&O No. 1 left on time at 8:20 a.m., soon doing the 75-mph speed limit. The Washington-St. Louis sleeper and two coaches had been turned on CUT’s loop — just like Eisenhower’s funeral train would be two years later —

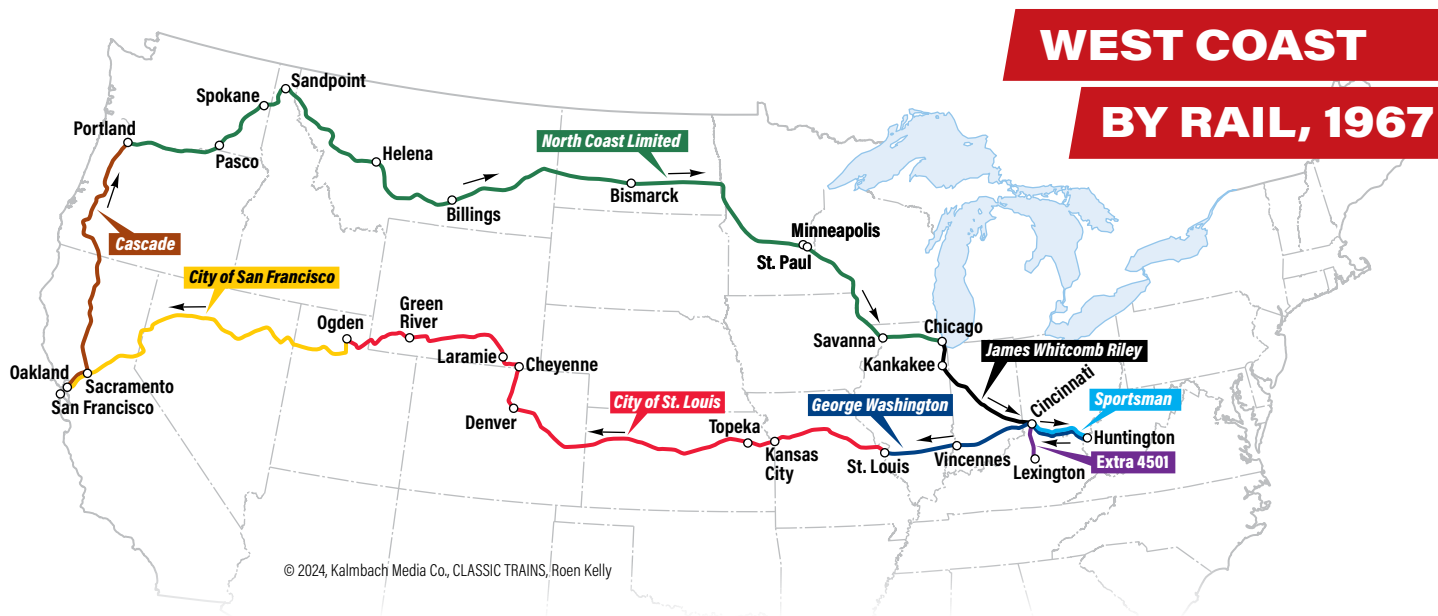


The westbound *George Washington* (It will always be the *National Limited*, protests the author) streaks past its eastbound counterpart — headed by B&O E6A 1408 — in the hole at Olney, Ill., at 12:05 p.m., 20 minutes late, on June 4, 1967.



CB&Q E9A 9988A is heading a special train ready at 2:15 p.m. June 4, 1967, to depart St. Louis for a destination unknown to the author.





Denver's elegant Union Station — which Lucius Beebe saw as a prime example of "railroad Gothic" architecture — takes a sunbath at 8:10 a.m. June 5, 1967.



UP's *City of St. Louis* is ready to depart Denver with dome/coach 7001, where the author will spend most of his Monday gawking at the scenery.



Southern Pacific GP9 3003 arrives with commuter train 145 at SP's stub-end Third Street Station in San Francisco at 2:03 p.m. June 6, 1967.



Departure is 10 minutes away for Southern Pacific train 12, the three-unit, 11-car *Cascade*, in Oakland, Calif., at 3:40 p.m. June 6, 1967.



The author has a roomette booked in sleeper 9026 as the *Cascade* prepares to depart Oakland for Portland, Ore. Time to stop taking pictures and think about a good night's rest.

so they would remain in the same position relative to the rest of the two-unit, nine-car train.

We stopped at Aurora, Ind., from 9 to 9:03 a.m. to check on a problem thought to be dragging brakes. It turned out to be a loose generator belt on the Railway Post Office; it was throwing rocks.

Soon we were in the Central time zone. At 9:37 we raced past an eastbound freight train headed by GP30 6941, waiting in a siding near the Mitchell, Ind., hometown of Virgil "Gus" Grissom, the astronaut who had died the previous January in a fiery accident during a pre-launch test of the Apollo 1 spacecraft. He was a son of Dennis Grissom, a B&O signal maintainer.

We kept going back and forth losing time and gaining time during a six-minute stop at Washington, B&O's division headquarters, and less than a minute at Vincennes. At 11:30, we whizzed past train 93, a freight headed by GP30s 6942, 6968, and 6935 and GP35 3505. A crewman pointing to a man standing near the power told me he was D. E. Faris, St. Louis Division superintendent.

After we met train 2, headed by E6 1408, at Olney I figured it was time for lunch in "coffee shop lounge car" 1351 *Silver Spring*. The car was a combine built in 1949 by Pullman as part of two sets of lightweight cars to reintroduce B&O's *Columbian* to the postwar traveling public. My snack was even cheaper than that earlier breakfast — 77 cents.

After playing tag with the clock, we backed into St. Louis Union Station at 2:20 p.m., 10 minutes early. Schedule padding: it's great!

It was also great that railfan friend Lloyd Lewis and I had been here the previous April to attend a National Railway Historical Society national board meeting. We had gotten permission to spend all day between the legs of Union Station's massive three-track wye and take photos all day long. So, it was almost like coming home. Stashing my stuff in a 25-cent locker, I secured permission again and started shooting: Missouri Pacific train 15 for Kansas City; Illinois Central train 22, the *Green Diamond*, for Chicago; a Chicago, Burlington & Quincy special for somewhere; and Norfolk & Western train 110, the *Banner Blue* (and former Wabash train) for Chicago.

Now it was time to launch myself out into new territory aboard N&W train 209, the *City of St. Louis*, with three units and 13 cars, departing on time at 3:40 p.m.

I got seat 17 in Union Pacific dome





Union Pacific E9A 910, Milwaukee Road E9B 32B, and UP E8A 934 take a 13-car *City of Portland* out of its namesake city at 12:40 p.m., 10 minutes late, on June 7, 1967. The Milwaukee took over the operation of UP passenger trains into Chicago in 1955 and changed its paint scheme to match.

coach 7001, immediately went upstairs, and stayed there, except when I went to UP diner 4807 for a \$3.96 dinner. I scribbled notes furiously about seeing a Rock Island passenger train, CRI&P and CB&Q freight trains, and Virginian hoppers — eight years after that company merged with N&W.

Upon arrival in Kansas City at 8:43 p.m., two minutes early, I kept scribbling. Of special note for me was Kansas City Southern E7 No. 7 and 14-roomette/4-bedroom sleeper *Arthur Stillwell*. Departure was at 9:31, 11 minutes late, aboard UP train 9, the *City of St. Louis*, a three-unit, 15-car beauty. After finding upper 7 in car 93, the 6-section/6-roomette/4-bedroom sleeper *National Frontier*, I went to UP club/dormitory car 6104 to write postcards to my parents and several railfan friends. You remember postcards, don't you? Those were the days of 4-cent postcard stamps and RPO cars, long before cell phones, digital tablets, and social media. Just before we arrived in Topeka at 10:38, six minutes late, I went back and performed the tradition-



The *City of Portland* shown above now crosses the Willamette River on its way out of town. If all goes well, its passengers will arrive in Chicago at 10:15 a.m. on the second morning.



Great Northern SDP40 323, barely a year old, takes four-car train 459 out of Portland enroute to Seattle, Wash., at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 7, 1967.



Here comes their train — SP&S No. 2 — backing into the Portland station. The train will carry, in addition to SP&S cars, NP cars for the eastbound *North Coast Limited* at Pasco, Wash., and GN cars for the eastbound *Empire Builder* at Spokane.

al task from Pullman days of undressing in an upper. After traveling 846 miles in a single day, sleep came quickly.

## » MONDAY, JUNE 5

When I awoke shortly before 7 a.m. Mountain time, I noticed on the wall a slender panel with a knob on it. I slid the panel back, and what do you think I saw? A window! An upper-berth window. And what did I see out that window? Nothing except brown, barren, and flat land,

reminding me I was far away from my beloved West Virginia hills!

I stared out that little window for close to an hour before dressing and preparing to see Denver Union Station, which we backed into at 7:53 a.m., 17 minutes early. Apparently, all that flat land enabled those UP engineers to run like NASCAR daredevils. I spent time admiring the elegant station, spent 75 cents on souvenirs, walked to a freight house to get a timetable, and met up with a couple of

Cincinnati railfan friends, Mike Weber and Jim Odell, who were returning home after enjoying a steam fantrip.

I saw UP train 105, the *City of Portland*, depart at 8:37, 17 minutes late, with 12 cars; and CB&Q's 17, the *California Zephyr*, back in at 8:22, 22 minutes late, with 14 cars. Too soon, it seemed, it was time to depart Denver at 8:42, two minutes late, and head for Ogden. This time we were pulled by four units pulling 13 cars. Mountains must be ahead, I thought.

I had given up my upper for a coach seat, but spent most of the day in "dome-liner" 7001. After, that is, I went forward to enjoy a \$2.01 breakfast in diner 4807. There, I met Paul Slater, a fellow railfan, who was returning to his home in Berkeley, Calif., from school in Moberly, Mo. We topped off breakfast with two Cokes (50 cents) in club/dormitory car 6014.

When we pulled into Laramie, Wyo., at 11:25, a yard crew added eight cars that had arrived on mail train 27 from Omaha. Now we had 21 cars — another reason for four units. Our crew allowed Paul and me to ride with the flagman in his rider coach, 48-seat 512. We departed Laramie on time at 11:45.

I noted that we passed train 106, the *City of Portland*, somewhere between Wyoming and Rock River while both





NP train 26, the *North Coast Limited*, is ready to depart Pasco with F3 6506C, F9B 6703B and F9 6701C on the point of a gleaming 12-car train.

trains were doing 80 mph. Rock River was several minutes short of Medicine Bow, where NBC's *The Virginian* television show was being filmed.

During the stop at Rawlins, Paul and I walked back forward and ate lunch in the 4807. We enjoyed dinner there, too (\$3.50), while we were passing the unusual Devil's Slide rock formation. We reached Ogden at 7:29, a minute early, and after walking to a nearby bookstore we watched a crew switch several trains. UP train 103, the *City of Los Angeles* from Chicago, departed toward the east and somehow toward Los Angeles with five units and 24 cars. At the same time, train

35, the *Butte Special*, arrived from Salt Lake City with three units and 10 cars enroute to its namesake Montana city. Somehow, in the middle of all this, I mailed another postcard on UP RPO/baggage 5907, which was spotted nearby.

I left town at 8:40 p.m., 10 minutes late, aboard Southern Pacific train 101, the *City of San Francisco*. This train had three units pulling 19 cars. I opted to splurge again and secured a roomette aboard SP 10-roomette/6-bedroom sleeper 9041, the train's penultimate car.

At 9:10, we started a 25-minute ride across the Great Salt Lake, which is just a hoe-handle away from Promontory,

where the nation eventually would celebrate the 1969 centennial and 2019 sesquicentennial of the first transcontinental railroad's completion. Then, as my nightly habit was, I read a few verses from the Bible and snuggled up in my comfy roomette.

## » TUESDAY, JUNE 6

At 7 a.m. Pacific time, I enjoyed a scrumptious \$2.45 breakfast aboard coffee shop/lounge car 10405, the car immediately in front of my sleeper. Then I saw something else I never thought I would see: Donner Pass's snow and snowsheds in June. I learned years later that on Jan.



Spokane, Portland & Seattle F7 803 and two sisters await their train coming from a coach yard in Portland.

15, 1952, train 101 bogged down in two large snow slides near Yuma Gap and remained stuck for four days. None of the 226 passengers or crew members died, but two rescuers did. Thankfully, that didn't happen to us.

Shortly after enjoying a \$2 lunch in the same car, we arrived in Oakland on time at 1:20 p.m. Having two and a half hours to see the sites, I boarded — forgive me — a Greyhound bus to ride across San Francisco Bay to check out commuter operations at San Francisco's 13-track stub-end Third Street Station. I spotted a signboard advertising Phil Harris and Jim Nabors appearing at Lake Tahoe. After another bus ride, I was ready to ride the rails again, this time in another snug roomette aboard SP 9106 on train 12, the three-unit, 11-car *Cascade*. I had shelled out another 25 cents for a locker in Oakland and \$1.08 for souvenirs in San Francisco.

Departure from Oakland was on time at 3:50 p.m. Near Gerber, we flew a mile in 51 seconds and passed over a seven-mile-long straight section of track. I saw a block signal go off two miles back.

I enjoyed a 25-cent Coke in car 10284, but that wasn't enough, so I went up to car 10285 for a \$3.37 dinner. (These cars were articulated, something

else I had never seen. Cars 10283-10285 were, from front to back, a kitchen/dormitory car, a diner, and a lounge car.) But the trip was starting to wear me out. I went to bed at 10:30.

### » WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

The next morning, shortly after I enjoyed a \$2.50 breakfast in car 10284, we arrived at Portland Union Station on time at 8:50. During the day, I stashed my stuff in a 25-cent locker, bought 90 cents worth of souvenirs, ate a \$2.15 lunch, and bought some slides in the station. I also visited the offices of Spokane, Portland & Seattle; Great Northern; Northern Pacific; and Union Pacific lines, photographed several trains arriving and leaving; and watched as crews aboard Portland Terminal yard engines 32 and 41 switched cars.

Finally heading east toward home, I departed Portland on SP&S three-unit, 11-car train 2 on time at 3 p.m. The train carried cars for both Northern Pacific's *North Coast Limited* at Pasco, Wash., and Great Northern's *Empire Builder* at Spokane.

We stopped briefly at Camas, Wash., to pick up five Northern Pacific and five Great Northern passengers. As we passed Milepost 74 at 4:35, I spotted 11,225-foot-high Mount Hood, a few miles south

of the right of way. A few minutes later a porter walked through the train announcing that sleeping car space still was available either overnight or all the way to Chicago. I already had my reservation.

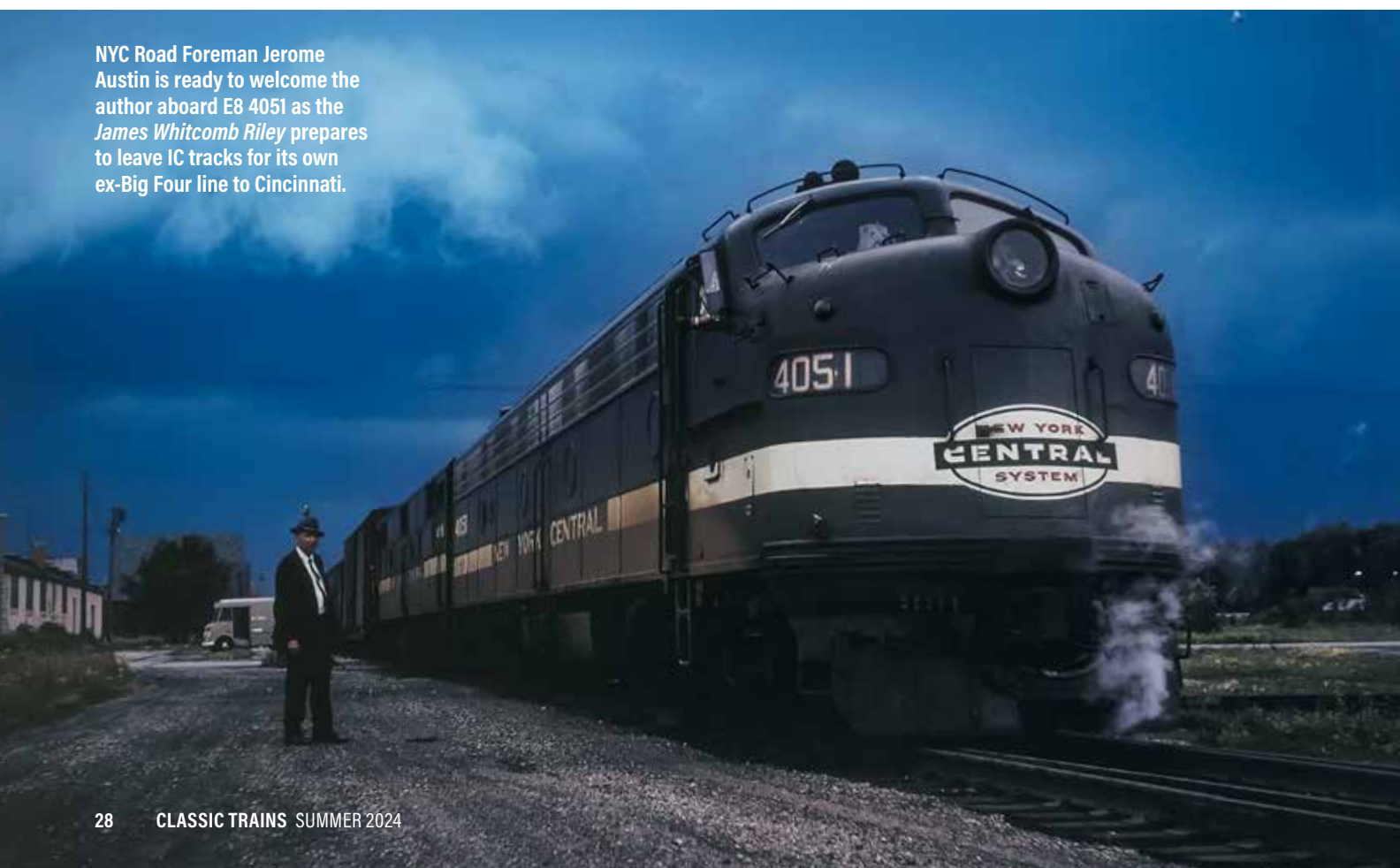
There were a couple more flag stops — well, sort of flag stops, which must be arranged with local agents and wired to the train. We paused at Stevenson at 4:13 p.m. to welcome GN sleeper passengers and their baggage, and at Bingen-White Salmon, Wash., at 4:37 for a GN coach passenger.

When I bought a \$3.85 dinner in SP&S diner *Columbia*, I was joined by a girl named Peggy enroute to Bismarck, N.D., to visit her grandmother. Not bad — both the dinner and the tablemate.

Upon arrival in Pasco at 7:09, four minutes late, the SP&S dropped three cars for NP train 26 — dome car 559, coach 589 and 6-roomette/4-bedroom/8-duplex roomette sleeper 372 — and continued to Spokane. I departed Pasco on the three-unit, 10-car *North Coast Limited* on time at 7:50 p.m.

My reservation was in NP 336, *Loch Awe*, a 24-room/8-double room Slumber-coach. The train was literally deluxe — recorded music, piped-in messages from the dining car steward and stewardess/nurse, and the unusual touch of

NYC Road Foreman Jerome Austin is ready to welcome the author aboard E8 4051 as the *James Whitcomb Riley* prepares to leave IC tracks for its own ex-Big Four line to Cincinnati.







**Lake Street "El" cars 2138 and 2127 stop at Chicago's LaSalle Street Station to pick up a weary West Coast traveler for a joy ride to the end of the elevated.**

semaphore signals. Car 496, a Lewis and Clark Travelers Rest car, was out-of-this-world gorgeous, and shared the train with full dining car 463, both of them placed right behind my Slumbercoach.

Weariness soon caught up with me, and after our on-time arrival in Spokane at 10:30, I went to bed.

## » THURSDAY, JUNE 8

Now in the Mountain time zone, I got up at 7:15 a.m. Between meals in diner 463 — \$2.20 for breakfast, \$1.60 for lunch, and \$2.20 for dinner — I spent most of my time in dome car 559. But anytime I wanted, I could go back to the Slumbercoach and take a nap. What a life!

Stopping in Livingston, Mont., from 10:50 to 11:06 a.m., we traded power as I watched a fellow on a portable 20-foot-high scaffold wash our dome windows. That day was more of the same: eating three good meals in the 463 — \$2.20 for breakfast, \$1.60 for lunch, and \$2.20 for dinner — sightseeing from the dome car, and napping in the Slumbercoach. I could get used to this!

## » FRIDAY, JUNE 9

By the time we arrived in St. Paul, we were on Central time. Now the trans-continental rivals NP and GN were

combined into one long four-unit, 21-car train to continue on CB&Q to Chicago. In fact, when I completed getting the consist, it was so near departure time I had to get back on the train near the head end and walk through the cars. All deluxe!

Maybe I shouldn't have worried. Departure was at 7:33 a.m., 18 minutes late.

Years later, I found out that my seven-dome car train roared through Oregon, Ill., a day after writer William P. Diven arrived there to begin a summer job in the kitchen and dining hall at a YMCA camp near Mukwonago, Wis. [see Winter 2019 *Classic Trains*]. It wouldn't have mattered anyway; my notes indicate I enjoyed a \$2.20 breakfast on car 463 and went back to bed.

We arrived at Chicago Union Station at 2:27 p.m., 27 minutes late. I could have gone on home that day, but delayed my departure for two reasons, as I'll explain shortly. After I gave a 25-cent tip to the Pullman porter, I walked a few blocks with my heavy luggage over to Grand Central Station to put all that stuff in a 25-cent locker and watch B&O trains.

After getting permission, I was accompanied by a B&O policeman to the platforms, where I saw the two-unit, 10-car train 6, the *Capitol Limited*, depart at 4 p.m.; train 7, the *Diplomat*

(ex-*Shenandoah*), back in at 4:30 with one unit and seven cars; and C&O train 8, a *Pere Marquette*, leave at 5:15 for Grand Rapids, Mich., with one unit and eight cars (the last two were Roadrailer trailers).

Bogged down and walking again, I checked into the Fort Dearborn Hotel at 401 S. LaSalle St., across the street from LaSalle Street Station. After stashing my stuff in room 1117 and eating dinner, I took an "L" train to the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State Street, to see Bob Hope and Phyllis Diller in the movie *Eight on the Lam*. I hit the sack at 11:20.

## » SATURDAY, JUNE 10

After breakfast at the hotel, I went by bus to the Adler Planetarium on the lakefront and then rode L trains to the end of the line and back. I caught a Parmalee Transfer Co. bus at 2:11 p.m., which stopped at Dearborn Station before delivering me to Central Station at 2:25 in one of the hardest rains I had ever seen. In fact, the rain flooded the yard so badly that diesels couldn't get to their trains. (Steam engines wouldn't have had that problem.) We were terribly late in departing.

Illinois Central train 5, the *Panama Limited*, got the first priority, backing out of the station and detouring around the

low-level tracks. Then New York Central train 304, the two-unit, 10-car *James Whitcomb Riley*, was next, with me aboard, departing at 5:43 p.m., an hour and 48 minutes late. I had already finished my \$3.53 dinner in diner 449 and had settled in my seat aboard coach 3059. I saw several passengers gawking at a building that had suffered a collapsed roof during the storm.

When we arrived in Kankakee an hour later, the first reason I wanted to delay my departure from Chicago unfolded. NYC officers had responded positively to my request for a cab ride. Road Foreman Jerome Austin took me up to the cab of E8 No. 4051 and introduced me to engineer John McVee. At 6:53, we left IC rails and hit the old Big Four!

and we had planned later in the day to ride a steam fantrip to Lexington, Ky., behind Southern Ry. 2-8-2 No. 4501. We walked to the nearby Holiday Inn, got in bed at 2 a.m., and back up at 7.

Baldwin built the 4501 in 1911. Southern retired the locomotive in 1948 and sold her to the 10.5-mile coal-hauling Kentucky & Tennessee Ry. in Stearns, Ky., where she became No. 12. When the short line dieselized in 1964, fan Paul Merriman bought the engine with \$5,000 of his own money. When Southern President W. Graham Claytor Jr. started a steam excursion program, he used the 4501, which Merriman eventually turned over to the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga.

Anyway, it was a gorgeous Sunday

p.m., we arrived back at CUT. We watched with a bit of nostalgic sadness as the train went around CUT's loop and returned across the Ohio River to Southern's yard in Ludlow, Ky. Not a bad day for a \$9.75 ticket and a \$3.15 box lunch!

There was still more railfan sightseeing to do. We saw a B&O special depart for Parkersburg with three units and 17 cars; PRR train 70 arrive from Chicago with three units and five cars; and B&O 11, the "primarily mail" *Metropolitan*, arrive from Baltimore with eight cars on time at 10:40 and leave for St. Louis on time at 11:30 with the same two units now pulling 10 cars between them and single coach 3673.

Then it was time to go home. Lloyd departed for his Princeton (W.Va.) home at 11:25 p.m. on N&W train 4, the *Pocahontas*, and we Huntington-area folks left town on C&O 46, the *Sportsman*, on time at 11:50 with two units and 14 cars. I'm sure the crew appreciated the fact that they didn't have to wait for the Chicago-to-Newport News sleeper as long as the crew did on the previous night!

## » MONDAY, JUNE 12

We all slept soundly, so soundly that I never recorded who took me home. All I jotted down was that we arrived in Huntington at 3:57 a.m., on time. But what a time I had! Precious memories, indeed!

Thankfully, the worst I had imagined never happened. After my Army commissioning and with the Vietnam War winding down, I spent three months in spring 1971 at Fort Belvoir, Va., where I rode in the cab of United States Army 80-ton GE switcher 1657. I fulfilled the rest of my military obligation in the West Virginia Army National Guard, with summer camps being conducted at breathtakingly beautiful Camp Dawson in Preston County, only 15 miles from B&O's friendly helper station in Rowlesburg, which resulted in many cab rides between 1971 and 1975.

By whatever metric you care to consider, the West Coast trip was a once-in-a-lifetime trip for me. ■

*BOB WITHERS is a West Virginia-based writer and former newspaperman with numerous bylines in Trains and Classic Trains magazines. He thanks Doug Bess, Ralph Barger, Jeff Cauthen, Tom Dixon, John Droege, Larry Fellure, David Gilliland, Greig Goodall, Bill Howes, James Millard, Jim Mischke, Don Munger, Carl Shaver, and Joe Welsh for their help in preparing this article.*

## A BUCKET LIST TRIP BY THE NUMBERS

- **NUMBER OF STATES: 19** — West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.
- **NUMBER OF RAILROADS: 11** — C&O, B&O, N&W, UP, SP, SP&S, NP, CB&Q, IC, NYC, and Southern (plus terminal companies).
- **MILEAGE:** 6,446.8 (C&O 324, B&O 338, N&W 278.1, UP 1,229, SP 1,489, SP&S 231.3, NP 1,669, CB&Q 427, IC 54.5, NYC 248.1 [including short stretches on N&W and Monon by trackage rights], and Southern 158.8).
- **TYPES OF LOCOMOTIVES THAT PULLED ME: 10 models** — EMD E6, E7, E8, E9, FP7, GP9, F3, F9; Alco PA1; and an ex-Southern 2-8-2.
- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Coaches, dome cars, diners, an upper berth, roomettes, and a Slumbercoach room.
- **PRECIOUS MEMORIES:** Countless!

The ride was adventurous, passing through a dust storm and around a tornado — which made me think there was more than rain involved with that collapsed roof. At Templeton, Ind., we began riding over Nickel Plate, Monon, and ex-Wabash tracks before returning to Big Four rails at Altamont. At one point I learned that high speed wasn't limited to the Western roads when we whizzed past NYC train 305 at 83 mph. Too soon, we arrived at Indianapolis and I returned to coach 3059.

## » SUNDAY, JUNE 11

We arrived at Cincinnati Union Terminal at 12:55 a.m., an hour and 50 minutes late, and the second reason for my delayed departure was now at hand. Longtime Huntington railfan friend Maury Hartz was waiting for my arrival,

morning, and the 4501 was ready to depart CUT with a beautiful 15-car heavy-weight train. When we departed at 9:16, Maury and I had been joined by compatriots Lloyd Lewis, Larry Fellure, Jack and Mary Waldeck, and several members of the sponsoring Cincinnati Railroad Club. A 110-volt A.C. hookup was provided in AGS baggage express car 4016 for recording, and box lunches were sold in coach/lounge car 952.

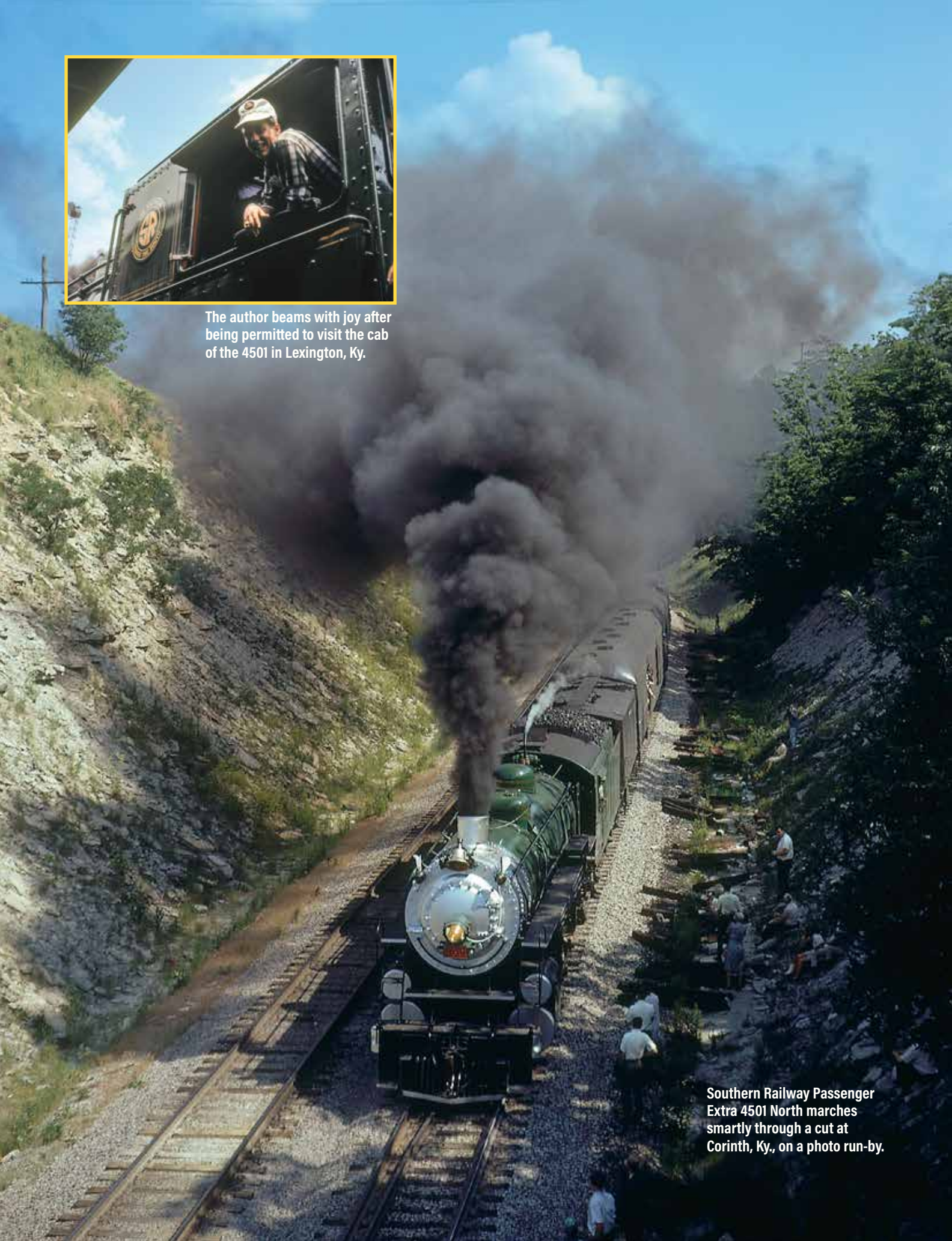
We enjoyed a late-morning photo run-by at Sadieville and picked up a few passengers at Georgetown at 12:10 p.m. Arriving in Lexington at 12:35, the entire train was turned on a wye somewhere south of that point, then departed Lexington north at 3:18 p.m.

After dropping off the Georgetown passengers at 3:41, we enjoyed another photo run at Corinth. Too soon, at 6:33



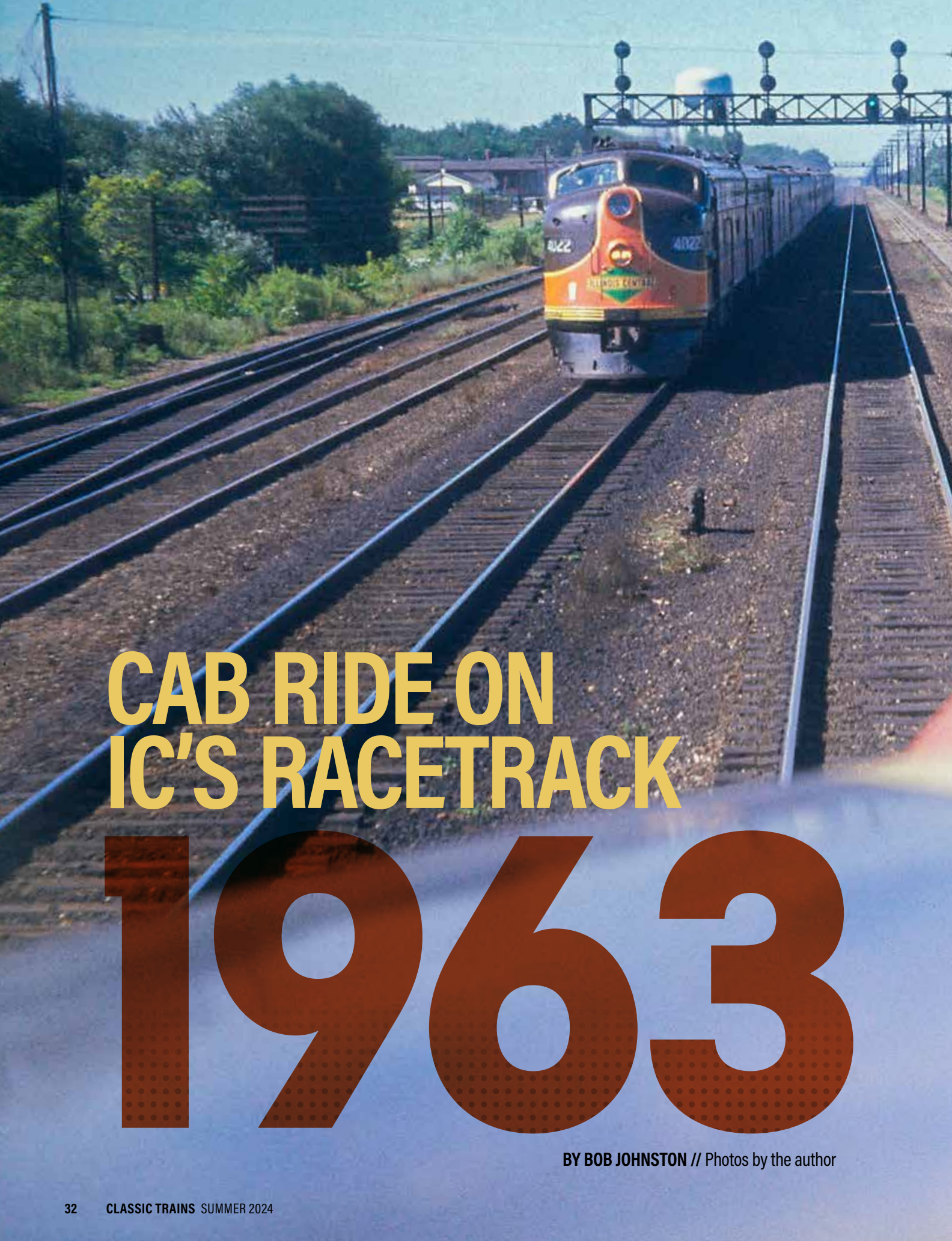


The author beams with joy after being permitted to visit the cab of the 4501 in Lexington, Ky.



Southern Railway Passenger Extra 4501 North marches smartly through a cut at Corinth, Ky., on a photo run-by.



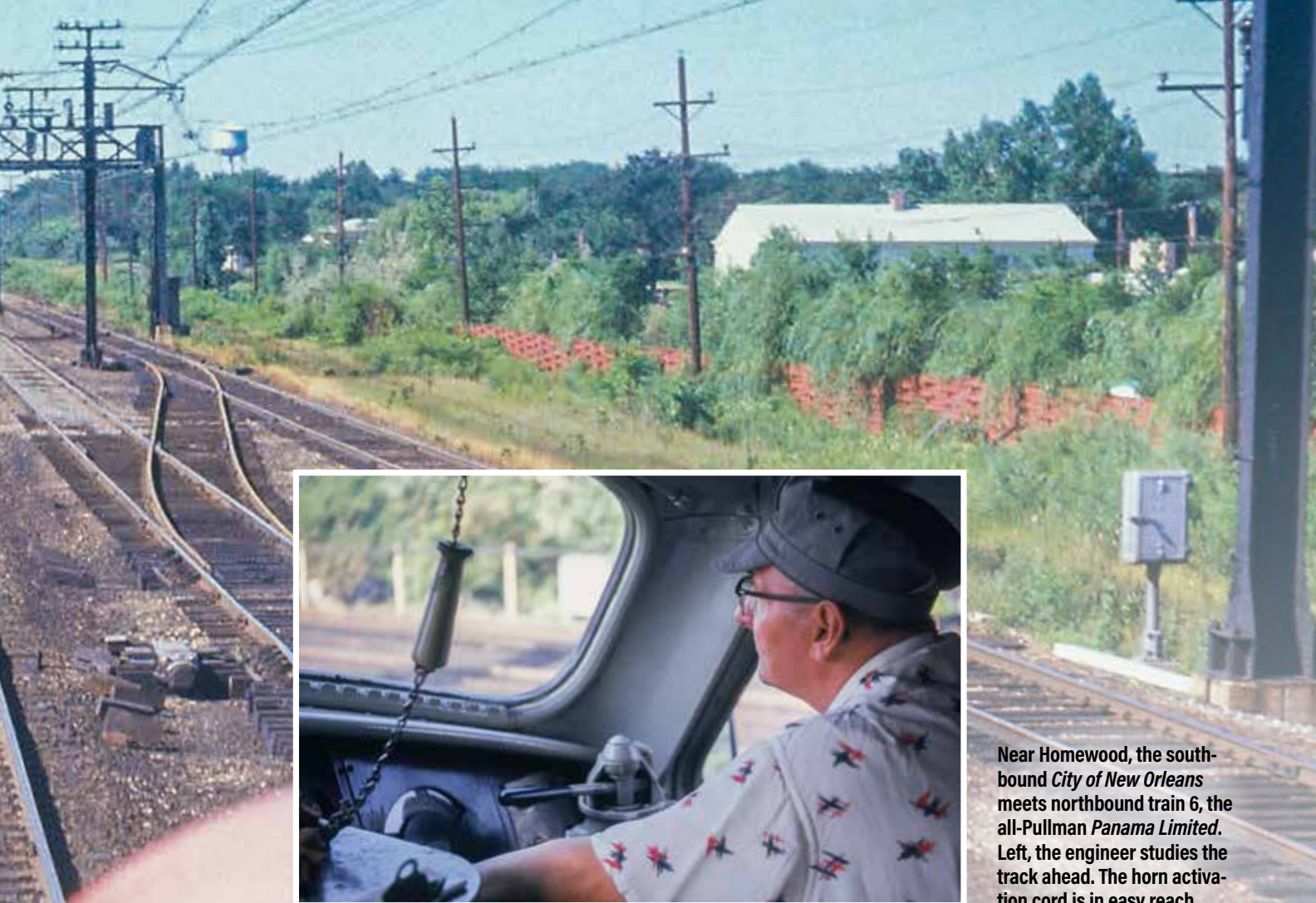


# CAB RIDE ON IC'S RACETRACK

# 1963

BY BOB JOHNSTON // Photos by the author





Near Homewood, the south-bound *City of New Orleans* meets northbound train 6, the all-Pullman *Panama Limited*. Left, the engineer studies the track ahead. The horn activation cord is in easy reach.

## MY *CITY OF NEW ORLEANS* ADVENTURE WAS PART OF A ONE-DAY MIDWEST CIRCLE TRIP THAT INCLUDED THE *WABASH CANNON BALL* AND PENNSY'S *SOUTH WIND*

A single-day Midwest rail adventure awaited when I learned the father of my brother's friend happened to work for the Illinois Central. Checking the hand-me-down *Official Guide* on pages not otherwise frequented, there was his name below the IC's Traffic Department heading: H.S. Powell, Assistant Vice-President, Chicago. "Mr. Powell" apparently learned of my train interest after he had arranged a ride in the cab of the *City of New Orleans* for an important shipper, who returned with rave reviews of the experience.

Although I cut my teeth watching the Chicago & North Western's speedy *Dakota 400* and *Duluth-Superior Limited* while growing up in the northwest Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights, it was easy to become enamored of the *City of New Orleans* from afar, since the streamliner

nearly always landed near the top of Don Steffee's annual speed survey in *Trains Magazine*. The fastest times were in 100-mph territory south of Champaign, where IC had installed Automatic Train Control on its double-track main to permit higher speeds. The *City* was carded at 300 minutes for the 306 miles between Chicago and Carbondale, with nine intermediate stops. The longest of these — scheduled at five minutes — was at Champaign.

That would be my destination on Monday, July 15, 1963. I met Powell at the IC office building early that morning to sign the necessary releases and obtain an authorization letter to the train crew. The letter, from General Manager E.H. Buelow, explained that Robert Johnston is a 17-year-old minor and the son of Richard L. Johnston. I assume the parentage factoid was slipped in to dispel conjecture that the kid was somehow related to Illi-

nois Central President Wayne A. Johnston, who had served in that capacity since 1945. Sure enough, when I ascended the ladder of E8 No. 4026 from the Central Station platform and presented the cab authorization to the veteran engineer who would be taking us south, he gave me a once-over look and started to ask, "Are you...?" I quickly responded with something like, "No, I've never met him."

He and the fireman had a good chuckle, I recall, but details of the questions I asked and the back-and-forth cab banter — other than calling signals — that took place as the orange-and-brown EMDs bounded down IC's speedway over the next two hours to Champaign are buried in some inaccessible corner of the brain. Did I at least write down their names? Nope. Carrying a notebook and, later, an audio recorder on such an adventure wouldn't occur to me for another 25 years.



The engineer exchanges pleasantries at Champaign with the carman topping off the E8's fuel tanks for the fast run south.



The *Wabash Cannon Ball*'s fireman prepares to snare train orders at Tolono, Ill.

Fortunately, the Kodachrome record of the trip withstood the test of time. We passed the northbound *Panama Limited* near suburban Homewood while both trains raced adjacent to IC Electric suburban tracks. The *City* made it to Kankakee in less than an hour after passing a local switch job, then the *Seminole* from Florida somewhere after that. I do remember being given the opportunity to blow the horn through trackside communities with funny names known well from trips down U.S. 45 to the University of Illinois: Chebanse, Ashkum,

Buckley, and Loda.

When we finally arrived at Champaign, the engineer did offer me his Form 44 Chicago clearance and accompanying train orders, the green "flimsies" I had seen operators copy during visits to Chicago-area towers. Scribbled on an attached sheet indicating out-of-service trackage were the names of Conductor Charles Talbot, N.B. Williams (was he the engineer?), and "14 cars."

### PLANNING THE RETURN

Alas, Mr. Powell's *City of New Orleans* cab ride offer was only one-way. Although the IC operated five daily round-trips as far as Carbondale, plus an every-other-day *City of Miami*, the next northbound option from Champaign was the lowly coaches-only *Creole*, which departed more than six hours after the arrival of train No. 1. Powell had arranged for a free ticket back to Chicago on IC No. 8, but I told him I would figure out another way.

That trusty, dog-eared *Guide* had plenty of options in July 1963. The question was with so many choices, what was the combination of connections between east-west and north-south passenger trains that offered unique onboard experiences without a too-late Chicago arrival?

The most intriguing options involved a railroad I was anxious to learn something about: the Wabash. It was high on a bucket list of Chicago-area also-rans, a

list that also included the Monon; neither line was bashful about boasting its own Midwest swagger.

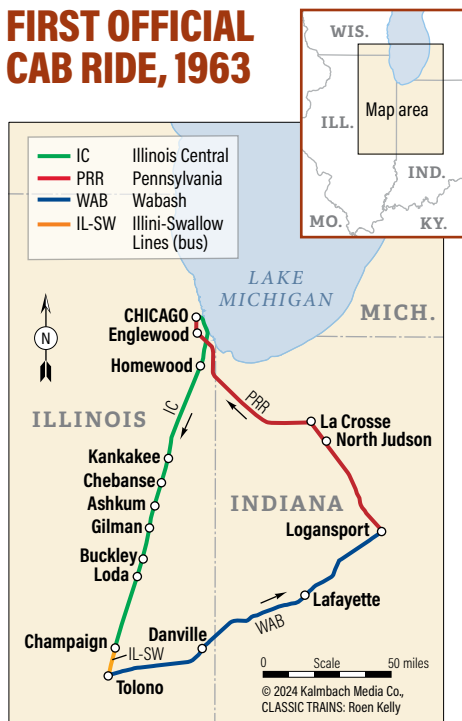
The book of schedules revealed that a "rail tickets honored" bus from Champaign operated by Illini-Swallow Lines served both the eastbound and westbound Detroit-St. Louis *Wabash Cannon Ball* at Tolono, a 10-mile jaunt south. Here was a legendary name-train immortalized in song, so it had established marquee value. Each was scheduled to stop at Tolono between 12:25 p.m. and 12:31 p.m. The *City of New Orleans* arrived in Champaign at 9:50 a.m. Perfect! Now which direction would get me to a train back to Chicago?

Going west, I could take Wabash No. 1 to Decatur, then wait five hours for the northbound *Banner Blue*. Or maybe ride farther to Litchfield, with only an hour and 15-minute stopover until Illinois Central's Chicago-bound *Green Diamond* showed up. The *Guide* helpfully noted the two Litchfield stations were exactly 216 yards apart. Hmm. Though both of these northbounds had dining cars, the *Banner Blue*'s Decatur layover was too long. And in any case, I reasoned it would be hard to top the IC head-end experience.

Heading east, the *Cannon Ball* missed a connection with Monon's northbound *Thoroughbred* at Lafayette, Ind., by a half hour, so the plan I chose was to instead ride to Logansport, Ind., for a rendezvous with the Pennsylvania Railroad's *South*



## FIRST OFFICIAL CAB RIDE, 1963



*Wind.* The *Guide* was far less precise about the distance in Logansport between the Wabash depot and Pennsy's "Van Station," where trains from Florida stopped; "about 2-5 mile," it said. There was also the matter of Indiana time zone confusion: the Wabash 2:58 p.m. Logansport arrival was "Central Standard" and the PRR *South Wind* departure showed 4:55 p.m. "Eastern Standard" for the same city, but the discrepancy meant there was still an hour to make a taxi trip out to "Van," where routes from Louisville and Cincinnati joined west of downtown Logansport.



The eastbound *Wabash Cannon Ball* bounds through the countryside east of Danville, Ill., near the Indiana state line.

## GOOD SAMARITANS ON A NORTH WESTERN TRAIN MASTER

In summer 1958, a kid had the bright idea to row across a northern Wisconsin lake at dusk, then walk north through the forest along a Chicago & North Western branch line. Maybe he would see a train. After about a half-mile hike, the rustling of vegetation behind him revealed a brown bear lumbering out onto the tracks. Uh oh. After standing motionless for at least five minutes with mosquitos biting like crazy until the bear shuffled into the brush, the boy didn't dare walk south. Too risky! Instead, though darkness was closing in, he stepped uncertainly along the ties in the other direction without any return-to-civilization plan. How could he ever get back to the lake?

A faint clanking that soon became louder provided the only possible answer: the headlight of a southbound "Omaha Road" way freight out of Ashland, rounding a curve up ahead. No question — he would have to flag it down! Arms out! Mercifully, a youngish fireman emerged onto the gangway of the yellow and green-striped Fairbanks Morse Train Master to find out the nature of the drama. "There's a bear out there — I have to get back!" was the gist of the boy's plea above the din of squealing brakes and hissing air.

"C'mon up — we'll take you," he shouted.

Whew!

Inside, the seasoned engineer manipulated the levers below lighted dials, making the Train Master gurgle louder as the locomotive grudgingly picked up speed. The hogger smiled, volunteering that he had seen plenty of wild animals' hind ends in these forests; the train scares them off, he explained. Of course, there was no evidence of any bear as we trundled past the site and ground to a halt at the poison ivy patch where the Lake Owen station platform had once been. "Be sure to climb down the ladder facing the engine," the fireman admonished. The local shuffled off south to Hayward, Trego, and Spooner with about 30 cars of mixed freight. Loud yelling emanated from the conductor and brakeman riding the caboose's rear platform as it passed. Were they angry?

And that was my first cab ride. — *Bob Johnston*



The *Wabash Cannon Ball*'s engineer takes a break on the cinders while mail and express are loaded at Lafayette, Ind.



Diner 50 brings up the rear of the eastbound *Cannon Ball* as the train pauses at Logansport, Ind. The car was built for the Wabash in 1947 by American Car & Foundry.

## ON BOARD

You'd think a train with a country song written about it should be more impressive than the regional workhorse that clattered across the IC diamond at Tolono. Lead by an EMD E8 back-to-back with an E7, the overpowered eastbound *Cannon Ball* had two grimy heavyweight baggage cars and two lightweight stainless-steel coaches. Ah, but it did have a full dining car bringing up the rear a few years before snack bar coaches proliferated on such runs, and of course that meant a lunch that back then probably cost less than \$5.

In fact, the daytimer provided basic transportation while managing to link together 18 mid-size and small communities on its 489-mile St. Louis to Detroit daily sojourn. The schedule also showed another 10 conditional stops at rural outposts. And for some reason, the eastbound *Cannon Ball* I rode also paused at up to eight more stations than its westbound counterpart. The extended stop for a mountain of mail and express at Lafayette afforded extra time for a front-end photo. Only recently did I learn the railroad named its new 1949 streamliner af-

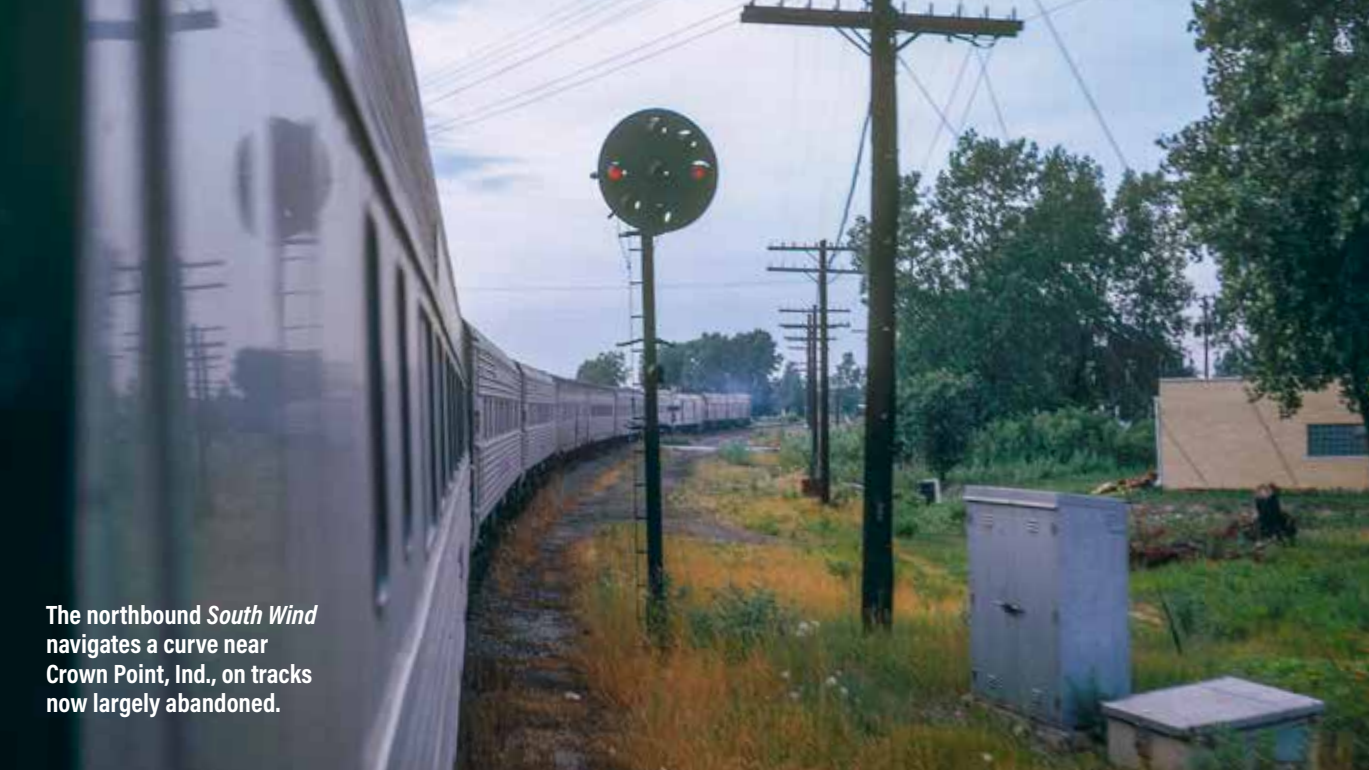
ter the Carter Family's enduring song, which had been written decades earlier, not the other way around. Figures.

By comparison, the northbound *South Wind* growling to a stop around the curve off Pennsy's line from Indianapolis at "Van" didn't disappoint. On a route that would be eventually chosen by Amtrak's organizers for the *Floridian*, the summer consist was loaded with coaches and sleepers from Miami, Sarasota, and St. Petersburg; a diner; and a coach-lounge car. Like the *Cannon Ball*, this Atlantic Coast Line, Louisville & Nashville,

A water tower still stands guard at Logansport's Van Station as the *South Wind* prepares to continue its northward trek along the Pennsylvania's former Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis "Panhandle Route."







The northbound *South Wind* navigates a curve near Crown Point, Ind., on tracks now largely abandoned.

and Pennsylvania conglomeration appeared to do a hefty head-end business for a train that didn't serve its intermediate stops every day. On the other hand, it provided a mid-afternoon departure from Indy that took only four hours to get to Chicago.

The 2 hours, 25 minutes from Logansport wouldn't provide enough time to visit one of the train's feature cars, though why stay in a seat? An already-open Dutch door beckoned, but a young traveler had beaten me to it. With the train easily hitting 70 mph on tracks that

had yet to deteriorate (and would later be abandoned), racing toward the Windy City with the horn blowing and wind whipping through the vestibule was a mesmerizing spectacle for both of us. The boy went back to his seat after about an hour, but I soaked in the exciting ambience on the nonstop run all the way to Englewood on Chicago's south side.

It's hard to say what the best part of this mid-July circle trip out of Chicago might have been. Certainly, the *City of New Orleans* cab ride was a thrilling counterpoint to my first cab ride, a

northern Wisconsin escapade (see page 33). The *Wabash Cannon Ball* amply represented a once-plentiful genre whose declining economic situation was spiraling downward as the country began to invest billions in highways and the U.S. Post Office pulled the plug on its Railway Post Offices. On the *South Wind*, conductors and brakemen passed but made no attempt to chase me away or close the top door. They had to understand that experiencing a mild summer evening at speed was one reason this paying passenger enjoyed taking the train. 🚂



An open vestibule on the *South Wind* has attracted the rapt attention of a young traveler, and the author.

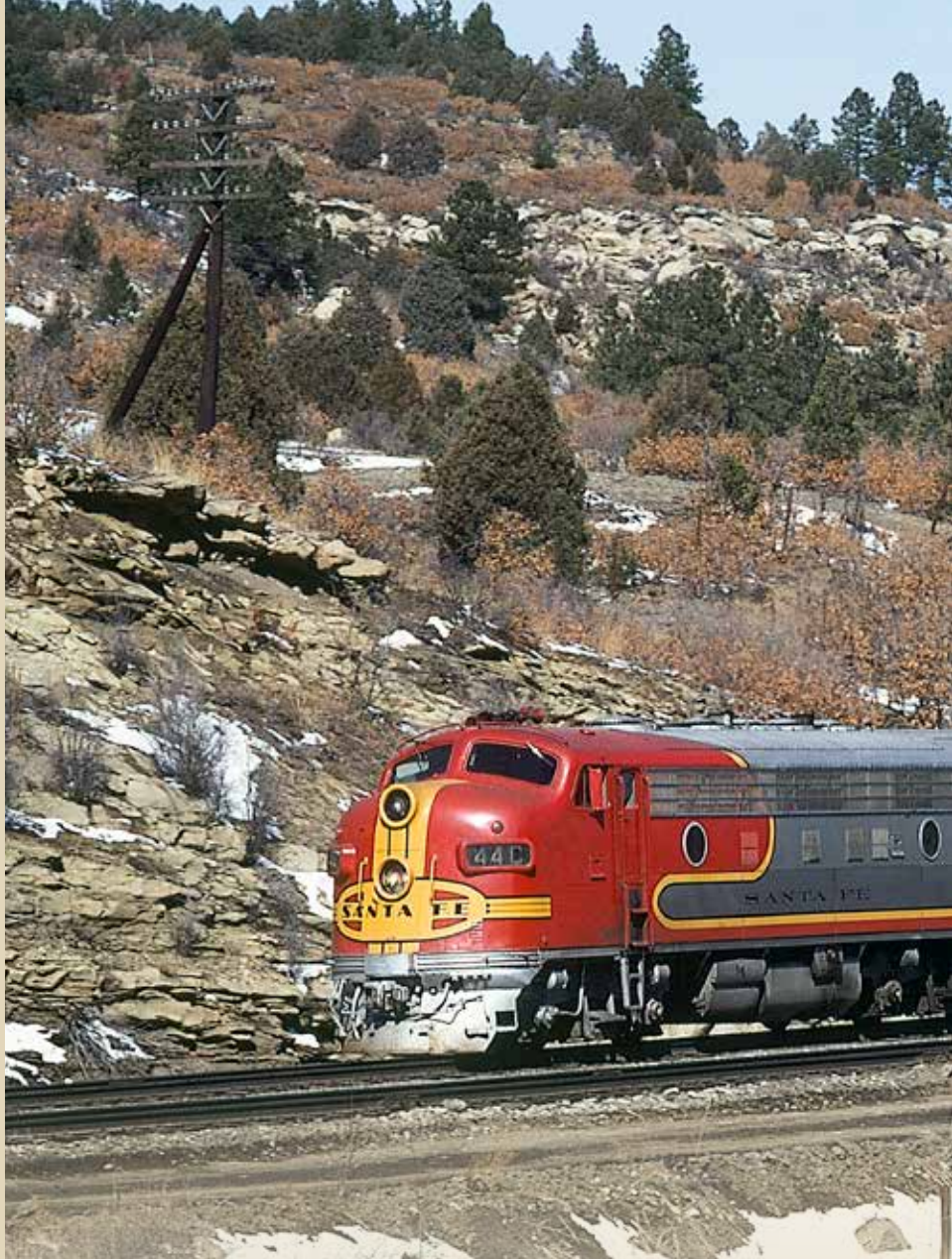
The trip: July 15, 1963	
	<b><i>City of New Orleans</i></b> <b>Illinois Central No. 1</b>
Chicago	7:45 a.m. CST
Champaign, Ill.	9:50 a.m. CST
	<b>Illini-Swallow bus</b>
Champaign	11:55 a.m. CST
Tolono, Ill.	12:15 p.m. CST
	<b><i>Wabash Cannon Ball</i></b> <b>Wabash No. 4</b>
Tolono, Ill.	12:25 p.m. CST
Logansport, Ind.	2:58 p.m. CST
	<b><i>South Wind</i></b> <b>Pennsylvania No. 93</b>
Logansport ("Van station")	4:55 p.m. EST
Chicago	7:20 p.m. CDT
Source: Official Guide, June 1963	



## Less-than-grand Grand Canyon

**In 1968**, there were plenty of “Lost Glory” stories to share about the imploding network of passenger trains across the United States. This is one. We’re watching Santa Fe’s Train No. 23, the west-bound *Grand Canyon*, or more precisely, the remnant thereof. Established as the *Grand Canyon Limited* in 1929, and renamed simply as the *Grand Canyon* in 1947, the train was a workhorse for the Santa Fe. For much of its life, it was heavy on head-end mail and express traffic, served lots of local smaller towns, and often ran as a long train, sometimes in sections. But that all changed for good in 1967. Too many passengers were deserting the railroads — even the beloved Santa Fe — for jet airliners and freeways. Then in 1967, the Post Office took the draconian measure of pulling its remaining mail contracts from the country’s railroads. And the result was what you see here; a now-nameless transcontinental train running all the way from Chicago to Los Angeles with one baggage car and two (sometimes three) coaches. In early 1968, No. 23 climbs Raton Pass in southern Colorado, just a few miles north of the Pass, Raton Tunnel, and the New Mexico state line. Like the entire industry, the Santa Fe could not justify the losses from such a train with few passengers and no mail. And like the entire industry, Santa Fe tried to discontinue this train. The ICC heard Santa Fe’s case, and in a somewhat mysterious and confused decision let Santa Fe get rid of the much more popular *Chief*. But it had to continue operating the vest-pocket sized No. 23 streamliner. The situation was a bit reminiscent of other railroads’ train-off requests at the same time, such as Northern Pacific’s legendary attempts to cut its *Mainstreeter* secondary train between St. Paul and Seattle. In those years, industry folks would often scratch their heads at ICC logic and decisions. When Santa Fe was told they had to keep running the money-losing No. 23, the company still took the high road, continuing to run an on-time and clean train, speeding up the schedule (with no need to spend time at station stops for head-end work), and reinstating dining service. Early on a spring day in 1968, this sequence shows Santa Fe continuing to put its best foot forward with a colorful, if short, train. But now, it is shorn of sleepers, set-out cars, passengers, mail and express, and even its prestigious *Grand Canyon* name. — *Otto P. Dobnick*

Photos: Brian M. Schmidt collection









↓ CN's Thunder Bay station dwarfs CN train 687 on May 13, 1977. Below, passengers await boarding and then appear onboard the two-car RDC train for Winnipeg.







# *A banquet of* **PASSENGER TRAINS**

MY U.S.-CANADA CIRCLE TRIP WAS A DEEP DIVE  
INTO RAILROADING, 1977 STYLE

BY MIKE SCHAFER // Photos by the author

**A**s a passenger-train fanatic, I've managed to enjoy a banquet of intriguing circle trips in North America over the years. One of my favorites — a circle trip that included U.S. and Canadian railroads, but mostly the latter — took place in spring 1977 in early Amtrak and VIA days. Like me, my fellow travelers and my fellow employee at Kalmbach Publishing Co. — Dave Ingles and his wife, Carol — were “mileage collectors,” meaning those who ride unexplored rail routes and kept track of same ... usually in Rand McNally's Handy Railroad Atlas books, which had maps on which routes ridden could be highlighted with felt-tip markers.





↑ At Winnipeg's beautiful Canadian National station, we made our close evening connection from CN 637 to the eastbound *Super Continental*.

→ The morning of May 14, 1977, found us cruising through remote corners of northern Ontario. These were the early days of VIA Rail Canada, so much equipment on our *Super Continental* still sported CN black-and-off-white.





← Our train was delayed account of a sun kink ahead — the temperature was more than 90 degrees — so the crew took advantage of the the situation by positioning our train near a pond, taking out fishing gear, and casting away!

↓ Despite the serious look of our engineer on the RDCs, he was a jovial gent. He said he normally had the shade down on his cabin entrance so that he could “scratch his ass” without being noticed by passengers!



I have to confess, this particular trip began aboard an airline flight out of Milwaukee. We didn't have the time to do the whole circle trip by rail, so Ozark Air Lines took us to Duluth, Minn., where we changed planes to reach the starting point of the rail aspect of our trip — Thunder Bay, Ont., where we spent the night in a hotel. Historically, Thunder Bay was the result of the combining of Port Arthur and Fort William, Ont., and was an important terminal for both Canadian Pacific and Canadian National.

## THE OBSCURE BUT CHARMING

We awoke to unusually warm and humid weather for late spring in this part of Canada, and taxied our way to the large CN office and station complex, in front of which sat a two-car RDC train — our conveyance for the all-day trip to Winnipeg. This was a rather obscure run, and what intrigued us about it was that this CN line dipped back and forth across the international boundary for four station stops in Minnesota.

The 438-mile westbound run — tri-weekly CN train 687 — was protected by a pair of Budd-built Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs). The friendly, laid-back train crews were rather fascinated by the fact we were riding the train to ride the train, not necessarily to get to Winnipeg for some special event (other than to catch another train — eastbound, no less).

The train crew was uber-friendly when they found out we were out for a joy ride, and thus the engineer welcomed us to stand in the aisle beside the cab to watch over his shoulder as we clipped along the miles. He kidded that he normally kept his aisle shade down so he could scratch his ass, if necessary, without being seen by an unsuspecting passenger walking up to look out of the front of the train.

The passenger load out of Thunder Bay included a large number of school kids also out for a joy ride. They detrained at Kakabeka Falls, 23 miles out of Thunder Bay, where a chartered bus took them back to the Bay. Meanwhile, our crew urged us to detrain for photos; they promised they wouldn't leave us behind.

Onward, we began to see that the route was quite rural; some stations were merely shelters. There were numerous lakes, and we could see this was good fishing territory and soon got a close-up look at same. Things were laid back in those days. Somewhere east of Antikokan, Ont., there was a sun kink, and we were going to be held until the rail was straightened out. The train came to a halt in the middle of nowhere, and the train crew announced there would be a short fishing expedition. Say what?

Yup. Once our train was parked, the engineer and conductor headed to the baggage compartment to get their fishing poles and related gear. They invited us to join them, and we did. Honest!

After Rainy River, CN crossed into Minnesota, where four stops were made: Baudette, Williams, Roosevelt, and Warroad. Technically, we were not allowed off the train at those stations without going through customs, but the crew kindly allowed us off for station photos. Our memorable trip ended in the early evening at CN's beautiful Winnipeg station, where we made a tight connection to CN's eastbound *Super Continental*.

It was on this run that we all had our first ride in an open section — the sleepers you might associate with old movies. They have upper and lower berths (beds) protected by heavy curtains on the aisle side. For daytime travel, they convert into semi-private face-to-face seating. I had the upper while Dave and Carol took the lower, all of us enjoying a solid sleep for the night.

We arose to a sunny morning with our *Super Continental* skimming across the plains of Ontario while we enjoyed a full



breakfast in the diner — our first full meal since leaving Thunder Bay. Meanwhile, our berths were made up by our sleeping-car attendant and we returned to what was now a roomy four-person seating alcove.

Across the aisle from us was a CN employee in the process of moving himself and his family — including a dog in the baggage car — from Vancouver to Montreal, where he would change to CN's *Ocean* for the remainder of his trip to Halifax, N.S. We enjoyed conversation with the humorous fellow throughout this segment of our trip, which for us ended in early afternoon at (of all places) Oba, Ont., a tiny burg that is a gateway to area hunting and fishing grounds. Why Oba? This is where CN's transcontinental main line between Vancouver and Montreal crossed the north-south main line of the Algoma Central. Here we would catch ACR's northbound day train coming up from Sault Ste. Marie (a.k.a. "The Sault," pronounced "soo") and ride 50-some miles to the end of its 296-mile run at Hearst, Ont.

We had a fairly long layover between trains at Oba, about four hours. No problem. The stationmaster was another friendly sort who enjoyed good conversation. Dave and I spent much of the time trackside, with cameras at the ready for CN and ACR action — of which there was not much, save for the westbound *Super Continental* in late afternoon.

The ACR of 1976 was quite different than the popular tourist route it is today under CN, with passenger service provided by the province, but the scenery — notably Agawa Canyon — back then was just as awesome as today. Our train ambled in around close to 5 p.m. with but a single GP9 and five cars, a modest affair compared to the *Super Continental*. The passengers aboard were a down-to-earth, jovial bunch, and not quite the kind of clientele you'd find aboard the *Super Continental* and certainly not CP's *Canadian*. In little over an hour, our ride arrived at the train's terminating point, Hearst — a rowdy town in the middle of nowhere along the Trans-Canada Highway. Following an unmemorable supper at a local dive, we checked in for the night at a facility some might consider one of those "no-tell motels."

## HEARST-SAULT STE. MARIE

This was yet another unusually warm spring day, good for vestibuling. The equipment for our southbound run was the same that had brought us north the day before. Now heading south, we began retracing our ACR mileage from yesterday as far as Oba. Ah, but we're traveling the entire distance of the ACR main line down to Sault Ste. Marie, 296 miles.

Once our train was underway, we noted what the train's main duty was: dropping off and picking up fishermen, hunters, canoeists, hikers, and campers along the route, sometimes at locations where there appeared to be no station. Canoes were hoisted in and out of the baggage car and, with a wave from the detainees, our engineer hooted twice and off we went to the next "station" (whether there was a depot or not).

At Eaton, Ont., we met our northbound counterpart. We arrived at Sault Ste. Marie relatively on time, around 5 p.m., thus making what was a bit of a worrisome half-hour-or-so connection with CP train 428, a 179-mile RDC run to Sudbury, Ont.

Down in the United States, the 1971 launching of Amtrak had eliminated all sorts of short-haul passenger trains outside the Northeast Corridor, but Canada was still full of varied interconnected passenger runs, and CP train 428 was one of them. As was the case with our CN ride between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg, the crews on 428 were most accommodating, knowing we were railfans on a joy ride.

↓ Our northbound Algoma Central train arrived at Oba, Ontario, from Sault Ste. Marie with a short but interesting consist that included converted World War II troop cars.







↑ The Algoma Central traversed intriguing North Woods, filled with creeks and deep blue lakes. We were free to ride any of the equipment on our southbound run to Sault Ste. Marie.

← Our mid-afternoon layover at Oba, Ontario, was relaxing. Traffic on the Canadian National main was light, highlighted by the westbound *Super Continental*, shown at the joint Algoma Central-CN depot.



↓ At Sudbury, the Montreal and Toronto sections of the *Canadian* joined to continue west as a single train. Here, Dave and Carol turned back west while I would continue east to Toronto and as far as Syracuse, N.Y.



→ Syracuse, N.Y., was easternmost point of my wandering circle trip. Friend and native Richard Horstmann picked me up from Amtrak 64 in late afternoon for dinner before I began my return trip home on the *Lake Shore Limited*.



↑ My layover at Toronto Union Station on the morning of May 17 was brief, but I did wander the platforms for a bit. A GO Transit suburban train departs at left while a CN FPA4 leads the overnight *Cavalier* arriving from Montreal and Ottawa.



↑ Author Schafer relaxes aboard the eastbound *Super Continental* on the second leg of the multi-part trip with Dave and Carol Ingles. J. David Ingles, Brian M. Schmidt collection

The four-hour-plus run brought us to Sudbury — where the Montreal and Toronto sections of CP's *Canadian* were merged (westbound) or separated (eastbound). This is where the Ingles and I parted company. From there, Dave and Carol turned west for destinations that escape me at the moment, while I was ultimately headed for Syracuse, N.Y., via Toronto and Buffalo.

Similar to the eastbound *Canadian*'s split into Montreal and Toronto sections, in the morning, the *Super Continental* did likewise at nearby Capreol, where I would pick up the eastbound Toronto section of the *Super* around midnight. A shuttle service ran me up to CN's Capreol station, where I boarded the Toronto section of the *Super*.

## TORONTO—BUFFALO—SYRACUSE

I don't recall much about my overnigher to Toronto other than a peek out the window of my sleeper in the wee hours that revealed a strange sight bathed in moonlight — a barren, spooky landscape that looked like the surface of the moon.

Arrival at Toronto was on time, allowing for some photography at Toronto Union Station prior to my boarding my train back to the States. Linking the cities in its name, the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railroad had long intrigued me. A TH&B RDC train provided a handy morning connection to the eastbound *Super*'s Toronto section. I arrived at Buffalo Central Terminal noonish — and it would be the only time I ever arrived at this landmark building, which still stands, before it closed. I was met by Conrail (ex-Erie Lackawanna) engineer and friend Devan Lawton, who gave me a quick tour of what was then still a complex field of railroading once served by New York Central, Pennsylvania RR, Lehigh Valley, Erie, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, and Baltimore & Ohio.

I still had some traveling to do, so Devan dropped me off back at Union Terminal to catch Amtrak train 64, the eastbound Detroit-Toronto-New York City *Niagara Rainbow* — for Syracuse, N.Y., at about 1:30 p.m. Why Syracuse? This gave me an opportunity to spend some time with a particularly treasured friend and mentor, the late Richard Horstmann. Dick picked me up at what was then the ex-NYC belt-line depot near city center and we spent time photographing what was then-new Conrail operations in the area. At that time, Dick worked for New York Attorney General Jacob Javits and was also the proprietor of private car *Lehigh Valley 353*, whose home at that time was Syracuse.

As the day wore on, we fulfilled my need for good Italian food (a staple of Upstate New York eateries), after which we partook of shots of Jameson at a bar in a former Erie Canal lock building, rounding out a most enjoyable day. At the midnight hour, Dick bid adieu as I boarded the westbound *Lake Shore Limited* and, exhausted and a bit loopy, collapsed into my room.

The story of this wild, wandering rail journey wasn't quite over without another surprise. The *Lake Shore* would essentially conclude one of my most memorable train-riding circle trips ever, though the story doesn't quite end with my boarding of train 49 at Syracuse for the trip back to Chicago. The next morning, I headed for the diner for breakfast when who should my wondering eyes discover in the dining car but Kevin P. Keefe, a friend since the early 1970s. At the time Kevin was working for the *Daily Star* newspaper in Niles, Mich. We enjoyed breakfast together as I spun the details of this, the concluding lap of a wonderful circle tour of lower Canada. Little did we know that, in a couple years, we'd be doing a magazine together: *Passenger Train Journal*.

That would be a whole other adventure. ■



Archive Treasures



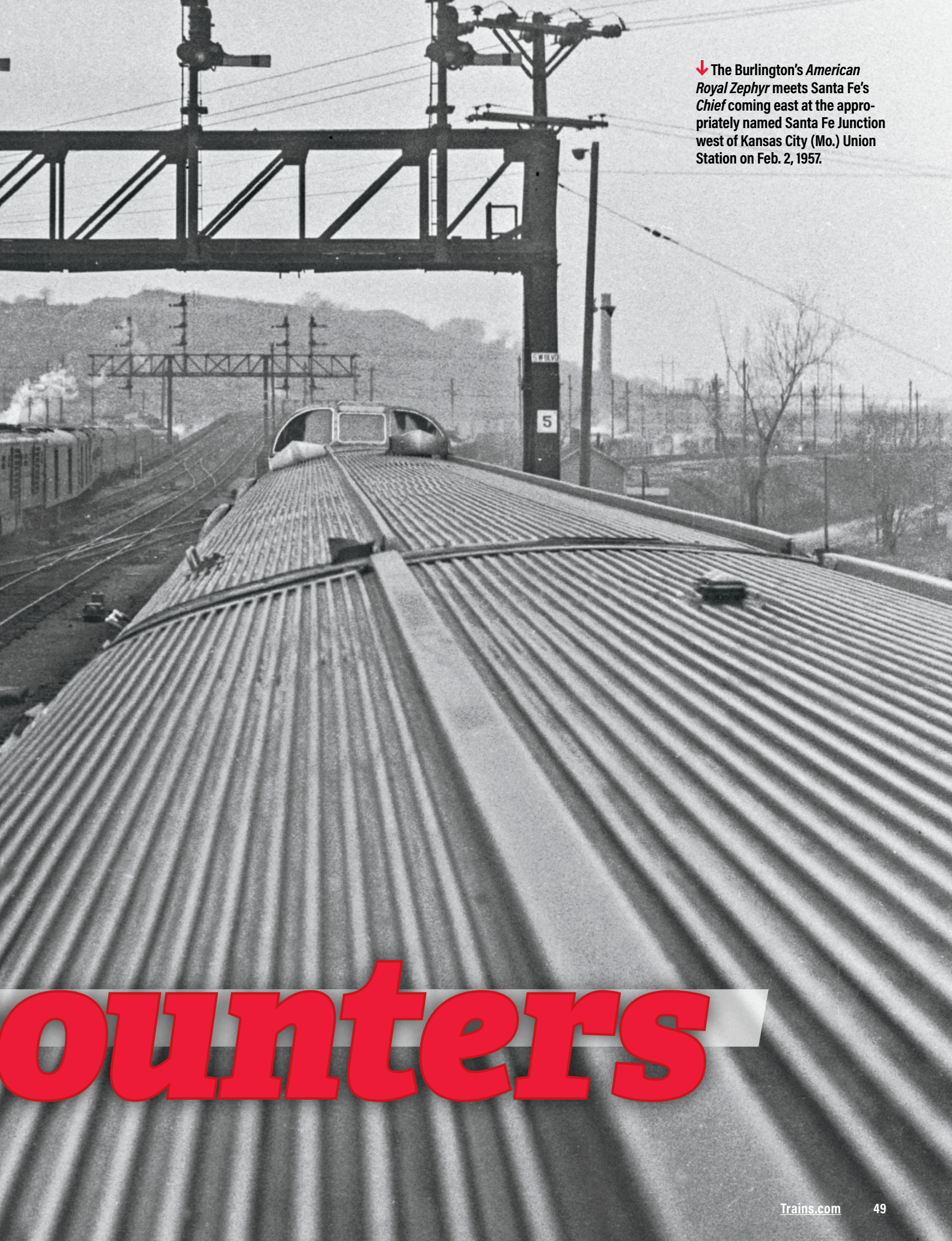
# Brief *Enc*

FROM THE TRAINS WALLACE W. ABBEY RODE

BY SCOTT LOTHES //

Photos by Wallace W. Abbey,  
Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection





↓ The Burlington's *American Royal Zephyr* meets Santa Fe's *Chief* coming east at the appropriately named Santa Fe Junction west of Kansas City (Mo.) Union Station on Feb. 2, 1957.

ounters





↑ In late summer 1953, Abbey took a circle trip out of Milwaukee that included stops in Montreal, New York, Washington, and Cincinnati. To get between the last two cities, he rode Chesapeake & Ohio train 5, the Washington-Cincinnati section of *The Sportsman*. On the sunny afternoon of Aug. 23, he looked back from an opened doorway as his train pulled out of Clifton Forge, Va. The scene included an A-B-A set of F7s on a westbound merchandise freight — possibly train 91, *The Speedwest*, which ran from Norfolk to Chicago on a two-day schedule.

← Union Pacific Challenger 3990 and other locomotives simmer under the coaling tower at Rawlins, Wyo., in October 1955, as seen from the rear car of No. 10, the eastbound *City of St. Louis*.





↑ Abbey captured passengers in the dome car along with Extra 2837 East, what appears to be a local freight train led by a SP 2-8-0, likely in Roseville, Calif.



↑ Through the window of his train, Abbey observed semi-streamlined Southern Pacific class GS-6 4-8-4 running as Extra 4460 West at Suisun City, Calif.

**D**uring the 1940 and 1950s, Wallace W. Abbey rode trains for business and for pleasure. He traveled all over the country by rail, always with a camera, and he frequently staked out prime spots for photography: the front seat in a dome car, an open Dutch door, or the rear of the observation car. He even shot through the glass windows of coach seats, accepting the imperfections of their reflections for the remarkable subject matter he saw just beyond them. He even turned his lens inward to portray his trains' interiors, from lowly commuter coaches to elegant parlor cars.

This was a fascinating time in North American railroading and a formative time for Abbey. He finished his journalism degree from the University of Kansas and worked in the editorial offices of a newspaper and two railroad magazines — *Trains* and *Railway Age* — before transitioning to a public relations career in the rail industry. He traveled frequently and almost always by train.

As anyone who has attempted to make photographs from a moving train (or about any other vehicle, for that matter) knows all too well, the available perspectives are limited. You can't crouch low or climb a hillside; you can't move closer to or farther from your subject. About all you can really do is aim your camera through your one available window to the world. And wait.

As in comedy, timing is everything. The prevailing aesthetic of your own train streaming around a curve is captivating, but quickly becomes repetitive. Many of the best photographs taken from moving trains use that train to frame another subject, but those other subjects can pass quickly. The streamliners Abbey rode were frequently moving at 60 mph or more — sometimes much more. Even stationary objects could be gone within a few seconds of seeing them. The closing speed of another train approaching from the opposite direction could be well in





← At Wahsatch, Abbey's train, No. 10, the *City of St. Louis*, overtook a freight extra east occupying the center siding behind turbine 63 in October 1955.

↗ Interior view of the observation dome lounge car at the rear of the *City of St. Louis*.







↑ Aboard a Milwaukee Road commuter train in January 1953, Abbey recorded a scene to remind us that men wore hats and read in the days before smartphones. Note the vertical “Chicago commuter train fold” on the newspapers.



↑ On the overcast morning of June 27, 1951, Abbey was in the dome near the front of Baltimore & Ohio train 8, the *Shenandoah*, approaching Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, along the Ohio River. Here we see a westbound P&LE freight.

excess of 100 mph.

Abbey seemingly kept his camera constantly at the ready. I can only imagine trying to have a conversation with him in the dome car as he sat in wait, one hand holding his Rolleiflex and one eye always on the track ahead. Even then, he needed the right mix of luck and skill to trip his shutter at just the right moment. There were no motor drives and no second chances.

Despite the limitations and challenges, Abbey made remarkable photographs from the trains he rode. Each image is a scene from the movie of his life and a vignette of a story that, for him at least, disappeared almost immediately after he saw it. Along with my profound gratitude for the fact that these images exist at all, they also fill me with a deep sadness. Each one reveals a compelling place in railroading that has changed greatly and almost always in ways that have made it visually less interesting. And each one is a memento of the briefest of encounters with these places. For me, when I look at these photographs, my yearning to step off the train that Abbey was riding is almost unbearable.

Can you imagine gliding through Rawlins, Wyo., where Union Pacific Challengers and Big Boys simmered in snow under the coaling tower, awaiting their next call to freight service, and not being able to stay for the drama that was sure to follow? Abbey made many great photographs from trackside, too, of course, but when he was riding a train, a destination always beckoned. There was always a family gathering to join, classes to get back to, a story to write, or a meeting to attend. To get there, he rode trains. Their tracks promised proximity to the railroad world, and the journeys afforded him time — brief as it may have been — to take it in. 📷



# *By train to* **Hay River**

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME TRIP  
OVER THE NORTHERN ALBERTA  
RAILWAYS AND THE GREAT  
SLAVE LAKE RAILWAY

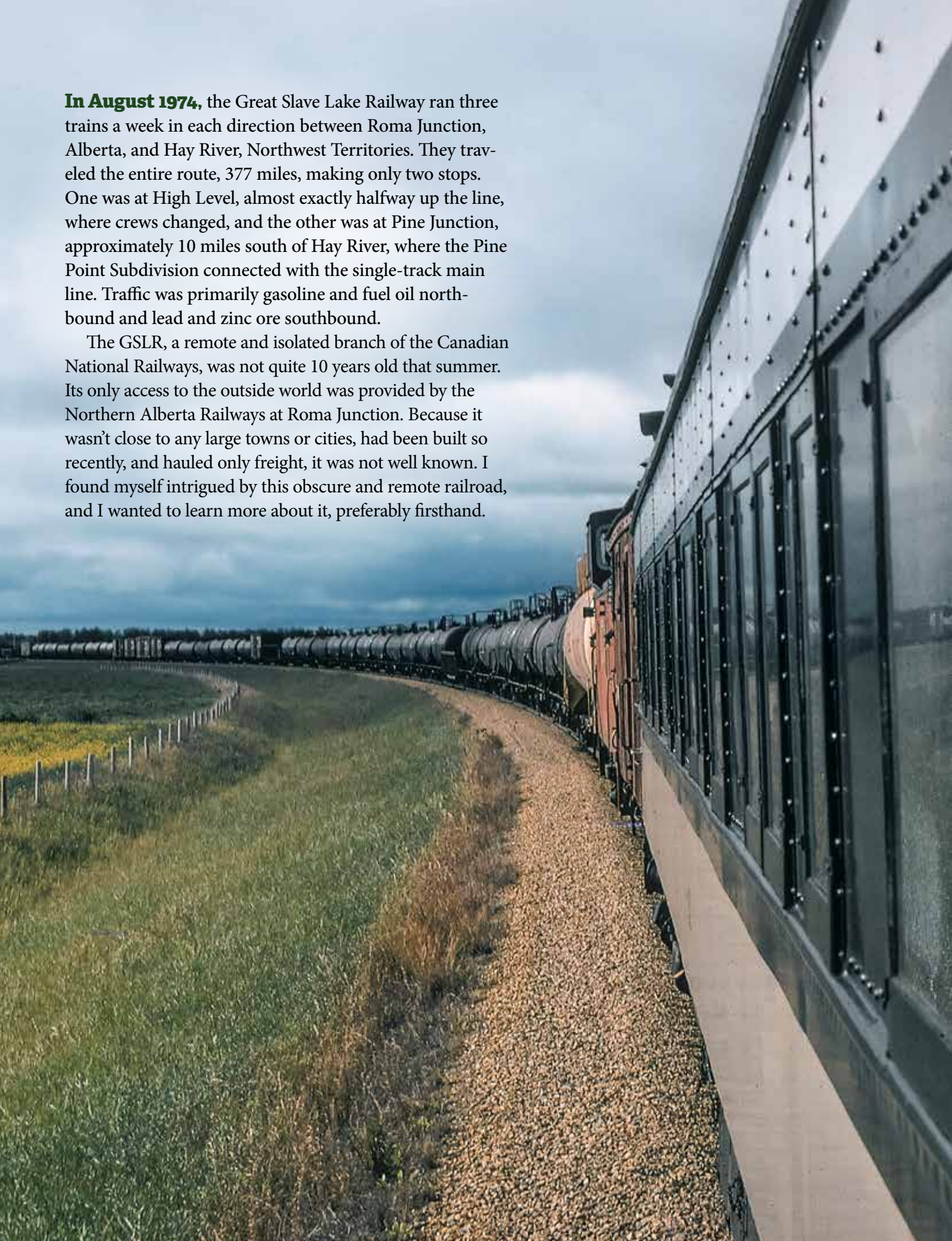
BY JAMES B. ARMSTRONG // Photos by the author

Last leg of the trip: Extra 4150 South is  
back in agricultural country, south of  
Deadwood, 44 miles from Roma Junction.



**In August 1974**, the Great Slave Lake Railway ran three trains a week in each direction between Roma Junction, Alberta, and Hay River, Northwest Territories. They traveled the entire route, 377 miles, making only two stops. One was at High Level, almost exactly halfway up the line, where crews changed, and the other was at Pine Junction, approximately 10 miles south of Hay River, where the Pine Point Subdivision connected with the single-track main line. Traffic was primarily gasoline and fuel oil northbound and lead and zinc ore southbound.

The GSLR, a remote and isolated branch of the Canadian National Railways, was not quite 10 years old that summer. Its only access to the outside world was provided by the Northern Alberta Railways at Roma Junction. Because it wasn't close to any large towns or cities, had been built so recently, and hauled only freight, it was not well known. I found myself intrigued by this obscure and remote railroad, and I wanted to learn more about it, preferably firsthand.







Train 31 takes the siding at Morinville, Alberta, for the meet with first 40, led by GP9 No. 211. The Geep arrived in 1958 as 208 but was given a new number after a 1959 collision.



CN business car 62 rests at Roma Junction. It will serve as home away from home for the next four days. The yard is filled with tank cars full of fuel oil and gasoline bound for Hay River, N.W.T.

Two years earlier, in June 1972, I rode the NAR's mixed train from Dunvegan Yards (Edmonton) to Waterways (Fort McMurray) and back, a memorable round-trip that took four days to complete. I kept notes and took photographs, then wrote an article about the experience. It was published in Canada in 1973 and was later reprinted in *The Headlight*, the NAR's employee newsletter. (An account of my trip appeared in Fall 2007 *Classic Trains* as "Mixed Train Through the Muskeg.") Emboldened by the article's success, in spring 1974 I wrote to G.D. McMillan, CN's regional manager of operations in Edmonton, asking for permission to travel over the GSLR.

He was understandably skeptical. "On the G.S.L. Railway, we operate freight trains only with a caboose for the train crews' accommodation," he replied. "There are no eating facilities enroute other than at High Level. The terrain north from Roma Jct. lends itself to mixed farming; however, from High Level north, it is desolate and for the most part tundra. Because of the isolation and inadequate facilities, we have not encouraged train travel on this route."

But it was clear he was taking my request seriously, because he went on to say, "However, it is possible that we could make an exception in your particular case. In the event that you were to travel on the G.S.L. Railway, it would be necessary to sign the proper release forms, obtain transportation, etc."

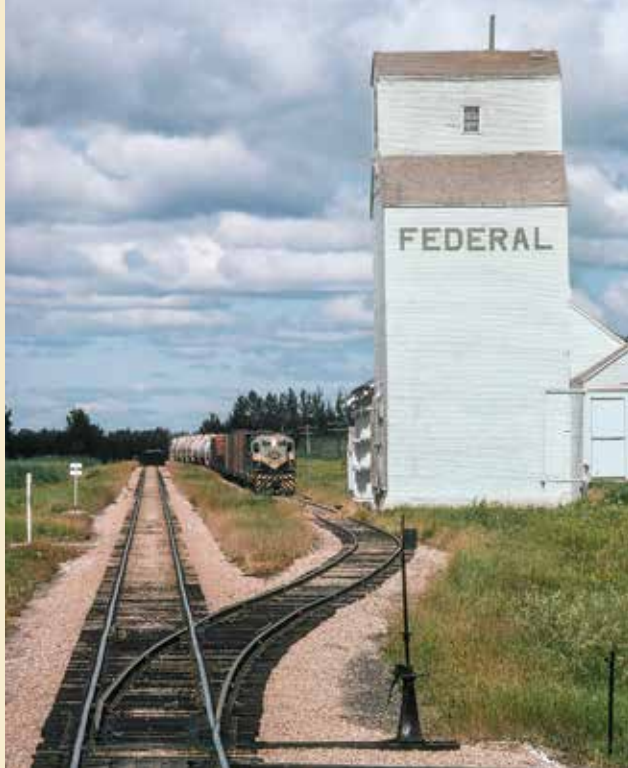
I wrote back, thanking him for his letter and restating my interest. I suggested that mid-August would be a good time for such a trip. His subsequent reply was music to my ears: "Regarding your request to ride on the Great Slave Lake Railway this summer: this we will grant." Yes!

## GETTING THERE

First off, I had to find a way to get to Roma Junction, a tiny spot in western Alberta and a long way from Washington, D.C., where I was living at the time. The logical solution was to travel there by train, and so I got in touch with K.R. Perry, general manager of the NAR. Although we had never met, Mr. Perry and I had exchanged numerous letters following my trip to Fort McMurray. He proved generous with his advice and assistance, and offered me passage aboard NAR train 31, the daily westward freight, which I could ride as far as McLennan, and then, the following day, aboard the NAR's Roma Junction Turn, for the final leg of the trip.

My grand excursion commenced on





According to the NAR employee timetable, the eastward train is superior in direction, but here second 40, running well behind schedule, has taken the siding at Jarvie to let 31 get past.

the morning of Aug. 13, 1974. The starting point was Dunvegan Yards, on the outskirts of Edmonton. Train 31 that day was made up of 101 cars and had four GP9s on the point. In the lead was NAR 209. The other three locomotives came from the NAR's co-owners, CP Rail (two units) and Canadian National Railways (one). I began the daylong trip in the bay-window caboose, in the company of conductor Gordon Anderson and brakeman Joe McLaughlin.

At Morinville, 20 miles and 45 minutes up the line, we went into the hole for a meet with the first section of eastward train 40. When the crew got word that the second section was having motive-power problems, we continued northward, finally meeting it at Jarvie, milepost 74.3. By then I was riding the head end. It was crowded in the cab; also aboard was the road foreman of engines, Frank Dove.

We changed crews at Smith, the end of the Edmonton Subdivision and the start of the Slave Lake Subdivision, which was named not for Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories, my ultimate destination, but instead for Lesser Slave Lake in Alberta. (Hardly "Lesser" — the lake is more than 60 miles long.) Leaving Smith, train 31 crossed the Athabasca River and proceeded west. It was evening when we stopped at the hamlet of Enilda, at MP 227.0. The NAR did not have hot-box



detectors, so there were designated inspection points along the line, and Enilda was one. The crew checked the train over and gave the OK, and we pushed on to High Prairie and then to McLennan.

Here are some miscellaneous details gleaned from the NAR employee timetable: length of the Edmonton Sub, 131.0 miles; length of the Slave Lake Sub, 131.2 miles. Such symmetry! Time allotted for train 31 to travel from Dunvegan Yards to McLennan, 10 hours 40 minutes; top speed, 35 mph; average speed, 25 mph.

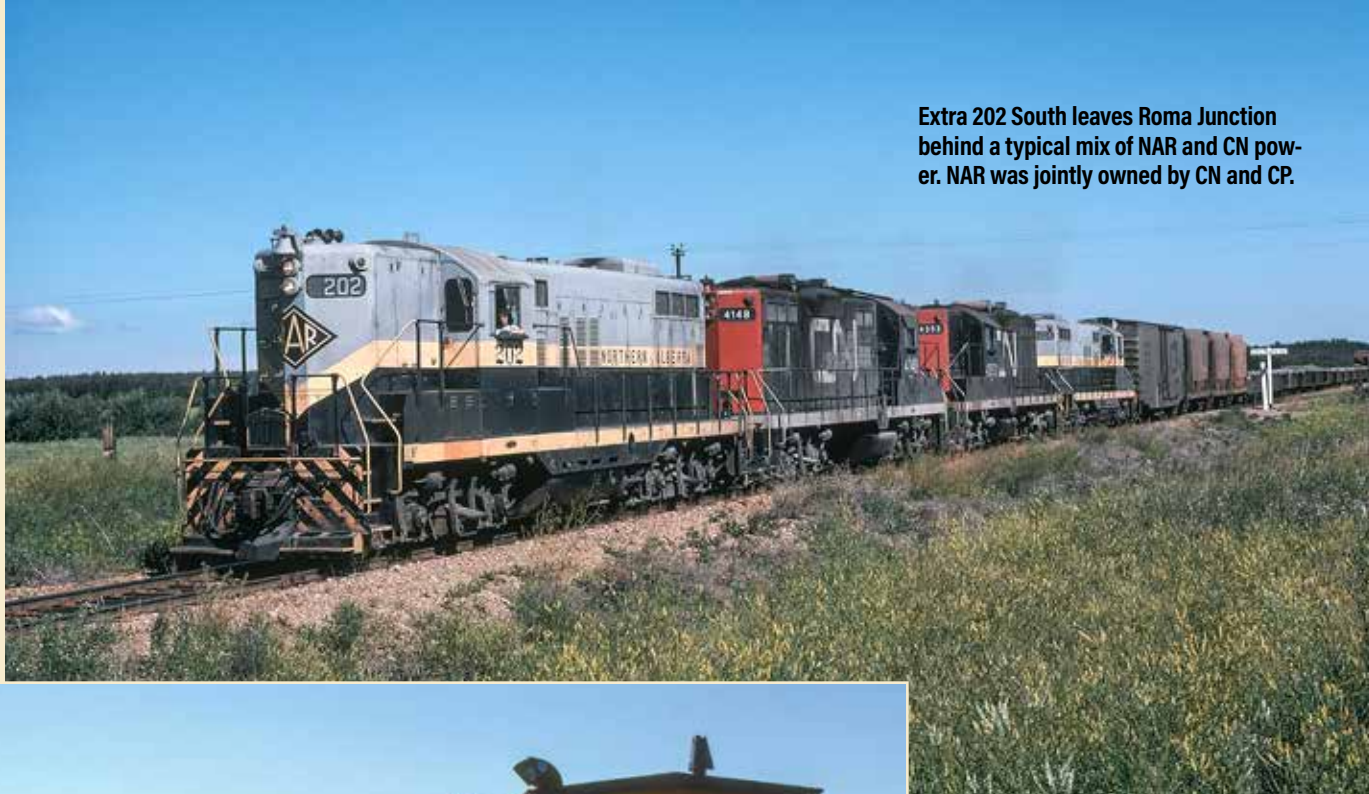
When we reached McLennan, I derailed and got a room at the hotel across the street from the station. It was a short night, and I was up before dawn to catch Extra 204 North, the Roma Junction Turn. (Train 31 departed during the night,

continuing on its journey to Grande Prairie.) This morning's train had 46 cars, and it too was powered by four GP9s, with NAR 204 and 202 bookending CN 4353 and 4148. Just west of the station, we left the main line and turned north on the Peace River Sub. Our destination, Roma Junction, lay 60 miles up the line.

The weather again was ideal. The vast Alberta sky was a brilliant blue, and the panoramic views across the valley of the Peace River were magnificent. At one point I looked out the left side of the cab and saw where the Smoky River flowed into the Peace. Some early morning fog had not yet burned off, and the scene was calm and peaceful. But the valley presented a challenge: for the seven miles between Judah and the town of Peace River



**Extra 202 South leaves Roma Junction behind a typical mix of NAR and CN power. NAR was jointly owned by CN and CP.**



**Turning the camera, one sees some of the CN's newer 100-ton center-dump ore cars, brought down from Pine Point Mine by the GSLR's triweekly train.**

the ruling grade was 2.4%. Like all north-bound trains, Extra 204 North was required to increase brake pipe pressure to 90 psi and make a standing air brake test at Judah before proceeding. (The NAR's GP9s were not equipped with dynamic brakes. In 1975, the railroad purchased four dynamic-brake-equipped SD38-2s from GMD. They were based at McLennan and used primarily on trains to and from Roma Junction.)

We crept down the hill at 15 mph, slowing to 10 mph as we crossed the Heart River Bridge near the bottom of the grade. After that came the 11-span, 1,840-foot-long bridge that carried the NAR over the Peace River. Once on the western side, we began the steep climb toward Roma Junction, 12 miles away. The grade here was only slightly less severe, 2.2%.

Upon arrival at Roma Junction, the NAR crew set out our train and then made up a new consist of loaded ore cars and empty tank cars to take back to McLennan. As was common at the time, this train — Extra 202 South — had to double the hill from Peace River to Judah.

### **RIDING IN STYLE**

Two days earlier I had visited the headquarters of CN's Mountain Region in downtown Edmonton to sign the releases that would give me permission to travel over the GSLR. While there, I learned of a change of plans. I would not be making the journey to Hay River on my own. Instead, I would be accompanied by Bill Harmon, the railroad's trainmaster and acting superintendent, and also by his wife, Donna. This was puzzling news. Would the three of us be

sharing space with the crew in the caboose and taking turns riding up in the cab? No, we wouldn't. And that was because we were going to make the trip aboard the finest of all conveyances: a business car. Wow!

The GSLR was indeed rolling out the red carpet, and the proof was there in the yards at Roma Junction. CN business car 62 presented an incongruous sight, a startling touch of elegance at the tail end of a workaday freight train. It was as long as two boxcars and was painted in CN's familiar pale gray and broad band of black. It rode on four-wheel trucks, and its most notable feature was the observation platform at the rear. Inside, the car was both fancy and functional. There was a small but complete kitchen; a wood-paneled dining room; sleeping accommodations that consisted of a master bedroom, two standard bedrooms, and a "secretary" room; and, at the rear, a lounge with two large windows and a door that opened onto the observation platform.

The car had been built in 1913 by the Pullman Co. as a tourist sleeper for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. It was damaged by fire in 1915 and was rebuilt as a business car. It received steel siding in 1926. Over the course of its career on the CN, it carried the numbers 55, 89, and then 62. It had been based in Winnipeg, later in Moncton, N.B., and then in Campbellton, N.B. It was modernized in 1965, and in 1974 the CN transferred it to Edmonton.



The northward GSLR train to which car 62 was attached was made up of loaded tank cars and empty hoppers, gondolas, and ore cars, 111 cars in all. It was powered by four GP9s. Bringing up the rear was a caboose, followed by an old boxcar that contained a generator that supplied power to the business car, followed by car 62.

Early on, a variation of the standard CN paint scheme had been applied to four GSLR-assigned GP9s. They were painted yellow, with typical CN orange-red ends. The “wet noodle” CN logo appeared in black on the sides, and “Great Slave Lake Division” was written across the battery covers, below the cab window. Some cabooses were also painted yellow, as were the 100-ton-capacity center-dump ore cars built in 1965 by National Steel Car. But this different color scheme did not last long, and the locomotives in charge of our train and the caboose at the rear wore traditional CN livery.

Shortly after 5 p.m., the cry of “Highball!” came over the Motorola. The Harmons and I were sitting in the business car’s lounge at the time, anticipating our train’s departure, and we braced ourselves for a sudden lurch as the slack was taken out of more than a hundred cars riding ahead of us. Instead, we glided forward smoothly and quietly. It was an impressive performance. “Just like number one,

Stevie,” called Bill over the radio, letting Frank Stephenson, the engineer, know that the entire train was now moving, and complimenting him by comparing our departure to that of CN’s crack passenger train, the *Super Continental*.

### A ROUTE WITH ROYAL APPROVAL

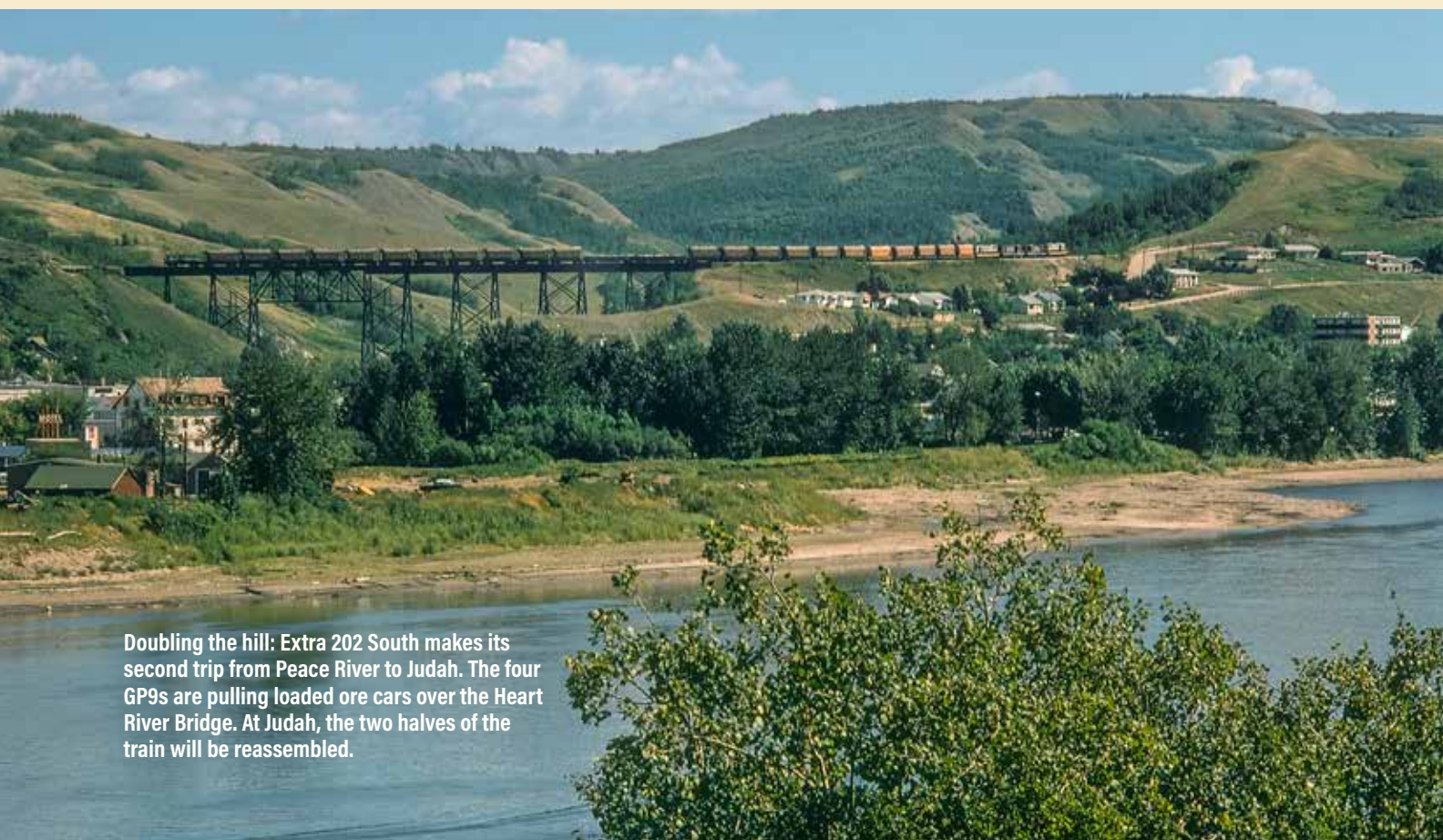
When the idea of constructing a railroad between Alberta and the Northwest Territories was under consideration in the 1950s, all parties agreed that the primary goal was to reach the southern shore of Great Slave Lake, where large quantities of lead and zinc were known to exist. The question was how to get there. A route through eastern Alberta was considered. It would start at Waterways (northern terminus of the NAR line that I rode in 1972) and head north to Fort Smith, N.W.T., then cut northwest toward the lake and on to the town of Hay River. A selling point of this route was its potential for opening up large areas of remote territory, principally for mining, petroleum exploration, and hydroelectric power. In contrast, a proposed western route would start at Grimshaw, a town on the NAR’s Peace River Sub, and run north to High

Level and then on to Hay River, with a branch line to the ore deposits. This option would serve an area that was already home to well-established agriculture. In addition, a railroad here would be easier and cheaper to build, not least because of the proximity of the Mackenzie Highway.

A three-person royal commission was appointed in June 1959. It held hearings and collected data, then delivered its findings a year later. One commissioner was in favor of the eastern route, while another preferred the western. Ironically, the commission’s chairman wasn’t sure a railroad was needed at all. However, he thought that, of the two alternatives,

the western route made more sense. The government agreed, and surveying began in December 1960. The southern terminus ended up between Grimshaw and Peace River — Roma Junction — which was the site of a ground-breaking ceremony on Feb. 12, 1962. Less than three years later, both below budget and ahead of schedule, the GSLR was completed. On Nov. 18, 1964, a train with 36 cars of ore left Pine Point, bound for the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co.’s smelter in Trail, B.C.

**Some early morning fog had not yet burned off, and the scene was calm and peaceful. But the valley presented a challenge: for the seven miles between Judah and the town of Peace River the ruling grade was 2.4%.**



Doubling the hill: Extra 202 South makes its second trip from Peace River to Judah. The four GP9s are pulling loaded ore cars over the Heart River Bridge. At Judah, the two halves of the train will be reassembled.





An unexpected feature of the GSLR's Manning Subdivision is this bridge over the Meikle River. These cars are heading back to the lead and zinc mine at Pine Point.



The dials above the window at left show the air brake pressure, the time, and the train's speed. The view out the back is typical of the Meander River Subdivision near the 60th parallel.

## HEADING NORTH

The slack remained stretched out as our train contended with the steady climb from Roma Junction to MP 8, but neither here nor anywhere on the GSLR did the grade exceed 0.6%. We passed through the rich farmland that Mr. McMillan had alluded to in his letter. Crops included durum wheat, oats, barley, and flax seed. At Manning, MP 55.3, there was a long siding with five large wooden grain elevators built beside it. In addition, this part of the province is where most of Canada's clover honey comes from, and we saw beehives at the edges of many fields.

The highlight of the evening was the crossing of the Meikle River, 18 miles north of Manning. Although the river is modest in size, the valley is deep and wide, a dramatic interruption in the largely uniform terrain. To get across it, the CN built an impressively large bridge, 154 feet high and 1,730 feet long, with timber approaches of 147 feet and 250 feet. Construction took place during the winter and spring of 1963, when temperatures fell as low as -50°F. Complicating matters, the south approach was built on a 6-degree curve. On a railroad where curves were gentle and tangents extended for miles, the horseshoe-shaped stretch of track between MP 72 and MP 76 was unique.

Like the rest of our accommodations, car 62's dining room was spotless. There were newly laundered linens and polished silverware that bore the distinctive CN emblem. A silver dish on the dining table held fresh fruit. The galley was well stocked, and additional supplies were carried in the boxcar. As the train continued northward toward Keg River, the Harmons got to work, eventually emerging from the kitchen with a full dinner. There were no oysters or champagne on the menu — despite our iconic surroundings, we did not dine like railroad tycoons — but the food was good and plentiful. After we had eaten, I was put in charge of the cleanup. It was an agreeable division of labor that held throughout the trip.

Outside, the skies that had been threatening all evening finally broke, and as we rolled on into the gathering darkness the rain began to beat heavily against the windows. When we arrived at High Level, MP 182.9, Bill and I went out on the back platform and lit the markers.

## A VAST WILDERNESS

Our departure from High Level was delayed by the late arrival of the south-



bound train from Hay River, and when I awoke early the next morning we had traveled only as far as MP 250. But this worked in our favor, since it allowed us to see more of the Meander River Subdivision — the northern half of the GSLR — in daylight.

We were now traveling through a very different landscape. Gone were the cultivated fields and fenced-off pastures; instead, we were in the middle of a vast wilderness of black spruce, jack pine, and birch. To pass the time while waiting for my traveling companions to appear, I rode in the front vestibule of the business car. I unlocked the top section of the Dutch door, swung it open, and latched it, then stood at the open half-door. As I watched the scenery slip past, mile after lonely mile, the weather changed abruptly. One moment the sun was shining; the next, it started to rain. Then the sun came out again, and the tamarack and aspen sparkled.

Later that morning we crossed the 60th parallel, which marks the border between Alberta and the Northwest Territories. As expected, our train didn't stop until it reached Pine Junction, MP 368.8, where we paused to set

out the empty ore cars. Then it was on to Hay River, the end of the line and the destination of all the tank cars.

From early May to mid-September, Vale Island, the commercial and industrial part of the town, was a scene of nonstop activity. It was here that barges were loaded with the gasoline and fuel oil that we had delivered, and also with every conceivable type of commodity needed in the settlements and outposts scattered around the Northwest Territories and the Canadian Arctic. There were no roads north of Yellowknife or west of Fort Simpson, and everything had to be delivered by water. Barges pushed by powerful diesel tugboats traveled down the Mackenzie River all the way to Inuvik and often far beyond — as far as Spence Bay, for example, a small settlement on Boothia Peninsula so distant that only one trip could be made each year, late in the summer, when the ice was rotten enough to permit passage.

Car 62 and the auxiliary boxcar were set out on a siding for the 24 hours we were in Hay River. Bernie Plaquin, a local CN employee, was our genial and informative guide to the area, giving us a

detailed tour of Vale Island and showing us the town of Hay River on the mainland, then accompanying us the next day on a trip by car over the Mackenzie Highway to Fort Providence. A highlight of my brief visit to the Northwest Territories was seeing the northern lights. The aurora borealis is not as spectacular in August as it is in, say, January, but I was mesmerized by the misty pale-green swirls that danced across the sky above Hay River that night.

## TYING UP AT ROMA JUNCTION

Late the next afternoon, with the business car once again bringing up the markers, we left Hay River with a long string of empty tank cars. At Pine Junction we added 35 cars of ore that had arrived earlier in the day from Pine Point Mine, the open-pit operation located at the end of the

54-mile-long Pine Point Sub.

During the railroad's first decade of operation, lead-zinc ore constituted the major part of its business, as anticipated. The original guarantee of 215,000 tons of ore per year was easily exceeded; in 1968, for instance, the GSLR hauled 630,000 tons, about 8,500 cars' worth. The smelter at Trail, B.C., was the primary destination, but the concentrate was sometimes shipped as far away as Japan and India. Fuel oil and gasoline were

hauled north in significant quantities, but they were necessarily seasonal commodities, and over the course of a typical year ore cars outnumbered tank cars by a wide margin. In addition to these mainstays, trains carried chemicals, building materials, and steel pipe north and agricultural products and forest products south.

Today's train, designated Extra 4150 South, was powered by the same four GP9s that had brought us north. I finally got a chance to photograph them while we were at Pine Junction and saw that, unlike the NAR, the GSLR ran their Geeps long-hood-forward. Once the switching was completed, we sat and waited for the brake line of our 112-car train to charge. It took a while, and dinner that evening was prepared and consumed without the gentle rocking and swaying we had grown accustomed to on the northward trip.

It was still light when we departed Pine Junction, and it remained light late. But it had been a long day, and the soothing, repetitious clickety-clack, clickety-clack of our train traveling over jointed rail at a steady 30 mph proved soporific.

When we arose the next morning, we

were well south of High Level. As Extra 4150 South rolled through Manning, past Deadwood, and on to Leddy, the Harmons and I breakfasted and cleaned up, then packed our bags. Just before noon we eased to a stop in the yards at Roma Junction. Our grand journey was finished, and my first (and, so far, only) trip aboard a business car was at an end.

I still had many miles to go before I was back home on the East Coast, and the majority of those miles were by rail: on CN's *Super Continental* from Edmonton to Sioux Lookout, Ont., with a lay-over in Winnipeg; on CN's biweekly mixed train 278 from Sioux Lookout to Thunder Bay, Ont.; and lastly on CP's *Canadian* from Thunder Bay to Toronto. It goes without saying that each of those segments was fascinating as well as highly enjoyable, especially from the vantage point of half a century later. But my trip on the NAR and the GSLR to Hay River was even more than that. It was unique. Incomparable. The best! ■

*JAMES B. ARMSTRONG thanks Ed Faggart of Lincolnton, N.C., for requesting this article and for providing valuable help with the history of the GSLR. He also thanks Maria Martins of the Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum for information about CN business car 62.*



**When riding on the rear platform, always stay alert and always hold on to a grab iron — the slack action from more than 100 cars can be sudden and is often dangerous.**





*Flambeau 400, train 153, stops at Green Bay during winter 1968-69. The train has just been reduced to two coaches, with its baggage-tap, Green Bay coach, diner, and one Ashland coach having been pulled from the train and sent back south.*

Three photos, Mike Schafer

# Chicago & North Western's bilevel *Flambeau 400*

Passengers enjoyed top service between to northern Wisconsin on bilevel equipment

**Into the 1960s**, Chicago & North Western passenger trains blanketed the Upper Midwest, especially in Wisconsin — a popular vacationland until the jet airliner beckoned travelers instead to the likes of Southern California, Miami, and Las Vegas. In the late 1950s, new C&NW management saw the writing on the walls of the railroad's majestic North Western Terminal in downtown Chicago that the future of the intercity passenger train involved a guillotine.

This did not go over well with Wisconsin, which threatened to block train-offs unless some sort of agreement could be made. The result? The state established an agreement with C&NW to upgrade selected principal trains while chopping runs that had fallen victim to competitors (notably Milwaukee Road). The result? C&NW's lucrative Chicago-Milwaukee-Green Bay corridor would stay busy and

with all modern lightweight equipment (notably that from the discontinued *Twin Cities 400*) and new bilevel rolling stock for the *Peninsula 400* and the *Flambeau 400*, both of whose routes extended well beyond Green Bay to Ishpeming, Mich. (393 miles), and Ashland, Wis. (450 miles), respectively.

North Western made a wise move here. Already, in the 1950s, the railroad had established a modernized suburban train network fanning north and northwest of Chicago with bilevel Pullman-Standard rolling stock (some of which remains in service). To upgrade the *Flambeau* and *Peninsula 400*s, C&NW ordered more P-S bilevel stock but outfitted with long-distance interiors: reclining seats, rotating seats for parlor-car service, cheery wall

coverings, and luggage compartments. Lightweight, single-level dining and club cars from discontinued trains (notably the *Twin Cities 400*) were rebuilt with false roofs to match the new bilevel coaches and parlor cars.

Some of you readers have already figured out the long story. Should these trains ever be discontinued (which of course happened when Amtrak began operations), then C&NW could simply modify the coaches for suburban service — although the reality was that the cars

**Serving the storied North Woods territory of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, the *Flambeau 400* became a favorite name train for this writer, who rode this train in the mid-1960s to do some vacationing.**





400s - Chicago & North Western		
Train	Cities served	Route miles
Capitol 400	Chicago - Milwaukee - Madison	167
City of Milw. 400	Chicago - Milwaukee	85
Commuter 400	Chicago - Milwaukee	85
Dakota 400	Chicago - Huron - Rapid City	940
Flambeau 400	Chicago - Ashland	452
Green Bay 400	Chicago - Sheboygan - Green Bay	213
Kate Shelley 400	Chicago - Boone	340
Minnesota 400	Wyeville - Mankato	191
Peninsula 400	Chicago - Ishpeming	392
Shoreland 400	Chicago - Green Bay	201
Streamliner 400	Chicago - Milwaukee	85
Twin Cities 400	Chicago - Minneapolis	419
Valley 400	Chicago - Appleton - Green Bay	213



Car 600 interior coach section shows bilevel gallery type seating with reclining seats. Jim Scribbins, Milwaukee Road Historical Association collection



Southbound train 216 passes its namesake station on Jan. 3, 1971, through the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in northern Wisconsin. This was a scheduled stop at a road crossing.

were sold to Amtrak.

Serving the storied North Woods territory of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, the *Flambeau 400* became a favorite name train for this writer, who rode this train in the mid-1960s to do some vacationing. I never covered the entire 450-mile route and nearly 12-hour ride to Ashland, though, detraining instead at Rhinelander, Wis.

The *Flambeau 400* was an efficient operation. Northbound, the train left Chicago in late morning, allowing for an excellent lunch before arriving at Green Bay in late afternoon. There our northbound train met the southbound *Flambeau*. During the extended stop, the station switcher pulled the baggage-tap-lounge car, coach-parlor car, and diner off the front of the northbound train and shoving them onto the back of the southbound train. Very efficient!

Of course, as the '60s grew to a close, the cutbacks began. *Flambeau 400* service north of Green Bay became seasonal only — summer and the Christmas/New Year period. On Jan. 3, 1971 — the next-to-the-last day of *Flambeau 400*



Train 216 stops at Rhinelander, Wis., on Jan. 3, 1971, the second-to-last trip north of Green Bay.

holiday service — three of us photographers followed the southbound run out of Ashland as far as Antigo, Wis., when a snowstorm forced us to cut and run back to Illinois.

At this time, the new Amtrak law was already in effect, prohibiting railroads that had signed on to join Amtrak to discontinue any of their intercity trains until

April 30, 1971. My claim — arguably, I suppose — is that, in a sense, on that snowy day in January 1971, we had photographed an intercity passenger train that would be the first intercity passenger train to be discontinued per the Amtrak law. (Yes, the Chicago-to-Green Bay portions of the *Flambeau 400s* did make their last runs on April 30, 1971.) 📷





# Chattahoochee Valley Railway

**What would eventually become** the Chattahoochee Valley Railway began in 1896 as a 4-mile line laid by West Point Manufacturing Co. from a connection with the Western of Alabama at Lanett, Ala., southward to the company's textile mill at Langdale. At its peak, the railroad was 45 miles long running from a junction with the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic at Standing Rock southward through Lanett to a connection with the Central of Georgia at Bleeker. One mile of rail was yard trackage in West Point, Ga., the location of the road's headquarters, but the rest of the railroad was in Alabama. The shop was in Lanett, about 200 yards west of the Georgia line, though many early visitors to the road didn't know the difference between the two locations.

In 1932, the Great Depression saw the 17 miles of line between Lanett and Standing Rock removed, leaving the CHV as a 28-mile road from West Point to Bleeker. A 2-8-0 purchased in 1936 from the Tennessee, Alabama & Georgia became the short line's first eight-driven

locomotive. The engine was given the number 21 and served the CHV in some capacity for 25 years. Even after the road dieselized in January 1947 with the arrival of new Alco S2 No. 100, No. 21 saw intermittent use each year thereafter as a backup for the diesel or as the power on a directors' special pulling the road's heavy six-wheel trucked Pullman car, shown at right in March 1960. With its final run in April 1961 on an excursion train, No. 21 was retired. Its replacement as a backup to the No. 100 was an Alco HH900 from the Birmingham Southern, which retained its original No. 85 on the CHV roster.

West Point-Pepperell Inc. became the new owner of the CHV in 1965. The Pepperell side of the business soon allocated money to upgrade the short line's locomotive roster. Thus, in August 1966,

an EMD SW1500 numbered 101, riding modern Flexicoil trucks, and wearing a yellow carbody, red lettering, and black top, arrived new at Lanett. No. 100 was then shopped for a needed overhaul plus repainting into the new scheme. Once the S2 was back in service, No. 85 was scrapped.

Soon after No. 100 returned to service, it became apparent that No. 101 was way more locomotive than was needed for the CHV's normal operations. As a result, the S2 was put back in daily service, shown at right switching at Fairfax in March 1973. The SW1500 thus became the latest standby unit.

A dam construction project on the Chattahoochee River that began in 1969 caused the CHV to reinstall 3 miles of railroad northward from Lanett on its abandoned right-of-way. Alco RS1 No. 743 was acquired used to handle the carloads of construction materials the

**At its peak, the railroad was 45 miles long running from a junction with the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic at Standing Rock southward through Lanett to a connection with the Central of Georgia at Bleeker.**





**Alco S2 No. 100, built in 1947, handles switching duties, including a boxcar converted for woodchip service with its roof removed.**

Three photos, Thomas E. Lawson Jr.

road would be hauling to the new West Point Dam project. This traffic ended by 1973, and the 19 miles of railroad from Bleeker north to Riverview was abandoned, leaving the CHV as a 9-mile line between West Point and Riverview. The RS1, in full CHV paint, went to steel road Birmingham Southern.

A year after its 40th birthday, No. 100 was retired and sold. Its replacement in 1988 was a secondhand SW1000 from New Orleans Public Belt, which became No. 102 on the CHV roster as the normal daily switcher. No. 101 continued to rest comfortably at the Lanett shop.

West Point-Pepperell went bankrupt in 1992. The continued operation of the railroad was deemed redundant. A last run of the CHV took place in September 1992 and the remaining track was removed the following year. Both EMD locomotives were sold to Tennessee Valley Authority for use at one of that entity's coal-burning power generating plants. The Chattahoochee Valley was history! — *Thomas F. Lawson Jr.*



**No. 21 handles a directors' special with the road's six-wheel-trucked Pullman in March 1960.**



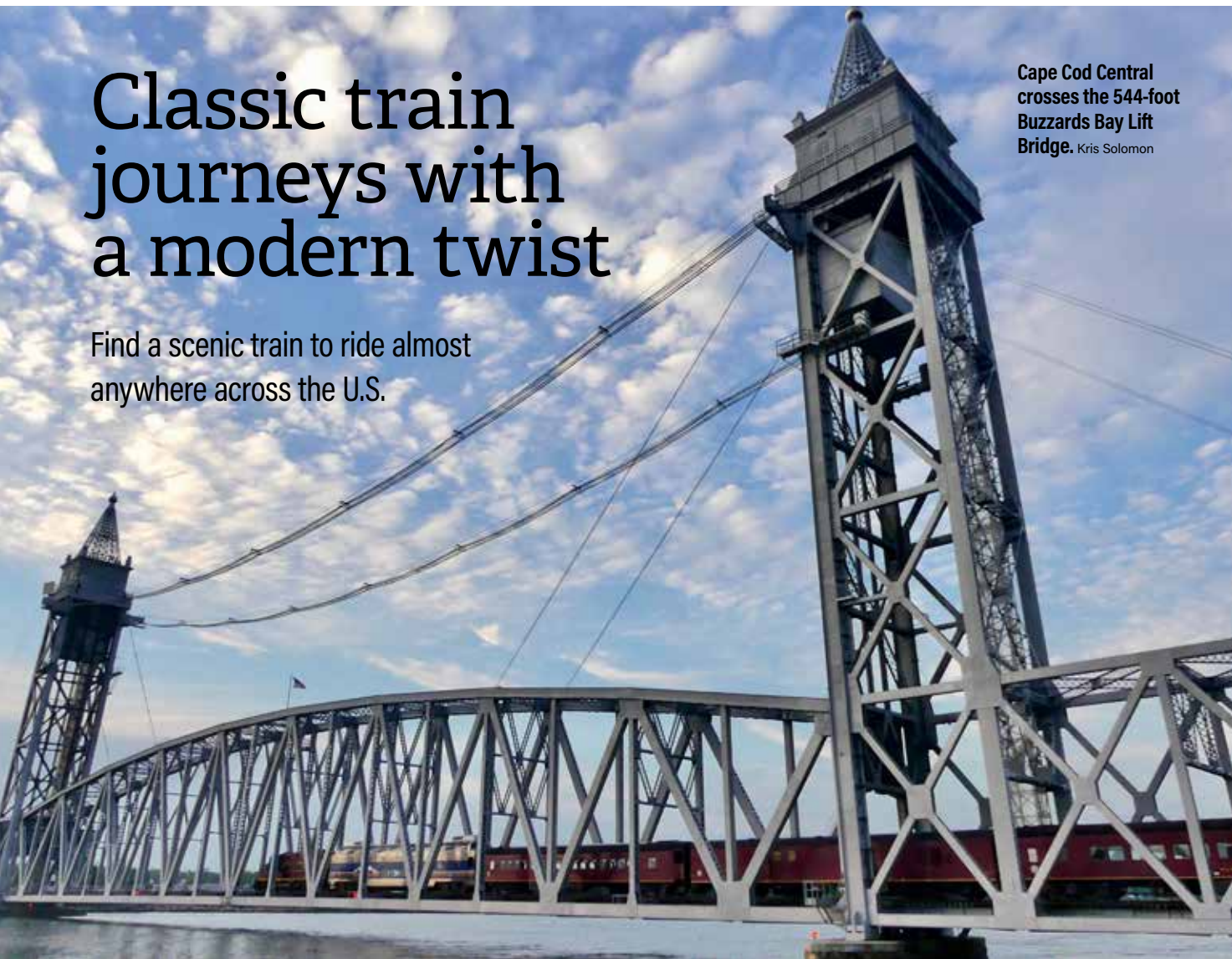
**Proving too large for use in everyday operation, SW1500 became a standby unit.**



# Classic train journeys with a modern twist

Find a scenic train to ride almost anywhere across the U.S.

Cape Cod Central crosses the 544-foot Buzzards Bay Lift Bridge. Kris Solomon



**As an avid railroad traveler,** writer, and marketing manager for the Conway Scenic Railroad, I'm always curious to learn more about interesting and worthy railroad journeys. There are trips I've made that need revisiting as well as new trips I'm considering. Some involve well-known railroads, while others represent obscure journeys at the periphery of the North American network. Here are a few to consider this summer and fall.

Cape Cod Central offers a variety of seasonal excursions on its former New Haven RR lines in eastern Massachusetts. Serious enthusiasts will be interested in riding behind its classic former New Haven FL9 diesel-electrics. They were designed in 1950 as dual-mode diesel-electric/third-rail electric variations of the EMD F unit and

intended for service into New York City terminals, but in their early years they also were regular visitors on Cape Cod.

The FL9s still look appropriate against the backdrop of the magnificent Buzzards Bay Lift Bridge. At 544 feet, this was the longest span lift bridge in the world when completed in 1935.

One excursion option is the Canal Excursion from CCC's Buzzards Bay station over the bridge and along the shore of the Cape Cod Canal toward Sandwich. This train runs on select days between June and October. Riders are advised that maritime traffic via the canal has priority over trains, so in situations where the bridge may be open, trains may first run toward Rochester, and return east later on. Other CCC excursions depart from the Hyannis station

between May-October. This includes the Cape Cod dinner trains. The railroad offers a variety of cars to travel in, include a pair of Budd-built former Santa Fe Ry. full-length domes. For more information, go to [www.capetrain.com](http://www.capetrain.com).

Eastern Pennsylvania's anthracite country is fascinating territory, with a rich history that goes back to the dawn of the railroad age. Today, Andy Muller's Reading & Northern system operates an extensive network of former Reading Co., Central Railroad of New Jersey, and Lehigh Valley lines. While largely a freight railroad, it also has also developed into one of the region's most extensive and busiest heritage railroads. Trains operate in all seasons, with the greatest number of regularly scheduled trips on weekends between April and October.



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Top: Reading & Northern's Lehigh Gorge Scenic passenger can take in the views onboard this full dome. Above: R&N trains exchange passengers at Jim Thorpe, Pa. Two photos, Brian Solomon

During spring through late autumn, Reading & Northern's Lehigh Gorge Scenic runs daily excursions from the old Jersey Central station at Jim Thorpe, Pa., through Lehigh Gorge. This 70-minute trip follows the most scenic portion of the gorge, where historically the competing CNJ and LV double-track lines ran parallel to one another. Today, the CNJ right-of-way now serves as a rail trail. Among the other regularly scheduled weekend trips are runs to Jim Thorpe from both Reading Outer Station and Pittston, Pa. The most exciting R&N's excursions are marketed as "Special Event" trains, and include excursions hauled by the railroad's former Norfolk Southern executive F-units and ex-Reading Co. class T-1 4-8-4 No. 2102, which was restored to operation in 2022. For more information, go to [www.rbmnrr-passenger.com](http://www.rbmnrr-passenger.com).

For a completely different anthracite region experience, consider a visit to the Pioneer Tunnel Coal Mine & Steam Train at Ashland, Pa., located less than an hour from Jim Thorpe by road. For more than 60 years, this privately operated attraction has been entertaining

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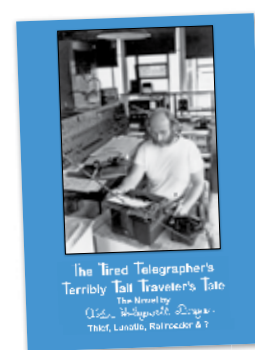
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**In the Spring-Summer 2024 issue of *Railroad History*:** Locomotive engineers during the Mexican Revolution; How Eads Bridge grew into a thriving St. Louis carrier; Moving peaches on the Illinois Central; Mann Boudoir sleeping cars in the Upper Midwest; A forgotten Dakota short line; a new home for Reading's *Rocket*, and more.

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**Top: Durango & Silverton train navigates a narrow canyon along the Animas River. Above: Cumbres & Toltec 2-8-2 No. 484 handles a train at Tanglefoot Curve.** Two photos, Brian Solomon

and informing visitors about historic anthracite mining. A battery-operated narrow-gauge train brings guests 1,800 feet into an anthracite mine, while an adjacent 40-inch gauge, steam-hauled train runs a short distance to an old strip mine at the side of Mahanoy Mountain. Autumn is a wonderful time to visit, when crisp days and rusty foliage help convey the spirit of an earlier time in Pennsylvania anthracite country. For more information, go to [www.pioneertunnel.com](http://www.pioneertunnel.com).

The West always inspires the avid railway traveler. The Rocky Mountains have attracted excursionists since the first rails were laid down here more than 150 years ago. Some of my most memorable Western trips have been on the former Rio Grande three-foot gauge lines, now operated by Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad and Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. C&TS's route connects Antonito, Colo., with Chama, N.M., which at 64 miles is among longest regularly operated heritage railroads in the U.S.

Cumbres & Toltec hauls trains with former Rio Grande K-27 and K-36 class 2-8-2 Mikados. Visitors have a choice of travel options. Purists desiring a rail-only journey may take a round trip from either Antonito or Chama to the mid-way point at Osier, where lunch is served. Also available: a through end-to-end one-way trip from either terminal with a bus journey on the return leg. Steam locomotive enthusiasts may prefer the eastward trip from Chama, where many miles of a sustained climb offer one of the best steam shows in North America. For more information, go to [www.cumbrestoltec.com](http://www.cumbrestoltec.com).

About 110 miles west is Durango, home of the D&SNG, which offers a choice of trips during the different seasons. The highlight of the journey is its sinuous trackage through the spectacular Animas Canyon, which links the former silver-mining hub at Durango with the equally famous small mountain town of Silverton. For more information, go to [www.durangotrain.com](http://www.durangotrain.com).

If the former Rio Grande catches your interest, consider a trip on the Royal Gorge Route, which follows the Arkansas River on a standard-gauge line through its namesake canyon in southern Colorado. A variety of EMD diesels painted to resemble those operated by Denver & Rio Grande Western lead one of America's premier scenic journeys. The train am-



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Passengers enjoy the view in Colorado's Royal Gorge from an open car on *Trains'* 2015 Colorado railroads tour. Brian M. Schmidt

bles its way through the narrow rocky confines of the Royal Gorge, the walls of which reach up to 1,200 feet in height. The ride includes the famous Hanging Bridge used to carry the railroad through an especially narrow vertical chasm.

Most of the year, Royal Gorge trips are offered seven days a week. Typical jour-

neys are under two hours and offer a culinary component, including a full bar. Trains board at the former Santa Fe depot in Cañon City, Colo., and feature full-length domes. For more information, go to [www.royalgorgeroute.com](http://www.royalgorgeroute.com).

Another American classic excursion railroad is the old California Western route in northern California, now marketed as the "Skunk Train," which reflects the nickname of the odiferous emissions from the gasoline railcars that historically provided passenger service on the line. The route once connected inland Willits, Calif., with the coastal community of Fort Bragg, Calif. The rugged and volatile nature of the geology in the region has isolated this railroad and effectively severed the line in the middle. Today, locomotive-hauled excursions are operated at both ends. The Pudding Creek Express makes a 7-mile round trip into the forest from Fort Bragg. A longer trip called the Wolf Creek Turn runs west from Willits. This climbs westward into the redwoods, over a mountain summit, and down into Noyo River Canyon. For more information, go to [www.skunktrain.com](http://www.skunktrain.com). — *Brian Solomon*

## Next Issue



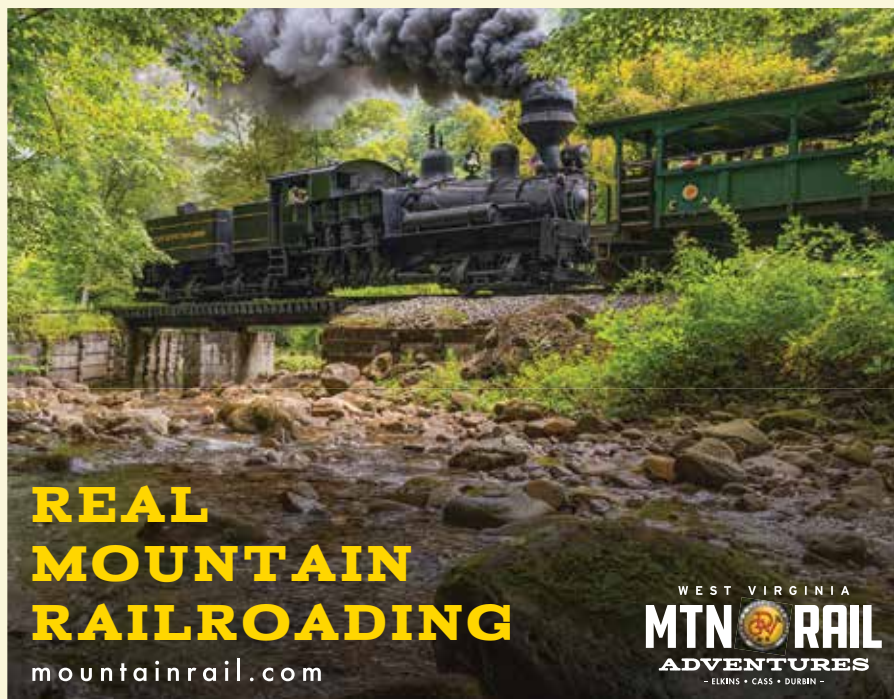
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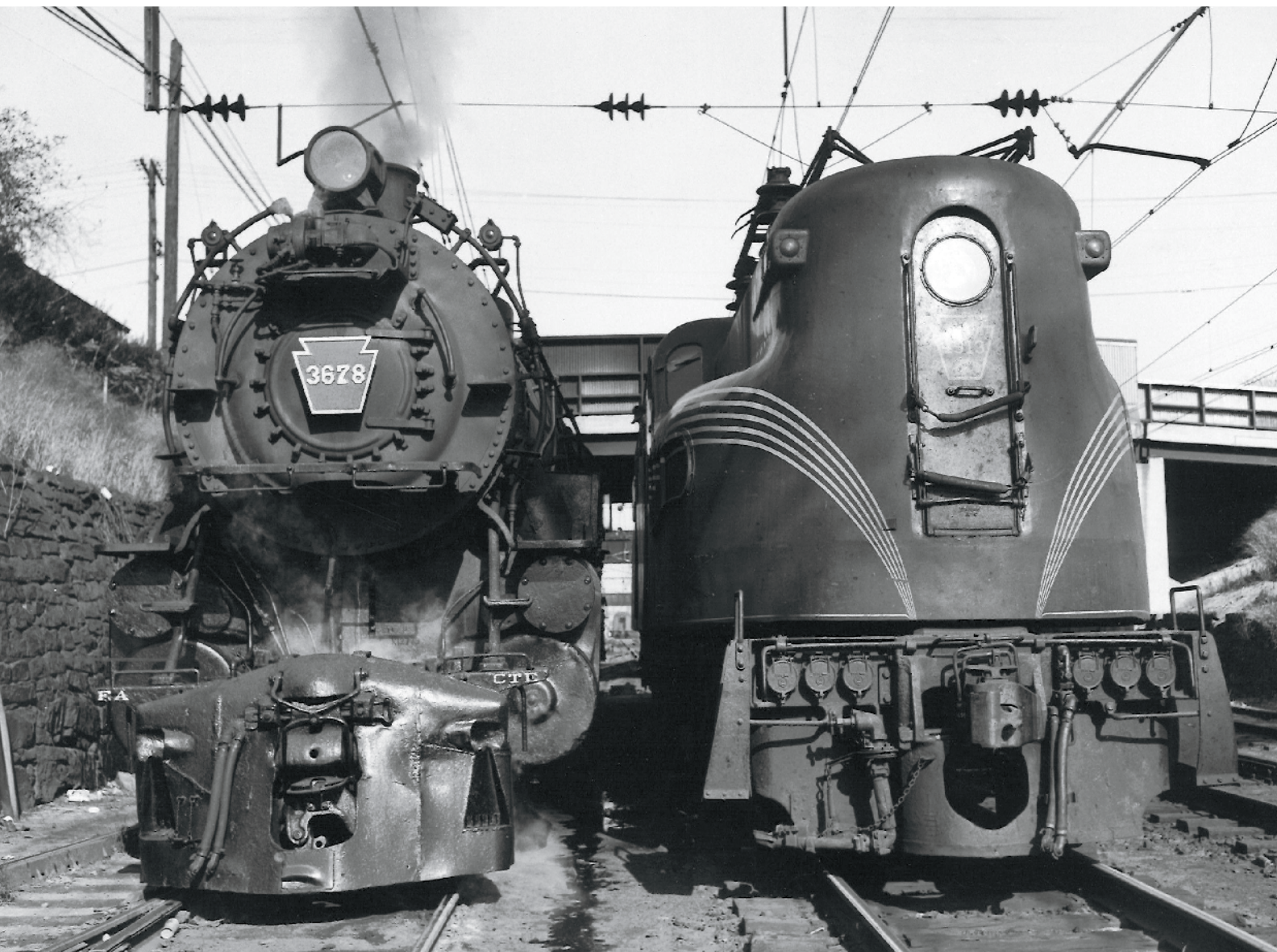
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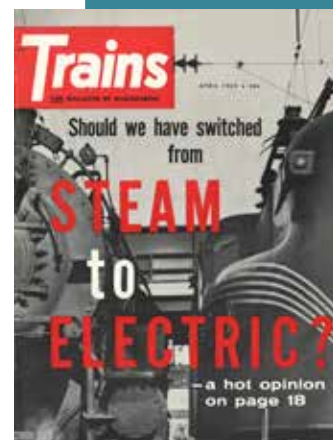


# ‘Pals through the years’

**During his 33 years as editor of *Trains*,** David P. Morgan chose more than 400 covers, most of them illustrated with photographs, but occasionally with a painting or illustration. When he chose a photo, he usually left it alone, presented pretty much as the photographer intended. But there were times when a larger point had to be made or a grander theme established, beyond what the image conveyed. In those instances, D.P.M. and his colleagues in the Art Department were fearless about cropping, shaping, or bending the photograph to their will.

Exhibit A: This portrait of two Pennsylvania Railroad icons — a K4s 4-6-2 and a GG1 electric —shoulder to shoulder in South Amboy, N.J., in October 1956, taken by the dean of PRR photographers Don Wood. Lovely as the photo is, Morgan and Art Director David A. Strassman elected to hack it in half to support the provocative cover line. We can presume the design did what all covers should do: cause readers to pick up the magazine. It's nice to take this occasion to display Wood's composition in its fullest glory. On the back of the 8 x 10 print, Wood scribbled “Pals through the years.”

No. 3678 was one of four K4 engines PRR streamlined in 1940-41. Today, GG1 4913 survives at the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, Pa., displayed in the same Tuscan red it wore when it posed in South Amboy 68 years ago. — Kevin P. Keefe





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