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# This Issue



**On our cover**  
Santa Fe GP60M No. 142  
on an intermodal over-  
takes another train at  
Ash Hill, Calif., in January  
1991. Brian Solomon

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By the late 1960s, not-so-fine  
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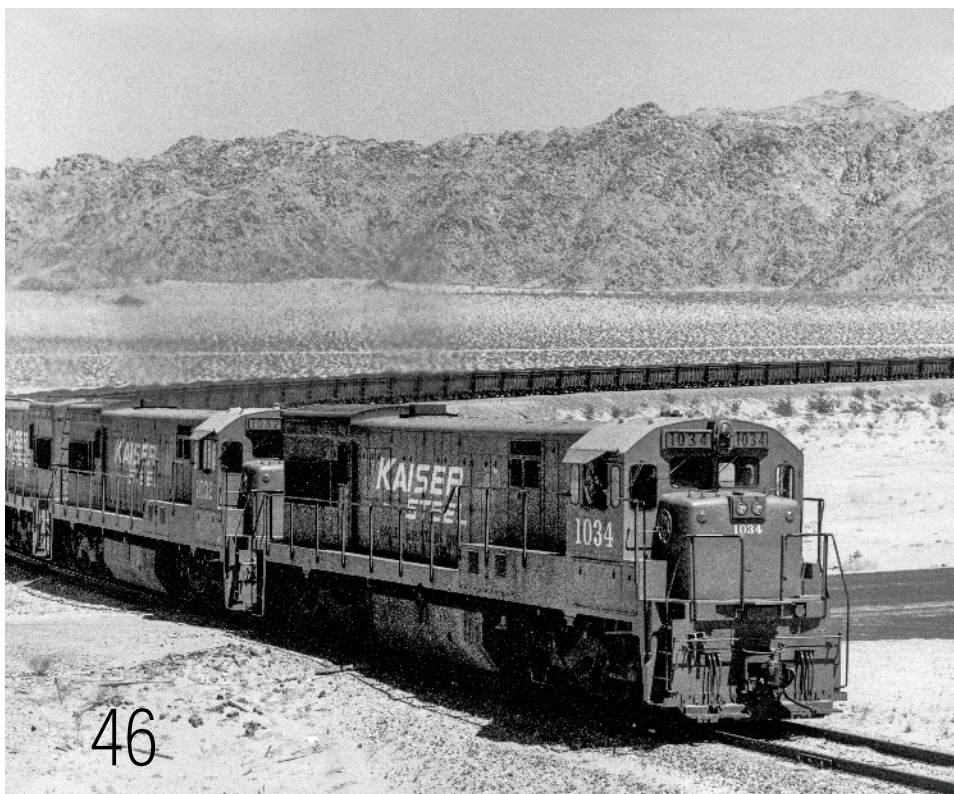


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# The intermodal revolution

**Thirty-five years is a long time.** That's roughly how long railroads have viewed, for better or worse, the trucking industry as an ally instead of an enemy, thanks to the partnership forged by the Santa Fe and J.B. Hunt (see page 20).

Historians credit the Chicago Great Western and Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee as pioneer roads for piggyback service. Then along came Trailer Train and double-stack innovation. Even short lines used to field trailer fleets by the hundreds. Today we're watching the end of the RoadRailer saga and possibly the notion of putting whole trailers on trains as we continue the transition to full containerization.

I'm always amazed when I get to break out of southeast Wisconsin to watch trains again and see the variety of trailers and containers that ride the rails today. Our little slice of the railroad world at Duplainville is dominated by international traffic to and from West Coast ports on Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. It gets to be, yes, I'll admit, a bore at times. But a trip to Rochelle, Ill., or north-west Indiana shows so much more variety on BNSE, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific trains.

No, they don't have cabooses and there are no towers to line them up, but these trains are a large part of railroading in the 21st century. That seed was planted way back in the classic era. It's time that *Classic Trains* told their stories, too.

*Brian M. Schmidt*  
EDITOR



**BNSF Railway and Union Pacific container trains meet on Cajon Pass in April 2014. Intermodal traffic is a crucial part of railroads' business today, and its story goes back deep into the classic era of railroading.** Brian M. Schmidt

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Editor  
Assistant Design Director  
Senior Production Editor  
Copy Editor  
Editorial Assistant  
Production Specialist  
Illustrator  
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Brian M. Schmidt  
Lisa M. Schroeder  
Rene Schweitzer  
Steven Otte  
Monica Freitag  
Sue Hollinger-Klahn  
Roan Kelly  
Thomas E. Hoffmann  
Kevin P. Keefe

#### Trains.com

Director  
Executive Producer  
Assistant Digital Editor  
Staff Writer

A. David Popp  
Kent Johnson  
Mitch Horner  
Lucas Iverson

#### Editorial

E-mail: [editor@classictrainsmag.com](mailto:editor@classictrainsmag.com)  
18650 W. Corporate Dr., Ste. 103  
Brookfield, WI 53045

#### Advertising Department

Martha Stanczak  
E-mail: [martha.stanczak@firecrown.com](mailto:martha.stanczak@firecrown.com)  
Phone: 888-558-1544, ex. 643

#### Customer Service

Phone: 877-243-4904  
Outside U.S. and Canada: 847-313-3921  
Customer Service: [ClassicTrains@Omedia.com](mailto:ClassicTrains@Omedia.com)

#### Retail Orders & Inquiries

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**FIRECROWN**





# Welcome to Firecrown Media

BY CRAIG FULLER

My company, Firecrown Media, has acquired Kalmbach's esteemed railroad magazines and media properties, including renowned titles such as *Model Railroader*, *Classic Trains*, *Trains*, *Garden Railways*, and *Classic Toy Trains*.

As the new custodians of these cherished and respected brands, we are committed to upholding their legacy and nurturing their growth.

Firecrown Media, a rapidly expanding media company, is dedicated to acquiring and stewarding magazine and digital media brands in the transportation sector. Our portfolio includes *Flying*, *Boating*, *Yachting*, and *FreightWaves*, among 50 other loved brands.

Firecrown Media is young; it has only been around for three years, but it is funded by a billion-dollar family office with a significant focus on media. After acquiring brands, we have invested over \$40 million in them.

As Firecrown's founder, I drive much of the passion and energy behind our media strategy.

I started in media in 2017 when I launched *FreightWaves*, a digital media company often called the "Bloomberg of freight." In just seven years, it has become the most prominent voice covering the freight industry, with deep news and analysis of the trucking, rail, air, and ocean container markets. *FreightWaves* is also one of the fastest-growing B2B media companies in the world.

While I am a digital native, I love print magazines. My love for print publications began when I was a boy; *Flying* was a magazine I grew up reading. So, when I had the opportunity to acquire it in 2021, I did. My purchase of *Flying* began as a passion project; after all, I am a private pilot.

My initial plan was to shutter the print magazine and focus on the digital edition. However, I remembered how I felt each month when I received my copy in the mail. Fully understanding and appreciating the power and love of print magazines, we soon realized that print magazines offered an experience for readers that digital couldn't match.

Unlike digital apps or websites, consuming print content provides the reader with an undistracted journey. When reading content online, one is constantly distracted by e-mails, Slack messages, and social media feeds.

None of that exists in print.

Print magazines offer the reader an experience and a journey unparalleled in any digital format. In recent years, we've seen younger generations (the "Zoomers") start to prefer print magazines over digital. For them, print magazines are innovative and tangible, providing a premium experience compared to digital offerings.



After our success with *Flying* (revenues up 5x since we acquired it in 2021), we expanded our portfolio through 20 acquisitions and rebranded as Firecrown Media.

Firecrown's playbook for the Kalmbach titles will follow our experience with other publications and digital assets we've acquired.

We will invest significantly in print magazines, creating coffee table-worthy magazines with gorgeous photography and stories that engage audiences. Print magazines should be timeless and something that readers want to keep.

In addition to creating beautiful print magazines, we will also make significant investments in the digital websites in our portfolio. This will include significant upgrades to *Trains.com* and all of the affiliated properties.

Rest assured, we plan to keep the forums, but our roadmap includes significant upgrades to ensure their stability and functionality with more modern aesthetics and experience.

We also have big plans for video products and plan to introduce new podcasts to serve and engage the community.

All of these investments will take time, but in a few months, you will start to see improvements in the online products, and over the next year, you will see a relaunch of the print versions.

You will also be glad to know that we are committed to the modeling community and the railroad brands we just acquired.

I am bullish on the future of modeling and its attractiveness for younger generations.

As a parent of five children (ages 3 to 17), my wife and I spend much time and effort introducing our young children to hobbies that do not involve screens and devices. We want to find experiences that exist in the physical world.

Model railroading offers a four-dimensional experience that does exactly that. For example, I have a small Lionel layout that I have been building with my 5-year-old son.

It is an opportunity for the two of us to make something that is limited only by his imagination. Best of all, I can share my knowledge and love of the freight railroads with him as we develop and play with our evolving model railroad. As an entrepreneur, I love building things; he can help me participate in the journey.

I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas on improving the *Model Railroader*, *Trains*, *Classic Trains*, *Classic Toy Trains*, *Garden Railways*, and *Trains.com* experience.

You can find me on X: @freightalley.



Southern Pacific class C-40-1 caboose No. 1029 was built in 1937. Brian M. Schmidt collection

A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

# HeadEnd



## Farewell 'Second 1027'

*Trains* and *Classic Trains* readers have a tradition of sending photos highlighting the number 1027, Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s longtime street address on North 7th Street in downtown Milwaukee. When the company moved to suburban Waukesha in 1989, the address became 21027, or second 1027. With the summer move to

new quarters under Firecrown Media ownership complete, we thought it appropriate to dust off this trope with an unidentified photo of Canadian National GMD1 No. 1027 powering a mixed train somewhere across the prairies. Now, who among our readers recognizes the location? *Classic Trains* collection



## CSX expands heritage fleet

CSX Transportation released its Monon-painted heritage unit, ES44AC No. 1897, in early 2024. It wears the road's black-and-gold paint scheme that was itself a nod to Purdue University. Shown here, it leads train M635 at Carey, Ohio, on July 14, 2024. Other heritage units released in spring and summer 2024 include those honoring Georgia Railroad (No. 1834), Pittsburgh & Lake Erie (No. 1875), Pere Marquette (No. 1899), Seaboard Coast Line (No. 1967), and Western Maryland (No. 1852). Each unit is numbered to commemorate a significant year in that road's formation. Dale A. DeVene Jr.



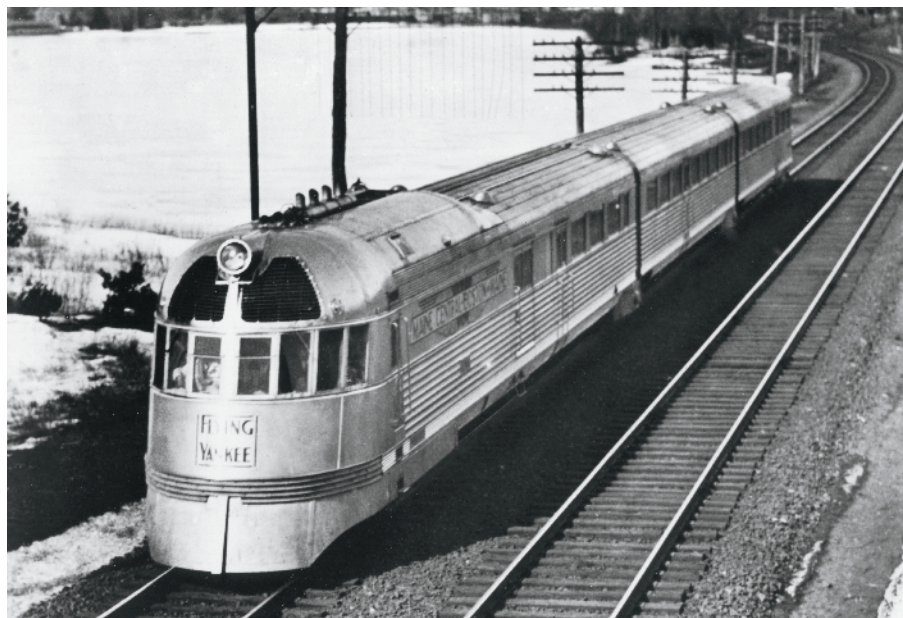
# Flying Yankee Association to purchase Budd streamliner

Details of transfer of 1935 articulated trainset still to be completed

**The Flying Yankee Association** preservation group has been selected by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation as the purchaser of the historic Budd articulated streamliner *Flying Yankee*, the virtual duplicate of Burlington's *Pioneer Zephyr* that has been owned by the state since 1996.

Selection follows a process that began in fall 2023 with a Request for Proposals. That request called for the train's relocation from its current location at the Hobo Railroad, the heritage line in Lincoln, N.H., purchased last year by Patriot Rail. It also encouraged the train's restoration.

"We are both honored and thrilled to be receiving this historic train from the state," Brian LaPlant, president of the FYA, said in a press release. "The *Flying Yankee* has languished for far too long, and we look forward to preserving, relocating, and restoring the train, thanks to the state, as well as our friends, partners, and supporters that will help make this dream become a reality. A beautiful piece of New England his-



The Boston & Maine's streamlined *Flying Yankee* was built by Budd in 1935. *Classic Trains* collection

tory has been saved today."

The three-car train, built in 1935 for the Boston & Maine Railroad, operated on various New England routes until its retirement in 1957, then was displayed at the Edaville Railroad tourist line for 36 years. On-again, off-again restoration

efforts began in 1993.

The association is scheduled to meet with state officials later this summer to finalize transfer details, after which the state's Executive Council will approve those details and transfer ownership. — *David Lassen*

## Great Northern 4-6-2 restoration launched

Sioux City museum marks joint effort to return GN 1355 to operation

**The Sioux City Railroad Museum**, its parent Siouxland Historical Railroad Association, and the American Heartland Railroad Society are beginning a joint effort to restore Great Northern 4-6-2 No. 1355 to operation.

Siouxland Historical Railroad Association President Larry Obermeyer, also the museum's board president and CEO, said the museum and American Heartland society are "pooling our resources, knowledge, and expertise" to restore the locomotive. "This organization has a lot of young people who have studied the heritage crafts involved with locomotive restorations," he



Great Northern 4-6-2 No. 1355 inside the roundhouse at Sioux City. *Steve Glischinski*

said, "and they bring together what resources and knowledge and expertise that our volunteers did not have."

Museum director T.J. Obermeyer said the project is something the community and region

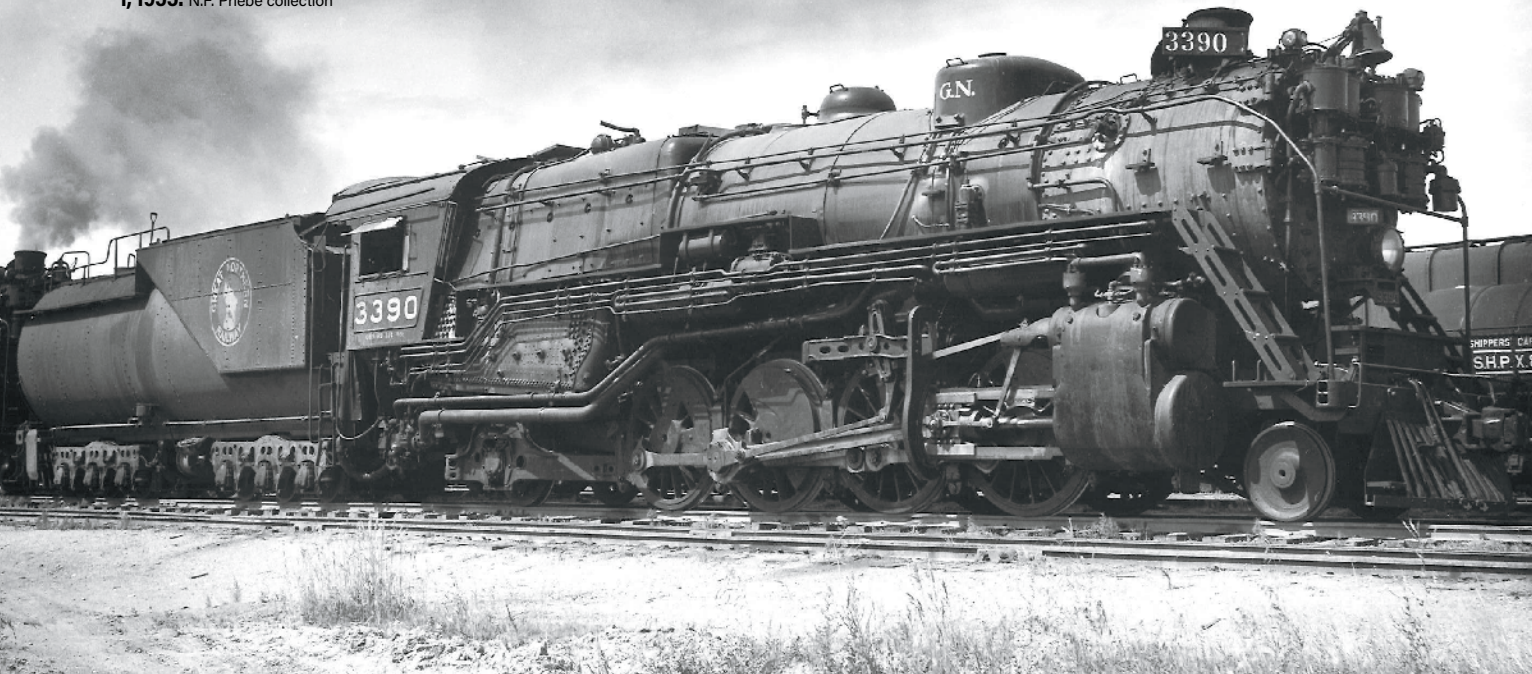
"can rally around and really be proud of. That's really the goal."

According to the Great Northern Railway Historical Society, the Class H-5 locomotive began life as a 4-6-0 built by Baldwin for GN in 1909. It was rebuilt by GN's Dale Street Shops in St. Paul to a 4-6-2 in 1924, undergoing conversion from oil to coal firing in the process. It ran in passenger service until 1950, handling such notable GN trains as the *Oriental Limited* and *Empire Builder*, then served in Mesabi Range ore service until its retirement in 1955. It was donated to Sioux City and placed on outside display in July in 1955, then saved by the newly formed Siouxland Historical Railroad Association in 1984.

"We are going to restore the engine back to operation with the goal of bringing business and tourism to Sioux City," said Logan Stilwell, president of the American Heartland Railway Society, a Sioux City-based nonprofit.

The news follows a significant June flood that inundated the museum grounds, shops, and exhibits. — *David Lassen*

Great Northern O-8 No. 3390, one of the class of largest 2-8-2 Mikado locomotives ever built, simmers at Minot, N.D., on Aug. 1, 1955. N.F. Priebe collection



## Largest 2-8-2 Mikado: Great Northern's O-8 class

Homebuilt locomotives from the depths of the Depression took the type to its limit

**For much of the first half** of the 20th century, the 2-8-2 Mikado was the dominant freight locomotive of the steam era. With its medium weight and medium power, it became the go-to, general-purpose engine — sort of the GP38 of its era. Consider how the World War I-era United States Railroad Administration divvied up wheel arrangements as it standardized much of locomotive design: the largest number of USRA engines were 625 light 2-8-2s, outnumbering all other types of USRA engines combined. Add in the other 233 “heavy” USRA Mikes, and you have true domination.

The award for the largest 2-8-2 goes to the Great Northern Railway, whose O-8 class engines were even heavier and more powerful than some 2-8-4 Berkshire types, despite the latter’s “super power” status. These massive

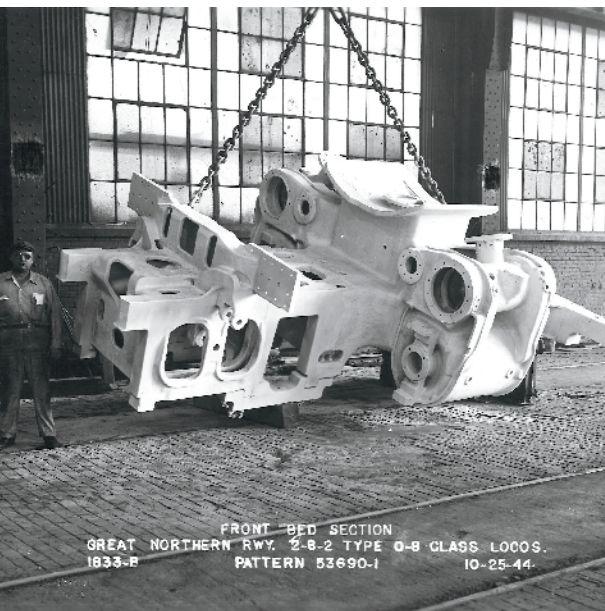
Mikes boasted a boiler pressure of 250 psi, delivering 77,793 pounds of tractive force at the rail via 69-inch drivers in the first three engines in the class. They weighed in at 425,540 pounds, with a weight on drivers of 325,000 pounds. That latter figure is noteworthy: GN’s mechanical department placed great emphasis on weight on drivers, which likely explains why the railroad never opted for a 2-8-4. And as far as GN was concerned, that enormous mass also obviated any need for boosters. (The second-largest 2-8-2s were the 10 4200-class engines of the Frisco, built in 1930.)

The road to developing GN’s huge O-8 was circuitous. The railroad bought its first 2-8-2s in the O-1 class from Baldwin in 1911 and ended up buying 145 more, giving GN one of the larger rosters of Mikados. The company obtained a

small 2-8-2 in the O-2 class via merger, then in 1920 acquired nine more heavy USRA engines in the O-3 class, secondhand, from Spokane, Portland & Seattle and El Paso & Southwestern. That same year GN made another big order from Baldwin for 45 in the O-4 class, engines that were similar in size to the original O-1s. The railroad got creative with the O-5 through O-7 class — 89 engines — through conversion of boilers from other locomotives, work performed at various GN shops across the system.

The first three of the big O-8 engines, all oil burners, also were homebuilt, constructed by the company’s Hillyard Shops in Spokane, Wash., in 1932, the depths of the Depression. The trio had the remarkable distinction of being among the few engines built for any Class I railroad that year: a total of 36. The GN liked the big





FRONT BED SECTION  
GREAT NORTHERN Rwy. 2-8-2 TYPE 0-8 CLASS LOCOS.  
1633-B PATTERN 53690-1 10-25-44

The O-8s of 1944-46 got one-piece front bed sections, with integrally cast cylinders and pilot beams. They were welded to the remainder of the original O-7 frame. General Steel Castings

Mikados so well that in the 1940s it converted all 22 class O-7 engines to the O-8, generally matching the originals in size and power. The entire class was converted to oil, and driver size was increased to 71 inches. A major improvement was the use of cast-steel front-end beds with integrated 28-inch cylinders.

When it came to esthetics, the O-8s wouldn't be everyone's favorite. With its rather ungainly, squarish Belpaire firebox (a GN tradition) and a front end crowded with air pumps hung on the smokebox, the O-8 presented a fearsome presence. But the big 2-8-2s were significant, as GN historian Norman Priebe noted in his profile of the class, "The World's Greatest Mikado," in the January 1969 issue of *Trains*.

Priebe wrote: "In fact, the O-8s demonstrated the upper limit in usefulness for two-wheeled trailing trucks and showed that this approach was superior to the use of four-wheel trucks for locomotives in their weight range."

Alas, only a single Great Northern 2-8-2 survives, and it's not an example of the largest 2-8-2 Mikado. It's an old class O-1 machine, No. 3059, built in 1913 and displayed in a city park in Williston, N.D.

— Kevin P. Keefe



Great Northern O-8 No. 3394 slumbers in retirement near the old water tower at Allouez Yard in Superior, Wis., on Nov. 28, 1963. At the time it was one of just two steam locomotives at Allouez to fend off the scrappers torch. Larry Easton

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Trains editor, David Morgan, so named the NP in 1985

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The PRRT&HS brings together railfans, modelers, and historians interested in the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) to preserve its history and record information on its organization, operations, facilities, and equipment. Society archives are maintained at our 1849 ex-PRR station in Lewistown, PA.

Membership includes *The Keystone*, our 80-plus page quarterly illustrated journal, and discounts on books we publish. Our free quarterly online magazine, *The Keystone Modeler*, encourages accurate modeling of the PRR. We offer local chapters and an annual meeting.

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## OBITUARIES

**Jerry Angier**, a prominent New England-based railroad preservationist and author, primarily involving the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad (BAR), died June 19 at his home near Portland, Maine. He was 82. Born March 1, 1942, in Washington, D.C., Gilman “Jerry” Angier Jr., attended school in Providence, R.I., summered with his family in Hyannis Port, Mass., and earned a degree in speech and broadcasting from Boston’s Emerson College in 1966. After an initial stint in public broadcasting, he settled into a long career in the life insurance and financial planning profession, first in Cincinnati and later in Portland. Angier authored three books about the BAR, including *Bangor & Aroostook, the Maine Railroad* (Flying Yankee, 1986) with co-author Herb Cleaves; *Bangor & Aroostook Railroad in Color* (Morning Sun, 2004); and *Bangor & Aroostook: The Life of a Maine Railroad Tradition*, again with Cleaves (Fleet Graphics, 2009). He also wrote articles on the BAR for both *Trains* and *Classic Trains*.

**Anthony Haswell**, founder of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, died Friday, May 17, in Tucson, Ariz., where he had retired many years ago. A lawyer by training, Haswell was born in Dayton, Ohio, on Jan. 30, 1931, went on to earn a bachelor’s degree at the University of Wisconsin in 1953, and graduated from UW law school in 1958. He displayed an early penchant for supporting various causes. One of them became the passenger train, hence his organization in 1967 of NARP, now known as the Rail Passengers Association. In its January 2000 turn-of-the-millennium special issue, *Trains Magazine* recognized Haswell among the century’s 10 leading figures in railroading, a group that included D.W. Brosnan, Al Perlman, and John W. Barriger III. “Every American who rides a train owes a debt to Haswell,” said *Trains*. “A pain to politicians, railroaders, and union leaders, he was the right man at the right time.”

**Logan “Stan” Garner**, rail enthusiast, actor, and supplier of railroad equipment to the entertainment industry, died May 20 in Arizona at the age of 83. Born in Pasadena, Calif., Garner gained initial fame for being a co-founder in 1967 of Short Line Enterprises, where discarded railroad equipment, mostly from Hollywood movie studios, found a home. The company refurbished the locomotives and passenger and freight cars and made its reputation as an active supplier of its roster for movies, television, and commercial work. Garner also became an actor, usually playing a conductor or train crew member, in a variety of movies including *Midnight Run*, *Back to the Future, Part III*, *City Slickers II*, a remake of *The Italian Job*, *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?*, the remake of *True Grit*, *Flags of Our Fathers*, and *There Will Be Blood*. Television work included the movie *War and Remembrance*, the Vietnam-era “China Beach,” “General Hospital,” “MacGyver,” “Quantum Leap,” and “Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman.”

**Clinton Jones**, president of the family-owned Mineral Range Railroad based in Ishpeming, Mich., died at Marquette General Hospital in Marquette, Mich., on April 19, 2024. He was 79. Jones began his railroading career as an electrician helper at the Milwaukee Road shops in Milwaukee in the mid-1960s. Between 1978 and 1985, he was involved in the operation of the Chippewa River Railroad, Algoma Railroad, and Brillion & Forest Junction Railway. He also worked as a trainmaster in nearby Marquette in the late 1980s and early 1990s for Wisconsin Central. Greg Vreeland, president of the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad said, “Clint Jones was an old-school railroader whose lifelong dedication to the short line industry in the upper Midwest was unparalleled. I was inspired by his vast experience beginning in the 1960s.” The Mineral Range Railroad was featured in a June 2022 *Trains* feature, “Home, Home on the Mineral Range.”

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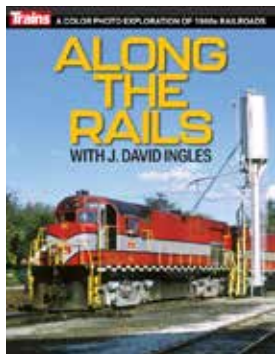




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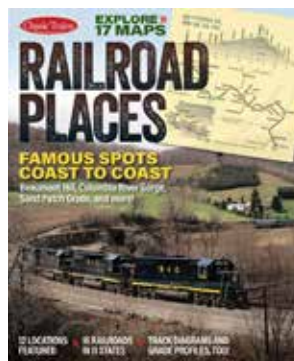
### ALONG THE RAILS WITH J. DAVID INGLES

Illustrating more than 90 railroads, this 224-page book has 200+ photos from the Ingles Color Classics series, taken as Dave traveled to various cities and along different routes.



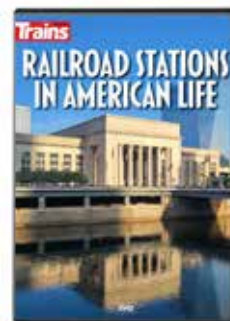
### BIG BOY 4014 PUZZLE

Now-famous Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy No. 4014 spins on the turntable at Cheyenne, Wyo., in July 1959. UP would reacquire the locomotive from a California museum in 2014 and restore it for operation in 2019.



### RAILROAD PLACES

Explore 12 famous railroad locations across the U.S. with *Classic Trains'* new special issue! Plus, each story features one or more related maps, with a total of 17 maps. Learn about the history and operations from the people who know these locations.



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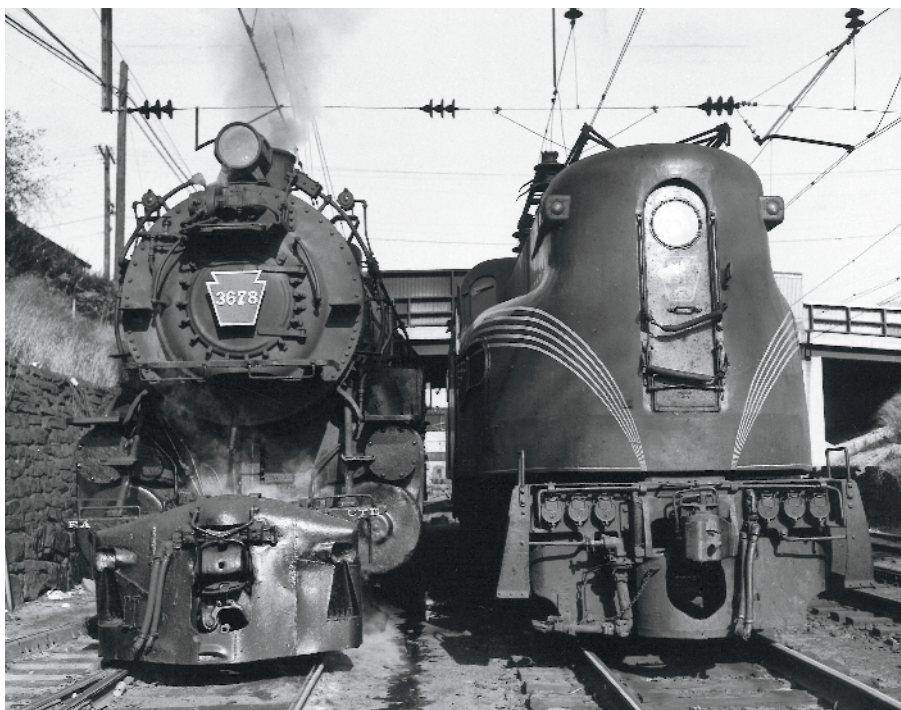
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Pennsylvania Railroad steam and electric motors share space at South Amboy, N.J. Kevin P. Keefe told the story of this one-time *Trains* cover image in our Summer 2024 issue. Don Wood

## New Jersey cousins

I've enjoyed reading the Summer issue. The Don Wood photo on the inside back cover of Pennsylvania Railroad K4s 3678 and GG1 4913 took my breath away. I grew up in Hackensack and made a few trips to South Amboy, N.J., as a teenager when time and allowance allowed, including October 1956. I wish that I'd been able to visit more often but I'm grateful for the few photographs that I have, none as fine as Don Wood's. — *Bob Kron, Greenville, S.C.*

### On train riding

The summer issue with three circle trips is probably the best issue ever published. I enjoyed them all, but the West Coast trip with Bob Withers was the best. Beautiful pictures of pre-Amtrak streamliners and detailed dining car costs.

He did take a heck of a chance walking from Cincinnati Union Terminal to his hotel at midnight — scared me just reading about it.

Keep those pre-Amtrak trips coming.  
*Loveland, Ohio, Joe Beal*

I particularly enjoyed the long West Coast trek Bob Withers wrote about and his day-to-day to experiences he enjoyed. He, like other authors of circle trips, recount the various railroads rode, types of locomotives used, but Withers offers added tidbits of train travel info all to bring the story to an up-close and personal way

for the reader to get a true understanding of his trip.

Personally, I never had the opportunity to experience a ride on such classic trains in my lifetime. However, I do remember when going to Cleveland State University from 1967 to 1971. As part of my college commute, I would take the Cleveland Rapid Transit from far west side to Cleveland Union Terminal. On those almost daily trips for the four years of riding and in the early morning hours, I would see what appeared to be a NYC passenger train quickly passing us and heading west. I often wondered where that fast-moving dark grey and stripe passenger train was heading.

These stories serve us readers well, especially those who enjoy the classic railroading of years past and possibly who never got to ride the rails of long ago.

*Nick Milburn, Sarasota, Fla.*

### Flambeau 400 memories

I enjoyed Mike Schafer's bilevel *Flambeau 400* story. I must be older because I'm familiar with that train in its pre-bilevel years. The Flambeau name was used for a seasonal train to the Northwoods for many years, then in 1950 for a new 400-family streamliner operating daily year-round between Chicago and Ashland, with summer service on the Eagle River branch from Monico to Watersmeet.

The equipment on the branch was several lightweight 400 coaches and a parlor car, all split off at Monico. The power on the branch was steam, an R-1 4-6-0 which was standard C&NW branch line power, almost always the same one, No. 1331. This lasted into 1956 when CNW fully dieselized and an Alco road switcher took over for the last year of that service. In 1958 the bilevel equipment arrived and the summer service became a bus out of Rhinelander, which was discontinued after a few seasons.

Bright yellow and green cars led by a black smoke-belching steamer born around 1907 made for quite a visual. One day while driving on a parallel highway, my dad timed the southbound at 50mph as it bounced along the 72-pound rail. Later, I rode it myself and remember the smooth ride of the air-conditioned coaches with smoke curling past the window. It was nice while it lasted.

*Jules Eberhardt, Riverwoods, Ill.*

### Abbey's Rides Revisited

Abbey's portrait on page 52, lower left, is of the observation lounge of the 1936 *Denver Zephyr* that went on to serve the *Texas Zephyr* after the new dome-equipped *DZ* entered service in 1956.

The ACF-built dome observation lounges assigned to the *City of St. Louis* were built blunt-ended but were soon modified for mid-train service.

*Jon Boyle, Springfield, Mo.*

The caption on page 48 says the *Chief* is the Santa Fe train in the photo, but upon checking the Official Guide for that time period, the *Chief* came through in the middle of the night. Also, the Burlington *Zephyr* leaving would have to pass at the same time. Checking the Guide again, that would be just after noon. The CB&Q train is the Chicago-bound *Kansas City Zephyr* heading west out of Union Station before turning north and crossing the Missouri River before heading east to Chicago via the Kansas City





Canadian Pacific Erie-Built B unit No. 404397 (ex-Pennsylvania Railroad 9474B) resides at North Transcona in Winnipeg on May 11, 2010, just prior to being scrapped. A. Ross Harrison

shortcut. The only Santa Fe streamliner scheduled into Kansas City at noon was the *Chicagoan*, due in at 12:05 p.m. This train from Texas would sometimes have E units assigned. If you look close the third unit, it's the sole DL110, No. 50. Both are east-bounds and both are scheduled into Chicago at 8 p.m. later the same day, yet one leaves west out of Union Station and one leaves eastward. This is at Signal Bridge 5 at the west end of Kansas City Terminal's "Penn" interlocking at Tower 5 at the west throat of Kansas City Union Station.

Raymond Goy, Winnipeg, Manitoba

## Fairbanks-Morse's fate

To provide some additional detail to the statement "...a set of General Steel Castings trucks from an unidentified Fairbanks-Morse Erie-Built was used under Delaware-Lakawanna Railroad's restored Alco PA..." on page 9, the exact lineage maybe debatable, but the GSC trucks were most certainly from a group of Pennsylvania RR Erie-Built, thanks to Canadian Pacific.

CP acquired four ex-Pennsylvania FM Erie-Built B units for its continuous welded rail welding plant in Smiths Falls, Ontario, in the late 1960s: Nos. 9460B, 9462B, 9474B, and 9476B. They were renumbered sequentially CP 404395-404398.

The B units were stripped internally of all engine-generator and related components, and the shells of the car-bodies were used to house the required electrical power-stripping-welding-grinding-polishing equipment to transform stick rail into continuous welded rail. The converted Erie-Built units were

repainted in a modified Tuscan Red livery with a teal green used in lieu of grey, complete with "Canadian Pacific" in a similar, but non-standard, script lettering. When the CWR plant in Smiths Falls was shut down, one of the units, No. 404397 (PRR 9474B), was relocated to CP's other continuous welded rail facility in North Transcona (Winnipeg). The remaining Erie-Built B units in Smiths Falls were scrapped in 1994, and the three-pairs of GSC trucks were salvaged to assist in the restoration of the two Alco PAs that had been repatriated from Mexico.

The last remaining unit, 404397 (PRR 9474B) was eventually deemed surplus to requirements at North Transcona, earmarked for preservation or a possible fourth truck donor. Those plans never came to fruition, and the last known Erie-Built B unit was scrapped in 2010. Its story was detailed in *Trains'* special edition *Locomotive 2014*.

A. Ross Harrison, Winnipeg

## What of Car Stop?

Please, please bring back the "Car Stop" column. We transit fans deserve continued recognition in the pages of *Classic Trains*. It was the first column I read upon the arrival of each new issue, and now it's gone. Surely, there must be someone out there that can step in the shoes of Art Peterson.

Bill Clynes, Saginaw, Mich

¶ It was my decision to end Car Stop, not Art's. Its replacement, "Short Rails," will include electric operations as content is available. And I am looking for quality interurban and streetcar features to run in the magazine. — B.M.S.

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# Why Michigan Central Station matters

Turning back the clock on a landmark

A 4-8-2 leads train 303, the *Queen City* for Cincinnati, out of Michigan Central on May 1, 1955.

Ernest L. Novak



**Walking out the 15th Street** side entrance to Detroit's Michigan Central Station several weeks ago, I found myself channeling the great baseball play-by-play man Jack Buck: "I can't believe what I just saw!"

Buck's epic quote came, of course, when Dodger Kirk Gibson launched his epic home run off A's reliever Dennis Eckersley in game one of the 1988 World Series. It was a shot heard 'round the baseball world. But what *Trains* passenger writer Bob Johnston and I witnessed in June 2024 was equally astounding. More so, actually.

We were there to cover the gala grand opening of Michigan Central, a weekslong event that included a huge Thursday night concert at the front of the station

followed by a week of scheduled public tours. Bob and I managed to arrange a spot in the first tour, a 10 a.m. introduction for news media.

The building we walked into was a sparkling vision from another time and place. Thanks to Ford Motor Co. CEO Bill Ford and his 2018 pledge to turn the station and environs into a high-tech research campus — they call it an "innovation center" — Michigan Central has become a faithful version of its 1913 self.

Every surface, every square foot, every pane of glass has been either restored or replicated in amazing detail, a level of historic preservation possible only

because Ford was willing to spend just short of \$1 billion on the place.

From the cavernous waiting room (now called the Great Hall) to the multi-columned ticket lobby to the sunlit concourse, the station again fulfills the promise the Michigan Central Railroad

implied when it first opened its new headquarters in December 1913. In those days, MCRR made sure travelers arriving on the *Wolverine* or the *Detroit Night Express* would immediately know they had arrived in one of

America's great cities. The station delivers that same promise today, except, of course, that you can't arrive by train.

If you aren't from around Detroit, you

**The building we walked into was a sparkling vision from another time and place.**



might be surprised at how gaga a big city has gone for a train depot. But you'd understand if you have followed Detroit's gradual distancing of itself from that creepy preoccupation known as "ruin porn." It seems almost unfair to recall a *New York Times* headline from 2012: "How Detroit Became the Capital of Staring at Abandoned Buildings."

The *Times* would be less likely to write that headline now, given the progress Detroit has made. Recent years have been marked by new downtown sports facilities for all four major-league teams — Tigers, Lions, Pistons, and Red Wings — as well as soaring new office towers and hotels, and, perhaps most important, some reclaimed neighborhoods. Now you can add 114-year-old Michigan Central to the list.

The station Detroit embraces is significant for a number of reasons, starting with the sheer scale of the renovation. It's difficult to imagine another major American railroad terminal that had crumbled as much as Michigan Central, only to come back better than ever. The lengths Ford has gone to get it "right" is amazing, from reopening a quarry in southern Indiana to retrieve the same limestone the railroad used in 1913, to the restoration of tens of thousands of Guastavino tiles arrayed across the arched vaults high above the waiting room. Every little decorative element, every vast stretch of marble floor has received the same attention.

Then there is Michigan Central's complicated place in architectural history and



Beneath the waiting room's vaulted ceiling, a "ribbon timeline" traces Michigan Central Station's history through its decline and return to glory. Kevin P. Keefe

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**This marble-faced clock in the ticket lobby was painstakingly replicated by Michigan Central Station artisans. Two photos, Kevin P. Keefe**



**The “poster vault” (inside the former ticket offices) feature promotional Michigan Central Railroad graphics and those of other subjects.**

its relationship to the company that controlled it, New York Central. To design the complex, the railroad hired two of the era’s blue-chip New York firms: Reed & Stem and Warren & Wetmore. Reed & Stem, originally based in St. Paul, Minn., was the principal firm for NYC’s Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan, and Warren & Wetmore designed a number

of famous hotels as well as the landmark NYC Building still standing at the foot of Park Avenue.

Bringing two architectural firms onto the project helped lead to criticism that MC Station was something of a two-headed monster; Warren & Wetmore’s big, blocky office tower does seem to sit uncomfortably atop Reed &

Stem’s fanciful Beaux Arts terminal. As *The Architectural Record* magazine reported when the station opened, “Each part taken separately might be good. Joined together, they are architecturally incongruous.”

No one is calling the place incongruous now, certainly not me. Ford’s gift to Detroit, indeed to all of us who treasure railroad landmarks, reduces such criticism to mere quibbling.

Michigan Central is more than just a building. It’s part of a massive complex that stretches east two miles to Canada. The key is the 1.6-mile-long Detroit River Tunnel, which opened in 1910 and made the station possible. The tunnel, still in use today under Canadian Pacific Kansas City control, was an engineering marvel for its use of a pair of single-track steel tubes installed in trenches dug into the bottom of the Detroit River.

To underscore the significance of the Michigan Central complex, consider this conclusion by authors Garnet Cousins and Paul Maximuke in their two-part, 9,500-word history of the station in August and September 1978 *Trains*: “The (station), with its 15-story office tower, was a predecessor of what today is called a megastructure. Megastructures are totally integrated environments, combining within their boundaries parking, transportation access, commercial facilities, office space, and residential space.” In that vein, Cousins and Maximuke make a direct connection between Michigan Central and Detroit’s blockbuster Renaissance Center of 1977.

Amid all the wonder of Ford’s accomplishment, a question lingers: will Michigan Central ever be a real station again? The station’s current management is open to it, if they and Amtrak can manage a workaround that takes into account the need to have a backup move to accommodate *Wolverine Service* trains that currently turn northward for Pontiac before they reach Michigan Central. It doesn’t help that all 18 tracks from the original station are gone. But as a visionary Ford Motor Co. has proven, don’t rule out anything. ■



**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 biweekly blog “Mileposts” is at *Classic-TrainsMag.com*.



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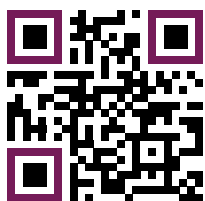


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A painting of a yellow and black locomotive, likely a Union Pacific, traveling on tracks.

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# Contrasts at LaGrange

The American Freedom Train's ex-Southern Pacific GS-4 No. 4449 lays over at the Electro-Motive Division plant in La Grange, Ill., in summer 1975 in the company of GM6C electric demonstrator No. 1975. Number 4449, built in 1941, arrived at the plant in early July to await its Freedom Train duties, taking over from ex-Reading Co. T-1 No. 2101 on Aug. 4. Number 1975, in contrast, was a six-axle, 6,000-hp electric freight motor built earlier in 1975. (EMD also produced a GM10B 10,000-hp model.) Alas, No. 1975 was scrapped just a decade later without inducing any sales for EMD, while No. 4449 still steams in the 21st century from its home in Portland, Ore. Russell T. Sharp











Two Santa Fe trains with a variety of power meet in Arizona's Crozier Canyon. Tom Danneman





# The **SMARTEST, LUCKIEST** railroad in America

SHIFTING THE PARADIGM — SANTA FE STYLE // STORY BY JIM GIBLIN





On Sept. 21, 1991, locomotive No. 553 is heading up a company special eastbound through the remote Missouri town of Ethel. David P. Oroszi

**In this rail industry** insider's opinion, the modern history of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway represents a truly fortuitous combination of factors and circumstances virtually unmatched in modern railroad history.

Between 1988 and 1992, Santa Fe was blessed with three extraordinary commercial encounters. First was formation of the legendary joint venture with trucker J.B. Hunt Transport Services (branded as Quantum). Second was expansion of Santa Fe's existing relationship with United Parcel Service, culminating in the building of the Willow Springs (Ill.) multimodal complex outside Chicago; UPS became, briefly, Santa Fe's biggest customer and burnished the railroad's reputation for running fast, reliable trains. And third was the establishment of the intermodal logistics park in North Texas (now known as Alliance) with Hillwood Development Company, a Ross Perot company. Alliance became the prototype of the logistics park concept that Santa Fe successor BNSF has since taken to Chicago; Kansas City; Stockton, Calif.; and soon, Barstow, Calif.

Being smart is good. So is being lucky. Santa Fe's management was smart enough and lucky enough to produce the most

significant paradigm shift in modern railroad history, seemingly moving it from worst to first in the industry.

Paradigm shifts almost always involve risk. The greater the shift, the greater the risk. In Santa Fe's case, the stakes were enormous. But in the end, so were the rewards. J.B. Hunt as a standalone railroad customer would ultimately replace UPS as

Santa Fe's (and BNSF Railway's) single largest customer. According to published reports in the Journal of Commerce, J.B. Hunt is now the single largest intermodal marketing company in North America, with more than 100,000 53-foot containers in service. (This figure represents a significant equipment investment Santa Fe and BNSF have not had to make.) In 2020, J.B. Hunt Intermodal grossed almost \$5 billion in revenues and represented more than half of J.B. Hunt's operating income by business unit.



**Santa Fe's headquarters on Michigan Avenue.** David P. Oroszi

## BUCKING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Here are some insights, observations and commentary about what happened, how it happened, and why. Conventional wisdom in the railroad business once held that truckers and railroaders were competitors, not partners. The original 1990

Quantum promotional videotape likened the competition to the Cold War. According to the Quantum narrative, "Until recently, trains have gone one way and trucks have gone another. And if they never crossed paths, that would suit both of them just fine."

But not Santa Fe. In 1989, Santa Fe, under Michael Haverty's visionary leadership, decided to co-opt the traditional commercial relationship and produce something entirely new. Instead of "win-lose," it became "win-win." This was the epitome of one of the railroad's longest-running marketing slogans, which read, "Santa Fe — Always on the Move Toward a Better Way."

In 1981, the Interstate Commerce Commission used its new authority provided under the Staggers Rail Act of 1980 to exempt domestic intermodal traffic from price and rate regulation.





Deregulation of international intermodal traffic would come in 1984.

Utilizing its new regulatory freedom, most of the rail industry began experimenting with ways to attract new intermodal customers and improve chronic profitability issues with the existing business. Each railroad took a different approach in the name of trying something new. American President Line (APL) vs. Sea-Land was an interesting contrast in styles (and outcomes) between steamship companies. Both carriers had their own domestic containers as well as intermodal double-stack cars. But they still needed willing rail partners.

Union Pacific (along with partner Chicago & North Western) outsourced its domestic intermodal business to APL with a 10-year agreement in the mid-1980s. It was the brainchild of Don Orris, APL's marketing chief. As described in David J.

DeBoer's book *Piggyback and Containers*, this occurred after Orris was rebuffed by Santa Fe — not so bright on Santa Fe's part then. But later, its obstinance made so much more possible.

CSX Transportation went a different direction under the leadership of CEO Hays Watkins, acquiring Sea-Land in 1986. By 1991, CSX Intermodal was selling a nationwide intermodal service network that included service to southern California via Southern Pacific.

Several railroads tried the retail approach, keeping everything in-house. Burlington Northern went all-in on domestic retail with BN America. Norfolk Southern was the only railroad to seriously commit to RoadRailers with its retail door-to-door Triple Crown Service.

The Motor Carrier Deregulation Act of 1980 was enacted at about the same time as Staggers. Truckers also entered their

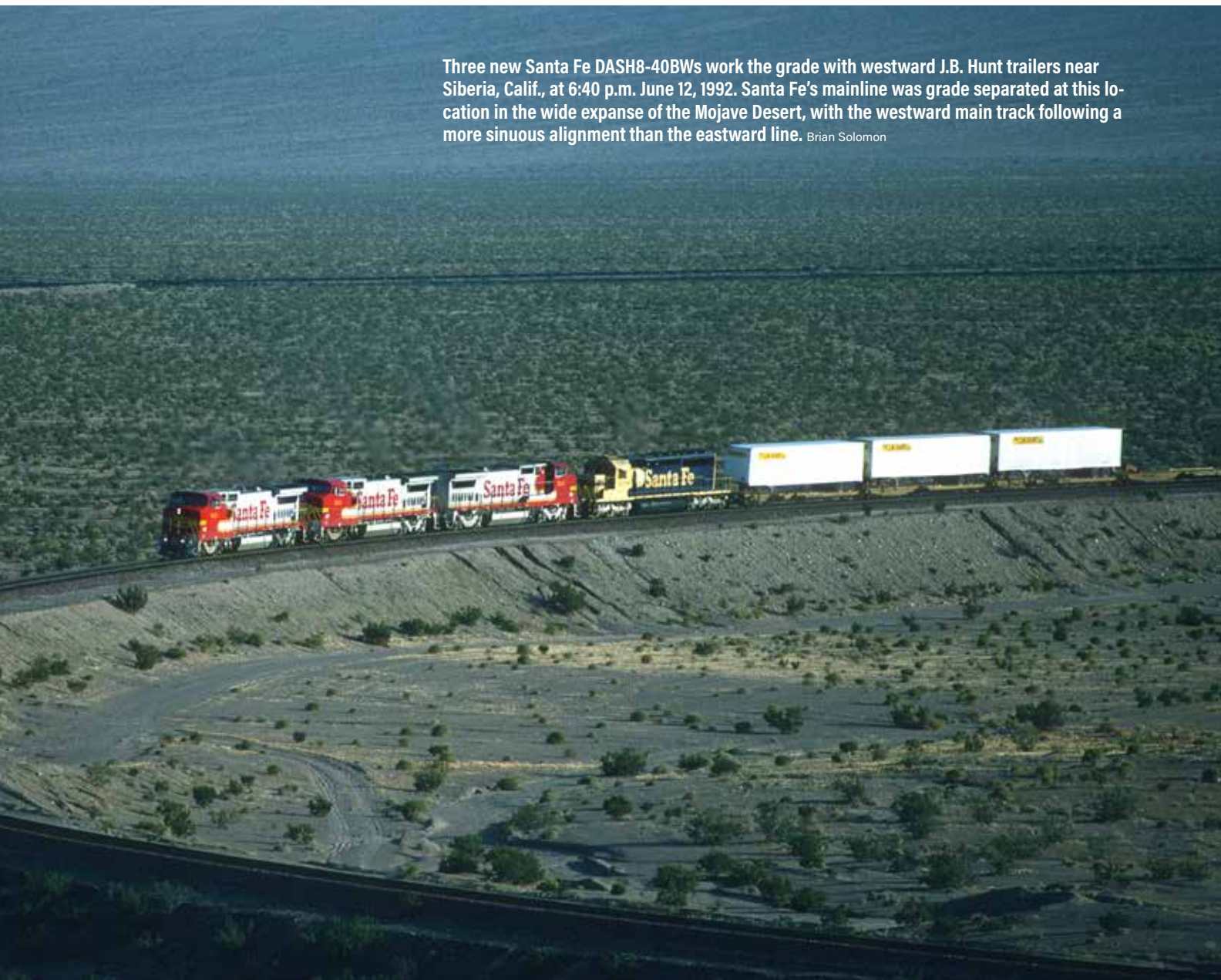
brave new world of deregulation, some coping better than others. An early casualty became Santa Fe Trail Transportation, a Santa Fe highway subsidiary dating to 1939; it shut down in 1984. One of the strongest and smartest survivors under deregulation, however, was a shrewd trucker from Lowell, Ark.

## BREAKING OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS

Where was Santa Fe during this era of rapid change and innovation? Literally and figuratively frozen in time and place since it began the merger process with Southern Pacific in March 1984. Don McInnes, assistant to the vice president of operations during the 1980s, said it best: "We came to a standstill."

Yet the intellectual foundation for the upcoming multimodal transportation revolution had already been created at the

Three new Santa Fe DASH8-40BWs work the grade with westward J.B. Hunt trailers near Siberia, Calif., at 6:40 p.m. June 12, 1992. Santa Fe's mainline was grade separated at this location in the wide expanse of the Mojave Desert, with the westward main track following a more sinuous alignment than the eastward line. Brian Solomon







**In June 1993, Willow Springs Yard was still being laid out along the Chillicothe Subdivision as westbound train V-CHLA2-21 heads toward California on June 21, 1993.** Two photos, Mike Abalos

University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, by Haverty himself, when he was a part-time MBA student in the Class of 1982. Conceptually, Haverty believed there should be "an alliance between a trucking company and a railroad."

As described by Keith L. Bryant Jr. and Fred W. Frailey in *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway*, a marketing course at Booth allowed Haverty to expound on his concept in a thesis on the "desirability of partnerships between railroads and truckers, combining the low-cost over-the road capabilities of railroads with the sales and pick-up deliveries capabilities of truckers." When Haverty became Santa Fe's president in 1989, this paper was his manifesto for revolutionary change. And one of the first things he did was make what many in the railroad industry considered a deal with the devil: He invited trucker Johnnie Bryan Hunt on a train ride.

Dumb luck played a part in this. As recounted in Bryant's and Frailey's book, John Russell — the lead McKinsey & Company consultant working for Santa Fe at the time — knew Hunt and volunteered to make the introductions and help get him on the train.

The train selected for the November 1989 demonstration run was Q-NYLA, the fastest freight on the railroad and a direct descendant of the Super C, which set speed records during its eight-year tenure between Chicago and Los Angeles. Four

FP45 locomotives, freshly washed and wearing the new Warbonnet paint scheme, pulled the train. These locomotives had initially been purchased by Santa Fe 22 years earlier as replacement power for the *Super Chief-El Capitan*. In 1989, they still made good motive power for high-speed intermodal trains.

After departing Chicago, as the westbound train rolled through Galesburg, Ill., Hunt leaned over and said, "Haverty, I think we've got ourselves a deal." And the rest is history. But at the time, as Haverty later recalled, "Neither one of us knew what the deal was."

### PERFECTING THE DEAL

Several strategic factors were already at work. First, in an Intermodal Founders Oral History Program interview videotaped at the University of Denver in 1999, Haverty said Santa Fe wanted to create a retail door-to-door intermodal program. However, he also said he did not want to get into the trucking business.

Santa Fe's existing wholesale marketing program, in which it merely hauled trailers that trucking customers collected, was inherently awkward, was cumbersome to manage, and suffered from a lack of quality control. A full-fledged door-to-door joint venture with a leading truckload carrier like J.B. Hunt gave Haverty precisely what he wanted and needed.

Second, it turned out that both Santa Fe and Hunt wanted to go beyond the





traditional commercial relationship and form a true partnership. While many railroads had made sales calls on Hunt, Santa Fe's Haverty was the first and only railroader to suggest such a partnership. That sealed the deal for Hunt. The association gave Hunt and Santa Fe equal amounts of skin in the game. Santa Fe would provide the premium train service, and J.B. Hunt Transport would provide everything else, including the customer interface. Both companies would contribute information technology assets and staff.

Finally, according to former Santa Fe CEO Robert Krebs in his 2018 autobiography *Riding the Rails*, "Hunt himself was a marketing genius. The world was waiting for good, reliable transportation service at a price less than you had to pay for a single driver to take a trailer across the United States."

An aside: J.B. Hunt was not only a first-class trucker, but also someone who

knew something about railroads, as revealed in that University of Denver interview. He said Haverty "knew how to keep the track up and move the freight. That's about three-fourths of the act. Now you've got to get it picked up and delivered; that's 99% of the act. But if you don't have the track, you ain't going to get much service."

One should not overlook the personal rapport between the two leaders. They were embarking on a journey into uncharted waters. Both were products of small towns about 400 miles apart. Haverty grew up in Atchison, Kan., and Hunt in Heber Springs, a small town in north central Arkansas.

For some in the intermodal business, especially at Santa Fe, this new deal was déjà vu all over again. As described by DeBoer, in the early '80s, APL's Orris proposed a rate-sharing agreement with Santa Fe that looked much like what J.B. Hunt and Santa Fe agreed upon years

later. "APL will take the risk on the equipment," DeBoer quotes Orris as saying, "but Santa Fe needs to reflect a part of the cost savings in the rate." Santa Fe's traffic VP at the time, Jim Wright, told Orris, "Sorry... I just couldn't do that. Our other third parties wouldn't hold still for that."

Orris replied, "Your other third parties don't supply Santa Fe with equipment. We'll bring both the boxes and the cars, and we'll bring you totally new traffic." Wright didn't believe Union Pacific would do the deal and told Orris so. But he was mistaken.

### ECHOES OF SUPER C

A similar fear of commercial blowback from various existing third-party customers, like shipper agents and freight forwarders, had contributed in 1967 to the failure to launch a Santa Fe-New York Central super-fast, premium-priced train between New York City and Los Angeles.

**Santa Fe's hot 891 train has just landed on track 1712 at the east end of Willow Springs Yard on May 22, 1995. The power will be cut off and continue east to Corwith, where it will be serviced. The sprawling building in the background is UPS's Chicago Area Consolidation Hub.**





**Intermodal train SFRCH (Richmond, Calif., to Chicago) is eastbound at Flagstaff, Ariz., on Sept. 28, 1995. The Flagstaff depot is a popular Amtrak stop for people wanting to visit the Grand Canyon and other tourist spots in the area.** David P. Oroszi

When NYC backed off, Santa Fe went ahead and the following January created its half of the service anyway, calling it Super C.

In August 1987, the transcontinental train concept was resurrected in a much different environment as the Q-NYLA and Q-LANY. This time, the eastern partner became a railroad success story named Conrail, operating its own new high-horsepower locomotives over main-line tracks equal in quality to those of Santa Fe. The Q trains ran between the New York metro area and Los Angeles in 76 hours. It was an idea whose time had finally arrived.

Santa Fe's new Intermodal Business Unit (IBU), created in 1989, was now responsible for everything intermodal, including profit and loss. It was led not by another hidebound Traffic Department executive (dragging tons of institutional baggage with him) but by a former operating department executive and Haverly colleague, Don McInnes.

This time, things were going to be dramatically different. Speaking to the Intermodal Marketing Association in February 1990, as the new vice president-intermodal, McInnes spelled out the game's new rules: "Santa Fe is going to cease being a price taker. Santa Fe will cease being leveraged on price with, I'll

take my freight elsewhere.' If you are an intermodal retailer and you deal with railroads in this fashion, you won't be dealing with Santa Fe much longer."

Then, in a 1990 *Progressive Railroading* article, McInnes described Santa Fe's premium marketing strategy this way: "We market our premium service something like the way the railway did our famous *Super Chief* passenger train. If you wanted to ride the *Super Chief*, you were required to pay an extra fare. We feel strongly that there is a growing niche for this type of intermodal service."

It was in this evolving environment that the new Santa Fe-J.B. Hunt joint venture emerged as Quantum. I still have my Quantum coffee mug and Lionel O-gauge Santa Fe Quantum tractor and trailer. The logo on the backside of the coffee mug is an inverted triangle with the words "Break Tradition."

### **TAKING THE ADVANTAGE**

The Quantum partnership gave Santa Fe several important advantages that few people fully understood. It gained instant access to a vast nationwide customer base. The trucking industry handles more than 70% of all domestic intercity freight tonnage shipped. Yet 99% of motor carriers operate 100 or fewer trucks. J.B. Hunt Transport was and remains, by revenue,

one of the five largest for-hire truckload carriers in America. (It now operates the largest refrigerated intermodal container fleet in the industry.)

Second, Hunt agreed to supply the bulk of its own intermodal trailers and containers; this was comparable to Union Pacific's deal with American President, wherein APL provided both containers and railcars. This was another lucky windfall for Santa Fe because it eliminated an enormous capital investment.

Finally, as an interstate trucker par excellence, J.B. Hunt already possessed the ability to successfully (and profitably) manage what is known as the "first-mile, last-mile" segments of the move. It had the dispatching and information-technology infrastructure to manage drayage nationwide far better than other intermodal drayage carriers.

The partners' robust existing framework of over-the-road business would allow them to internally cross-subsidize highway and intermodal operations, keeping empty miles and costs to a minimum. The icing on the cake was placing a Santa Fe customer service manager on-site at J.B. Hunt's corporate offices in Lowell.

This new multimodal concept was pure genius and now seems painfully obvious to just about everyone in the business. But someone had to possess the courage and foresight 30 years ago to take the risk and the first steps. That's called



leadership. In his 1996 *Trains* article "The Santa Fe Mystique," author William Benning Stewart described Santa Fe's competitive advantage as "the happy combination of analytical left brain thinking with right brain creativity." By the end of 1989, Mike Haverty had become the living embodiment of that "distinctive advantage," as exemplified by two concurrent actions.

In late 1989, Haverty was finalizing the details of the deal with J.B. Hunt Transport (heavy duty left brain thinking). This action would go on to "please the shareholders" beyond belief within five years, helping to make Santa Fe one of the most valuable franchises in North American railroading. At the same time, Haverty resurrected the famous Warbonnet locomotive paint scheme (heavy-duty right-brain creativity) as the key feature of the new Santa Fe brand image, an action that would "please the soul of the romantic." Haverty personally selected and approved the new paint scheme shortly.

The book *Warbonnets: From Super Chief to Super Fleet* by Dan Pope and Mark Lynn includes a fascinating letter from Haverty himself providing his recollections of "how it all took place." It is an interesting story for most railfans and an integral part of the book, but his assess-

ment of the real-world impact is the most important part.

Santa Fe "received millions of dollars in free advertising as it again became the most recognized paint scheme in the world," Haverty wrote. "It became one of the biggest marketing coups in recent history. It put Santa Fe back in the news, and, more importantly, helped the company regain its image as a quality carrier."

GP60Ms delivered from EMD in May 1990 would be the first of a long parade of Santa Fe locomotives wearing the latest version of the Warbonnet paint scheme.

### **TAPPING INTO A LEGEND**

What was it in Santa Fe's DNA that made all this possible? Was it pure luck or something else?

First, the collective memory of Santa Fe's past glory days was alive and well. In 1989, most of the senior management were still career Santa Fe employees. They represented an extraordinary brain trust of experienced railroaders proud of the Santa Fe legacy and eager to help the railroad regain its leadership position. They were, as a group, intimately familiar with the concepts of quality and speed, as represented by premier trains such as the *Super Chief* and *Super C*.

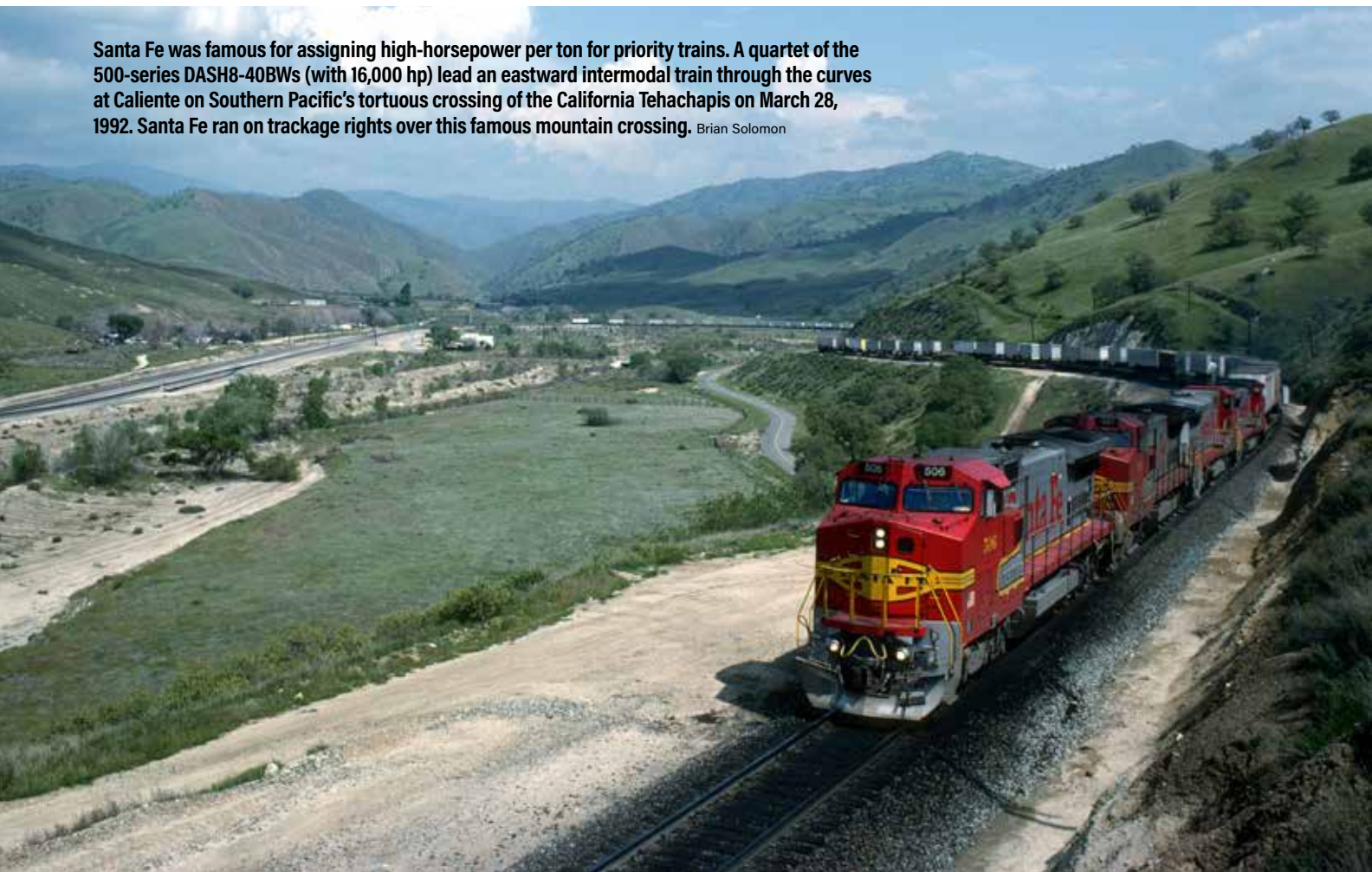
One of the early IBU-managed promotional campaigns included a full-color print ad that proclaimed, "If it's Super, it has to be Santa Fe." The 1989 Santa Fe promotional video "Smooth Journey" proudly proclaimed, "From the *Super Chief* of 1939 to the Super Fleet of today, we've set the track record in transportation." It reminded viewers, "The values and principles that guided the *Super Chief* guide the Super Fleet of today."

Probably nothing epitomizes Santa Fe's corporate esprit de corps in its final years more than the book *Warbonnets* by Pope and Lynn, in which they write, "The powerful imagery and the superior service of Santa Fe's premier passenger train would become synonymous with the railroad itself. The mystique that was created still lingers today. If image is everything, then the Santa Fe has it all."

After the Santa Fe-Southern Pacific merger was quashed by the ICC in 1986, the Santa Fe team knew what to do. They just needed new direction and fresh leadership, which they got from Krebs, who became the railroad's chief executive in 1987.

Many at Santa Fe didn't realize they likely were living on borrowed time. In 1988, one of the Santa Fe's largest

**Santa Fe was famous for assigning high-horsepower per ton for priority trains. A quartet of the 500-series DASH8-40BW's (with 16,000 hp) lead an eastward intermodal train through the curves at Caliente on Southern Pacific's tortuous crossing of the California Tehachapis on March 28, 1992. Santa Fe ran on trackage rights over this famous mountain crossing. Brian Solomon**







**Train 199 blasts up Edelstein Hill west of Chillicothe, Ill., on Sept. 3, 1995. Edelstein Hill is a 6-mile grade that brings trains west out of the Illinois River valley.** David P. Oroszi

shareholders, the real estate company Olympia & York Development and its McKinsey & Company consultants, believed the railroad to be the least desirable part of the proposed SPSF holding company. When O&Y director Paul Reichmann brought before the board the idea of selling the Santa Fe, Krebs proposed instead that McKinsey be employed by the railroad to take a second look at the company. McKinsey ultimately agreed that the railroad had the most upside potential of all SPSF companies. Krebs went on to lead one of the most spectacular turnarounds in modern railroad history.

Next, in 1988, came an intense internal analysis and review of possible options and outcomes, led by Krebs and facilitated by McKinsey. The result of that process would be a laser-like focus on providing the highest quality rail intermodal service in North America at the lowest possible cost.

Also in its DNA, Santa Fe had a corporate commitment to intermodal unique in the rail industry. In 1989, most U.S. railroads treated their intermodal business like an unwanted stepchild. But not Santa Fe. Writing in his *Santa Fe 1992 Annual*, author Kevin EuDaly said “There is no doubt that Santa Fe and intermodal are synonymous. In fact, if there were a definition in the dictionary for intermodal, it would surely use Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway as a primary example.”

In 1988, Santa Fe ranked second in intermodal volume behind Conrail. However, the comparative relationship here is not as obvious as it looks. The difference was that Conrail had a near-monopoly in the Northeast, which the Federal Railroad Administration had identified as the densest long-haul intermodal freight market in the U.S. Conrail spread this volume over two legacy routes between the New York City area and Chicago. By contrast, most of Santa Fe’s intermodal volume still came from its primary route, Chicago to California.

### **A RAILROAD WITHIN A RAILROAD**

Also pursuant to its DNA, one of the first things Santa Fe did — based on advice from McKinsey — was to establish an Intermodal Business Unit, described as “a railroad within a railroad.” This fundamental structural change made the laser-like focus possible. The IBU’s mandate was to sort out Santa Fe’s legacy hodgepodge of intermodal business and make intermodal solidly profitable.

Management added a few twists of its own. The IBU would control both marketing (sales, pricing) and operations (terminals, equipment) — no more traditional railroad managing in stovepipes. Success would require the IBU to control all the levers and have P&L responsibility.

To maximize the possibility for success, Haverty turned to a trusted operat-

ing department colleague, Don McInnes, to run the new business unit. During his tenure as vice president of operations, Santa Fe’s own Traffic Department had been Haverty’s biggest obstacle to going forward with his trucking partnership idea. By 1989, the Traffic Department had already trashed this idea once. But as president, Haverty no longer needed to worry about getting “permission” from narrow-minded prophets of doom in his own organization.

Santa Fe’s modern legacy of high-speed freight trains also was deep in its DNA. One of the few metrics available for a comprehensive analysis of freight train speeds was Donald M. Steffee’s Annual Speed Survey, published in *Trains*. Unfortunately, the Speed Survey was phased out in the early ’70s. The survey included all fast freight trains in North America with runs (or segments) timed at 55 mph or better.

One of the last good examples was the 1969 survey, published in the September 1970 *Trains*. Steffee made this fascinating observation: “So fine is Santa Fe’s freight performance with other hotshots as well as with *Super C*, that we have had to restrict its representation to 60 mph.”

For the total freight train scorecard, Santa Fe had 17 runs operating 60 mph or greater and 32 runs operating 55 mph or greater. Steffee’s 1969 survey identified 105 freight runs nationwide at 55 mph or greater, and 46% of these trains operated over Santa Fe.



By 1990, Santa Fe's two fastest intermodal trains were the Chicago to Richmond (Oakland) No. 199 and its eastbound counterpart No. 991. Both operated on the southern Transcon route via Amarillo, Texas. Train No. 199 was allowed 51 hours, 45 minutes to cover the 2,505 miles, an average speed of 48.4 mph. In August 1970, the *San Francisco Chief* passenger train was allowed 50 hours to cover 2,537 miles from Dearborn Street Station to Richmond via Topeka, Kan. Eastbound 991 was slightly slower, with a scheduled running time of 55 hours, to cover the same 2,505 miles. Trains 198 and 891 operated on a 49-hour schedule between Chicago and Los Angeles (45.3 mph average speed).

In the two decades after 1969, train speed would become critically important. According to data collected by the FRA National Intermodal Network Feasibility Study, the average highway speed for trucks had increased from 43 mph in 1950 to almost 57 mph in 1972. Begun in 1956, the original Interstate Highway System was proclaimed complete in 1992. In 1995 Congress repealed the mandatory 55 mph limit in its entirety.

The Interstates allowed truckers to drive faster and farther. Haverty encountered this phenomenon during his first transcontinental business car trip after he became president in June 1989. "We're zipping across out there adjacent to Interstate 40 in New Mexico," he's quoted as saying in the book *The Illinois Division of Santa Fe Railway*, by James A. Brown. "It was unbelievable how many trucks were out there. Actually, at the time, the 55-mph speed limit was in effect. They weren't running 55, but they were supposed to be 55 mph. Here we are out there going 70 mph, and we're like 40 yards away from the interstate."

The Federal Highway Administration had identified Interstate 40 as one of the five busiest for truck traffic in the U.S. and the third most active in the West. It remains a critical link in the collection of four Interstate highway segments that collectively replaced Route 66 as the primary Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway route.

#### **ONE MORE ACE**

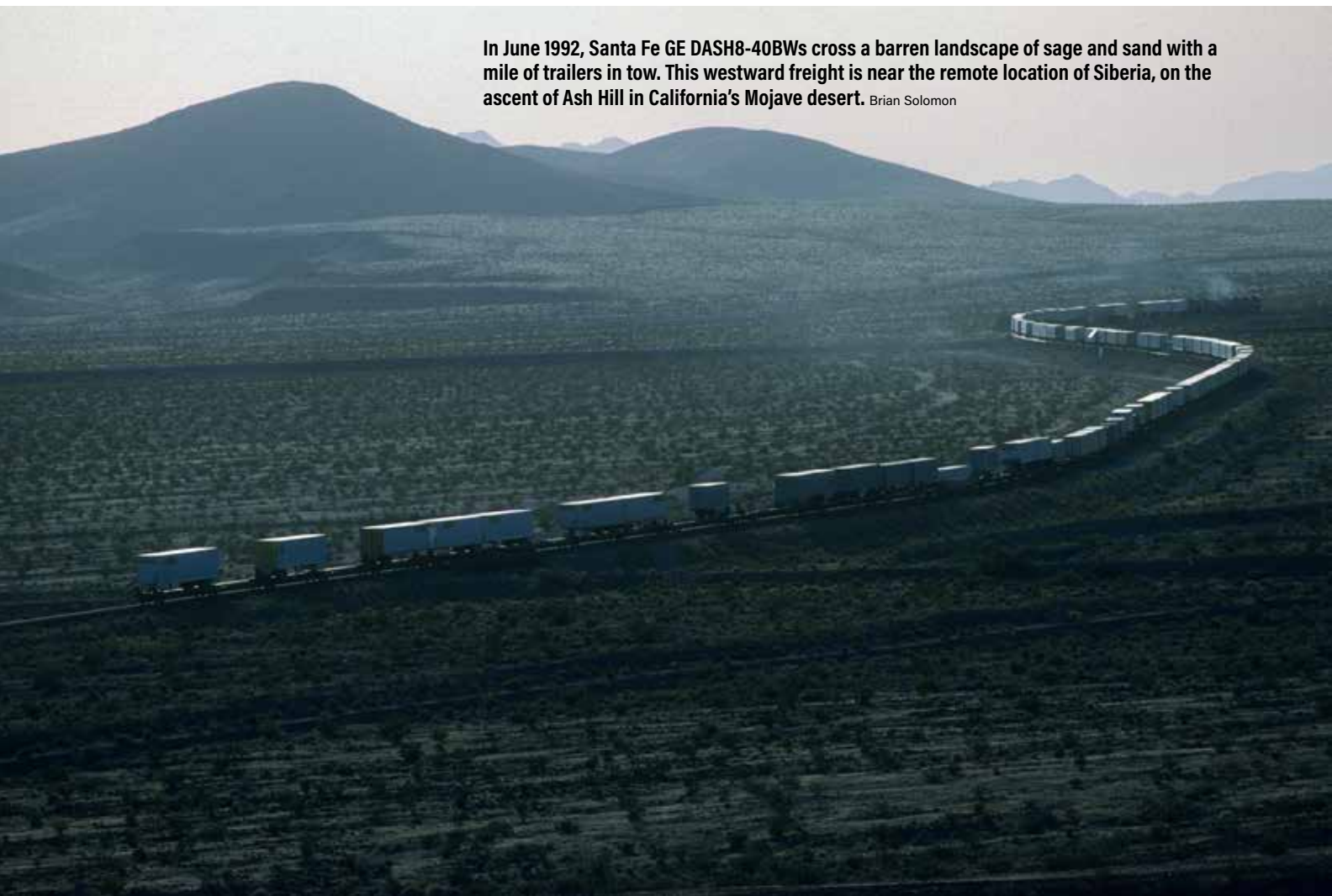
Finally, Santa Fe had one more ace up its sleeve: its special relationship with long-time customer United Parcel Service.

Frailey's and Bryant's book observes that UPS "became what passenger trains once were: an enforcer of operational discipline." UPS paid a premium price but demanded — and got — consistently reliable service from the railroad.

The final word here belongs to Robert D. Krebs. In December 2000, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Canadian National filed a merger application with the Surface Transportation Board. "I still wonder what Hunter Harrison would have done with (or to) BNSF," Krebs wrote in *Riding the Rails*. "Early in 2000, we invited Hunter to accompany our operating people on a trip from Chicago to Los Angeles. One suggestion he made then was to slow our intermodal trains down to 50 mph. We prided ourselves on our 70 mph intermodal trains, which we thought were important in providing service competitive with trucks. The Surface Transportation Board made such worries moot." ■

*JIM GIBLIN was hired to the Santa Fe by Don McInnes in 1989. He wishes to dedicate this article to his father, John J. Giblin — a decent man who made all things possible for his son.*

**In June 1992, Santa Fe GE DASH8-40BWs cross a barren landscape of sage and sand with a mile of trailers in tow. This westward freight is near the remote location of Siberia, on the ascent of Ash Hill in California's Mojave desert. Brian Solomon**







# MILWAUKEE ROAD'S slug units

BY ART DANZ

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**Consider the slug.** Not the shell-less cousin of a snail, but in railroading the weighted-down, engineless platform that's dependent upon a "mother" locomotive to provide power to its traction motors. The 1970s saw a number of Class I railroads develop an interest in these non-powered units as a cheaper alternative to providing higher tractive effort at lower cost in operations that didn't require high speeds.



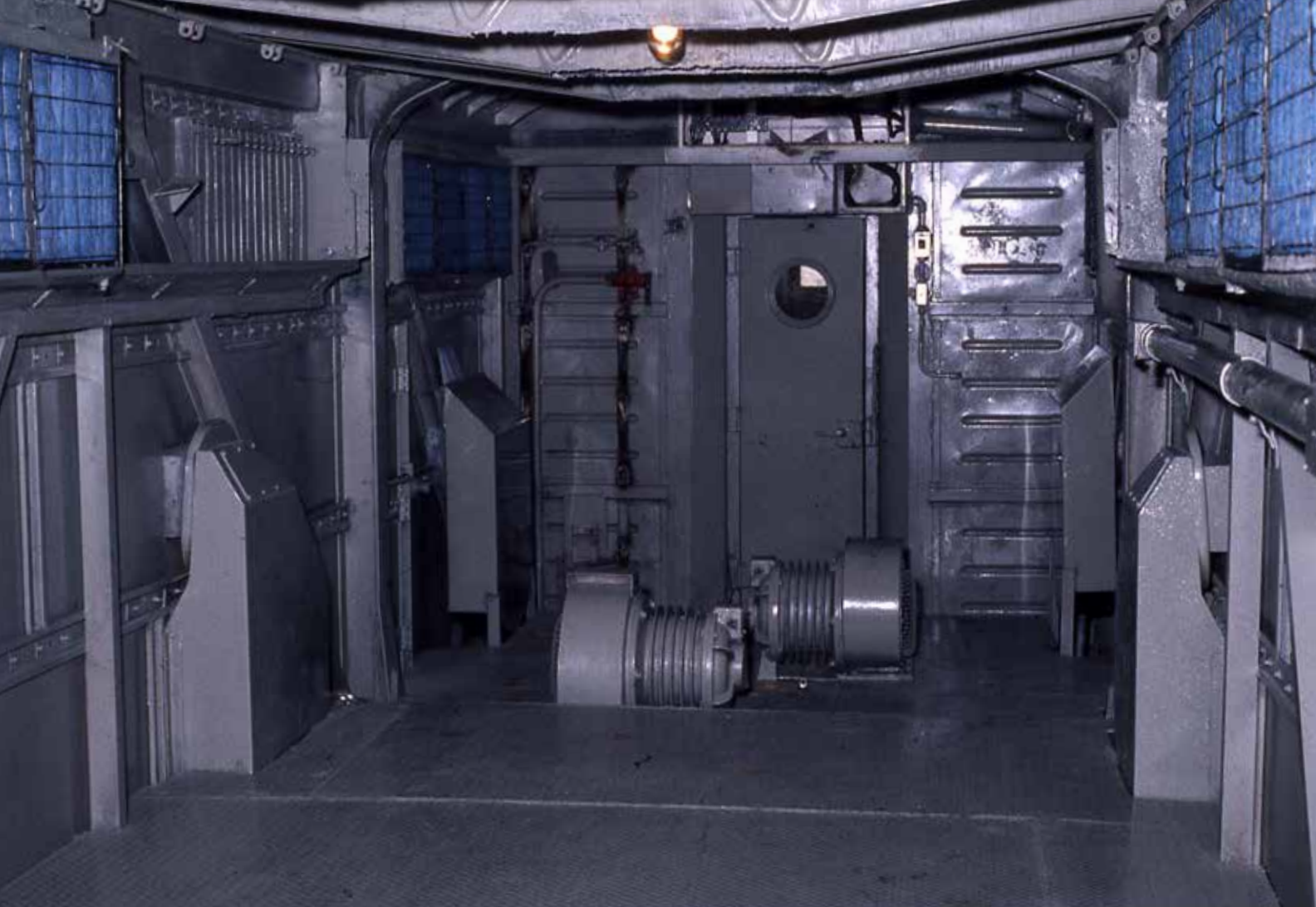


THEY WEREN'T PRETTY, BUT THEY COULD PULL LIKE CRAZY



Main: Fresh out of the Milwaukee Shops in February 1972 47C/SE-1/47A (renumbered 81C/SE-1/81A) stand out against a cold, dreary day in Milwaukee, Wis. Those home-built winterization hatches along the front three roof cooling fans did not last. Above: The business ends of the Slugs. Note the power cable design difference between the SE-1 on the left and the subsequent SG-2 on the right. The original design featured a hood above the cables and vertical receptacles along the side to hold them when detached from the mother unit. The later design was much simpler. Notice that one of the ports has the power cable already pulled through. The power cable assemblies were installed only on one side of the slugs/mothers ends. A warning reminds employees not to plug into the "parent" unit with the engine running.





Top: Here's the inside of the finished product, a vast cavern resplendent in standard Milwaukee Road Suede Gray interior paint. Prominent are the two traction motor blowers in the center and four sand boxes along the sides with a flat safety-tread steel floor covering the area once occupied by the prime mover. Middle: You can get an idea of just how much the floor was raised above the ballast by these three photos.

**It was a perfect design, since the slug sets were to be used as helpers and in drag service rather than switching.**



Slugs were perfect for the job, since they'd pull like crazy but at slow speeds. Among Class I railroads, Seaboard Coast Line was enthusiastic about the slug's advantages, using them in large numbers in the phosphate district near Barstow, Fla. SCL's slugs (called "Mates") were built by GE and were paired up with the railroad's U36Bs. I can remember being at Barstow, Fla., with my friend the late George Niles in the 1980s to watch the "fleet" arriving back at the SCL yard after a day of amassing hundreds of phosphate-filled

hoppers. I also saw slugs on the Chicago & North Western and Missouri-Kansas-Texas; by the early 1970s, slugs were common sights on several other roads, including Louisville & Nashville, Norfolk & Western, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and, later, Conrail.

My employer, the Milwaukee Road, also ventured into the slug concept and built a total of five very successful units. The first one, numbered SG-1, was constructed in 1972 from an Alco RS3 and designed to be married to a pair of GE

U30Bs. Dubbed the "Twinkie" because of its shape, it worked south out of Tacoma, Wash., on the Milwaukee's logging branches. After the success of SG-1, the company continued with the program but settled on using aging EMD F7 units as platforms, as they were coming due for retirement.

It was a perfect design, since the slug sets were to be used as helpers and in drag service rather than switching. Set 81A/SE-1/81C (formerly 47A/SE-1-47C) emerged in 1972, while sets 82A/SE-2/82C and 83A/SE-3/83C followed in

**Ballast consisted of scrap freight car axles and rail angle bars, likely lowered into the carbody through the roof hatch when the prime mover was removed. Note how the blower motor ducts were raised to get the motors up to the new floor level. Look closely at the lower left-hand photo; you can see a workman at the far end modifying the area where the side access door swings in.**



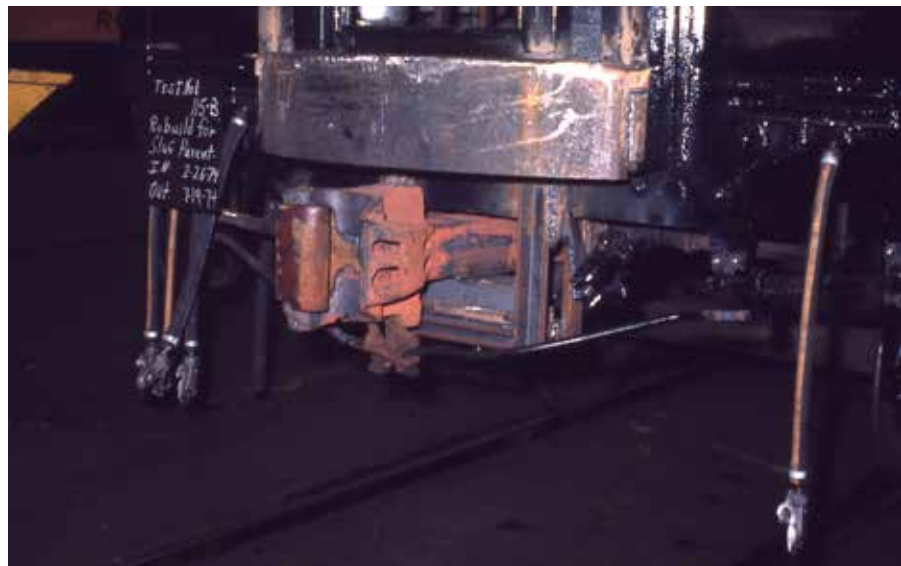




Above: Metamorphosis complete, slug SG-2 sits on the turntable outside the Shops roundhouse ready to be towed west on the next freight to Tacoma, where she'll be introduced to her U30B General Electric mother units.

Over the years I've asked myself what the big advantage is of a three-unit slug set with 3,000 hp and 12 traction motors.

Below: Units 82A/SE-2/82C, 83A/SE-3/83C, and SG-2 all received the Milwaukee Road billboard lettering that was introduced in 1972. Middle: Looks like the paint shop was ready before the final sand box modification was. It'll get touched up later on. Bottom: Little seen area of F-type locomotives. Note how the coupler yoke was modified and strengthened. F7B No. 115B became the SG-2 on July 19, 1974 after a five-month rebuild.





1974, with the 82AC and 83AC sets receiving the new billboard-style Milwaukee Road lettering. Last to be built was SG-2, again an F7B, but this time constructed to be paired with another set of GE U30Bs. Four of the sets were assigned to Tacoma, with the 81AC and 82AC sets spending most of their time coupled together pulling cuts of Portland-bound cars up the 3.5% grade between Tacoma and Hilldale.

Far to the east, the 83AC spent its career based out of Latta, Ind., roaming the

main line as well as the Lattas Creek Branch, gathering up strings of coal. All five slugs lasted in service until the Milwaukee Road's final bankruptcy and re-trenchment from the West Coast in 1980.

What you see here is a photo story of the slugs as they were being constructed at the railroad's West Milwaukee Shops complex. It's an interesting look into the engineering, building techniques, and planning that were incorporated into one of the famous Shops' last major products.

Over the years I've asked myself what

the big advantage is of a three-unit slug set with 3,000 hp and 12 traction motors versus a pair of SD7s with 3,000 hp and 12 traction motors. I think I might have hit upon an answer. A slug set weighed in at 748,600 pounds, while the SD7 pair weighed 590,000 pounds. A general understanding of railroad tractive effort tells us that more weight on the drivers (powered axles) equals more adhesion and greater pulling power. Hence the success of the slug sets on various railroads across the country. ■

**Below: Slug mother 47C looks like any other F7A on the property. The only slug mother physical features noticed are the single porthole window, those two extra sand box filler ports, and the power cables barely visible at the rear. Bottom: SE-1, on the other hand, is quite noticeable with its absence of any roof appliances, no portholes, fuel tank or battery boxes, one side access door, power cables, and large under-mounted air tank.**







# Manufacturers Railway in 1950

BY JERRY A. PINKEPANK// Photo by Alco-GE

**The Manufacturers Railway (MRS)** was a wholly owned subsidiary of St. Louis brewer Anheuser-Busch, Inc. The railroad was founded in 1887 to take over plant switching of the brewery. Beginning in 1876, A-B also was the pioneer in rail transportation of beer as well as a recipient of inbound beer ingredients and bottles; the company led the advance in the bottling of beer, extending its marketing beyond tavern taps. Railroads naturally charged their customers for intra-plant switching, and as rail traffic at the brewery grew, so did the need to switch cars other than the initial spot-and-pull included in the rail rate. By making the switching line a common carrier, A-B was able to receive payment from the railroad that directly connected to the brewery trackage, Missouri Pacific predecessor St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern.

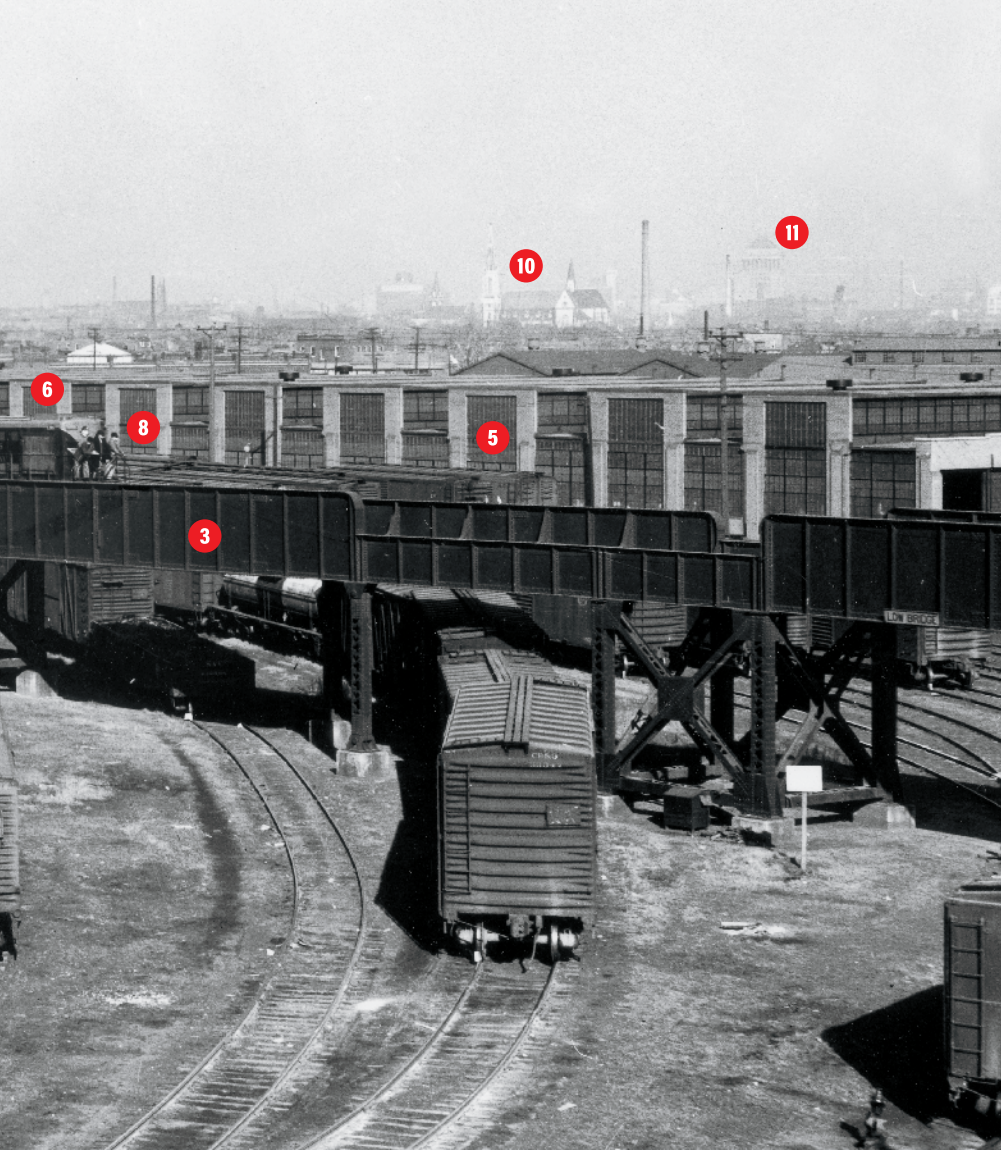
**1 Brewery yard** at Arsenal Street; the blue line is the Missouri Pacific.

## **2 Extension across the Mississippi River.**

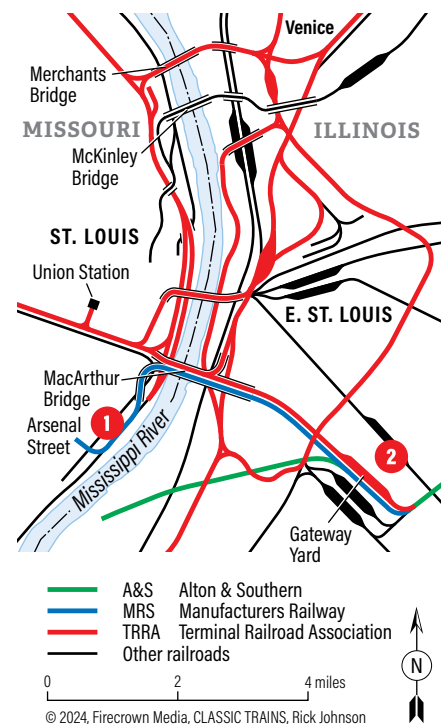
The Eads Bridge had been opened to rail traffic in 1874, replacing much ferrying of railcars. From the beginning, however, St. Louis industries considered the tolls on the bridge to be excessive. In 1889, main line railroads on both sides of the river had formed the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, which then owned the Eads Bridge, with tolls remaining the same issue. The industries arranged for the construction of the Merchants Bridge, which opened in 1889, just when the newly formed TRRA gained control of access to it on both sides of the river. During the recession that followed the Panic of 1893, the industries lost control of that bridge to the TRRA, as well. Tolls remained the issue, to the extent that ferries continued in competition. Another independent bridge, the McKinley, opened in 1910, built by the Illinois Traction Co. and operated primarily for passenger service and as a toll bridge for highway vehicles. IT re-

organized as the Illinois Terminal Railroad in 1937. No other railroad used the bridge. The two lines diverging on the east side of the river were, heading north, a branch to Alton, Ill., and nearby towns beyond, and heading east, the IT main lines to East Peoria, Decatur, Champaign-Urbana, and Danville. It took from 1906 to 1928 for the City of St. Louis to get the Municipal Bridge (renamed the MacArthur Bridge in 1942) open to rail traffic, but when it did open, A-B had built a connection to it, parallel to the MP between MP and the river, around MP's Lesperance Yard, then looping back across the MP to get an approach alignment to the bridge. MRS used the bridge to extend their line by trackage rights via an independent switch carrier, Alton & Southern (a subsidiary of the Aluminum Company of America). The red line on the map represents the route to the bridge built on the Missouri side by the Manufacturers Railroad, and its trackage rights on the bridge, which has





## Downtown St. Louis



a long, elevated approach on the Illinois side curving to descend alongside and connecting to A&S's Gateway Yard (green on the map).

**3 MRS approach to overpass** over MP to the MRS's Municipal Bridge connecting line.

**4 Brewery.** What is in view is a small part of the complex, which is laced by ex-MRS track, now switched by successor Foster Townsend Rail Logistics.

**5 A-B warehouse.**

**6 MRS S2 208** built August 1944, pulling a cut from the brewery. MRS's original diesels were 1000-hp Alco high-hood No. 201-203, built February and April 1940, followed by S2s No. 204-211, built November 1940 through December 1948. The railroad acquired one S4, No. 212, in August 1951, as well as other second-hand S2s

later. The 208 in 1978 was sent to Morrison-Knudsen for rebuilding into the equivalent of an SW1200 with a 567C engine and D77 motors in new trucks. This turned out to be a one-off, as MRS then acquired secondhand SW1500s rather than do additional rebuilds.

**7 St. Louis Refrigerator Car Co.** bunkerless refrigerator car (the term was applied to what were later simply called insulated boxcars). Many of these cars are in the photo. SLRX was a wholly owned A-B subsidiary founded in 1878. There were 1,337 SLRX cars in 1950.

**8 Switch crew riding** to the next move on the front platform of No. 208: a foreman and two switchmen. Their presence in this position tells us that in spite of using the MacArthur Bridge connection, they are probably not making a cross-river trip, as the MRS had cabooses for such moves. Besides Missouri Pacific, the con-

nections MRS reached directly in 1950 without using TRRA were Alton & Southern; Baltimore & Ohio; Burlington; Chicago & Eastern Illinois; Gulf, Mobile & Ohio; Illinois Central; Litchfield & Madison (a Chicago & North Western subsidiary); Nickel Plate; Louisville & Nashville; New York Central; Pennsylvania; St. Louis South Western (Cotton Belt); Southern; Wabash (lines east of Mississippi, TRRA tolls applied to interchange to Wabash lines west); and short lines St. Louis & Belleville Electric and St. Louis & O'Fallon (another A-B subsidiary).

**9 MRS S2 209**, built August 1945.

**10 Saints Peter & Paul Church**, built in 1875 and designed by Franz Georg Hempler; the spire was added in 1890.

**11 Civic Courts building**, Greek Revival structure built in 1928. 🏠





# BACK DOOR CHANGE

## DULUTH, WINNIPEG & PACIFIC'S 1984 RELOCATION

DAVID C. SCHAUER // Photos by the author

**T**his is the story of a small 167-mile railroad in northeastern Minnesota that underwent a major change in the 1970s and early 1980s to become Canadian National's indispensable route between Canada and the United States. A key element of that transformation was the total relocation in 1984 of the railroad's operations from its signature Minnesota city to a little-known place in nearby Wisconsin. This shift proved to be a massive undertaking that took years to plan and millions of dollars to complete.

The railroad at the center of this relocation was the Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Railway (DW&P), called the "Peg" by locals. The cover of the March 1974 *Trains* Magazine featured the DW&P, with the bold headline "CN's Back Door Entry to the U.S.," showing an image of a southbound train behind two Alco RS11s about to enter a tunnel in western Duluth. In that issue, author Stanley H. Mailer covered the railroad's transformation into a primary international artery.

Back in the 1970s and '80s, the Peg was best known for its large fleet of brown boxcars with DW&P lettering and yellow or green doors, green for finished lumber service and yellow for newsprint. These cars, along with black-and-green bulkhead flat cars, formed the backbone of the railroad's freight car fleet moving lumber and newsprint out of Canada in ever-increasing quantities. Adding to the Peg's impressive tonnage figures was a large rise in shipments of the potassium-

bearing material known as potash, used as a base for fertilizer.

The cascade of lumber traffic from Canada would prove to be the main impetus for the rebuilding of the lightly trafficked DW&P, and is fitting, given that the line traces its beginnings to the timber industry.

Chartered in 1901, the Duluth, Virginia & Rainy Lake Railway was originally built to move logs to a large sawmill located on Silver Lake in Virginia, Minn. In 1905, Canadian interests purchased the logging line with the intent to create a link between Duluth and their Canadian Northern Railway at Fort Francis, Ontario. A name change to Duluth, Rainy Lake & Winnipeg followed, and construction began north from Cook toward Canada, ending at Ranier across the Rainy River from Fort Francis.

In 1909 construction commenced south toward Duluth, with completion of the link in 1912 and another name change









to Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Railway. Canadian Northern, along with its DW&P subsidiary, would become a main component of Canadian National in 1919 when that Crown corporation was formed to operate a number of financially struggling lines. Today the former DW&P route's importance is underscored by its

use of Centralized Traffic Control and Positive Train Control, a far cry from the line's logging origins and true to the "Pacific" in its name. The border town of Ranier has the distinction of being the busiest rail crossing between Canada and the U.S., with more than 20 trains a day during traffic surges.

#### EARLY CONSTRICTIONS

When the DW&P arrived in the Twin Ports of Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis., its choice of routes was limited and the railroad found itself carving a twisting route out of an escarpment that forms a steep hillside in Duluth. This line featured a 1.15% grade and a curving 520-foot-



**Above:** Crews from two transfer jobs head back to their respective locomotives as C&NW power arrives to pick up interchange traffic in downtown Duluth in spring 1980. One crew delivered a train to BN's Bridge Yard and has put their caboose on a cut of cars for the return trip to West Duluth while the other crew delivered to the C&NW. **Right:** On March 19, 1983, a northbound train exits the curved 520-foot-long rock tunnel at mileage 7.4 on its way to Canada.







**Two RS11s pull a train back to West Duluth on Dec. 27, 1981. The rear of the train can be seen in the distance curving off Burlington Northern trackage at DW&P Junction.**



**A northbound DW&P train with Canadian National SD40 5021 leading works up the 1.15% grade out of Duluth and is about to enter the DW&P's tunnel at mileage 7.4 on June 3, 1979. Note the new farm equipment visible on the left. This route along the hillside is now a city-maintained recreation trail.**

long tunnel at mile 7.4. Adding to the complexity of the route was the need to span numerous roads, streetcar lines, and the Northern Pacific in West Duluth. This was accomplished by a half-mile-long wood trestle that included a three-story depot, complete with an elevator.

Between the trestle and the base of the hill was the railroad's cramped yard and engine facility. Built when freight cars were smaller and traffic levels lower, the yard had been outgrown by the 1970s, and it was becoming an operating bottleneck. Another issue was its position on a grade; it wasn't uncommon for cars to roll out of the yard toward downtown Duluth. While these factors were not the main reason behind the 1984 relocation, they would play a role in the Peg's decision to vacate its Duluth terminal.

In 1975, plans would begin to change that back door in Duluth, forever altering the railroad landscape in the Twin Ports. The driver behind this change was the desire to extend Interstate 35 through downtown Duluth. When I-35 arrived in the early 1970s, it ended at the west side of downtown. Planners had envisioned the highway going beyond there and along the north shore of Lake Superior to connect with a four-lane expressway on

the far east side. After years of debate, it was decided that I-35 would continue past downtown and end at 26th Avenue East. It was short of the expressway, but a compromise that would avoid disrupting an affluent part of eastern Duluth.

This agreement called for the removal of Burlington Northern's Bridge Yard (so named due to the yard having been originally built on pilings) and Chicago and North Western's 5th Avenue Yard in downtown, where most of the interchange business with the DW&P was transacted. Milwaukee Road, which had trackage rights over BN from St. Paul, also interchanged with DW&P at Bridge Yard. Prior to the BN merger, DW&P would interchange with connecting railroads at the Lake Superior Terminal & Transfer Railway in Superior, with transfers using Northern Pacific's Grassy Point Swing Bridge between Duluth and Superior. As traffic grew, that arrangement became cumbersome, so the move to Duluth was made shortly after the BN merger.

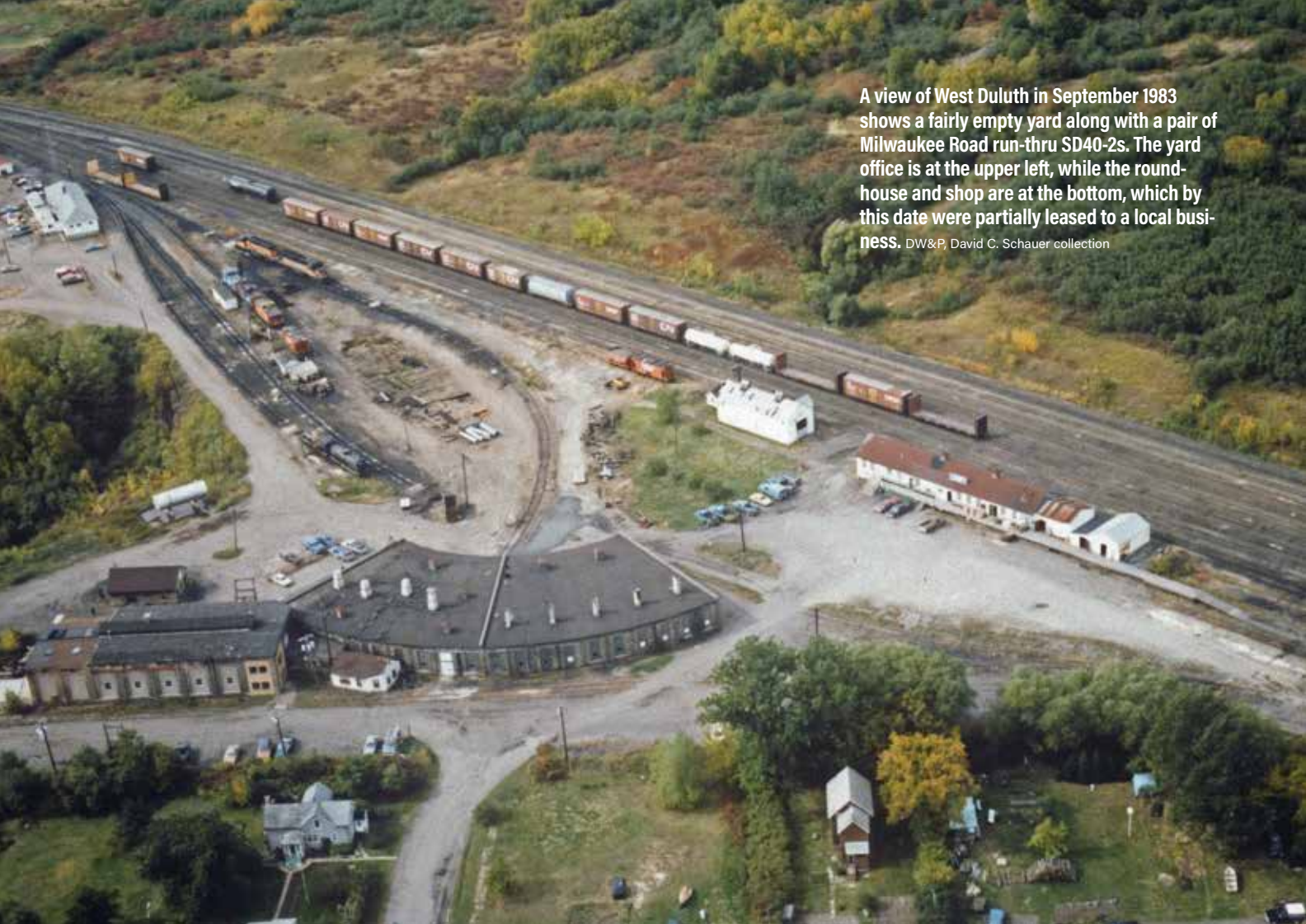
Given that the Peg's primary interchange in Duluth was being removed, a search began to find a replacement. BN's nearby Rice's Point yard was considered, but it lacked the capacity to handle the traffic, and its shorter yard tracks

wouldn't be as efficient for interchanging long trains. Attention turned to the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range yard at Steelton in far western Duluth. This yard had served U.S. Steel's Duluth Works but was now mostly unused as the mill and its associated functions closed in the 1970s.

Understandably, Minnesota's Department of Transportation favored the Steelton site, as it would keep the railroad and its 200 jobs in the state. Local residents in the Gary-New Duluth neighborhood that bordered the yard voiced concerns, so planners turned their attention to a large rural area across the St. Louis River in Wisconsin known as Pokegama (Poe-KEG-uh-muh), located along the DM&IR's Interstate Branch where it crossed the Northern Pacific's Superior-to-Carlton, Minn., line, a route abandoned after the BN merger.

Benefits of this location included relatively inexpensive flat land and access to all railroads in the Twin Ports using the Interstate Branch, which ran east from Steelton to South Itasca (eastern Superior) and was built to handle iron ore and products from the Duluth Works. A drawback was the low wetland nature of the property and its clay soil, not to mention being on another railroad's line.





A view of West Duluth in September 1983 shows a fairly empty yard along with a pair of Milwaukee Road run-thru SD40-2s. The yard office is at the upper left, while the roundhouse and shop are at the bottom, which by this date were partially leased to a local business. DW&P, David C. Schauer collection

While the relocation of the DW&P from West Duluth was the main expense, funds were also distributed to the Soo Line, BN, and C&NW to upgrade and build new tracks at their yards in Superior to accommodate changing traffic patterns. The Peg and Soo had interchanged in West Duluth and later at Bridge Yard, so that traffic was also impacted by the extension of Interstate 35. In all, more than \$18 million was spent on this project, a substantial sum at the time, with the federal government and Minnesota DOT paying \$15,490,000 while DW&P contributed \$3,021,000. In concert with construction of new facilities at Pokegama, DM&IR rebuilt its Spirit Lake and Interstate branches to handle the additional traffic, as well as installing CTC.

### CONFRONTING THE MERGER ERA

Prior to completion of Pokegama Yard, in 1983 came a new connection from the Peg's original line at Nopeming to the DM&IR's Spirit Lake Branch west of Duluth and a connection from the

Interstate Branch to BN's mainline at Saunders, south of Superior. These connections were put in to accommodate run-through trains operated between DW&P and Milwaukee Road, as the Grand Trunk Corporation — the CN's U.S. subsidiary overseeing the Peg — was funneling traffic to MILW in anticipation of buying that railroad.

Although that marriage never came to pass — Soo Line won the right to purchase its competitor — the connecting track at Saunders still bears the name Milwaukee Connection, a reminder of why it was built.

Although it lost the battle for the Milwaukee, CN eventually won the war in 2001 when it bought Wisconsin Central for its own route to Chicago. That purchase would lead to the 2004 acquisition of Great Lakes Transportation (DM&IR, Bessemer & Lake Erie, Conneaut Dock Company, and Great Lakes Fleet), as CN wanted control of the DM&IR's Spirit Lake and Interstate Branches to connect its WC property to the DW&P.

Work on Pokegama Yard began in July 1983 and was essentially complete by October 1984, with trains starting to use it a few days prior to the official November 1, 1984, move-in date. The new facility was 210 acres, with 12 miles of welded rail covering two departure and seven classification tracks. A 13,200-square-foot transportation and accounting center plus a locomotive and car repair shop were built, consolidating mechanical and operation functions in Wisconsin.

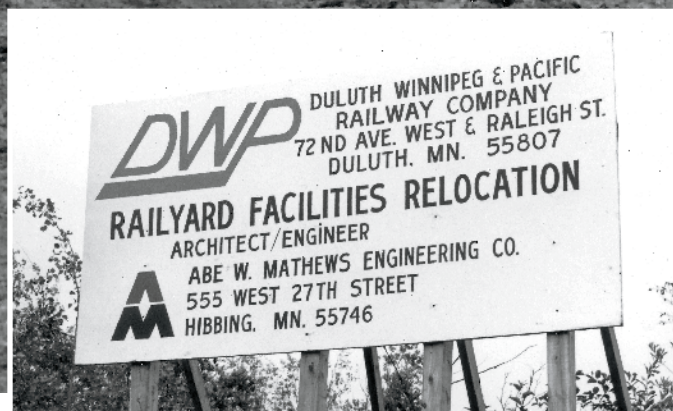
Prior to this, major locomotive repairs had been handled at a small roundhouse at West Virginia, Minn., the halfway point on the railroad. Accounting functions that had been located in downtown Duluth and dispatching that had been done at West Virginia were also moved to Pokegama. The only function not to fully relocate was the track department, which moved into a new building at West Virginia, plus stationed equipment at a few strategic locations along the line.

Pokegama was a far cry from West Duluth. Some of the best changes, accord-





Crews moved mountains of clay to build Pokegama Yard in northwest Wisconsin in the early 1980s. Two photos, Patrick C. Dorin



ing to transportation clerk John Rodberg, who hired out in 1977, were longer yard tracks and better road access, allowing clerks and carmen to drive alongside the switching yard and departure tracks to safely do their work. The yard was also built with a slight bowl, so cars would no longer roll out of the yard like they sometimes did at West Duluth.

The downside, says Rodberg, was the long drive to Pokegama, as many Peg employees lived in or near West Duluth; the longer commute to Wisconsin could be stressful during bad winter weather. Another detractor was the fact that the yard was on the DM&IR, whose dispatchers controlled all movements in and out of Pokegama. When all-rail (non-dock) iron ore trains were running steady, it wasn't uncommon for DW&P switch crews to wait extended periods to make moves in and out of the yard or to connecting railroads along the Interstate Branch.

Interestingly, the trackage rights agreement signed with DM&IR did not allow the DW&P to handle any iron ore

traffic over the line, which eliminated the concern that CN would poach ore trains originating at the Minorca taconite plant and interchange those with BN for movement to their ore dock at Superior or for all-rail moves.

Veteran DW&P engineer John Harney, who hired out in the track department during 1956 and retired as an engineer in 2000, noted a big change for train crews was swapping the DW&P's grade for the DM&IR's line down Steelton Hill in far western Duluth. Although shorter than the Peg's hill line with its 1.15% grade, the Missabe route was nearly 2% and required attentive train handling, especially with heavy lumber and potash tonnage. When John Harney hired, he was joined that year by the railroad's only bought-new freight diesels, 15 Alco RS11s 3600-3614. The diesels were equipped with dynamic brakes, which helped make the descent into West Duluth more manageable for engineers. By the time of the relocation to Wisconsin, the RS11s had been shipped off to sister rail-

road Central Vermont, replaced by EMD SD40s and GP38-2s from Grand Trunk Western, none of which had dynamic brakes. Supplementing the DW&P roster were numerous CN SD40s, also sans dynamic brakes, thus making trips down Steelton Hill a bit more challenging.

The advent of run-through motive power and cabooses on trains was also a change once the shift was made to Pokegama. When operating in Duluth, trains would either stop at West Duluth and have transfer crews deliver cars to connecting railroads or road trains would go directly to Bridge Yard and return with their locomotives and caboose. After the switch, it was common to have DW&P crews deliver entire trains to other railroads and then return to Pokegama in a vehicle. This operating dynamic was common with Milwaukee Road interchange and became even more pronounced after CN signed a haulage rights agreement with BN and later with WC to move trains between Superior and Chicago. By the 1980s, most trains were





**This aerial view of downtown Duluth circa 1971 shows work being done to reconfigure BN's Bridge Yard to better handle long trains of interchange from the DW&P. C&NW's nearly empty 5th Avenue Yard is northeast of Bridge Yard and will also become busy with Peg traffic. Duluth Union Depot is visible above the trackwork.** Basgen Photography, David C. Schauer collection

typically assembled at Winnipeg, with cars put in blocks for connecting railroads, thus reducing the amount of switching needed on the DW&P.

## POSTSCRIPT

Little did observers know it at the time, but the DW&P's big move 40 years ago would prove to be the beginning of the end for the shortline feel of the Peg. The railroad's "Delivered With Pride" slogan was reflective of a family environment enjoyed by both management and employees, more typical of a short line than a busy mainline bridge route. This pride was showcased through numerous Harriman safety awards earned by the railroad and its employees, a solid accomplishment considering weather conditions in the Peg's operating territory.

Retirees often reminisce about working at West Duluth and the early years at Pokegama when the Peg would shut down operations on Christmas and New Year's Day so employees could spend time at home. Jackets and hats with the DWP logo were often seen around town, worn proudly by employees. Company-sponsored summer picnics were also

welcomed, as were Christmas parties and Santa passenger trains. It was also common to have family members working for the railroad — both Rodberg and Harney had sons who followed in their footsteps. Harney summed up the family environment best when he said "working for the DW&P in those years was like belonging to a country club."

While employment and operations stayed fairly stable in the 1980s, CN's efforts to assimilate its U.S. properties began on Jan. 1, 1992, when marketing under the banner of CN North America commenced. DW&P accounting and most office functions were moved to Michigan in 1992-93, and employment fell from 389 in 1980 to just 180 in 1992. Rodberg recalls that there were 80 to 90 people on his seniority roster when he was hired, but only a half dozen or so locally when he retired in 2012.

On Jan. 1, 1996, CN took over operational control of GTW and DW&P, effectively eliminating the semi-independent status of the Peg, although freight cars still use DWC reporting marks. Both DM&IR and DW&P territories are now operated under CN's Wisconsin Central

subsidiary, which might explain why CN didn't paint any of its locomotives in Peg or Missabe colors when it introduced a heritage program in 2020. (Bessemer & Lake Erie was also excluded, but surprisingly, the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern had a locomotive painted in its trademark orange scheme.)

The story of Pokegama yard today is one of further consolidation, with a bit of irony. During most of the Peg's existence, its neighbor DM&IR was the big player in northeastern Minnesota. The Missabe was more than happy to have the DW&P locate along its line in Wisconsin, as the trackage rights fees were lucrative. This arrangement became an irritant for CN, especially after the purchase of Wisconsin Central in 2001. It was this 17-mile stretch of DM&IR that would lead CN to buy Great Lakes Transportation in 2004, thus making CN — with its DW&P heritage — the largest player in the region.

The once mighty Missabe now found itself under CN ownership — something never envisioned when owned by U.S. Steel — but ironically, it would be local DM&IR assets that would spell the demise of Pokegama. After the purchase of Great Lakes Transportation, it was determined that most local switching plus locomotive and car repair would be handled by DM&IR's large facility at Proctor, just outside of Duluth. CN invested a substantial amount to reconfigure a portion of Proctor yard to handle increased commercial (non-ore) traffic.

Pokegama has since been relegated to handling transfer runs to Proctor and to other railroads for local interchange, but still remains the primary crew change location for Chicago-Canada trains. A portion of the mechanical department buildings now house maintenance-of-way crews while most of the office buildings are vacant. Unlike the former DW&P mainline, now busier than ever, the yard work at Pokegama is a shadow of its former self, although CN did build an additional long track along the mainline (now called the Superior Subdivision) to help accommodate crew changes.

As for the Peg's old home along the hillside in Duluth, the city has recently improved the grade into a trail, fittingly called the DWP Trail, and cleaned out rock debris in the tunnel so hikers, bicyclists, and snowmobiles can safely transit through the bore. The first of what the city hopes to be many new residential buildings are starting to sprout up near the West Duluth yard site. Long gone are the wood trestle and yard buildings, but



some of the DW&P's Duluth roots live on in the form of rail and ties salvaged from the line north of the tunnel for use on the nearby Lake Superior & Mississippi tourist railroad.

Another interesting connection that carried over from Duluth and lasted many years was the use of Minnesota's 218 area code for telephone numbers at Pokegama, instead of Wisconsin's 715 area code. (Today the yard has a 715 number.) In addition, the former DW&P mainline north of Nopeming Junction to Ranier is known as the Rainy Subdivision, an historical nod to predecessor Duluth, Rainy Lake & Winnipeg.

With CN now owning its own route from Chicago to Canada, one could say the back door has been ripped off, but for those of us that remember, it was the Peg that came knocking on that door once upon a time. 📌



**A view of the former yard at West Duluth looking southwest in October 2023. The area on the left was where the roundhouse and engine service area were located. New residential housing can be seen adjacent to where the yard office was located.**



**A 2023 view of Pokegama Yard in Wisconsin. The DW&P's Duluth line grade can be faintly seen about halfway up the hillside in the distance. This yard is now used mainly for local transfer runs to connecting railroads and for crew changes on mainline trains.**



# By train to



Kaiser Steel's Eagle Mountain Railroad at its zenith in the mid 1970s: bright red U30Cs built to SP specifications leading an endless string of iron ore cars in the Southern California desert.





BY ELROND LAWRENCE

// Photos by Richard Steinheimer, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

# Eagle Mountain

RICHARD STEINHEIMER PHOTOGRAPHED

KAISER STEEL'S MINE AND RAILROAD

**Y**ou don't normally think of Kaiser Steel when you hear the name Richard Steinheimer, but a recent discovery within his collection at the Center for Railroad Photography & Art revealed a rare treasure: "Stein's" pictures from his ride on a 1950 railfan excursion to Kaiser's Eagle Mountain iron ore mine in the Southern California desert. Stein was a fresh-faced 21-year-old when he rode the two-day excursion, and his photos cover every aspect of the train ride and mine tour with his signature style.

In 1950, The Kaiser Co. Inc., Iron and Steel Division (renamed Kaiser Steel Industries in 1956) was well on its way to forging its legend in Southern California. Eight years earlier, the company completed construction of the only steel manufacturing facility on the West Coast, near the sleepy town of Fontana. Visionary industrialist Henry J. Kaiser recognized a need to serve the booming markets of Southern California and the West Coast and established the company in late 1941. The attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and America's entrance into World War II accelerated construction of the \$40 million steel mill, built on the site of a hog breeding farm.

The national war effort had swung into high gear, and Henry Kaiser's shipbuilding facilities on the West Coast needed a mill far closer than the steel centers thousands of miles away. Fontana was chosen as a strategic distribution point. It was 50 miles inland from Los Angeles, out of range of enemy attacks. But more impor-





Aboard the 1950 excursion: While most fans trained their cameras on the Baldwins, Stein also photographed passengers enjoying the ride.



Stein's creative eye framed Railway Club railfans at the Eagle Mountain mine's ore conveyor belt (obviously not operating) on Oct. 22, 1950.





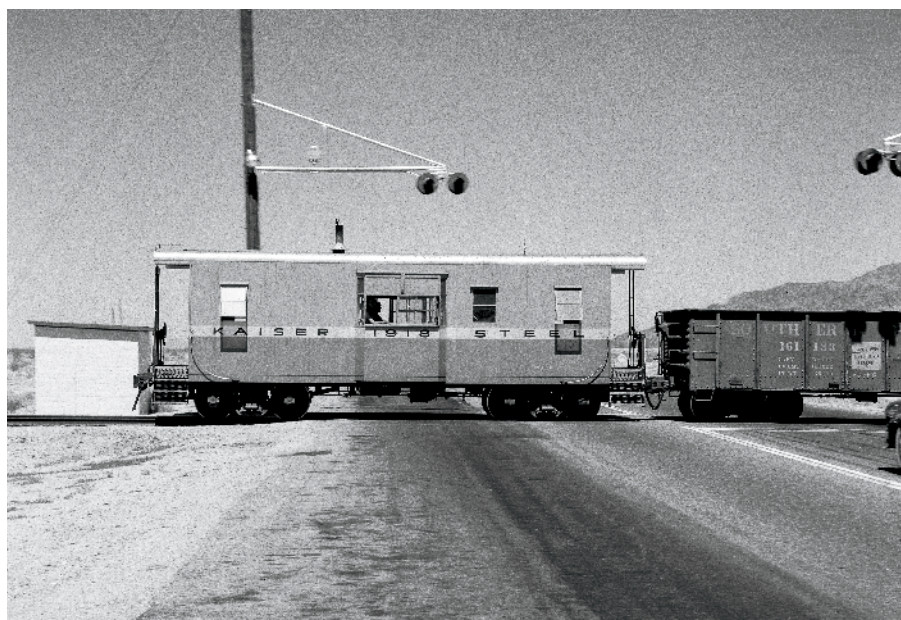
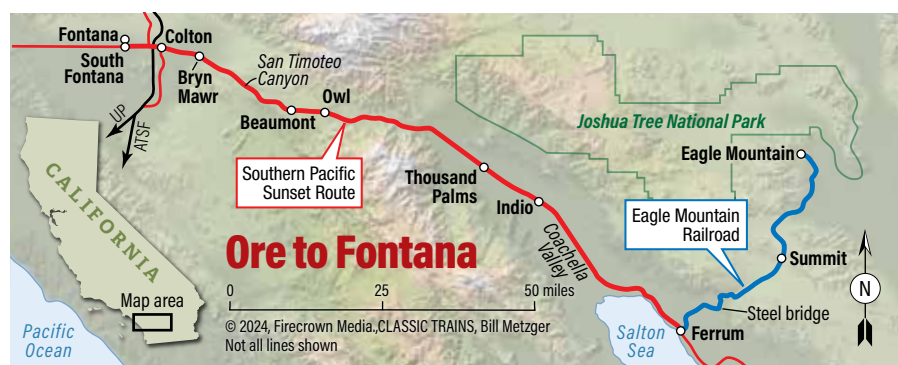
**"Big Baldwin road-switchers of the Eagle Mountain Railroad working their way to the summit of the Chuckwalla Mountains near Desert Center," wrote Steinheimer about his June 1958 "portrait of a modern mining train" in the Colorado River desert.**

tantly the site had immediate access to service from the region's "big three" railroads: Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, and Union Pacific.

When Kaiser's first blast furnace — affectionately named "The Bess," after Henry Kaiser's wife — roared to life on Dec. 30, 1942, iron ore was supplied from the Vulcan Mine near Kelso, Calif., on UP's Salt Lake Route. By summer 1943 the integrated steel mill was fully operational, and the coal to feed it came from Sunnyside, Utah, via the Rio Grande, UP, and Santa Fe, the last of which reached the Fontana plant using its Second District main line between San Bernardino and Pasadena. Limestone was carried by train over a Santa Fe branch from Cushenbury, Calif., just east of Cajon Pass.

In 1944, Kaiser purchased Eagle Mountain in Riverside County, in the southeastern corner of the Mojave Desert, and developed a new open-pit mine and ore concentrating plant near a remote community called Desert Center. Kaiser established a self-sustained company town (which was also named Eagle Mountain) near the mine and launched its own standard gauge railroad in 1948 to carry iron ore 51 miles to a connection with Southern Pacific's Sunset Route at Ferrum, beside the Salton Sea; SP would then haul the ore trains more than 100 miles past Palm Springs, over Beaumont Hill, and through Colton and South Fontana to reach the plant.

The excursion, operated by The



**Kaiser Steel caboose 1918 brings up the rear of the Eagle Mountain mine train, seen near Desert Center in 1958. Sister 1905 survives at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum at Campo, Calif.**





As guests of Henry J. Kaiser, the rare Eagle Mountain tour allowed fans to stroll past Baldwins at work loading iron ore trains.



A high view from within the Eagle Mountain mine looking out toward the entrance. The Railway Club of Southern California excursion train is visible at distant right.

Railway Club of Southern California, was nearly as fascinating as the destination. Passengers boarded a nighttime train at Los Angeles Union Station (then Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, or LAUPT) on the evening of Oct. 21, 1950, with a 10:15 p.m. departure. Power for the run from Los Angeles to Ferrum was black SP 4-8-4 No. 4444. Stein's pictures show the nighttime boarding and even passing a westbound led by Black Widow-painted F units; his notes state that stops were made at the towns of Alhambra, Pomona, Ontario, and Colton.

On the morning of Oct. 22, a Kaiser Steel excursion train of five SP Pullman coaches and a gondola car was hauled by two of Kaiser Steel's Baldwin AS616s up the steep grade to the Eagle Mountain mine, where fans were allowed to photograph the facility. Stein noted that fans were considered "guests of Henry J. Kaiser." His photos show fans enjoying a photo runby on the line and exploring an ore conveyor belt (not operating!).

Many great photographers have covered the Eagle Mountain operations, especially the late William "Hank" Mills and Gordon Glattenberg (see "Baldwins,





The massive Kaiser Steel complex in Fontana, Calif., was served by Santa Fe and Southern Pacific trackage. Here a row of AT&SF steam locomotives rest beside the mill's blast furnaces in 1952. Kaiser would occasionally rent or lease Santa Fe locomotives for static steam generation at its in-plant power house. Upon retirement, several locomotives were also scrapped on site at the steel mill. USC Digital Library, Los Angeles

Examiner Photographs Collection

Beaumont, and the Battle to Move Iron Ore," Winter 2011), who has promised his color slide collection to the Center — as well as other fans who documented the later operations in the 1970s and early 1980s after Kaiser replaced its Baldwin fleet in 1968 with five bright red U30Cs, built to SP specifications.

But this fantrip had been relegated to history and largely unknown until I learned of it while visiting western photographer Stan Kistler in summer 2022, months before his passing. Stan also rode and photographed the excursion train, which was eye-popping to this writer who grew up in Fontana and has developed a healthy obsession with the railroads of Kaiser Steel. Since that time, we at the Center have slowly uncovered Stein's photos of this extremely rare excursion, with additional scans located by Stein's wife and fellow photographer Shirley Burman.

Steinheimer returned to photograph the Eagle Mountain operation again in 1958 and a third time in the mid-1970s, when he made splendid action photo-

graphs of the mine train powered by the beefy red U30Cs wearing the iconic Kaiser Steel logo on their long hoods. His panoramic scene of a loaded iron ore train departing the mine, winding through a perfect S-curve as it approaches the company town of Eagle Mountain, is classic Steinheimer and captures the story of this remote operation in a single frame.

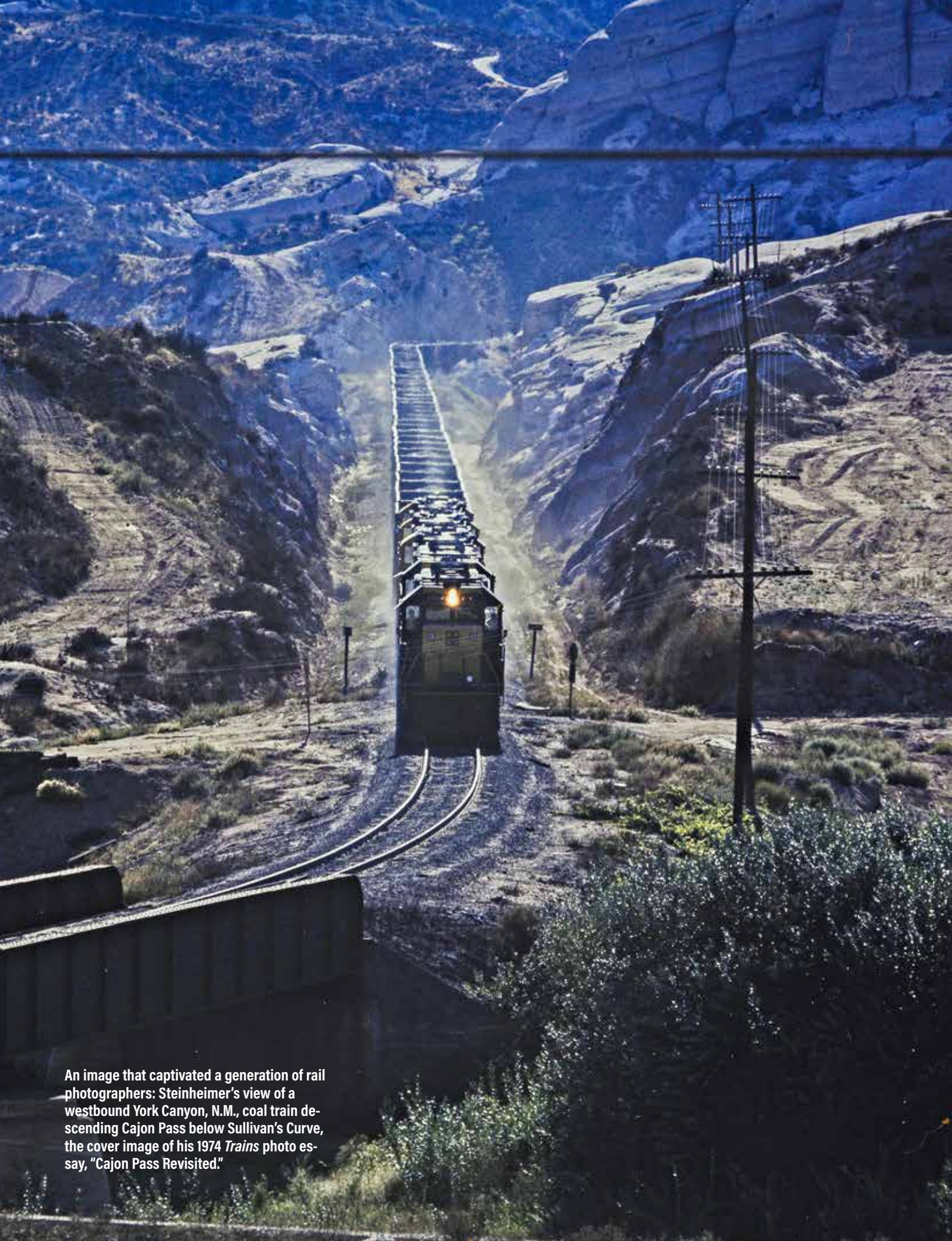
As far as we know, Stein never photographed the Fontana steel mill itself, but he did capture one of the many diesel switchers that worked the plant. He more than made up for that gap with three decades of photographing the many coal and iron ore trains to and from Fontana during the 1950s, '60s and '70s; these included Santa Fe's unit coal trains from a Kaiser-owned mine in York Canyon, N.M., and Rio Grande-Union Pacific unit trains that debuted in 1969 at Kaiser's Sunnyside, Utah, mine. And of course, he photographed SP's iron ore trains on the Sunset Route between Ferrum and South Fontana, where loaded westbound trains left the Sunset Route and traveled north



## Steelmaking milepost

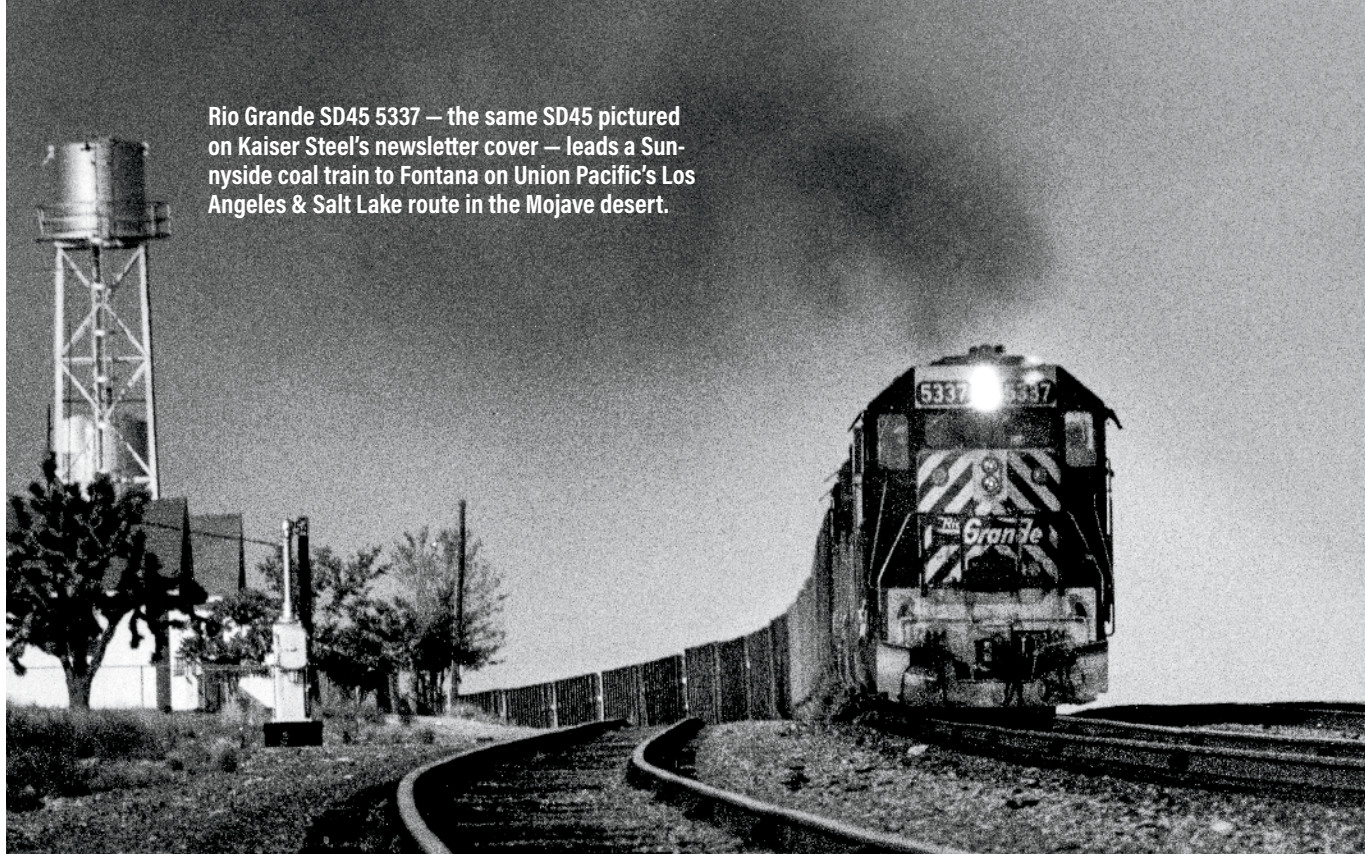
The July 1969 issue of Kaiser Steel's employee newsletter, *The Ingot*, proudly announced the dedication of the unit train loading facility at Sunnyside, Utah. Elrond Lawrence collection





An image that captivated a generation of rail photographers: Steinheimer's view of a westbound York Canyon, N.M., coal train descending Cajon Pass below Sullivan's Curve, the cover image of his 1974 *Trains* photo essay, "Cajon Pass Revisited."





Rio Grande SD45 5337 — the same SD45 pictured on Kaiser Steel's newsletter cover — leads a Sunnyside coal train to Fontana on Union Pacific's Los Angeles & Salt Lake route in the Mojave desert.

to the Fontana plant.

Increasing competition and lower costs from overseas steel manufacturers finally spelled the end of Kaiser Steel's storied Fontana plant in the early 1980s. Two years after a \$287 million modernization upgrade, the company announced in late 1981 that the steel mill and the Eagle Mountain mine would close. The final coke oven at Fontana was switched off on Dec. 29, 1982, and the plant fully closed the next year. Following cleanup operations, the last Eagle Mountain train operated in September of 1983.

Following the plant's closure, a portion of the site continued under California Steel Industries, a steel finishing operation, and a NASCAR auto racing track opened in 1997 on a large part of the old mill. Surprisingly, the California Speedway closed in 2023 and faces an unknown future.

The California Steel site was also known for being the home of Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 3751 in its final years of restoration to operation. In a setting where steam engines were once scrapped on site and occasionally used for steam to power plant buildings, it's ironic that the 1927 Baldwin was saved on the same ground where so many of its fellow locomotives became history.

The closed Eagle Mountain mine was once touted as a possible landfill location coupled with a trash-by-rail operation that would add a disposal solution for



Steinheimer caught a runaround near Java, Calif., on the Needles District in September 1976. A fast TOFC train passes a westbound York Canyon train holding the main.

Southern California's increasing refuse. After years of political football tossing and environmental battles, the concept was abandoned due to Eagle Mountain's proximity to Joshua Tree National Park.

By 2023, the railroad was dismantled across the entire right of way, and little remains. Only the company town survives, now believed to be California's most modern ghost town. The mine and town were recently sold by Kaiser Ventures (Kaiser Steel's successor) to a China-based corporation and is guarded

by round-the-clock security.

Nearly 75 years after they were made, Richard Steinheimer's pictures are a great example of the constant surprises that are emerging as the Center continues to catalog and process his landmark photography collection. They remind us of an innocent, hopeful era when the West's greatest steel company gave railfans an open house they would never forget. ■







# Milwaukee Road mail train

**Unnamed train No. 58** from Minneapolis blasts through Milwaukee's South Side near the intersection of South 6th Street and Holt Avenue in June 1965. The concrete structure being demolished is a remnant of the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee interurban, which ended operation in January 1963. The train is captured in early evening summer light, when it would otherwise appear in darkness for much of the year. Leading the charge is FP7 No. 97A along with E8 No. 35C. Immediately following the power are two Flexi-Van trailers of the New York Central, a proprietary system that the Milwaukee Road bought into (as did the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; Illinois Central; and Seaboard Air Line). This train readily shows that Milwaukee Road enjoyed having the U.S. Post Office's primary contract for moving most mail and parcels in the Chicago to Minneapolis-St. Paul corridor. To do this, Milwaukee Road handled huge volumes of mail and express on eight of its 10 Chicago-Minneapolis passenger trains well into the mid-1960s. Four of these Milwaukee Road trains over the 421-mile route, including No. 58, were essentially all mail and express trains like you see here. At St. Paul, much of the Milwaukee Road's mail and express traffic was handed over to the Great Northern and Northern Pacific, destined for the Pacific Northwest and western Canada. Only a few years after these photos, the RPOs, the mail and express traffic, and finally the trains themselves, would disappear. — *Brian M. Schmidt* Photos: Ed DeRouin





Grandpa, known to others as John Wright,  
at the Union Pacific shop complex in  
North Platte, Neb., in July 1978.





# GRANDPA and the UNION PACIFIC

BY JEFF SIMLEY // Photos by the author

**W**hen I was growing up, my grandfather used to drive me down to Jones Island in Milwaukee on Saturdays to watch the switch engines move cars around and to look at the ships that had come into the harbor from around the world. Those experiences shaped my youthful interests, which included railroads.

Grandpa, as I called him, retired and moved to Colorado when I was 14. After that, when I visited him, we often took trips to nearby Minturn, Colo., to watch Denver & Rio Grande Western helper engines assist in lifting trains up Tennessee Pass. Watching 10 locomotives at full throttle thunder up the 3% grade with heavy trains made an impression on me that persists to this day.

Driving from Wisconsin to Colorado with Grandpa in the summer of 1978, we decided to stop at North Platte, Neb., to see the yard and shops of the mighty Union Pacific. Grandpa suggested getting official permission to visit because he knew it would unlock a lot of doors. We scheduled a stop at UP's headquarters in Omaha. We looked up the address in a phone book, and soon we were parked in front of 1416 Dodge Street.

Grandpa had moved to Milwaukee from England in the mid-1920s to find opportunity. He started at the bottom and over years of hard work and night school made his way into the executive ranks of a large company in Milwaukee. He became a refined man, good looking, well dressed, well-mannered — a character not unlike that of a Cary Grant. His beautiful English accent was icing on the cake. Grandpa knew his way around the corporate culture of big office buildings.

We walked in through the front door and headed right for the information desk. Grandpa told the staff person that we would like to obtain permission to visit the shops in North Platte. “Yes, let me check on that for you,” came the reply, followed by a phone call. Grandpa looked at me with a bit of a smile and nodded to indicate “so far, so good.” We were handed a note with a room number and told to take the elevator. Grandpa looked at the note and said to me “top floor” and he smiled again and nodded.

I don't remember what floor it was, but according to Grandpa, it was a good sign. We got off the elevator and into a large room with desks in front of each of the offices. These were the

secretary's desks, and all of the secretaries were men, as was the practice back then. We walked up to one of the secretaries and grandpa told them why we were there. “Yes, let me arrange that for you,” came the reply. Grandpa looked at me with a small smile and nodded again.

A piece of Union Pacific letterhead went into the typewriter and the man started typing away. Soon he pulled the letter out of the machine and we were told it would be just a few minutes. The secretary walked into one of the offices and a couple of minutes later came back with the piece of paper and gave it to Grandpa. The letter was signed F. D. Acord, chief mechanical officer. We were told to report to an individual in North Platte the next day and that they would be expecting us. Once again, Grandpa looked at me with a smile and nodded.

The next day we found ourselves in the main shop building standing in the office of one of the shop officials, named Jack Gentleman. Grandpa and Jack hit it off and we got a complete briefing about UP locomotive servicing, followed by a personal tour. We wore shining white hard hats. Then Jack turned us loose and we had complete run of the place, including the shop and the refueling

pads. A safety briefing had taught us the basic precautions, along with a warning to not get in anyone's way or in the way of moving locomotives. For me, it was a dream come true, and, as could be expected, I shot all of my film. For Grandpa, it was a fascinating study of men at work. It took me several days to come down off of cloud nine.

Thanks to Grandpa, and thanks to the Union Pacific, I learned a lot those two days. It was a lesson in human behavior, corporate culture, and who my Grandpa was. I also got an unforgettable lesson about the railroad, seeing it up close and personal. I saw the impressive machines and the people that made the machines work. My interest in railroading matured several levels from that experience, and I am forever grateful.

I'm not sure the experience can be repeated today. Union Pacific still gives the public access to the railroad through such efforts as the steam program, North Platte Rail Days, and the visitors' center at North Platte. But walking in off the street and getting a pass from the railroad's chief mechanical officer and roaming freely through the shops is probably a remnant of a bygone era. ■

HOW CHARM  
AND  
CONFIDENCE  
GOT ME  
BEHIND  
THE SCENES  
AT NORTH  
PLATTE





▲ Anything that powered Union Pacific trains could be found in the company's North Platte diesel shop. Here we see a DDA40X, U30C, GP40X, GP9, and GP30 among the locomotives being serviced. The shop could do anything from changing a lightbulb to changing a piston. A traction motor/wheelset is being loaded onto a flatcar for repair at another system shop.

► The shops had a complete paint booth to make sure all the company's motive power looked their sharpest. Here, a DDA40X has just received a coat of Armour Yellow.







▼ The refueling pad, like the shop building, was ours to freely roam around and observe. As long as we stayed out of everybody's way, there was no problem. One had to be very alert, as this was a beehive of activity with locomotive sets constantly rolling into and out of the facility.



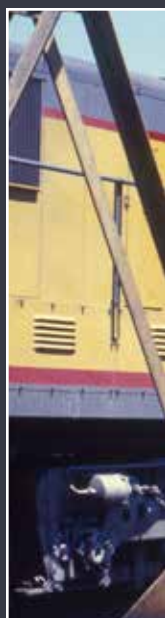
► At the time we were at the shops in July 1978, the UP was seeing an uptick in traffic. Consequently, DD35Bs were being called out of storage and run through the shops in preparation for service. In the background, DD35B No. 86B is being prepared for the road. Note the supply rack containing a myriad of parts.







► The Union Pacific's many run-through agreements with other railroads meant plenty of foreign power was processed through the North Platte complex. Here we see a set of Rock Island locomotives being readied for a trip to Chicago. Looking past this set of Rock Island power in the photo at right, we see that a UP locomotive has been tacked onto the point for the eastbound run over UP rails. This is necessary because the UP used the Automatic Cab Signal System, so one of its locomotives always had to lead. A relatively new UP C30-7, No. 2401, leads another consist.







◀ The huge refueling pad was a never-ending chess game, with locomotives being shuffled out of incoming consists to become part of new consists designed for their assigned outgoing trains.

▼ Back in the shop building, this U30C is having its prime mover rebuilt with new power assemblies. The North Platte shop was not designed for heavy repairs such as lifting engine blocks off the frame to replace the crankshaft, but just about anything else was possible.



*JEFF SIMLEY is retired after serving 37 years as a cartographer for the U.S. Geological Survey. He is the author of the books Rio Grande in Color, Volume 6, Tennessee Pass; Rio Grande in Color, Volume 7, Front Range; and Rio Grande in Color, Volume 8, Hauling Freight Over the Great Divide.*



# Late era railroad dining car meals

By the late 1960s, not-so-fine dining ruled the rails

**In the past**, railroad dining car meals were something to write home about, positively. A notable summary of this can be found in the lyrics of the popular song Chattanooga Choo-Choo, with its assertion that “dinner in the diner, nothing could be finer.”

As private-railroad passenger service declined in the 1960s, however, this became a proposition that was increasingly difficult to sustain. Prior to World War II, virtually all intercity business travel had utilized rail travel, including first-class sleeping car accommodations when overnight journeys were involved. The expense account traveler was used to having nice meals in hotels and expected similar quality during their journeys on the rails.

Postwar, airline service expanded rapidly, migrating many business travelers to that mode, particularly for long-distance trips. In addition, this also enabled many to desert the once-ubiquitous overnight sleepers on medium and short-haul routes in favor of “same day” trips that departed in the morning and returned in the evening, requiring no overnights away from home.

Rail coach traffic did not fall off as rapidly, but in many cases, these passengers either didn't want, or more likely, couldn't afford formal restaurant-style meals while enroute. Thus, the already difficult economics of dining cars, which were almost universally deemed to be unprofitable, got even worse as sleeping and parlor car patronage declined in the 1950s.

In addition, societal customs began to undergo changes, often in favor of less formal and often more inexpensive alternatives with respect to nourishment. “Fast food” began to become popular. Previously, even highway travelers tended to stop at sit-down restaurants, either local cafes, or chains like Howard Johnsons that had sprung up to cater to this market.

By the 1960s, chain fast-food enterprises such as McDonald's were springing

**“dinner in the diner,  
nothing could be finer.”**



Advertisement for a Penn Central snack bar featuring lighter fare such as sandwiches, soup, and beverages showcasing the transition from railroad dining car meals. George W. Hamlin collection

up all over the national landscape to cater to both locals and highway travelers. This trend continued to accelerate, with the result that in most areas of any population, fast food is not difficult to find, while today's traveler will search in vain trying to locate any Howard Johnson restaurants.

To some extent, railroads did offer multiple levels of food service, particularly on long-haul trains. Full dining facilities were provided for sleeping car passengers, while other less formal and less costly alternatives were offered for coach travelers. Think of the *North Coast Limited's* “Travelers Rest” cars, for example.

## TRENDING AWAY FROM RAILROAD DINING CAR MEALS

When the Pennsylvania and New Haven railroads launched their Budd-built *Congressional* and *Senator* equipment in 1952 in what is now referred to as the Northeast Corridor, both sets included a “Lunch Counter Tavern Lounge” car in addition to the regular dining cars (twin unit on the *Congressional* and a conventional single unit for the *Senator*) that catered primarily to the parlor car passengers, an indication that even then there was a portion of this market that preferred something less than a full meal.

In 1965, even the modestly sized Chicago & Eastern Illinois (C&EI) joined this trend, by converting a former tavern lounge (which had originally been a



coach of C&O's stillborn *Chessie* daytime streamliner) to a lunch counter-lounge named the *Harvest Inn* for the road's *Danville Flyer*.

The single-page card menu for this innovation listed "Hot and Cold Drinks" and "Beverages" (the latter implying alcoholic), as well as the food service, offered under the trendy term "Eatables," that included a variety of sandwiches (no mention of any at other than room temperature) along with sweet rolls and buttered toast. No individual item cost more than \$1.25. While this apparently was sufficient to stave off starvation between Chicago and downstate Illinois, it may not be a coincidence that longtime dining-car partisan Lucius Beebe died the next year.

Future merger partner Louisville & Nashville acquired the C&E's two former Maine Central dining-parlor cars in 1959 and in 1965 converted them to lunch counter-lounges for what remained of the L&N's flagship *Pan American*. By 1969, even the relatively pro-passenger Seaboard Coast Line had converted one of the two single-unit diners on its New York-Miami *Silver Meteor* to what it termed a "Budget Meal Car" that ran as far south as Jacksonville.

A harbinger of more widespread change along these lines can be seen in the Pennsylvania's Form 1 System Timetable of April 4, 1965, which showed "Sandwiches-Snacks-Beverages available at your seat" for many trains in the New York-Washington market. This type of service harkened back to the days of "news butches" selling such items to an earlier generation of travelers; coincidentally, this also was the way airlines served their passengers.

A year later, the Pennsy's April 2, 1965, timetable indicated that a "Snack Bar Coach — Hot-Cold Food and Beverages" had supplanted the "at your seat" offerings of the previous year. This type of car also provided the only food and beverage service on the Harrisburg-Washington portion of the *General's* route; the likely few remaining sleeper patrons on what had been the *Liberty Limited* probably were somewhat taken aback at their dining options south of the Pennsylvania state capital.

During the mid-1960s, the Pennsy converted several postwar sleeping cars into coaches for use in the Corridor; a modest number of these became snack bar coaches in the process to provide this service. They also served as a replacement for the lunch counter lounges on the *Congessionals*.

*Bon Voyage* . . . we hope you enjoy your trip on the Empire State Express, and the MEAL-A-MAT car referred to on the back of this page.

TO ASSIST US IN EVALUATING MEAL-A-MAT SERVICE, WE WILL APPRECIATE YOUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Quality of food good? \_\_\_\_\_ Price satisfactory? \_\_\_\_\_

Appearance of car pleasant? \_\_\_\_\_ Attendant helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you normally have sought meal service in regular diner? \_\_\_\_\_

Does this type service induce you to travel by rail? \_\_\_\_\_

Traveling on business or pleasure? \_\_\_\_\_

Any suggestions for improvement? \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

For a souvenir or gift . . . Set of six "New York Central World's Fair" twelve ounce tumblers, in the new Allegro decorated in gold and black design with N.Y.C. and World's Fair. Order forms may be obtained from attendant.

(Please See Other Side)

In December 1967, the New York Central converted most of its service within New York State to the "Empire Service" operating model, which did away with conventional dining services on these trains. After initial service using some of the NYC's fleet of tavern and parlor-buffet-lounges (the latter typically being former 6 bedroom lounges), the road elected to convert several of its 3000-series Pullman-Standard fluted-side coaches into what they termed "chair buffet cars."

By now, it was clear that the die had been cast, and starched linen, formal glassware, and cutlery had little future in U.S. railroad intercity passenger service. When the Metroliners went into service, they offered at-your-seat service to premium passengers and a stand-up snack car for the (relative) plebians. Closing the book of the trends that we've been examining, Amtrak's first major passenger car acquisition, in the form of the Amfleet cars, followed the same pattern when it arrived in 1975. ■

## Less formal food and beverage service

Left, a service questionnaire about the automated "Meal-a-Mat" car on the Empire State Express, August 1965. Below, take-out food offerings from the dining car on C&O's *George Washington*, 1968.

Three items, George W. Hamlin collection

WELCOME TO THE C&O/B&O  
The Snack Car is now open and ready to serve you

**MENU**

SOUPS, Etc.

CHILLED FRUIT JUICE . . . . . 25¢  
CUP OF SOUP . . . . . 35¢  
MACARONI AND CHEESE . . . . . 40¢  
CEREAL WITH MILK . . . . . 65¢

HOT SANDWICHES

HAM . . . . . 50¢  
HAM AND CHEESE . . . . . 65¢  
HAMBURGER . . . . . 50¢  
CHEESEBURGER . . . . . 50¢  
TOASTED CHEESE . . . . . 60¢  
HOT DOG . . . . . 40¢  
KOSHER CORNED BEEF SANDWICH (HOT OR COLD) . . . . . 75¢

DESSERTS

CAKE . . . . . 15¢  
PIE . . . . . 25¢  
SWEET ROLL . . . . . 20¢

BEVERAGES

COFFEE, CUP . . . . . 15¢  
TEA, CUP . . . . . 15¢  
MILK, IND. . . . . 25¢  
SOFT DRINKS . . . . . 25¢

CANDY BARS 10¢ SALT NUTS 40¢ CHIPS, PRETZELS 10¢

**Chessie Special**

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CHANGED DAILY

MANHATTAN, MARTINI OR OLD FASHIONED . . . . . } \$1.00  
WHISKEY, SCOTCH . . . . .  
WHISKEY, BOURBON . . . . .  
CANADIAN WHISKEY . . . . .  
GIN . . . . .  
VODKA . . . . .  
CLUB SODA, GINGER ALE OR TONIC (split) EXTRA 15¢

BEER (domestic) . . . . . 50¢

C&O/B&O PASSENGER FOOD SERVICE  
K. S. COX, Superintendent  
1-2

EQUIPMENT			
Type Car	Car No.	Between	Accommodations
Sleepers	R-99	Washington-Miami	10 Roomettes, 6 Double Bedrooms
	S-102	New York-Miami	11 Double Bedrooms
Diner	S-103	New York-Miami	5 Double Bedrooms, 2 Cpt., 2 Drawing Rooms
	S-104	New York-Miami	10 Roomettes, 6 Double Bedrooms
	S-105	New York-Miami	10 Roomettes, 6 Double Bedrooms
	S-106	New York-Miami	5 Double Bedrooms-Bar-Lounge
Coaches	13-E	New York-Miami	Reclining, Reserved Seats
	14-E	New York-Miami	Reclining, Reserved Seats
	15-E	New York-Miami	Reclining, Reserved Seats
Budget Meal Car		New York-Jacksonville	
Tavern-Obs.-Lge.		New York-Miami	
Registered Nurse—Passenger Service Agent—Coach Attendants			

Consist for the Seaboard's *Silver Meteor* shows "budget meal car" in addition to traditional dining car.









## East Jordan & Southern

**Descended from 19th-century logging lines** but a common carrier only since 1901, Michigan's East Jordan & Southern grew to 30 miles during the 1920s but then withered by a third. It had ICC approval to abandon once, in 1932, but didn't act on it. In post-World War II times, it was kept in business by a foundry and cannery in East Jordan. It dropped passenger service in 1945. An EJ&S farewell excursion (above) took place on Aug. 12, 1961, complete with the red, white, and blue "Swan City Express" excursion car. The line shut down at the end of that month. Following EJ&S's abandonment, No. 6 was left in place, and is still displayed on its old right of way on the shore of Lake Charlevoix. Combine No. 2 was bought by Mack Lowry and wound up at Wisconsin's Mid-Continent Railway Museum. — *J. David Ingles*

Photos: J. David Ingles



# Santa Fe all the way

Visit these landmarks from the Midwest to California // **BY BRIAN SOLOMON**

FP45 No. 108, the railroad's last new passenger locomotive, wears fresh paint after a six-year restoration at Southern California Railway Museum in Perris in 2018. David R. Busse



Santa Fe 4-8-4 No. 2926 simmers in Albuquerque on display as the New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society hosts a fundraising event in 2023. Alex Gillman

**Connecting Chicago and Texas** with the California coast, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway had one of the longest service areas of the traditional U.S. Class I railroads. Although nearly 30 years have passed since it merged with Burlington Northern, the Santa Fe remains one of America's favorite railroads. Its heritage is among the best represented in the West, and you could easily fill a book with comprehensive listings of the numerous locomotives, rolling stock, stations, bridges, and other structures that still carry the railroad's iconic herald. Below are just a few highlights where a visitor can find Santa Fe's heritage today.

## MIDWEST

Santa Fe's eastern passenger terminus was Chicago's Dearborn Station. Although Dearborn hasn't hosted a reve-



nue train since the early 1970s, the historic station building is in excellent condition and now serves as offices and retail space. To see a collection of preserved Santa Fe locomotives and rolling stock, consider a visit to the Illinois Railway Museum at Union, home to Fairbanks-Morse opposed-piston diesel H12-44TS No. 542, which spent years working as a Dearborn Station switcher. Other equipment on display includes 4-8-4 No. 2903, FP45 No. 92, and World War I-era Pullman lounge No. 1534. See: [irm.org](http://irm.org).

Fort Madison, Iowa, is where the AT&SF bridged the Mississippi and historically served as a division point and crew change. This was the only significant Santa Fe station in the state. In 2021, Amtrak relocated its Fort Madison stop for the *Southwest Chief* (the Amtrak train that largely traces the route of Santa Fe's transcontinental limiteds between Galesburg, Ill., and Los Angeles) to the town's traditional Santa Fe station structure, built in 1910.

Visitors to the National Museum of Transportation in St. Louis will find Santa Fe represented by 2-10-4 No. 5011, one of the surviving examples of the railroad's massive Texas-type steam locomotives. See: [tnmot.org](http://tnmot.org).

## TEXAS

To view a more extensive collection, consider a trip to the Museum of the American Railroad in Frisco, Texas, which has been preserving Santa Fe locomotives, cars, artifacts, and structures since the 1960s. Among the centerpieces is interlocking Tower 19, which until 1993 protected a junction of the Santa Fe and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas



**Chicago's Dearborn Station headhouse still stands on West Polk Street. Once the eastern terminus for the famed *Super Chief* and *El Capitan*, it closed to passengers in 1971.**

(Katy) in Dallas. Among numerous other items of interest are FP45 No. 107 (painted to represent the locomotive as built); Alco PA-1 No. 59L, pending restoration following service on Delaware & Hudson and repatriation from National Railways of Mexico (where it suffered wreck damage in the 1980s); plus an impressive selection of freight and passenger equipment.

## NEW MEXICO

Students of architecture might wish to visit the classic stations at Raton (at the foot of the famous namesake pass) and at Las Vegas, both of which serve the *Southwest Chief*. Also at Las Vegas is the Hotel Castanada, the famous Harvey House facility built in 1899 (same year

as the station) and beautifully renovated in 2019. The New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical society in Albuquerque has spent more than two decades meticulously restoring 4-8-4 Northern No. 2926, built by Baldwin in 1944. The restoration site offers limited public hours. See: [2926.us](http://2926.us).

## ARIZONA

The Arizona Railway Museum in Chandler displays a variety of Santa Fe freight and passenger equipment. This includes a rare surviving example of a 1920s-era Pullman Co. refrigerated boxcar and a broad selection of 20th century passenger cars, including Budd Hi-Level streamlined cars unique to the Santa Fe. See: [azrymuseum.org](http://azrymuseum.org).



**The former Santa Fe station in San Diego is the southern anchor for Amtrak's *Pacific Surfliner* service to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. The Santa Fe name is still well-represented here in the 21st century.** Three photos, Brian Solomon





Once part of the Santa Fe's own collection, an H12-44, RS1, and RSD12 sit in the California State Railroad Museum's shop in 2013. Brian M. Schmidt



F7 No. 347C sits on display at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento in 2014. Ben Margherone

## CALIFORNIA

The Golden State is rich with Santa Fe's legacy, offering lots to see and experience. Visit Barstow, where the 1911-built station and Harvey House hotel are located just east of the vast BNSF classification yard. The complex has been on the Register of National Historic Places since 1975 and was renovated after being damaged in a 1992 earthquake. Today it houses city offices, the chamber of commerce, and a visitors' center, as well as serving Amtrak's *Southwest Chief*. The old station also is home to the Western America Railroad Museum. Displays include Santa Fe FP45 No. 95 as well as No. 1460, a peculiar locomotive type created in the railroad's Cleburne, Texas, shops by blending a Baldwin switcher frame with EMD GP mechanical components to create what is colloquially called a "Beep."

Perris is home to the Southern California Railway Museum, previously known as the Orange Empire Railway Museum. This is located adjacent to a former Santa Fe branch that originally was part of the railroad's short-lived 19th-century mainline to San Diego via Temecula Canyon. The museum collection has preserved a wide variety of railway equipment, including Santa Fe FP45 No. 108 — the railroad's last new passenger locomotive, restored in 2018 to operating condition and its as-built appearance. Other Santa Fe rolling stock includes a variety of freight and passenger cars and Fairbanks-Morse H12-44 switcher No. 560, awaiting restoration. The museum was involved with the preservation of SD45-2 No. 5704, repainted in its 1976-vintage Bicentennial paint scheme by Mid-America Car in 2022,

and initially displayed at Kansas City Union Station. See: [socialrailway.org](http://socialrailway.org).

Active former Santa Fe stations include those at San Bernardino (home to the San Bernardino History & Railroad Museum), Fullerton, and San Diego. All are worth visits to experience the flavor of Santa Fe's classic architecture.

The California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento has one of the best-preserved Santa Fe streamlined passenger cars: Budd dining-car *Cochiti*, built in 1936 for the *Super Chief*. In addition, check out the museum's cosmetically restored F7 No. 347C dressed in designer Leland Knickbocker's classic Warbonnet scheme. The museum hopes to restore 2-6-2 No. 1010, a rare surviving example of a high-driven Prairie-type steam locomotive built for fast passenger service. See: [californiarailroad.museum](http://californiarailroad.museum). 📷



The California State Railroad Museum properly displays former Santa Fe dining car *Cochiti*, once a fixture on the road's famous named trains. Both the dining room and kitchen have interpretive displays for visitors. Left, Brian Solomon; right, Brian M. Schmidt



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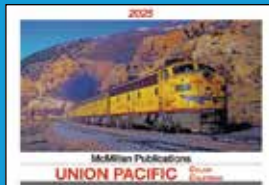
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# How to make yourself the “dumbest (epithet deleted)” on the railroad

A locked door almost ended two trainmen's careers

**Despite rumors that Amtrak** would eventually take over the employment responsibilities for on-board employees, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe continued to provide waiters, cooks, lounge car, and coach attendants for Amtrak trains over the railroad's routes until 1974. Amtrak assumed control of operating crews (engineers, conductors and brakemen) east of Needles, Calif., in August 1987.

By summer 1973, I had worked the December holiday and summer breaks since I was first hired in 1971 and held the seniority to bid on a regular job working as a coach attendant between Albuquerque and La Junta with two days on and one off.

By then, the equipment assigned to the train (then still called the *Super Chief*) was showing a lack of maintenance, and the vintage locomotives — in particular aging EMD F units — were frequently failing, causing major delays and slow-downs. In 1973, rumors circulated among crew members that Amtrak's newly delivered EMD's SDP40F locomotives would

be assigned to the *Super Chief* starting that summer.

One day, train 3 arrived in La Junta with two of the brand-new units! Behind the locomotives was a recently refurbished deadhead diner, the usual baggage/dormitory car, and the regular summer consist of standard and hi-level equipment that had been AT&SF's combined *Super Chief/El Capitan* in the years before Amtrak.

Crew members were excited to see the two SDP40s on the head-end of No. 3. Our conductor was F.J. Nelson, a longtime Santa Fe conductor with a reputation for taking his responsibilities seriously and not having much of a sense of humor. He always had a toothpick in his mouth, and he'd take it out and point it at you when he wanted to emphasize something he was talking about.

The news soon spread through the crew that Mr. B.O. Bernard, superintendent of Santa Fe's Colorado Division, would be riding the train from Raton to Las Vegas, N.M., to check out the new locomotives.

After we left La Junta and I had completed checking my assigned coach, I was talking to the head-end brakeman when he said, “I'd sure like to go up and see those new locos.”

I replied, “So would I!”

The brakeman was young and filling in for a more senior employee. He didn't have an official uniform, but was wearing a coat and tie and was as much of a greenhorn as I was. We agreed with a wink and a nod that I'd come up to the baggage car after we left Trinidad and “see if we could get in.”

After the stop at Trinidad, I identified the four or five passengers getting off my coach in Raton. After the conductor finished his rounds, I snuck up to the baggage car. It was hot, so I took off my uniform jacket and helped the brakeman shove aside a stack of heavy third-class mail sacks that blocked the door out of the baggage car. Once this was done, we walked through the deadhead diner and

**Amtrak train 3, the westbound *Super Chief*, passes the curves at Ribera, N.M., on July 4, 1973.** Two photos, Chuck Larrabee





went through the door at the far-end and climbed into the nose of the trailing SDP40F. The door to the diner closed behind us.

The brakeman and I took our seats in the rear-facing SDP40F's cab. I swear the cab had a "brand new" smell to it! The diesel engines hummed quietly and efficiently behind us as we admired the view of the steep climb up to the top of Raton Pass and the long train behind us. This was highly risky, but who was to know we were even there? The engineer and fireman were always extra busy going over Raton Pass and they were unlikely to come back to the cab at the opposite end of the second unit.

I checked out and marveled at the sparkling clean engine compartment, and the brakeman and I enjoyed the ride, perching on the springy seats in the cab. After we went through the tunnel, we had about half an hour until the next stop at Raton. The brakeman said, "Well, we'd better get back."

So, we reversed our trek, climbed out the locomotive door, and...

The door to the deadhead dining car was locked!

The brakeman cursed and pulled and



The westbound *Super Chief* with two EMD SDP40F units passes Rowe, N.M., in July 1973.

pushed at the door handle, then slammed it with his boot heel. No luck. We were stuck.

"Oh, \_\_\_\_!" the brakeman cursed, "What are we going to do?"

"We gotta get back!" I said, "I have passengers getting off, and Mr. Bernard will be there in Raton!"

But we were stuck. The brakeman kicked the diner's door several more

times, mostly out of frustration, but it wouldn't open. He nervously tried several of the keys he carried with him, but none of them fit the lock. I was feeling panicked but stayed silent, a sense of doom coming over me.

We climbed back up into the cab, and my heart pounded as we descended Raton Pass. I saw my railroad career suddenly as a short-lived adventure.

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What could we possibly do? Our stupidity got us imprisoned just to see the new locomotives.

The brakeman came up with an idea, and it was our only way out.

"As we're coming into Raton," he said, "we'll climb down the ladder on the outside of the cab – on the side away from the station – and run back and jump back on the train. No one will ever see us!"

"Oh great!" I said, "Sure nobody'll see us?"

"You got some other idea?" he said.

I was in complete despair. I had left my uniform jacket in the baggage car, and there were passengers in my coach to round up and get off at Raton!

As we got close to the Raton station and started to slow down, I climbed down the outside ladder first (I had further to run to get to my coach), and the brakeman was right above me. The train was still going at a pretty good clip when I jumped off as soon as we were over the brick station platform and I thought I

could make it. It was a miracle I didn't fall and break something in the jump! I ran back to my coach as the train ground to a halt.

I opened the door on the high-level coach and climbed aboard. Several passengers standing in the vestibule waiting to get off were startled to see me, and they couldn't figure where I'd come from since the train had been moving at a pretty good clip.

"Raton, Raton," I yelled, "Everybody going to Raton, this way out!"

I walked over to the other side of the vestibule, and opened the door as the train came to a stop. Grabbing the step-box, I put it on the platform and carefully counted the passengers as they got off. As far as I could tell, all the people I was responsible for left the train.

No one got on my coach at Raton, so the minute Nelson yelled "All Aboard!" and waved the highball, I closed the vestibule door and ran upstairs, dashed through the high-level coach ahead of

mine and retrieved my uniform jacket from the baggage car. I moved so fast I was back in my coach by the time Nelson showed up to collect tickets.

Nelson looked down at his ticket pouches and manifest and didn't look at me for what seemed like an eternity.

"Larrabee," Nelson said, "Superintendent Bernard asked me why you weren't wearing your uniform at Raton." My heart leapt into my throat. I didn't know what to say.

"Don't tell me," he said. "I told him you were probably taking a nap."

He went on his way.

I was stunned. I felt doomed. I wasn't wearing my uniform at the stop, and now Superintendent Bernard thinks I was taking a nap?

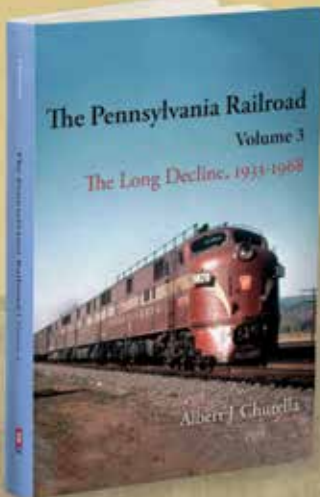
It's a long trip from Raton to Las Vegas, and I tried to keep my mind off what had happened. I cleaned the restrooms and took the carpet sweeper down the aisle two or three times. Then, the headend brakeman showed up in my coach.

"Conductor Nelson wants to talk to us," he said. My heart started pounding

**"Raton, Raton," I yelled, "Everybody going to Raton, this way out!"**


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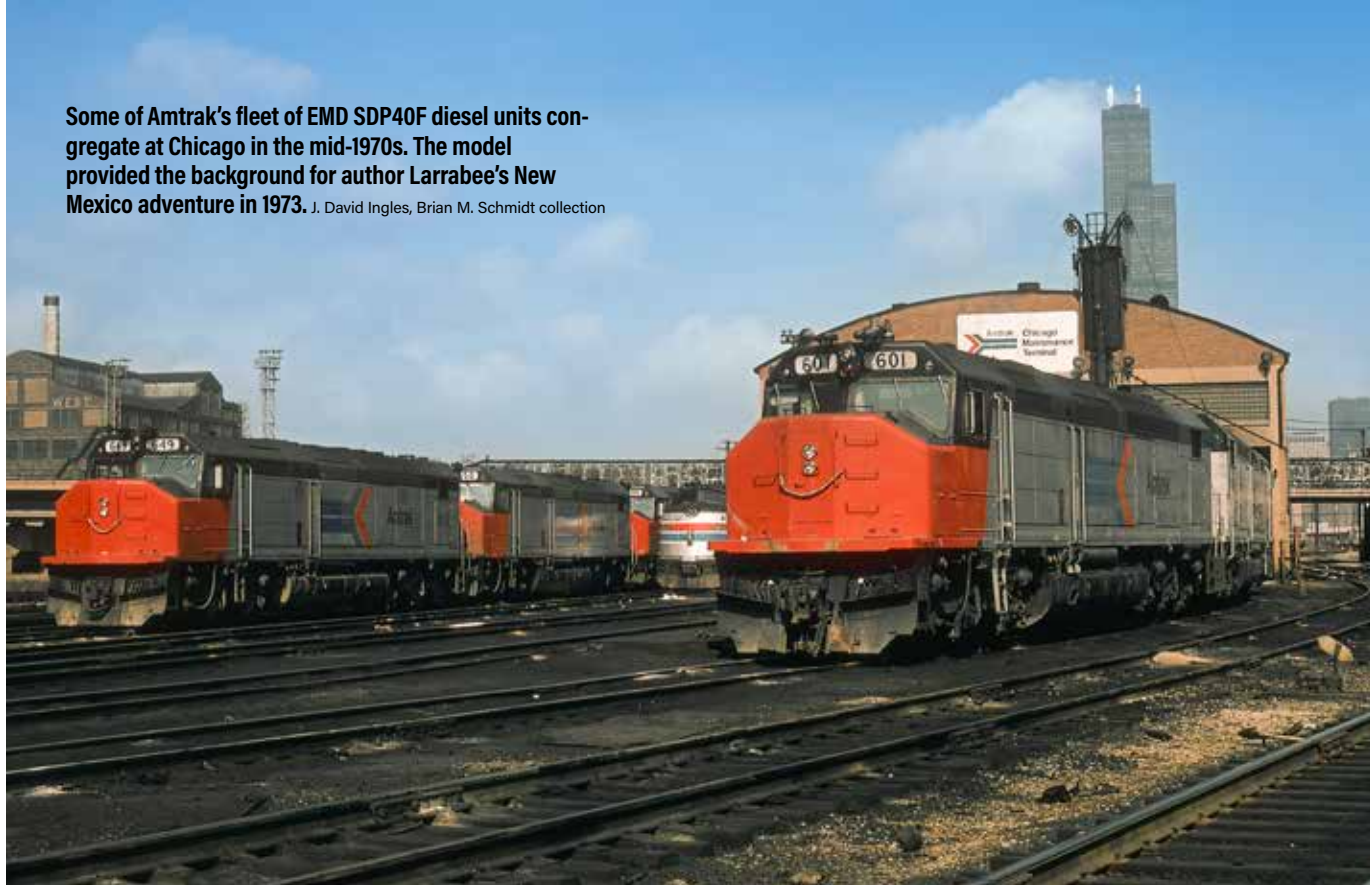
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Some of Amtrak's fleet of EMD SDP40F diesel units congregate at Chicago in the mid-1970s. The model provided the background for author Larrabee's New Mexico adventure in 1973. J. David Ingles, Brian M. Schmidt collection



again, and I slowly walked behind the brakeman to the first coach and down the stairs to the conductor's office. I felt like a third grader who'd been called to the principal's office.

"Close the door," Nelson said. There was a very long silence. Nelson twirled his toothpick in the front of his mouth.

"My man here told me what happened," Nelson said, pointing to the head-end brakeman and my accomplice in crime.

There was another long silence while he stared at the two of us.

Then he got angry.

He yelled, "You two are the dumbest [epithets deleted] I know on this [epithet deleted] railroad!"

Another long pause. He stared at us with an angry look.

Then, he broke out in the heaviest guffaw and laugh I had ever heard come out of anyone on the railroad! He laughed heavily and laughed some more for what seemed like a very long time. Then he paused. "Next time you two want to do something that stupid, do me a favor, and don't do it with Mr. Bernard waiting for us at the next stop! OK?"

Nelson couldn't stop laughing, and the brakeman and I started nervously laughing as well. I was so scared I didn't know what to do.

"You lucked out today," Nelson said, "Bernard didn't have time to ride down

to Vegas with us, and he didn't seem to care you were missing your uniform Larrabee." Another pause. "Get back to work, you two!" Nelson yelled, and we took off.

Nothing ever came of the incident, although I thought for sure conductor Nelson or Mr. Bernard would write me up for an infraction. I was also amazed at how quickly the story of how the brakeman and I got stuck in the new locomotive on Raton Pass made its way through the rest of the operating crews. "Sure sounded like a dumb thing to have happen," they'd say, "Lucky you didn't get your a\*\* fired!"

And every time I rode with Conductor Nelson after that, he'd always shake his head when he saw me at the beginning of a run.

"Are you planning anything stupid today, Larrabee?" he'd ask.

"No, sir!" I'd tell him.

"Good!" he always replied loudly.

Then, he'd walk away, laughing.

*CHUCK LARRABEE was hired by the Santa Fe Railway in December 1971 during the winter break from his freshman year at college as a chair car attendant in the early days of Amtrak working between Albuquerque, N.M., and La Junta, Colo. His adventures as a new hire were described in his article "Somebody'll die on you for sure!" published in the December 2015 issue of Classic Trains.*

## Next Issue



### Railroading in Winter

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## Future editor's first issue

**Most readers can tell me what their first issue of *Trains Magazine* was.**

Well, so can I: it was the December 1992 issue, with Kevin P. Keefe as editor, and it left a significant impression on one young railroad fan. The cover featured Montreal electrics in commuter service; I must have been so in love with the concept of a train magazine that I wanted the magazine even though I knew nothing about that topic. Other stories inside include Amtrak's *Auto-Train*, a 1942 trip through Georgia, and a look at working on the Milwaukee Road.

That story, by Jerry Pyfer, chronicled working on the Milwaukee Road's "South-

western" between Milwaukee and Savanna, Ill., in winter in the 1970s. One aspect that stood out was a cartoon-style map by illustrator Lee Vande Visse, reproduced here. The story, titled "The part of railroading I could do without," left a big mark, so much that this Ohioan later became a card-carrying member of the Milwaukee Road Historical Association. So, when I started planning a winter-themed special issue for sale in fall 2024 (see at right), I just knew that Jerry's story would make the cut.

And, yes, I've grown to enjoy Montreal commuters, too. — *Brian M. Schmidt*

Photo: Jerry Pyfer



Check out the latest *Classic Trains* special issue: *Winter on the Rails*! Read about working on the frozen rails from the men who lived it. Plus, learn about the tech that keeps railroads running!

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