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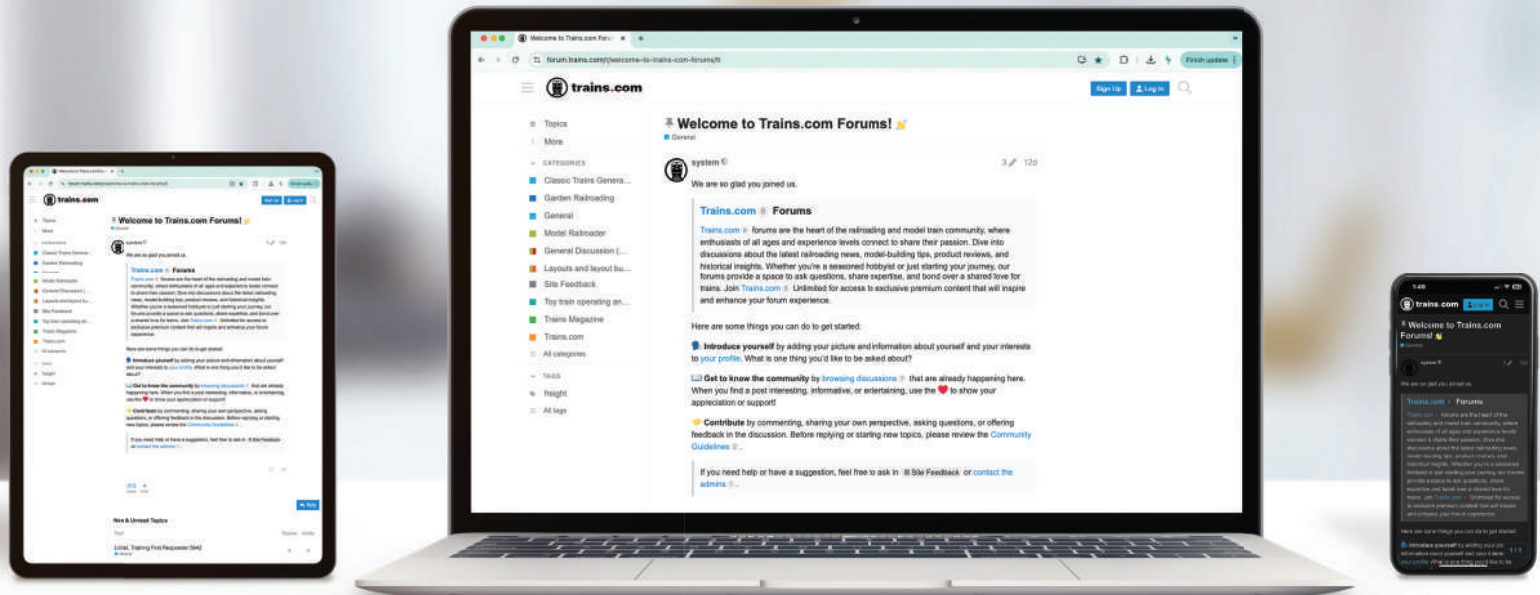




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Spring 2025 • Volume 26 Number 1

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Seaboard Air Line E7 No. 3038 holds a passenger train at the Hamlet, N.C., station. Dan Pope collection

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Celebrating Railroad History

Who would have thought that railroading's history would see so much industry recognition in the 21st century? Most of the Class I railroads have some program to honor their past. Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific still steam up steam locomotives to wave the corporate flag.

The modern heritage movement kicked off in 2006 with Union Pacific's six re-imagined locomotive paint schemes for its major predecessor components: Chicago & North Western, Missouri-Kansas-Texas, Missouri Pacific, Rio Grande, Southern Pacific, and Western Pacific. Other railroads would join the movement, including Amtrak in 2011, Norfolk Southern in 2012, Canadian National in 2020, and CSX Transportation in 2024. Canadian Pacific, Florida East Coast, Santa Fe, and others have revived classic paint schemes in the modern era.

(A generation before saw New Jersey Transit restore GG1 No. 4788 to its Pennsylvania Railroad Tuscan red with pinstripes and Norfolk Southern paint EMD GP59 No. 4610 in Southern Railway green-and-aluminum.)

History is all around us, from commemorative locomotives to genuinely historic ones and even bridges and stations, too. You may not think much of that right-of-way-turned-trail, but somewhere is a former employee who remembers getting trains over the road there. And that rusting hulk of a bridge is a testament to the way we used to get things done.

This modern interest in railroad history is heartening — and it's good for *Classic Trains'* next 25 years, too!


EDITOR



Canadian Pacific train 288 rolls east under the distinctive former Chicago & North Western right-of-way east of Sparta, Wis., near the west side of Fort McCoy in February 2020. CP is among the many railroads offering historic or "heritage" painted locomotives. Brian M. Schmidt



Editor
Assistant Design Director
Senior Production Editor
Editorial Assistant
Production Director
Operations Specialist
Production Specialist
Illustrator
Librarian
Columnist

Brian M. Schmidt
Lisa M. Schroeder
Rene Schweitzer
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Kelly Kramer Weekley
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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
18650 W. Corporate Dr., Ste. 103
Brookfield, WI 53045

Advertising Department

Martha Stanczak
E-mail: martha.stanczak@firecrown.com

Customer Service

Phone: 877-243-4904
Outside U.S. and Canada: 847-313-3921
Customer Service: ClassicTrains@Omeda.com

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FIRECROWN



A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

HeadEnd



Union Pacific
class CA-8 steel
caboose No.
25578 was built
in 1964 and re-
tired in 1990.
Jim Hediger

CABOOSE CORNER



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The Trains.com forums are back!

First off, I want to apologize for how long it took to bring the forums back live. We attempted to migrate the existing forums to a new version of the old software and realized after doing so that it was a disaster; instead, we moved to a far more modern platform that is in the cloud.

This platform is far more stable, and we are investing in making it a rich and engaging experience.

Unlike the old forums, the new platform has a modern architecture and is built in the cloud. We migrated the content from the legacy platform to the new one and addressed many technical issues that frustrated users in the old system.

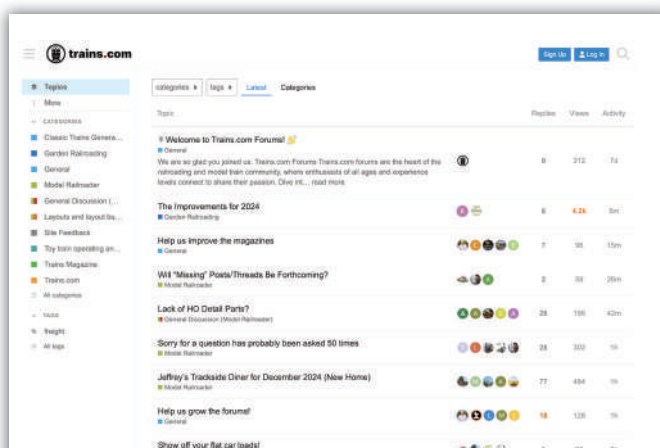
You can upload large pictures and even video links.

We are also developing many new features that will be implemented in the coming weeks that should make the Trains.com forum experience far more positive.

We hope you will encourage your friends and colleagues across the railroad community to rejoin or join the new Trains.com forums.

You can find the new forums at forum.trains.com or use this link: <https://forum.trains.com/invites/gfLtvG6mu>

Please share your ideas on what we can do to grow the community. You can find me in the Trains.com forum as "FreightAlley." See you there! —Craig Fuller



Warbonnet again

Former Santa Fe B40-8W No. 537 sparked in the paint booth of the Railroading Heritage of Midwest America shops at the former Rock Island Railroad Silvis Locomotive Shops in October 2024. BNSF Railway donated No. 537 in June 2023. Restoration work soon began on the former "Super Fleet" diesel, built in October 1990 and delivered in the railroad's classic warbonnet paint scheme. The paperwork that came with the locomotive indicated it was bad ordered and stored with a non-functioning air compressor. The first work was to replace the batteries, rotted radiator hoses, and two cab windows. The engine room was power washed and power assemblies checked. The locomotive was then started, and traction motor cables reattached. Once the engine proved to be mechanically sound, work began on restoration of the body. A detail that many people would overlook was the restoration of the original GE builder's plates. Steve Smedley



EBT wins \$1.6 million grant to restore bridges

Steel truss span at Pogue is railroad's largest at 275 feet

The Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program has awarded the EBT Foundation \$1.6 million to restore two steel bridges on a portion of the narrow gauge East Broad Top tourist railroad's dormant main line.

A major boost for the EBT, a national historic landmark, the grant will aid the line in its push to expand operations toward the mountainous mining area that supplied the line with millions of tons of semi-bituminous coal from its opening in

Work includes strengthening two piers to protect them from flood debris and ice; renewing the bearings that support the superstructure; and installing bridge timbers to replace the original untreated ties that have long since rotted away. EBT General Manager Brad Esposito and Director of Engineering James Roslund have said that inspectors have determined that, despite its age, the bridge is sound.

The other span is an 80-foot-long steel girder bridge over Three Springs Creek, a short dis-

a short portion of the route from 1960 to 2011.

Work to reopen the southern main line is being carried out by EBT's two full-time track crew members and a pool of Friends of the East Broad Top volunteers. The project, termed the "March to Saltillo," after the name of the town that is the near-term goal of restoration, reached a milestone last month when trains began running over 1.3 mile of track that hadn't seen a revenue movement since the spring of 1956, to a point named Jordan Summit.

In the few weeks since then, track renewal has advanced another 3,000 feet to the McCoy Road grade crossing, within sight of the Pa. Route 994 grade crossing and just a mile from the Pogue bridge.

The Friends' November newsletter notes that "in the past six months, the railroad's full-time staff members, assisted by FEBT personnel, have laid 6,500 feet of track. An awesome accomplishment."

Announcement of the grant was made jointly by state Sen. Judy Ward (R-Hollidaysburg) and state Rep. Rich Irvin (R-Spruce Creek). RACP grants, administered by the Office of the Budget, assist economic, civic, cultural and historic projects.



East Broad Top's 275-foot-long bridge over the Aughwick Creek at Pogue, Pa., is one of two receiving state funding for rehabilitation. Dan Cupper

1874 to its closure as a common carrier in 1956.

The major structure to be rehabilitated is Pogue trestle, a 275-foot-long 1904 steel Warren truss bridge over Aughwick Creek. As the largest bridge on EBT's original 33-mile-long main line, it stands 3 miles south of EBT's operating headquarters at Rockhill Furnace.

Appearing in many photos taken in the last years of EBT common-carrier operation in the early 1950s, the bridge has achieved iconic status, having been documented by such noted photographers as John Krause and Phil Hastings.

tance farther south.

Esposito said the funds, "in combination with a previously awarded RACP grant, will also include some clearing and grading of the right-of-way between Pogue and Three Springs, as well as the work on the Pogue Bridge."

In 2020, the newly formed EBT Foundation bought 27 miles of the line as well as the station and shop complex, six Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikado steam locomotives, and rolling stock. Its intent is to restore and reopen the lion's share of the line, which operated seasonal steam tourist trains on

The EBT grant is part of a group totaling \$600 million, announced by Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro.

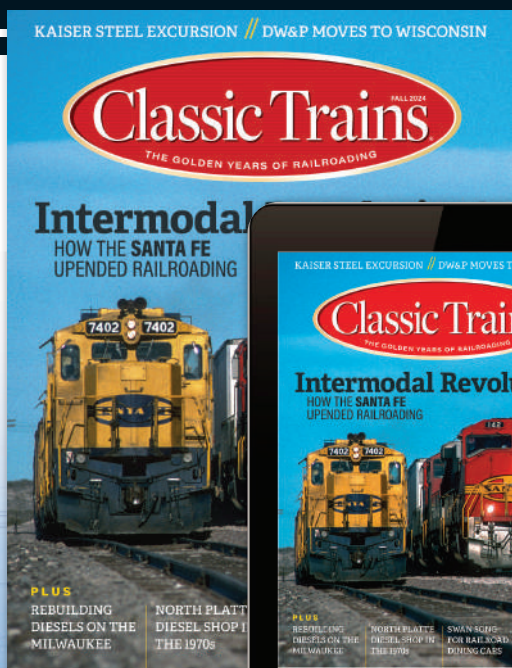
"Funding to restore the two bridges in the southern end of [Huntingdon] county," said Ward, "will allow the continued expansion of the East Broad Top Railroad, creating additional tourism, economic, and community development." Irvin added: "With [EBT] attracting thousands of visitors each year, an expanded rail route will further boost its economic impact."

— Dan Cupper



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New preservation group buys Amtrak AEM7 No. 927

Northeast Rail Heritage Inc. saves unit from scrapping

A new preservation group, Northeast Rail Heritage, Inc., announced Tuesday (Dec. 3) that it has purchased former Amtrak AEM7 electric locomotive No. 927, built in 1981 for high-speed passenger service on the Northeast Corridor and Keystone Corridor. It was retired in 2016.

Using technology from ASEA-built Statens Järnvägar (Swedish State Railways) Rc4 B-B locomotives, General Motors' Electro-Motive Division built 54 of the four-axle, 7,000-hp units between 1978 and 1988.

No. 927 joins three others of its type in preservation: No. 915 at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pa., No. 917 at the Danbury Railway Museum in Danbury, Conn., and No. 945 at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Ill. The unit is currently stored at Seaview Transportation, a Rhode Island short line, where it was among three remaining out of an original pool of 15 retired AEM7s held there.

Organized in 2023 by a group of current and retired railroaders, NRH gained non-profit status last summer.

Based in the Baltimore area but incorporated in Pennsylvania, the group is talking with several railroads about a place to store the unit while it seeks a permanent home in the Baltimore or Philadelphia areas.

Mike Huhn, 33, an Amtrak engineer on the Northeast and Keystone corridors, serves as president of NRH. For now, he says, the group consists only of a board but expects to eventually offer memberships.

"One of the big things I noticed in today's rail preservation environment, and not to discount it, but there's a heavy emphasis on steam and vintage diesels," he told *Trains News Wire*. "Very few groups have gone after modern stuff. Railroad Heritage of Midwest America recently restored a

Santa Fe B40-8, so you're starting to slowly see some groups take notice of [such] items."

"[But] my goal is to break that stigma of 'There's no point in preserving anything after steam.' I'm 33, and there's a lot of stuff I've seen when I was a kid that's often been overlooked – F40s and different kinds of diesels that [everyone said], 'Well, this will be around, that will be around.' One of these days it's going to be gone."

"I would hate to have seen that kind of way of

Wilmington & Western Railroad in Delaware.

Ryan Merrill, an Amtrak engineer from Washington, D.C., is NRH vice president. Previously he held train-and-engine-service jobs and then trainmaster at Strasburg Rail Road. Secretary-Treasurer Steve Johnson worked for Conrail, CSX and Amtrak, from which he retired as an engineer. Anthony Raspantini, another Amtrak engineer who is based in New York City, serves as chief mechanical officer.

NRH organized loosely in 2023 with a list of candidate equipment acquisitions, but at first lacked non-profit status. Huhn said the group quickly settled on AEM7 No. 927 when Raspantini called attention to the fact that it was available as one of a handful of units that was headed for scrapping earlier this year.

Seaview Transportation had held 15 Amtrak AEM7s in storage awaiting a possible lease or sale to Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which was considering electrification of some of its commuter service. When MBTA decided to stick with diesels, scrapping began.

"I got in contact with Eric Moffett, general manager of Seaview, and

asked what it would take to get hold of that engine," said Huhn. "It took a couple months' worth of phone calls, and at the beginning of November [the agreement] was finalized." He declined to name the sale price, but said the group now owns the locomotive free and clear.

"The AEM7 almost could have been lost to the sands of time," he said. "Miraculously, a group of 15 hung on. Thankfully, there are three others that have been preserved."

The 927, he said, could be cosmetically restored but "is mechanically intact" enough that operating it isn't completely beyond reach. He said the next step is to start a "fundraising campaign, in multiple phases, to get the engine moved and gradually restored." — *Dan Cupper*



AEM7 No. 927 has been stored at a Rhode Island short line. Logan Dahir

thinking affect the AEM7. Me being a millennial, that's what I grew up seeing on Amtrak. Nothing should be overlooked. Every piece of equipment has a story to tell. Steam did, the F-units did, now it's ... things that my generation took for granted."

The leaders of NRH have deep experience in both practical railroading and preservation. Huhn was a Norfolk Southern conductor and engineer before moving to Amtrak in 2019. He started volunteering as a youth with Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, and later joined the crew of Nickel Plate Road No. 765, operated by the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society. He also has worked as a diesel engineer for Western Maryland Scenic, put time in on the track crew at East Broad Top, and worked as a trainman and steam fireman at the

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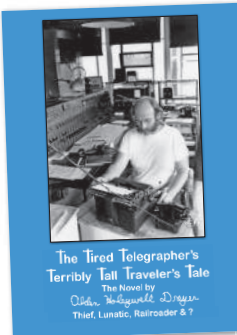
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Nevada museum acquires 1907 Virginia & Truckee car

No. 20 was the last new passenger car acquired by the V&T



V&T No. 20 rides the turntable at Carson City. Nevada State Railroad Museum

The Nevada State Railroad Museum has acquired a 1907 Virginia & Truckee Passenger car from the Southern California Railroad Museum, with the car arriving at the museum in Carson City in December 2024.

Coach-Smoker-Baggage car No. 20 was the last new passenger car acquired by the Virginia & Truckee, the museum said in a Facebook post announcing the acquisition, and is one of a handful of surviving cars built by the Hicks Locomotive & Car Works in Chicago Heights, Ill. Transported by truck from its prior home in Perris, Calif., it arrived in Carson City on Dec. 9, 2024, and was moved into the museum annex by the museum's Virginia & Truckee 4-6-0 No. 25, built by Baldwin in 1905. The Ten-Wheeler was being prepared for weekend Santa Train operations.

Acquisition of the car was supported by the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the Nevada Board of Museums and History. Delong Heavy Haul of Las Vegas transported the car from California. — *David Lassen*

OBITUARIES

Nancy Bartol, a longtime member of the *Trains* Magazine editorial staff and later Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s librarian, died Dec. 29 at age 83. Bartol was hired by Kalmbach in 1963 as the *Trains* editorial secretary, first appearing on the masthead in the September issue. She remained in the renamed editorial assistant post until 1977, when she was named copy editor in the wake of Entringer's death, at which point Morgan referred to Bartol as "our schedule czar." In November 1979 she was named production editor and served in that role until 1997, when she began to oversee the David P. Morgan Memorial Library, retiring at the end of 2006. Two generations of *Trains* staffers and contributors knew Nancy as a friendly, supportive colleague, but also as a no-nonsense taskmaster once she assumed the production editor role. It was in that job that

her organization skills came to the fore, responsible as she was for policing deadlines, editing copy, and delivering the finished magazine to the Production Department. She later applied the same skills to the company's library. — *Kevin P. Keefe*

George Corey, noted Northeastern rail photographer and retired lawyer died Nov. 26, 2024, nine days short of his 100th birthday. George shared some of his and his close associate Stan Bolton's nationwide rail photography in the Winter 2021 issue. George was awarded the Purple heart during the D-Day invasion of the Normandy coast during World War II. He retired from practicing law in 2007 but remained active as a railroad photographer until recently. A Kodak Baby Brownie received as a child progressed to a Hasselblad and finally to

digital photography. In 2022, the Boston & Maine Historical Society published his first book, *George Corey's Boston & Maine*. In 2025, his second book, *Central Vermont: Through the Lenses of George C. Corey and Stanwood Bolton*, will be published by the Central Vermont Railroad Historical Society. — *Tony Koester*

Robert A. Wegner, a 42-year employee of the Art Department at the former Kalmbach Publishing Co., died Jan. 6 at age 83. For more than 40 years, readers of *Trains* Magazine were the beneficiaries of one of railroad publishing's most accomplished but unsung talents, a man who created hundreds of the railroad maps that helped seal the magazine's reputation. But unless you read the tiny, 6-point type in the corner, you wouldn't know the name of Bob Wegner. — *K.P.K.*

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN HERITAGE UNITS CANVAS PRINT

Locomotives create a rainbow of long lost company paint schemes from the 1950s and 1960s. With 20 such locomotives, Norfolk Southern trains became a kaleidoscope of color against its traditional black attire.



UP FAMILY TREE PINT GLASS

This pint glass features the family tree of the Union Pacific railroad, which dates back to the original transcontinental railroad. Exclusively from *Trains* magazine.

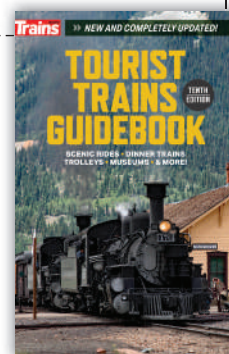


CLASSIC TRAINS 2025 CALENDAR

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MILEPOSTS

A blog from Classic Trains columnist Kevin P. Keefe

Mileposts Blog

Read biweekly commentary by our columnist Kevin P. Keefe, who reflects on the places he's been, the people he's met, and how railroading's history affects the industry today.



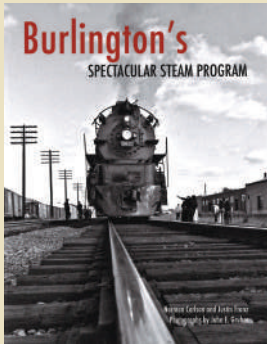
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Passenger Perspective

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

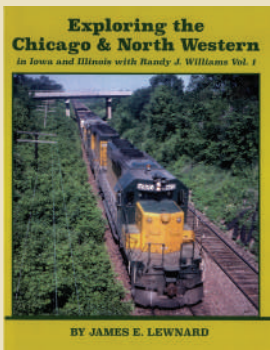
Reviews



Burlington's Spectacular Steam Program

By Norman Carlson and Justin Franz, Center for Railroad Photography & Art, Madison, Wis., 80 pages. \$30.

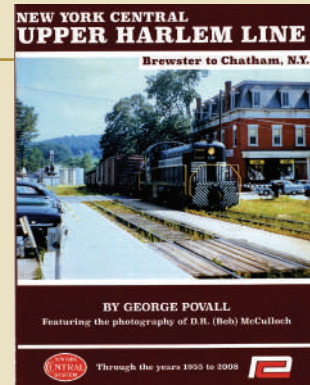
Steam photography never goes out of style, as this black-and-white tome reminds us. Three essays introduce photographer John Gruber, Burlington's steam excursion program, and the main steam locomotives pictured to readers. The main image gallery spans 60 impressive pages. This volume is a must-buy for fans of Burlington steam or Gruber's memorable photography. — *Brian M. Schmidt*



Exploring the Chicago & North Western in Iowa & Illinois with Randy J. Williams Vol. 1

By James E. Lewnard, SilverLake Images, Harrison, N.Y., 86 pages. \$50.

Follow a career railroader for his photographic views trackside. The book is divided geographically by rail line. When identified, most photos presented here fall in the 1976-1981 timeframe, but there are some outliers. The last pages present locomotive roster shots in Iowa, although many photos throughout the book are already tightly cropped. Several maps, track diagrams, and timetables are also reproduced. — *B.M.S.*



New York Central Upper Harlem Line: Brewster to Chatham, N.Y.

By George Poval, SilverLake Images, Harrison, N.Y., 86 pages. \$50.

This second installment reviewing Bob McCulloch's photography looks at the Harlem Line and is divided geographically by town and milepost. It is designed, generally with two or three images per page, packing a lot into its 80 pages. The coverage of Chatham is 30 pages and is further subdivided by date. There are also limited timetable excerpts and a map. This book represents a good value for railfans to become familiar with the line. — *B.M.S.*



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Chasing trains with Hank Griffiths

I've enjoyed Jim Griffiths' articles on his father's photography. In the 1960s, I was on three chases with his father. The first of these was in 1964, on the Idaho Northern Branch, which ran between Cascade and Nampa.

Gordon Glattenberg, Santa Clarita, Calif.



Top: Union Pacific train 507 passes the Horseshoe Bend, Idaho, station on Oct. 8, 1964. **Inset:** Hank Griffiths crosses a rope bridge at Big Eddy, Idaho, on the same day. Two photos, Gordon Glattenberg

Got a comment? Write us: Fast Mail, *Classic Trains*, 18650 W. Corporate Dr., Suite 103, Brookfield, WI 53045 or fastmail@classictrainsmag.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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In 1965, a silver anniversary for *Trains*

In their time, NYC and SP still pointed to the future

The email was innocuous enough, part of our regular routine, editor to contributor. Brian Schmidt wanted to know what I might have up my sleeve for this issue's Mileposts column. Before I could even think ahead very far, he reminded me: this would be *Classic Trains*' 25th anniversary issue. That's all I needed to know.

I love anniversary issues, and I've been lucky to be part of three of them, now

four. It began with our sister magazine *Trains*, first when I worked on the blockbuster 50th anniversary issue of November 1990 (Editor J. David Ingles' finest hour), then the 55th (an all-Union Pacific special), and finally the 60th (celebrating the number "60" in as many railroad contexts as we could think of). Every one of those issues called for all hands on deck, which meant long hours and stretched-to-the-limit deadlines.

And now a silver anniversary for CTR, as we called it around the office. Brian's done a great job of calling on tradition with a "silver" theme for this issue, and for me it prompts memories of another great silver moment: the 25th anniversary issue of *Trains* back in November 1965.

For a magazine that had so much trouble in its early years getting up to speed, reaching 25 years was a significant accomplishment. November '65 also turned out to be a prime showcase for the miraculous writing talent of Editor David P. Morgan, who filled the magazine's 30 feature pages with 47 photos arranged in 2-page themed spreads, each blessed with short essays. In each, Morgan seized the moment in text that often read like prose poetry.

If you were around, maybe you were as easily bowled over as me. I was 14 years old and this was the first issue of my first subscription to *Trains*, a Christmas gift from my parents; I had discovered the magazine three months earlier with a newsstand copy of August 1965. What a way to start! November was a full dose of D.P.M. at his best, covering themes the Editor cleverly saw as essential to understanding railroading since 1940. Some were predictable, and steeped in nostalgia — the demise of steam, the diesel revolution, the fading of the passenger train, the industry's triumphant World War II performance.

Other Morgan musings might have been surprising. He reflected on how electrification never caught on, with a headline that said it all: "Never a bride, seldom even a bridesmaid." He celebrated the era when passenger trains competed fiercely on speed. Contemplating mergers, he lamented the disappearance of so many grand old railroad names, yet concluded that "no matter how you compute it, the U.S. has too many railroads." Morgan was always clear eyed, even when emotion tugged at him.

Never one to shrink from object lessons, D.P.M. also chose to focus on two specific railroads. Sensing the historical moment, he wrote "NYC: Before and After," in which he considered the then



Eastbound New York Central freight at Amsterdam, N.Y., treads a right-of-way recently reduced from four tracks to two. Jim Shaughenssy, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

dramatic resurgence of New York Central under the leadership of Alfred E. Perlman. Contrasting a classic wedge shot of a Hudson-led passenger train with a contemporary Jim Shaughnessy view of Central hood units (shown here), Morgan saw what was going on at Central as industry bellwether.

Perlman, said Morgan, enacted a “now legendary overhaul that if enacted in the West, instead of the overcompetitive, industrially static East, might well have produced the greatest single payoff in postwar railroading.” In 1965, it was still too soon to see the Penn Central disaster on the horizon (at that point Chesapeake & Ohio was Perlman’s desired merger partner), but the Editor was prescient in pointing out what Perlman was doing right.

Morgan took it a step further a few pages later in “Is SP the New Standard of

the World?” The headline, of course, referred to the still-functioning Pennsylvania Railroad and its self-styled slogan, but for Morgan, the future belonged to Southern Pacific. This was 1965, mind you, when SP was breaking all kinds of traditions: trying new technologies, diversifying into non-rail businesses, extending its reach via Cotton Belt.

“Espee realized sooner than most,” D.P.M. wrote, “that the rails were caught up in a fight for survival; that industry cared less about traditional siding-to-siding boxcar transportation and more about the science of manufacturer-to-consumer distribution.” That last

phrase sounds like 2025. The Editor would have been shocked to hear that SP would disappear in 1998, but in his mind, in that moment, SP pointed to the future.

That issue also showcased one of Morgan’s rarest and most valuable talents — his ability to challenge readers without

talking down to them. There was a lot of stuff in that issue that had this teenager baffled — What were the Ophir Trestles? What’s a VGN rectifier? Who was John W. Barriger? — but encountering all of it wrapped in the Editor’s glistening prose only made you determined to learn more. That’s editorial genius.

The two magazines, *Trains* and *Classic Trains*, have two different missions, the former to mostly look ahead and latter to consider the past. (I probably don’t need to tell you, Brian, which exercise is more fun.) But in his opening essay, Morgan could have been speaking about both when he opined that “the rails remain as economically viable as ever, and the trains which run upon them are yet wondrous to hear and see.”

Still true, David, still true. **1**



KEVIN P. KEEFE joined the Trains staff in 1987, became editor in 1992, and retired in 2016 as Kalmbach Publishing Co.’s vice president, editorial. His biweekly blog “Mileposts” is at Trains.com.

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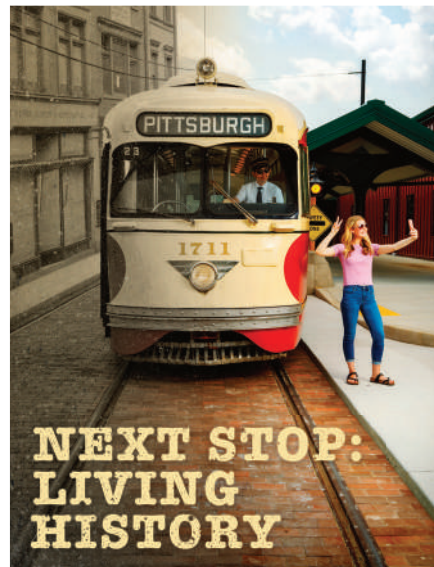
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Silver at Del Mar

Gleaming red-and-silver Santa Fe diesels congregate at the Del Mar Fairgrounds north of San Diego on Aug. 8, 1964. The occasion, of course, is the annual summer horse racing season, which drew thousands of spectators from throughout Southern California, a market well-served by the Santa Fe. At left, two men admire Alco PA No. 51 and its brethren displaying green flags for a first section. At right we see an A-B-B set of EMD F units, led by F7 No. 338. Today this rail infrastructure is gone.

Tom Gildersleeve, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection



The Seaboard Air Line's southbound *Silver Meteor*, train 57, streaks through United, Fla., down the long trestle south of Okechobee in November 1961. Two photos, David W. Salter



Seaboard's 'SILVER' FLEET

THE STRONG FLORIDA TRAVEL MARKET CREATED A DEMAND FOR BETTER TRAINS

BY JOE WELSH

At the beginning of March 1938, the Miami *Daily News* started an editorial campaign entitled "Streamliners for Miami." Backed by the business community, the campaign generated a series of interview articles with railroad leaders. Everyone interviewed had nothing but good things to say about streamlined trains and the efficiency of diesel motive power — both then virtually in their infancy. In addition to being more cost effective than heavyweight, steam-powered trains, the new streamliners were significantly more attractive. It was a major selling point.

Attracting passenger back to the rails was a major issue by 1938. In 1929, at the beginning of what would come to be known as the Great Depression, railroad passenger revenues were \$874 million nationally. Four years later, reflecting the impact of the Depression, national passenger revenues had plummeted to \$329 million. As a result, one of two major railroads serving Florida — the Seaboard Air Line Railroad — was in receivership.

While Seaboard had worked hard to lure more passengers by air conditioning its older heavyweight cars, clearly something else more daring and attractive was needed. The best option seemed to be a streamlined coach train.

Due to their higher capacity, luxury coach trains were more profitable than trains with sleepers and coaches. Coach travel also attracted a wider range of more frugal travelers, and this would help fill Florida trains in the historically off-season of summer.

The best example of what Seaboard was looking for had just gone into service in February 1938. The Santa Fe's *El Capitan* was a new all-coach train between Chicago and Los Angeles. Its builder, the Budd Co. of Philadelphia was known for using stainless steel to construct railcars.

Then Although the metal was more expensive and harder to work with than Cor-Ten Steel, the standard lightweight alloy of the time, stainless steel was lighter yet durable. Budd shaped the material into the components of a rail car. The shining sheets of "18/8" (18% chrome and 8% nickel) had to be welded carefully using a precise shot of electricity.

Motive power for the new Seaboard train would be Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 electrics north of Washington, D.C., and Electro-Motive Division E4s south of Washington for the Miami section. Seaboard remained loyal to EMD for passenger power for the *Meteor*'s entire career on the railroad. The railroad would eventually roster E4, E6, E7, E8, and E9 locomotives. For most of the *Meteor*'s career on the SAL, the E7s were the most common locomotives.

While the train was under construction, Seaboard conducted a "Name This Train" contest. Thirty winners out of more than 76,000 entries suggested the name *Silver Meteor* due to the train's stainless-steel appearance and speed. They shared the \$500 prize.

The *Silver Meteor* entered service on Feb. 2, 1939. Christened at the New York World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, in the city's borough of Queens, the train then ran under the East River to Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan before heading south to Florida.

Operating over the Pennsylvania as far as Washington, D.C., the train was then handled by Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac from there to Richmond, Va. South of Richmond it was handled by the Seaboard. The train was split into east and west coast sections at Wildwood, Fla., terminating alternately in Miami or Tampa/St Petersburg.

Originally, the single consist of the *Meteor* departed New York for Florida every three days with alternate arrivals at Miami or St Petersburg. This meant the train made a

Original 1939 *Silver Meteor* consist:

PRR GG1 north of Washington, D.C.

SAL E4A diesel locomotive (in SAL Citrus scheme)

1 - 22 coach seat Baggage-Dormitory No. 6000

3 - 60 seat chair cars Nos. 6200-6202

1 - 30 seat chair/tavern car

1 - 48 seat diner

1 - 48 seat chair-lounge observation car

round trip between New York and Miami and then a round trip between New York and the Florida west coast. This lasted until early June 1939.

At that point the train would begin being split at Wildwood with a single 60-seat coach and the 30-seat chair/tavern car going to the west coast and the rest of the train going to Miami. This west coast section was originally pulled by un-streamlined 4-6-2 Pacific steam locomotives. Shortly later Seaboard would use three Pacifics, which it streamlined in its own shops and were painted in the road's "Citrus" paint scheme to match the diesels.

Due to the new train's popularity, Seaboard, in December 1939, obtained two additional trainsets as well as three additional extra cars for the west coast section. This allowed the train to provide daily roundtrip service to both Miami and Tampa/St. Petersburg in time for the winter.

Seaboard's success had not gone unnoticed by conservative rival Atlantic Coast Line. Seaboard passenger revenues had increased substantially between 1938 and 1939, and ACL could see its passenger revenues declining. As a result, ACL and partner Florida East Coast turned to Budd to develop streamliners of their own. Their new streamlined ACL *Champion* trains would be in service within less than a year after Seaboard introduced the *Silver Meteor*.

Three heavyweight sleeping cars were added to the *Meteor* in June 1941. The cars were an 8-section, 1-drawing room, 3-double bedroom car for Miami while a 6-section, 6-double bedroom car and a 10-section, 1-drawing room, 2-compartment car went to St. Petersburg. The cars were apparently painted silver to match the fluted silver Budd equipment on the train.

World War II brought more changes. Heavy demand and a wide array of transportation changes were the hallmark of the period. For example, in the winter of 1941-42, the *Meteor* also carried three Boston-Florida sleepers.

In December 1942, at the directive of the Office of Defense Transportation, an additional section named the *Advance Silver Meteor* was placed in service. The original *Silver Meteor* became the east coast (of Florida) section while the *Advance* section went to the west coast. This eventually became a daily practice. At roughly the same time, Seaboard's heavyweight winter flagship the *Orange Blossom Special*, an all-Pullman train, was suspended.

The war years, which came to an end in 1945, had stressed the nation's railroads' passenger operations to their limits. Prewar passenger equipment, constantly on the road, had taken a beating. Beginning in

April 1947, the Seaboard, Pennsy, and RF&P obtained new 52-seat coaches from Budd. May and June marked the arrival of lightweight streamlined diners and baggage dormitory cars from the same builder. And in July, Seaboard received new and distinctive streamlined tavern-lounge-observation cars from Budd. The cars would carry the *Silver Meteor's* tail sign for 24 years.

New trains were in the offing as well. Hoping to compete with the Southern Railway, in May 1947 Seaboard introduced the streamlined train the *Silver Comet* between New York, Atlanta, and Birmingham. The train would offer new lightweight coaches, diner, and a tavern-observation like that on the *Silver Meteor*. By July 1947, almost all the cars ordered (baggage dormitories, coaches, diners, and observation cars) to reequip the *Silver Meteor* and create the *Silver Comet* had arrived.

Despite receiving a bevy of attractive shiny new postwar stainless cars, the new Seaboard streamliners still lacked modern streamlined sleeping cars. The new sleepers had been ordered in 1946 but delayed by a postwar backlog of equipment orders nationwide. In the meantime, heavyweight sleepers soldiered on in Seaboard service. Consists, especially in winter season, featured a large number of heavyweight Pullmans as evidenced by this consist:

To rectify passenger confusion spurred by the *Silver Meteor/Advance Silver Meteor* train names, Seaboard decided to rename the *Advance* train. The name chosen for the train, *Silver Star*, entered the timetable. Operating on the *Advance Silver Meteor's* schedule with cars for both coasts of Florida, the *Silver Star* went into service on Dec. 12, 1947, using equipment off the earlier *Silver Meteor*. It also carried only heavyweight sleepers. Introduced initially as an addition for the 1948-'49 winter season, the train stopped running in April 1948. But due to its success (and concerns about rivals) it returned in August 1949 and for many years operated as a year-round train and running mate to the *Silver Meteor*.

The new lightweight sleepers for the *Silver* fleet finally would be delivered by American Car & Foundry, Budd, and Pullman Standard in 1949. Thirteen 10-6 sleepers from Pullman Standard for Seaboard plus three more for RF&P arrived by June. Three *Mountain*-series 6 double bedroom bar-lounges were delivered by ACF and a dozen 10-6 sleepers (6 for Seaboard and 6 for Pennsy) arrived from Budd. The 10-6's would hold down assignments on the *Silver Meteor*, *Silver Star*, and *Silver Comet* while the AC&F sleeper lounges operated on the *Silver Meteor*. Despite the new cars, high

***Silver Meteor* consist, Feb. 27, 1948, at Raleigh, N.C.**

SAL 3014	E6A locomotive
SAL 3003	E4A locomotive
SAL 3103	E4B locomotive
SAL 6051	Dormitory
<i>Daleford</i>	10 sections, 4 private sections (heavyweight)
<i>Poplar Road</i>	6 sections, 6 double bedrooms (heavyweight)
<i>Glen Dochart</i>	6 compartments, 3 drawing rooms (heavyweight)
<i>Lake Alexander</i>	10 sections, 1 drawing room, 2 compartments (heavyweight)
<i>Lake Tahoe</i>	10 sections, 1 drawing room, 2 compartments (heavyweight)
<i>The Citadel</i>	10 sections, 1 drawing room, 2 compartments (heavyweight)
SAL 6104	Diner
SAL 6213	Coach
RF&P 830	Coach
SAL 6112	Diner
SAL 6204	Coach
PRR 4601	Coach
SAL 6205	Coach
SAL 6605	Tavern observation



E7s Nos. 3035, 3038, and 3048 handle train 58, the *Silver Meteor*, past Beaver Street Tower in Jacksonville, Fla., in August 1965. David W. Salter

Left: Train 34, the *Silver Comet*, stands between Southern and Seaboard diesels at Birmingham, Ala., on July 4, 1959. J. Parker Lamb, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

Below: On Seaboard's *Silver Meteor*, crossing the Trout River approaching Jacksonville, Fla., in 1964, coaches and a tavern-observation brought up the rear. Jim McClellan





The northbound *Silver Meteor* brakes through Winter Haven, Fla., in July 1964 with three E units in charge. Ralph W. Bostian



Tucked in ahead of the diner, Sun Lounge *Palm Beach* moves along in train No. 57, the *Silver Meteor*, north of Coleman, Fla., in April 1965. Sister car *Hollywood Beach* is still in operation. David W. Salter

winter ridership demands still resulted in heavyweight sleeping cars being used on SAL top trains into the mid-1950s. Still in summer, the Seaboard's *Silver* fleet more closely resembled the streamliners of the advertising.

The vast increase in highway construction post-World War II and the rise of the automobile for intercity travel in the 1950s posed a significant challenge for America's railroads. Connecting the populous northeast with Florida tourist market as it did, the postwar *Silver* fleet continued to do well in contrast to some other passenger rail markets. The flagship *Silver Meteor* gained popularity and ridership at the time. This was partly due to the discontinuance of Seaboard's legendary winter-only *Orange Blossom Special* in 1953. The *Blossom*'s aging heavyweight consist and seasonal-only operation undoubtedly led Seaboard to decide against reequipping the train.

But if Seaboard was reticent to invest in the *Blossom*, it harbored no such thoughts about the *Silver Meteor* and *Silver Star*. In 1955, new chair cars arrived for SAL and RF&P from Pullman Standard. In 1956, a second batch of new sleeping cars arrived for the *Silver* fleet. Largely similar in floor plan to

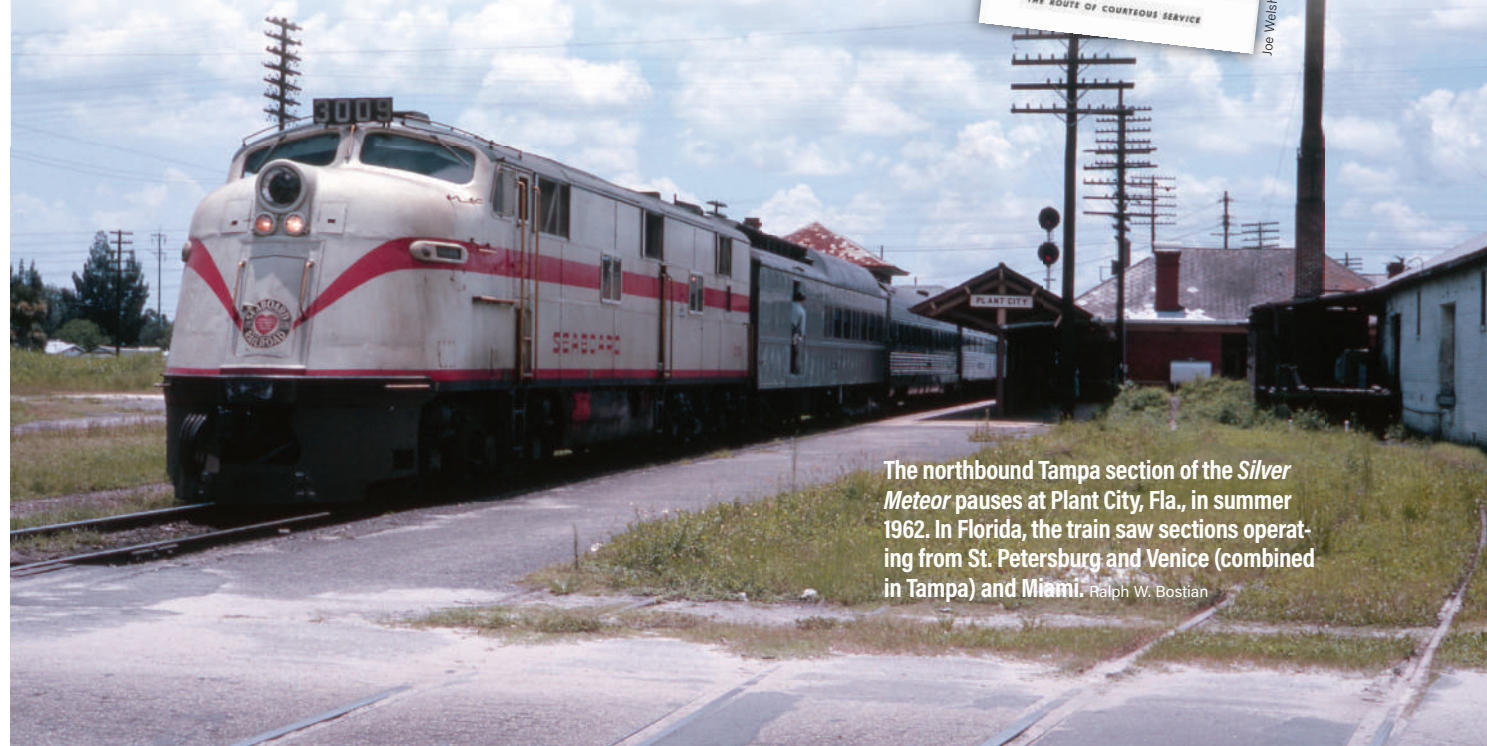
new cars being built for the Union Pacific, Seaboard received six 11-double-bedroom cars and three cars with 5 double bedrooms, 2 drawing rooms, and 2 compartments from Pullman Standard. The Budd Co. delivered six more cars with a 5-1-4-4 floorplan matching a series of cars it was building for the Canadian Pacific's new *Canadian* domeliner. Without question, the nicest cars to arrive at this time were three distinctively designed sleeper-lounges from Pullman Standard. They would turn out to be the queens of the fleet — the cars *Miami Beach*, *Palm Beach*, and *Hollywood Beach* — featured a large lounge area with a Florida theme complete with overside windows as well as glass in the roof. The cheerful cars were referred to as "Sun Lounges." They went into service on the *Silver Meteor*, where they'd remain for the rest of their career prior to Amtrak.

Both the *Silver Meteor* and the *Silver Star* winter season consists in January 1956 were as long as 19 cars! The *Star* would shortly have its round-end Tavern observation car originally inherited from the *Silver Comet* rebuilt to operate mid-train.

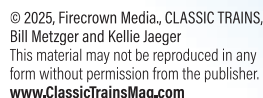
The continued development of the national highway system into the 1960s and the increase in jet-powered passenger

Typical *Silver Star* summer consist, 1953

14-seat Baggage dormitory coach (lightweight)	Washington, D.C.-Miami
52-seat coach (lightweight)	New York-Miami
52-seat coach (lightweight)	New York-Miami
52-seat coach (lightweight)	New York-Miami
24-seat tavern-coach (lightweight)	Washington, D.C.-Miami
Diner (lightweight)	Washington, D.C.-Miami
10-6 sleeper (lightweight)	Washington, D.C.-Miami
10-6 sleeper (lightweight)	New York-Miami
10-section lounge (heavyweight)	New York-Miami



The northbound Tampa section of the *Silver Meteor* pauses at Plant City, Fla., in summer 1962. In Florida, the train saw sections operating from St. Petersburg and Venice (combined in Tampa) and Miami. Ralph W. Bostian



In contrast, by the 1960s the Seaboard *Silver Comet* was significantly shorter than the Florida trains. Initially outfitted and staffed like the Florida fleet, it now sometimes carried leased sleeping cars from other roads in its consist (New Haven cars were common). Also, long gone was the train's attractive tavern-observation car. But to its credit, in the 1960s Sea-

Baggage dormitory	New York-Miami
Combine	Wildwood, Fla.- St. Petersburg
10-6 sleeper	New York-Miami (3 days per week)
10-6 sleeper	New York-Miami
10-6 sleeper	New York-Miami
5-2-2 sleeper	New York-Miami
10-6 sleeper	New York-Miami
5-DBR Sun Lounge	New York-Miami
11-DBR sleeper	New York-St. Petersburg
Diner	New York-St. Petersburg
10-6 sleeper	New York-Venice
10-6 sleeper	New York-St. Petersburg
52-seat coach	New York-St. Petersburg
52-seat coach	New York-Venice
52-seat coach	New York-St. Petersburg
Diner	New York-Miami
52-seat coach	New York-Miami
52-seat coach	New York-Miami
52-seat coach	New York-Miami
Taven Observation	New York-Miami





Train 34, the eastbound *Silver Comet*, snakes through a cut at Weems, Ala., 10 miles east of Birmingham, on July 3, 1959. J.

Two photos, J. Parker Lamb, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection



Seaboard's E units, FTs, and Baldwin cabs wore this early "citrus" scheme, displayed by E7 3036 in March 1952 as the north-bound *Silver Meteor* loads passengers at St. Petersburg, Fla.

W.B. Cox, Krambles-Peterson Archive

Seaboard observation 6601 brings up the
punctates a *Silver Meteor* consist at New
York's Sunnyside Yard in June 1967. Gerald H.
Landau, Krambles-Peterson Archive



Train 58, the northbound *Silver Meteor*, rolls north of
Wildwood, Fla., in June 1962. David W. Salter



board still offered dining car service on the *Comet* from Washington to Birmingham and a series of coaches and sleepers from New York and Washington to Atlanta and Birmingham. Even Richmond and Portsmouth had their own dedicated sleeping car service.

And other significant change was under way. As the railroad business and the competition changed over time, America's railroads sought refuge in consolidation. In one of the first U.S. mergers of two railroads that ran parallel to each other, Seaboard merged with Atlantic Coast Line in 1967. The new company was named "Seaboard Coast Line".

The new railroad originally operated 27 passenger trains per day, making it one of the busiest long distance rail passenger carriers in the nation. Among the operating changes that occurred after the merger, the *Silver Meteor* became strictly a Miami train while fleet-mate *Silver Star* began servicing both coasts.

And things were also changing at the head end. The movement of mail-and-express that had once bolstered the passenger trains' bottom line began to be diverted significantly to trucks and aircraft in the 1960s; the railroads sought to address the change. Their standard response was to discontinue passenger trains with questionable bottom lines.

In 1969, SCL decided to discontinue the *Silver Comet*. The train had already been struggling against the competition of Southern Railway's *Southerner* train and the likely loss of head-end revenue doomed the train. In its final days the *Comet* was down to as little as three passenger-carrying cars.

To address the now shocking loss of private passenger train service nationwide, Amtrak was formed in May 1971. The government-subsidized national passenger rail carrier relied heavily on the equipment and routes of the Seaboard Coast Line and other top railroads such as Santa Fe. For example, more than 20% of the new passenger carrier's original fleet of cars would come from SCL's reliable trains.

Two members of the *Silver* fleet — the *Silver Meteor* and the *Silver Star* — would prove to be popular trains for Amtrak from the beginning of the company. In a tribute to the strength of the Florida market, today both "Silver fleet" trains still operate, 54 years after Amtrak was founded. ■



Silver Comet consist, August 1964

Baggage car	Washington-Birmingham
52-seat coach	Washington-Atlanta
52-seat coach	New York-Atlanta
Tavern coach	New York-Birmingham
52-seat coach	New York-Birmingham
10-6 sleeper	New York-Birmingham
Diner	Washington-Birmingham
10-6 sleeper	Richmond-Atlanta
5-1-4-4 sleeper	Portsmouth-Atlanta
Coach	Portsmouth-Atlanta

Diesel-electric railcar 2028 powers the Venice section of the northbound *Silver Meteor* connection at Nokomis, Fla., on the state's west coast, around 1950. The line is now a trail. Bob Clarkson



Philadelphia's ground breaking *SILVERLINERS*

Budd stainless steel left a legacy for Philadelphia commuters

BY BRIAN SOLOMON

As a teenager, my father traveled from New York City to Philadelphia in 1958 to photograph the latest in suburban railroad transportation: Budd's experimental Pioneer III multiple-unit cars. Six of these advanced cars recently had been delivered to the Pennsylvania Railroad and were working Main Line and Manayunk services. These sleek stainless-steel trains were a stark contrast to PRR's vast fleet of "Owl Eye" MP54 multiple units that dominated Philadelphia electric suburban services since World War I. This new vision of the future represented a technological stepping stone in Budd's influence on American passenger-car design. Equally important, the Silverliners, as these cars and their descendants came to be known, spanned the fundamental transition from private railroad investment in passenger services and equipment to the era of publicly funded and operated passenger rail networks. The Silverliner era was a function of that transition. Over the years, my family has had many opportunities to experience and photograph these developments and put the cars in historical context.

BUDD PIONEER III

Since the 1930s, the Philadelphia-based Budd Co. had been a leader in innovative passenger train design and, as a result, became one of the largest producers of new rail-passenger vehicles. Among the company's successful postwar innovations were its Rail Diesel Car and Vista Dome, both of which incorporated Budd's patented shotwelded stainless steel construction. In the mid-1950s it was working to further advance its commercial designs to remain competitive, while giving the railroads the tools they needed to attract and retain business and lower the cost of providing passenger services. Budd's innovations had produced bi-level high-capacity gallery commuter cars for

Burlington, full-length domes for Santa Fe and Great Northern, Hi-Level cars for Santa Fe's transcontinental service, and a long-distance advancement of the RDC with locomotive-like cabs for New Haven for service as the *Roger Williams*.

A.G. Dean, Budd's Railway Division assistant chief engineer, described the company's approach in a 1955 paper to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, noting that interest in "radical new passenger car design," presented an "opportunity to explore materials and modern construction techniques." Dean and others at Budd recognized that significantly lowering car weight and reducing construction and maintenance costs would serve to help railroads recapture

passenger traffic. However, Budd's engineering solutions were reactive, aimed in part to counter more radical recent designs that ran contrary to established North American practice. Spanish manufacturer Talgo had introduced ultra-light-weight, low-profile cars with short bodies and single-axle articulated technology. By contrast, to advance passenger-car design, Budd embraced evolutionary innovation working from established North American practices.

In 1956, Budd built a single prototype passenger coach called Pioneer III, an allusive name that referenced Budd's stainless-steel airplane and the ground-breaking *Pioneer Zephyr* built for Burlington in 1934. Pioneer III was a full-length (85-



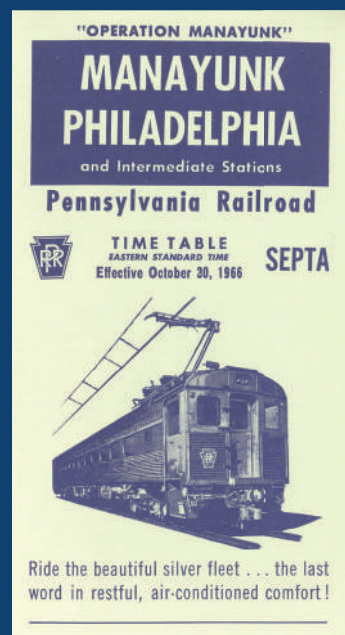
The City of Philadelphia began the "Operation Northwest" program of subsidizing the Pennsy and Reading Chestnut Hill branch operations from Oct. 26, 1958. By the April 28, 1963 timetable, PRR branch riders had twice the amount of service compared to 1960. George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive



foot) car that met all Association of American Railroads strength requirements, including the standard 800,000-lbs. buff-strength mandate, and weighed just 75,000 pounds. In his book *The American Railroad Passenger Car*, author John H. White noted that this was almost half the weight of a typical 1950s-era coach. Budd promoted Pioneer III as its most significant innovation since the RDC, sending it out on an extensive two-year 120,000-mile demonstration tour, hoping the design, in coach, sleeper, and food-service configurations, might be adopted as a new American standard. Unfortunately, the tour's timing couldn't have been worse. By 1957, many railroads were anticipating the end of the intercity pas-

senger train, and further investment in new equipment wasn't viewed as a solution to the problem.

However, the PRR was intrigued with the new design at a time when it was investigating replacements for its fleet of old suburban-service MP54s. So, while the coach was touring, PRR worked with Budd to adapt the Pioneer III as a modern high-capacity suburban service M.U. and, in January 1957, ordered six experimental units with an option for 44 more. A decade earlier, PRR had experimented with high-voltage AC-DC rectifiers using ignitron mercury arc technology. This system had been perfected and, in 1954, applied to Pullman-Standard's stainless-steel-sided M.U.s delivered to New



In the mid-1960s, the Pennsylvania Railroad-SEPTA's suburban timetables featured the new Silverliner cars. Richard Jay Solomon collection



On Dec. 7, 1958, PRR Pioneer III multiple units pause at Overbrook, Pa., with an inbound train for Philadelphia's Suburban Station. The experimental Pioneer III units used full pantographs that make them easy to distinguish from the later Silverliners that used the Faiveley "half pantograph."

Haven Railroad. Ignitron rectification was briefly employed on state-of-the-art electric locomotives in the mid-1950s, notably a few PRR experimental units and New Haven's 10 EP5s. This AC-DC approach to rectification allowed for the superior characteristics of high-voltage AC for long-distance transmission while providing the benefits of traditional DC traction motors, which were powerful, compact, and easy to control.

Other significant innovations introduced on the Pioneer III M.U.s were two distinct types of inside-bearing trucks that offered modern suspension and braking systems. Both trucks used suspension systems that supported the body of the car from the end-sills. Three cars were equipped with cast trucks manufactured by General Steel that used a four-wheel equalized rigid frame with suspension provided by a combination

of coil and air springs with shock absorbers between the bolster and the car body. The other three cars used a powered adaptation of the unusual lightweight Pioneer III truck, a fabricated unit designed for the experimental coach, easily identifiable by its outside disc brakes.

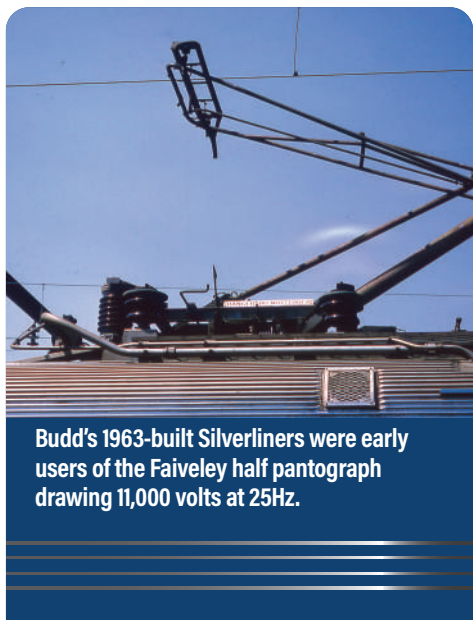
The combination of lightweight design and the high-power AC-DC electrical system made Pioneer III the fastest multiple units built for American rails to date. Their rapid acceleration impressed passengers, as did their modern interior decor, which was entirely free of paint. In-

stead, the interior consisted of tinted pre-molded plastic and fiberglass forms, vinyl asphalt floor tiles, and stainless-steel strips. Reversible "flip-over" seats were made from stainless steel, with polyether padding and woven plastic fabric covers. The interior was lit by cool, bright fluorescent lights that offered

a contrast to the comparatively dim incandescent lighting typical of earlier commuter cars. Commuters weary of humid Philadelphia summers appreciated another Pioneer III feature: air-conditioning.

INTRODUCING SILVERLINERS

Development of the Pioneer III multiple-unit cars coincided with a reckoning that suburban commuter services had become a drain on railroad resources and that ticket-recovery income was insufficient to sustain operations, let alone provide funds for new equipment. Yet the value of commuter services to area communities and the economy as a whole was more important than simply as revenue-generating traffic. The Pennsy had taken pride in its Philadelphia suburban services, which not only served the affluent Main Line communities west of the city, but also had been the impetus for its great high-voltage electrification of the 1930s. In June 1958, *Railway Age* reported the opinions of PRR President James M. Symes, who said that these six new cars would likely be the last that PRR would be getting for a while, noting that "arrangements should be worked out with local governments whereby the railroads will operate commuter service as their agent."



Budd's 1963-built Silverliners were early users of the Faiveley half pantograph drawing 11,000 volts at 25Hz.

Symes' comment anticipated the City of Philadelphia's Passenger Service Improvement Corp., a public organization created in the late 1950s as a means of providing the city's public transit and railroad commuter services with subsidies. These covered financial shortfalls and enabled investment in equipment and infrastructure while finding ways to improve connections between commuter rail and public transit. This was a prelude to the creation, in 1964, of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. Initially, SEPTA served to administer funding, coordinate improvements, and assist operators, while PRR and the Reading Company served as the host railroads, much in the way that Symes had suggested; later SEPTA would assume operation of all city/suburban transit and regional rail services.

In 1963, the first order for 55 Pioneer III-based cars was funded through a lease arrangement from Philadelphia through the PSIC — a move that set precedents for commuter rail investment elsewhere in the Northeast. The order cost approximately \$13.7 million in total. The fleet of new cars were divided between PRR (38 units) and Reading (17), with cars lettered and numbered for their respective operators. (Two decades later, the PRR and RDG suburban networks would finally be connected by a tunnel under Center City Philadelphia, enabling trains to roam freely over all lines.) A 1963 news release issued by the builder that

detailed the new cars said, "Philadelphia has received the first of 55 new stainless-steel Budd-built commuter cars with significant design advances that can be expected to make commuting more attractive to many Philadelphians."

Visually, the new cars would be a sharp break from PRR's red and RDG's green equipment, inspiring PSIC to dub them "Silverliners."

Based on the success of the experimental Pioneer III units, Budd implemented a number of changes in the Silverliners' design. This included adoption of the modern French-designed Faiveley "half" pantograph (introduced in 1955) in place of the traditional full pantographs used on the Pioneer IIIs. Instead of ignitron rectifiers, the Silverliners took advantage of the more modern and less complex silicon-diode rectifier system.

As-built, the Silverliners were rated at 85 mph. These had high-capacity 2 x 3 seating allowing for 127 seated passengers on cars without restrooms and 124 passengers on cars equipped with restrooms.

The interior of the Pioneer III car arranged for commuter service displays 2 x 3 seating and a narrow aisle. Budd Co.



At 85 feet long, these were more than 21 feet longer than the old PRR MP54s, which had only 72 seats per car. Significantly, despite greater length and more seats, the new cars weighed 30% less than the MP54s.

Owing to differences in their electrical systems, the Pioneer III and Silverliner cars were neither compatible with PRR's other equip-

ment nor with each other. However, like the Budd RDC, each of the electric cars had a full set of operating controls at each end and were designed to run singly or in multiples of up to 13 units. This flexibility was valuable in tailoring commuter services to the volume of expected passengers and it wasn't uncommon in the early years of operation for single cars to work lightly patronized schedules.

PRR routinely assigned its fleet of Budd-built cars to commuter runs centered on Philadelphia's Suburban Station. This included Main Line trains to Paoli as well as runs to Torresdale, Levittown, and Trenton on the New York-Philadelphia main line that included a few named



In February 1964, a new Silverliner car was on a solo run toward PRR's Philadelphia Suburban Station. Philadelphia's 30th Street Station is in the background. In the early years, Pennsy and Reading often operated their Budd-built M.U.s as single cars. Three photos, Richard Jay Solomon



Pennsylvania Railroad MP54 multiple units were the staple of its electric commuter services. A set of three was working west near Secaucus, N.J., in May 1963. Richard Jay Solomon

commuter runs such as the *Early Bird Express*, *Delaware Valley Express*, and the acclaimed *Bucks County Express*. The latter was listed in the Oct. 30, 1966, timetable as departing Suburban Station at 5:09 p.m., making its first stop 18 miles out at Cornwells Heights, and terminating at Trenton at 5:53 p.m. These also worked mainline schedules between Philadelphia and Wilmington, Del., plus branch services to Chestnut Hill, Manayunk, and West Chester via Media, Pa. The new Budd electric cars also worked some longer-distance services, notably PRR's 600-series limited-stop local service trains on the main line to Harrisburg. In addition, these were occasionally assigned outside the immediate Philadelphia area, working trains in New Jersey such as the Princeton-Princeton Junction shuttle, and trains to New York Penn Station.

In 1965, another 20 cars were ordered and allocated for service on PRR's lines. Interestingly, St. Louis Car Co., a divi-



Delivery of the 17 Reading-assigned "Silverliners" began in August 1963. These cars were city-owned and leased to the RDG. Purchase price was \$250,000 per car.

George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive

sion of General Steel, had outbid Budd to build this latest order. St. Louis took longer to complete the order than anticipated and all the cars were not delivered until 1967. The St. Louis-built units were built to essentially the same specifications as the Budd-built units, but exhibited a variety of external changes that included differences in side-window and roof profiles, different fluting pattern, and front-end valances over the headlights and front number boards. They used General Steel's cast truck instead of the Budd's Pioneer III truck. To enable use of the front vestibule for loading/unloading single-car trains, the St. Louis cars had left-hand controls.

The last Budd Silverliners were four special cars ordered by the Department of Commerce in 1965 for high-speed testing conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation with funding made possible through the High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965. These test cars were the prelude to PRR's proposed 160 mph New York-Washington, D.C., *Metroliner*. The four Budds were numbered T-1 to T-4. The trucks and braking systems were different from those on the commuter service cars and designed for high-speed service. Each of these cars only had controls at one-end. PRR requested that Budd fit the end-units with semi-streamlined beveled fronts that anticipated the more refined look of the Budd-built *Metroliner* cars. More significantly, each of the four cars was equipped with testing equipment to measure different aspects of railroad infrastructure and passenger car interface at very high speeds. For example, car T-1 was tasked with measuring and recording the interaction between catenary wire and pantographs. Testing began on tangent-sections of PRR's electrified main line in central New Jersey in 1966. On May 24, 1967, the cars made a widely publicized high-speed demonstration, blitzing Princeton Junction at 156 mph. My father was there to record the event.

THE SILVERLINER IV AND V

In the 1970s, SEPTA placed an order for 144 modern electric multiple-units from General Electric. Built at Erie, Pa., these were called Silverliner IVs. (Earlier cars were retroactively designated Silverliner I, II, and III at this time.) They used modern boxy stainless-steel bodies with seats for up to 129 passengers. Funding was jointly supplied by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,



Reading Co. Silverliners depart Reading Terminal in July 1964. Its cars were delivered numbered 9001 to 9017 and retained these numbers until retirement by SEPTA after almost 50 years of service. Passenger service to Reading Terminal ended in 1984, although this facility survives as a convention center with the famed Reading Terminal Market below. Richard Jay Solomon

Know Your Silverliners

The original Budd cars were retroactively re-classified with the arrival of St. Louis Car Co. and GE-built units. While this new system offered a logical progression, it can result in confusion since the later terminology wasn't in place during the early years of Silverliner operation. The six Budd Pioneer III experimental cars, that PRR had designated as MP85E-TC/MP85EA-TC, were reclassified as Silverliner I. The 55 Budd cars built in 1963 for service on the PRR (classes MP85BE1-TC and MP85CE1-TC) and Reading (Class REB-13) became known as Silverliner II. The 20 St. Louis cars of 1967 were classified as Silverliner III, while the large fleet of GE-built cars were from the time of construction called Silverliner IV. In 2010, SEPTA's introduced Hyundai-Rotem electric multiple units known as the Silverliner V.

Similar in overall appearance and application to the Silverliner IIs were St. Louis-built Arrow I cars built in the late 1960s for the New Jersey Department of Transportation to provide commuter service on PRR/PC electric lines serving New Jersey commuters, while NJDOT's fleets of Arrow IIs and IIIs built by GE in the mid-1970s were similar to SEPTA's Silverliner IVs. These latter cars were assigned to former Lackawanna and PRR electrified lines and consisted of both single cars with cabs at both ends and married pairs with cab-less ends coupled together. Among the defining external differences of the Arrow III (model MA-1G) were the application of central doors midway down the length of the cars. — *Brian Solomon*

nia, as well as PRR successor Penn Central and Reading. The order was later increased, and between 1974 and 1976 a total of 232 cars were delivered, 130 for use on PC lines, 102 for the Reading. Only 50 were single cars; the majority, 182, were draw-bar-connected "married pairs." The arrival of the Silverliner IVs allowed retirement of most, but not

quite all, of the worn-out MP54s and Reading "green" cars.

By 2010, SEPTA began replacing the 1960s-era Silverliner II and IIIs with a fleet of new 85-foot stainless-steel Silverliner V cars.

These were constructed in Philadelphia by Korean-railcar manufacturer Hyundai-Rotem using locally manufactured parts. The new

Silverliner IV Specifications

Builder: General Electric and Avco

Builder Model: MA-1H

Length: 85 feet

Height: 14 feet 8 inches

Width: 8 feet 10 inches

Maximum Speed: 85 mph



The final Budd Silverliners were four cars lettered for the U.S. Department of Transportation. These were pictured at Princeton Junction, N.J., on May 24, 1967, during high-speed testing conducted in preparation for Metroliner service. Richard Jay Solomon



SEPTA's largest fleet of suburban cars are the Silverliner IVs that have worked commuter trains since the mid-1970s. On July 2, 2014, an outbound SEPTA train enroute to Thorndale approaches Overbrook on the former PRR Main Line. Brian Solomon

cars were designed for system-wide route availability so that they could work all of SEPTA's former PRR and Reading regional rail lines. The cars used a new design featuring smooth stainless-steel bodies and large windows. The order for 120 cars (38 single, 82 as married pairs) was completed in 2013. Among the new features were lighted side-of-car destination signs and two pairs of exit doors on the sides of each car. The cars were equipped with regenerative braking to feed current back into the overhead catenary or to help supply auxiliary systems such as air conditioning. The 1960s-vintage Silverliners made their final runs on June 29, 2012.

Today, Silverliner IV and Vs carry the bulk of SEPTA's daily commuters. The original Silverliners are just a memory, but their design not only allowed for improvement to Philadelphia area rail-commuting that helped check the precipitous decline of rail transportation, but set important long-term technological precedents for both commuter rail and long-distance passenger cars, many of which have served the traveling public for a half-century or more. 📌

Special thanks to Richard Jay Solomon, Patrick Yough, and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania for their help in researching this article.



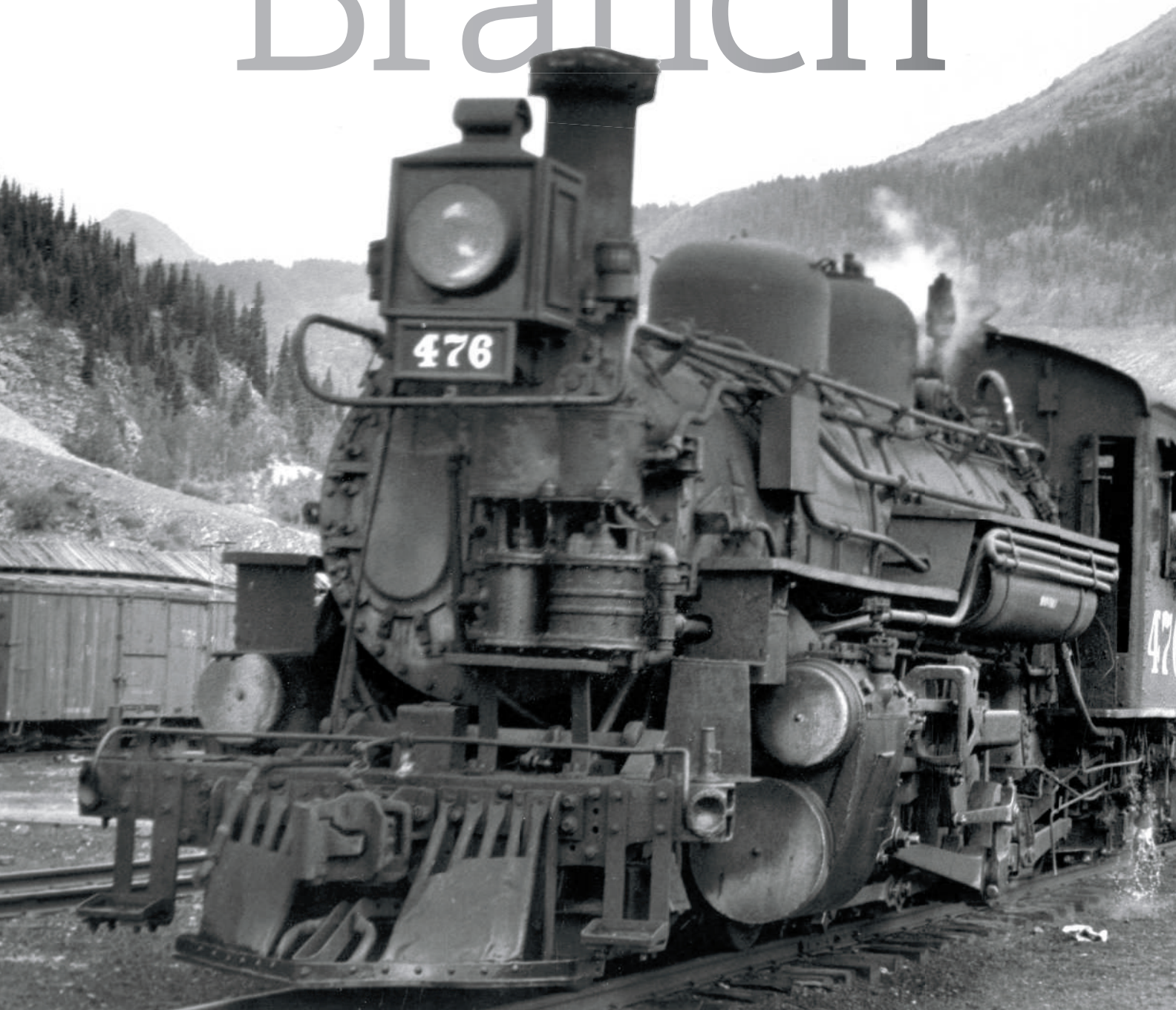
This shot emphasizes the WABCO disc brakes used on the "Silverliners." It was taken where the Chestnut Hill line crosses Cresheim Valley Drive and the paralleling Cresheim Creek, about a quarter-mile east of the St. Martins station. Krambles-Peterson Archive

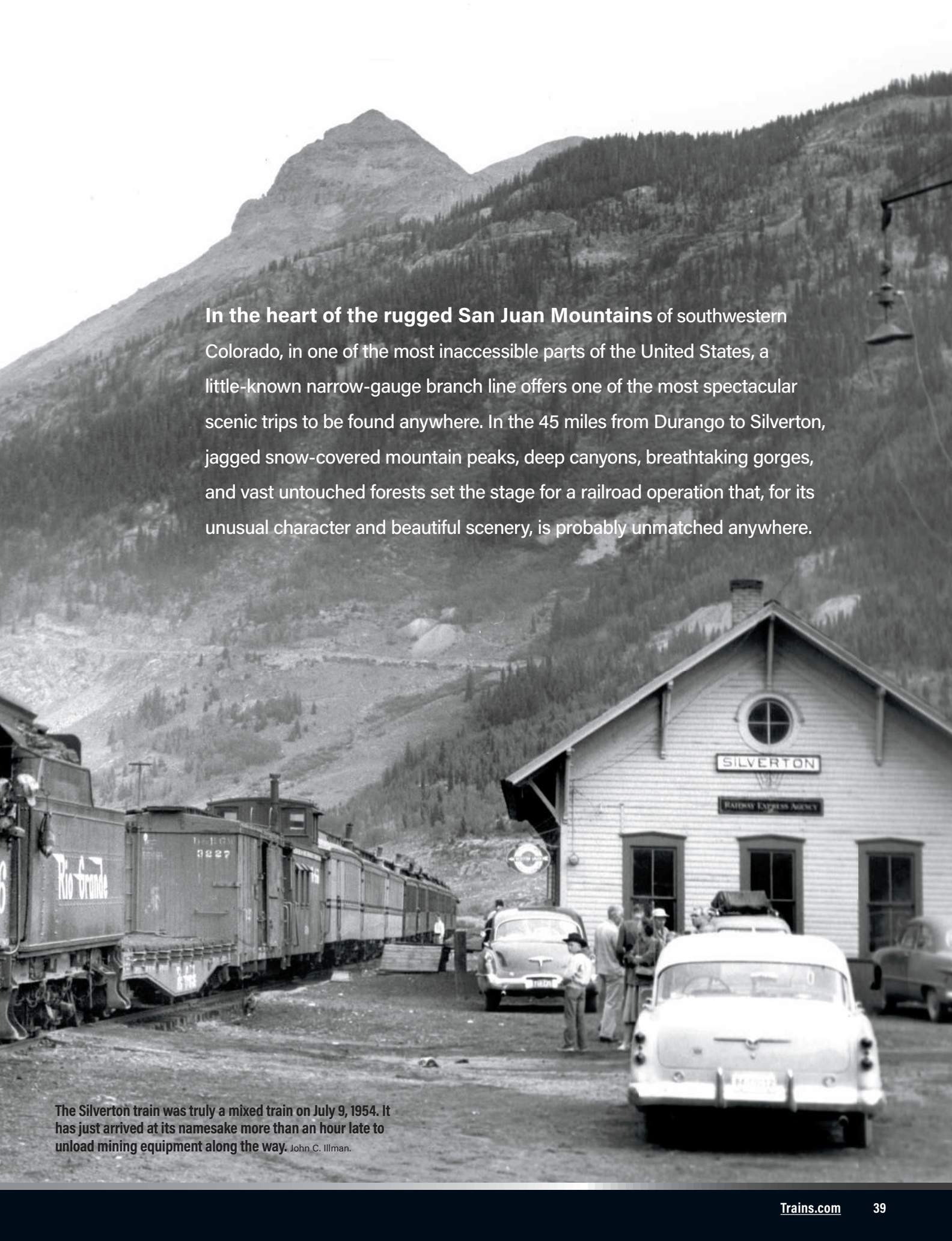


BY HAROLD M. MAYER

Silverton Branch

DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN'S MOST REMOTE TRAIN SQUEEZES UP
THE GORGE OF RIO DE LAS ANIMAS PERDIDAS TWICE A WEEK





In the heart of the rugged San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, in one of the most inaccessible parts of the United States, a little-known narrow-gauge branch line offers one of the most spectacular scenic trips to be found anywhere. In the 45 miles from Durango to Silverton, jagged snow-covered mountain peaks, deep canyons, breathtaking gorges, and vast untouched forests set the stage for a railroad operation that, for its unusual character and beautiful scenery, is probably unmatched anywhere.

The Silverton train was truly a mixed train on July 9, 1954. It has just arrived at its namesake more than an hour late to unload mining equipment along the way. John C. Illman.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're proud to present this story that first appeared in the August 1942 Trains Magazine, which so well captures the spirit of the Silverton Branch at that time. — B.M.S.

In common with most of the narrow-gauge lines built by the Denver & Rio Grande (later to add "Western" to the end of its name), the Silverton Branch was built to serve mining camps during the boom days of the late 1880s and early 1890s. In the San Juan Mountains are gold, silver, lead, copper, and zinc. Geologically speaking, these mountains are a vast dome of volcanic lava flows that were uplifted, then deeply eroded by numerous glaciers and streams, thus exposing many thousands of feet of volcanic rock formations crisscrossed by fissure veins containing rich mineral deposits. These deposits formed the economic base of several mining towns. Among these, in a small basin in the most inaccessible part of the mountain system, is Silverton, elevation 9,302 feet and surrounded by towering 14,000-foot peaks except for the narrow canyon of the Rio de Las Animas Perdidas to the south, which was utilized by the D&RGW to connect the mining

camp with the outside world.

Now, a highway connects Silverton with Durango on the south and with Montrose on the north. Over this road pass thousands of tourists each summer. But the highway is forced to go over the mountains, using steep grades and hair-pin turns, because the lower-gradient canyon route is far too narrow to permit the easy construction of a road or, for that matter, a standard-gauge railroad. The canyon is still the domain of the steam locomotive. Natives explain that the narrow-gauge railroad can turn on the brim of a sombrero, and in the winding gorge between Silverton and Durango the track seems almost to do just that.

At Durango, the hub of the narrow-gauge system, the inhabitants stare unbelievably when a person mentions his plans to go to Silverton by rail. Most of the natives are completely unaware of the existence of the line, although once each year a passenger excursion train is run to Silverton. This is the only regular solid passenger train to operate. One will look in vain for Chamber of Commerce literature advertising the ride; even the general office of the Rio Grande in Denver has no photographs of the line.

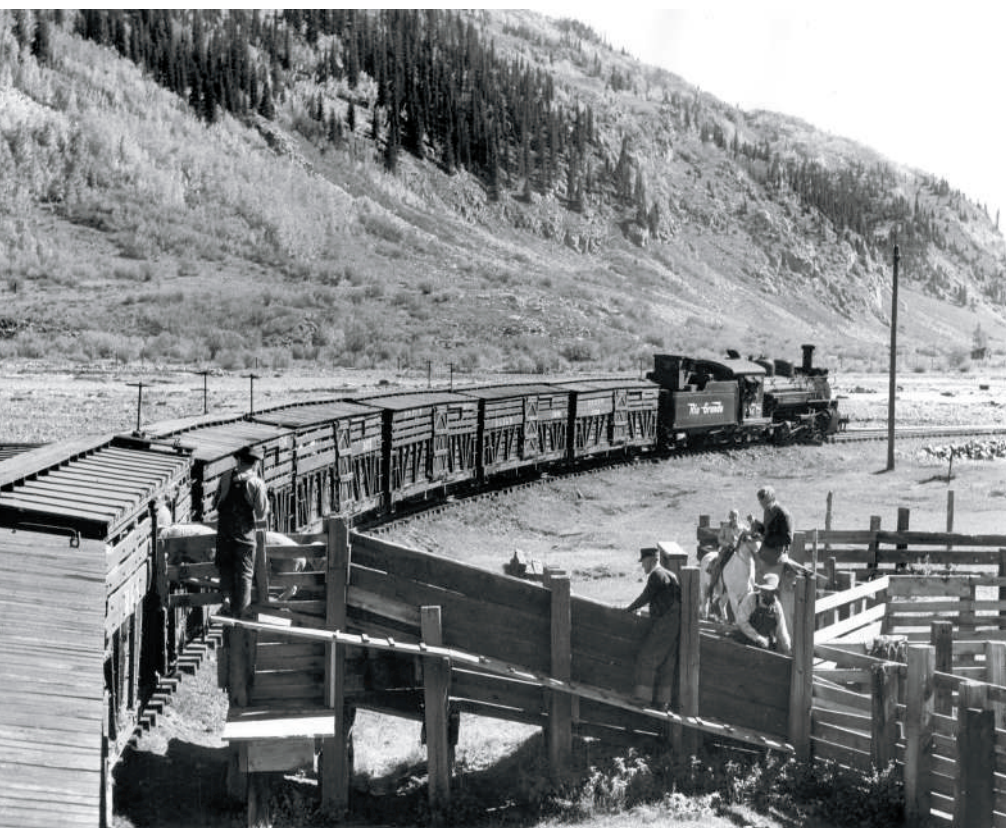
Service now consists of a mixed train, operating twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Passenger accommodation consists of a sway-backed combination passenger-baggage car, vintage of 1882, placed just ahead of the diminutive caboose on the up-bound trip, and behind it on the return. This car is itself of considerable interest: the passenger compartment is decorated with Mid-Victorian scrollwork and several once-elegant brass kerosene lamps. At the rear is a narrow, open platform, protected by an iron railing and dominated by the huge iron wheel of the hand brake.

At Durango, the metropolis of the southwestern quarter of Colorado, the narrow-gauge lines radiate in four directions. To the northwest is the Rio Grande Southern; to the south, the Farmington Branch of the D&RGW; and to the east, the more heavily constructed main line of the narrow-gauge system, to Alamosa.

Leaving Durango, the line — for the most part a tangent — traverses the wide valley of the Las Animas. This is a stock ranching country, and the livestock as well as a few cash crops furnishes traffic to the railroad, though the Silverton Branch only carries it a short distance. Not uncommonly, the train is less than half its original length when leaving the wider part of the valley just north of Durango. The valley is irrigated, with its fields of oats clover and alfalfa, and appears prosperous; there is an abundance of precipitation on the nearby mountains, and the railroad furnishes transportation of the stock to markets.

Dominating the valley's flat floor on both sides are precipitous cliffs consisting of sharply inclined Permian rocks with a beautiful red color, of considerable interest to geologists. Crossing the valley is the Rio de Las Animas Perdidas, the "River of Lost Souls," named, so we are told, by the early Spanish explorers in honor of members of their party who lost their lives in the foaming rapids in the gorge near Silverton.

At Hermosa, a waystation a few miles north of Durango, the little three-foot line commences to climb. A couple of miles farther north it is perched on a narrow shelf, blasted into the solid volcanic rock cliff on the west side of the valley. Between the branches of the pine and spruce trees that have found precarious foothold on the steep, rocky slopes, one catches intriguing glimpses of the flat valley below. Here it becomes narrower until, finally, the cliffs on either side are so close together the river occupies the en-



Men load 13 cars of sheep at Silverton in September 1942 during a scheduled-but-not-always-followed 35-minute layover on the round trip from Durango. Such is life on a mixed train where schedules are almost always more of a suggestion than a fact. William Moedinger



Equipped with fake diamond stacks, 476 and 478 double-head a Rocky Mountain Railroad Club excursion at Elk Park in June 1947. Richard H. Kindig



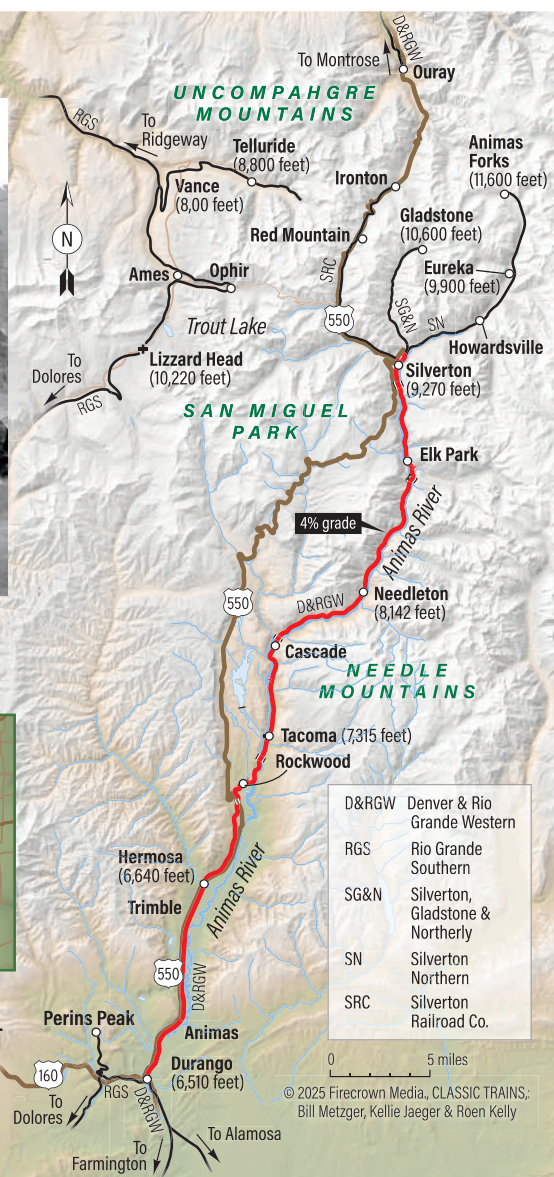
Two men ride the cupola on train 461, the mixed from Durango, at Silverton on June 4, 1940. Combine ahead accommodated the more civilized traveler. John Maxwell

tire width of the valley floor, seething and foaming against the steep rock walls, first on one side and then on the other.

Here the locomotive works hard, for the grade is 4% and the loads are heavy. Flanges screech on the sharp curves, and in places the locomotive and caboose pass each other in opposite directions. Tributary creeks cut deep ravines that are crossed far above the treetops by very high embankments or timber trestles. Looking out of the car, one sees nothing between the train and the roaring river, hundreds of feet below. The sensation of height and of the far greater heights above, the sway of the primitive cars as



Silverton Branch





The northbound Silverton turn hugs the walls of the Las Animas Canyon on Oct. 14, 1946. The photograph was taken from the platform of a passenger car at the rear of the mixed train. Note the doghouse at the rear of the tender for the head-end brakeman. Dave Lewis

they rattle around the sharp curves, and the laboring puffs of the locomotive as it sends hissing blasts reverberating across the canyon, all combine in a sensation of vastness. It induces awe at the powers of nature and the genius of man, who conceived and built this toy railroad to overcome the natural obstacles.

Despite the steep grade of the railroad, one becomes aware that the river is getting closer; its grade is even steeper. Finally, the narrow shelf holding the railroad on the side of the canyon is practically at the water's edge, and both canyon walls tower 200 feet above the track. The gorge is here but a narrow slit in the mountains, far too narrow to accommodate a road or a standard-gauge railroad. The sky is but a thin wedge of blue, far, far above.

Here and there the train hesitates, to drop off a party of fishermen in quest of mountain trout and a week of camping, or to leave supplies for the engineer at a power station set deep in the canyon, alongside the roaring rapids. The power station disappears behind a bend in the gorge, and once again the only sign that

man has ever before seen the canyon is the narrow railroad track. Looking ahead or backward as the train screeches around sharp curves, one may see towering even above the precipitous cliffs the far higher mountains, some with glaciers on the sides of their needle-like peaks. Mount Eolus, with a height of 14,086 feet, dominates the San Juan Range and the canyon, but shares attention with many other mountains of indescribable ruggedness and stupendous beauty.

Here there is no feeling of openness, as at the base of Pikes Peak; the topography of San Juan County is so rugged that in the entire county there is not an acre of tillable soil. Everywhere are steep slopes and vertical cliffs; at the bottom of it all, beneath the jumbled mass of peak upon peak, of canyon within canyon, is the bottom of the gorge of the Las Animas, with the little railroad alongside.

Suddenly a small, wider, basin area opens. A few houses appear, then a mine shaft house with a pile of tailings perched on the canyon wall, and the train arrives at the end of the line — Silverton.

Silverton is almost, but not quite, a

ghost town. The demonetization of silver in 1893 caught the town in its prime, and it has never since fully recovered, though there are a number of active mines in the vicinity and the present population is somewhat over 1,000. The wide streets, unoccupied houses, and the exposed foundations of others reveal the town's former importance. The hotel, with its Victorian architecture, its mansard roof, and its gaudy embellishment, betrays the town's former prosperity. The shop and yard of the Silverton Northern Railroad, which tapped the mines north of town, speak of the past and promise for the future, for the line, though inoperative, is still to be seen intact, and the equipment is not beyond rehabilitation.

The cars from Durango are dropped, others are picked up, the locomotive is watered and wyed, and the southbound train departs for Durango, disappearing into the awesome canyon, not to reappear until half a week later.

Typical trains on the Silverton Branch consist of 8 or 10 freight cars (including both gondolas and box cars), the combination passenger-baggage car, and a small

caboose. The locomotive assigned to the run is usually a little 78-ton 2-8-2 Mikado, with drivers inside the frame and with a prominent spark-arrester on the stack; the area is heavily wooded and within the San Juan National Forest, over which the United States Forest Service exercises careful supervision. Large wedge plows replace the pilots for more than half the year, as the snow accumulates very rapidly in the bottom of the canyon, where the sun seldom reaches.

Traffic now consists of coal, gasoline, and general supplies northbound, and ore concentrates southbound. The ore is carried in boxcars; consequently, each train has several empties: gondolas south and boxcars north. The ore receives its primary concentration at the mines, and is then shipped to smelters at Farmington, N.M.; Leadville, Colo.; or Colorado Springs. Thereby the Rio Grande receives from the Silverton Branch long hauls of ore concentrate, which add considerably to the revenue of the other portions of its narrow-gauge system. The war has materially aided the position of this traffic, and there is less likelihood of abandonment of the Silverton Branch than of most other parts of the narrow-gauge.

The Silverton Branch could at one time be used as an integral part of the narrow-gauge circle trip. The D&RGW gave an option to the traveler. He could either ride the Rio Grande Southern, avoiding the Silverton country entirely, or he could take a stage from Ouray to Silverton and then ride the branch line down to Durango. Now the narrow-gauge circle is no longer complete, at least as a passenger trip. One can no longer cross Marshall Pass aboard the D&RGW's luxurious *Shavano*. But the *San Juan Express* does run over Cumbres Pass to Durango, the Rio Grande Southern does run from Durango to Ouray, and from Ouray there are convenient connections to the standard-gauge main line at Grand Junction.

Since the mixed train on the branch runs Tuesdays and Saturdays, one can make the trip without stopover by leaving Denver Sunday or Thursday evening, arriving at Durango at 4:05 p.m. next day, taking the Silverton round trip the third day and immediately (by advance notice) catching the afternoon Rio Grande Southern train as far as Dolores. The fourth day is for the rest of the Rio Grande Southern and the D&RGW bus to Grand Junction. Then it's back to Denver via either the Rio Grande's Royal Gorge or Moffat Tunnel routes. ■



Unique narrow gauge observation car *Silver Vista*, shown farther east at the Toltec Canyon, was a regular on the Silverton Branch for excursions. George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive



Snow covers the Silverton Branch on March 31, 1949, just 4 miles south of its namesake city. The railroad shares the narrow canyon with the Animas River, which it follows within sight for much of the trip south to Durango. Robert W. Richardson





North Shore's Silverliners

Coming out of the war, the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee continued its pre-war ("Greenliner") modernization program on the two batches of "Skokie [Valley] Steels" it rostered.

That improvement program was barely completed, when the North Shore began a further refresh program on the oldest of the "Greenliner" motors upgrading them to the stunning "Silverliner" image. This time the exterior colors were a brilliant red above the belt rail and silver below. But not just plain silver: gray shading in a mottled pattern was applied to simulate the shading that appeared below the fluting on a stainless steel streamlined car.

The first "Silverliner" cars were released from Highwood Shops on April 25, 1950 — cars 756 and 776 — and were followed by three further cars in early May. George Krambles's view (inset) of the two-car consist headed by the 738 southbound at Dempster Street, Skokie, dates to early fall 1950.

In addition, both cars in this shot have that hallmark of the early "Silverliner" rebuilds — note the swirl of bright red paint on the roof over the end windows of the cars, a detail that was later omitted. Between spring 1950 and June 1958, the North Shore would upgrade 31 of its cars to "Silverliner" status. Bill Janssen's June 1958 shot (main) offers an interesting perspective on "Silverliner" action. At the time, North Shore trains were scheduled to arrive in the Loop on an alternating five-to-seven minute headway in the morning rush, threaded in between CTA trains, which also shared the trackage. — *Art Peterson*

Photos: Krambles-Peterson Archive

Silver Bulldogs: Burlington's E5s

Shining streamliners from the future // BY JERRY A. PINKEPANK

Until 1939, the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors and predecessor Electro-Motive Corporation had used the Winton 201-A diesel engine for all its locomotives. Then EMD introduced the model 567 engine, and with it, its first freight locomotives, the FTA and FTB. For passenger service, EMD had first built box-cab units, then in 1937 changed to what some call the “bulldog nose.”

There was an urgent reason for this change — safety for the engine crew. With locomotives having the cab at the front at frame level, there had been collisions with highway vehicles that were fatal for the enginemen. Danger grew as train speeds increased, as did the size of automobiles and trucks.

The first instance of reaction to this problem was the Pennsylvania Railroad's adoption of the center-cab P-5a Modified electrics built in 1934 and after, replacing the box-cab P5a introduced in 1931. EMD began using the high cab with a protective nose in 1937 with what later would be called the model

TA, six 201-A powered units for the Rock Island. Also soon to arrive: 567-powered models such as the EA (6 units for the Baltimore & Ohio, May 1937 to June 1938), the E1A-B (8 A units, 3 B units) for the Santa Fe June, 1937 to April 1938), and the bulbous-nosed E2 (just two A-B-B sets built November-December 1937 to power new streamliners). One set was jointly owned by Chicago & North Western, Southern Pacific, and Union Pacific for the *City of San Francisco*, and the other jointly owned by UP and C&NW for the *City of Los Angeles*.

There had been high-cab streamliner power before, starting in 1934 with Union Pacific's M10000, with locomotive bodies built by Pullman along with the rest of the train. But the noses were stubby, with weak structures designed around air intakes, and didn't provide the protection afforded by the “bulldog.” Starting with EMD demonstrator 822 in September 1938, EMD increased the horsepower of its dual-engine passenger locomotive from 1,800 to 2,000, with what would later be called the E3 and the custom versions for Seaboard Air Line Railroad, later called the E4, and for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the E5.

The Burlington's customization was the use of fluted stainless-steel panels with highly polished flat stainless panels above, to match the Budd-built streamliners they would lead. This even included lowering the rectangular side windows to match the window levels of the cars, as can be seen in the accompany-



The first E5 A-B set poses for the official record at LaGrange in February 1940. Nos. 9910A and 9910B, *Silver Speed* and *Silver Power*, display the truck skirts that remarkably lasted through World War II. The small rectangle below the engineer's window was a cab vent, later removed.

Jerry A. Pinkepank collection



ing photo. In the table of E5 production, Colorado & Southern 9950A-B and Fort Worth & Denver 9980A-B were delivered new to those subsidiaries for use on the *Texas Zephyr*, which began operation Aug. 23, 1940. The 9909 was built to power the *Silver Streak Zephyr*, which began operation April 15, 1940, between Kansas City and Lincoln via Council Bluffs and Omaha. Significantly, on this run this train replaced the first *Zephyr*, 9900, the *Pioneer Zephyr*.

It was 9900 that had been the unit in which the engineer was killed in an October 1939 grade-crossing collision, leading to an agreement between the Burlington and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers that CB&Q would in the future acquire locomotives with the superior protection such as offered by the "bulldog" snout. E5 A-B sets upon delivery powered the *Denver Zephyr*, replacing the 1936 shovel nose originals. E5s also powered the *Twin Zephyrs* replacing the 1936 shovelnoses when the trains were re-equipped in 1952. 1

Colorado & Southern E5 9952-A handles train 1 at Pueblo on Feb. 22, 1966. It was built in February 1940 as 9911-A, the *Silver Pilot*, and now resides at the Illinois Railway Museum. Krambles-Peterson Archive



THE E5s

E5A

- 9909** *Silver Bullet* March 1940, to C&S 9953 1955
- 9910-A** *Silver Speed* February 1940, to C&S 9951-A 1955
- 9911-A** *Silver Pilot* February 1940, to C&S 9952-A 1955 (briefly FW&D 9980-A in 1955, to Illinois Railway Museum)
- 9912-A** *Silver Meteor* April 1940
- 9913-A** *Silver Wings* October 1940 to C&S 9954-A 1957
- 9914-A** *Silver Arrow* June 1941 to C&S 9955-A 1961
- 9914-B** *Silver Swift* June 1941
- 9915-A** *Silver Carrier* June 1941
- 9915-B** *Silver Clipper* June 1941
- C&S 9950-A** *Silver Racer* March 1940
- FW&D 9980-A** *Silver Chief* March 1940

E5B

- 9910-B** *Silver Power* February 1940
- 9911-B** *Silver Mate* February 1940, to C&S 9952-B 1955 (briefly FW&D 9982-B 1955, to C&S 9952-B 1955)
- 9912-B** *Silver Comet* April 1940
- C&S 9950-B** *Silver Steed* February 1940
- FW&D 9980-B** *Silver Warrior* March 1940



E5 No. 9912-A leads the Burlington's *Morning Zephyr* out of Chicago Union Station under a faint cloud of smoke in 1958. Dan A. Pope collection

Southern's Silersides coal gondolas

These distinctive freight haulers revolutionized car construction

BY JEFF WILSON

The Southern Railway's "Silersides" coal gondolas — named for their aluminum bodies that gave them a bright silver appearance when new — were radical in design and innovative in multiple ways when introduced in 1960. They represented the first large-scale order for aluminum freight cars, and they were purchased for one of railroading's first true unit-train operations.

Aluminum freight cars had been built since the 1940s, but on a small-scale, experimental basis. The 750 Silersides cars, built in 1960 by Pullman-Standard, were specifically built to haul coal from mines directly to large power plants. The cars' aluminum bodies had vertical exterior side posts, interior cross and diagonal bracing, and horizontal end bars for strength. The underframes were steel, and they rode on

roller-bearing trucks — another feature still rare on freight cars of the era.

These were 100-ton capacity cars, nominally 50 feet long, stood 11 feet, 7 inches above the rails, and had an interior capacity of 3,620 cubic feet.

The biggest advantage of aluminum construction is lighter car weight. Each Silersides car weighed 47,300 pounds — a little more than a ton less than a smaller steel three-bay 70-ton hopper (which weighed about 49,800 pounds) and about five tons less than a new 100-ton steel hopper (about 58,500 pounds). This lower dead (tare) weight adds up significantly over a full train of cars. A 100-car train of Silersides cars weighed 500 tons less than a train of conventional hoppers, resulting in fuel savings and allowing cars and trains to carry more coal.

The cars were unpainted, with red lettering applied directly atop the aluminum finish. The original silver color oxidized and faded quickly — note the dull gray cast of the three-year-old car No. 1111. After several years of service, the lettering was difficult to read on most cars.

UNIT TRAIN SERVICE

A key innovation was that the Silersides gondolas were the first cars specifically ordered for unit-train service, which by the end of the 1960s would become common for the new, large power plants entering service.

Railroads had long operated solid trains of coal cars, but a unit train differs in that all cars travel under a single waybill from shipper to receiver. The Southern became an innovator as one of the first rail-



roads to implement unit train operations.

In the late 1950s, the Southern Electric Generating Co. (SEGCO; not related to the Southern Railway) was building its new coal-fired Ernest C. Gaston power plant near Wilsonville, Ala., which would open in 1960. It needed to get about 10,000 tons of coal daily to the plant from mines it owned near Parrish and Maylene, Ala., about 130 miles to the farthest mine.

SEGCO had been pondering building a coal-slurry pipeline to feed the power plant. It was the start of a brief period where slurry pipelines were in vogue, and the first successful one had just begun operations in Ohio in 1958.

The Southern wanted to get the contract for the coal haul, but knew it had to be more efficient than its current equipment and operations allowed. The Silversides cars were the key to this, with their light weight, larger capacity, and roller bearings, coupled with the unit-train concept. They allowed Southern to provide the service more cheaply than had it used 70- or 100-ton steel hopper cars operated conventionally.

Typical operations had a train of 75 loaded cars leaving the Parrish mine and heading through Birmingham (where, unlike standard freight trains, no switching or yard sorting was needed), then pausing at Maylene to add another 25



The first car of the series, No. 1000, poses for its builder's photo in 1960. The 750 cars were originally numbered 1000-1749; Norfolk Southern renumbered the remaining cars to the 11000-11749 series in the late 1980s. Pullman-Standard, Jeff Wilson collection

loaded cars. The train then proceeded to the power plant at Wilsonville. Multiple trains were in operation, so while a train was moving to the plant, cars there were being unloaded, empties were on their way back to the mines, and mines were loading cars and assembling new trains.

Upon arrival at the power plant, cars were placed in a receiving yard, where a switcher moved the cars one at a time to a rotary dumper — standard practice at the time, before rotary couplers allowed trains to be unloaded without uncoupling. The plant could unload about 1,400 tons of coal (about 14 cars) per hour.

SILVERSIDES' LEGACY

The cars were successful, but there were some teething problems. The combination of lightweight bodies, heavy loads, and comparatively short wheelbases caused the cars to sometimes rock excessively side-to-side. This was exacerbated at certain speeds, especially on jointed rail. Jerry Sullivan, a professional engineer with the Southern at the time, reported that during testing he and a fellow engineer saw wheels elevating a couple of inches above the rails as the cars rocked. Harmonic vibrations caused this — especially at slow speeds — due to the car truck center-to-center distance nearly matching the 39-foot lengths of rail on jointed track.

The rocking was blamed for a February 1968 coal-train derailment at Glenita, Va., involving 11 cars and 3 mid-train SD35 “slaves”; fortunately, there were no injuries [see “Calamity at Galena,” Spring 2016].

The solution was modifying the trucks by adding center-plate extension pads (giving the cars a larger riding surface above the trucks) and adding snubbers to the trucks’ spring packages. These are hard rubber cylinders that aided the other truck springs in returning to position without repeated rocking — much like shock absorbers on a vehicle. Upgrading the track to welded rail also helped.

As unit-train operations expanded in the 1960s, the Silversides cars found themselves traveling on other parts of the Southern system. Rotary couplers soon became the norm for power plant service, starting with an order of Thrall-built steel gons for Commonwealth Edison in 1964. As the Silversides cars aged, their lack of rotary couplers restricted their later use to specific customers.

In spite of that, the cars enjoyed long service lives. Of the 750 built, 704 were still in service in 2001, having been re-lettered and renumbered from their original 1000-series to 11000 series for new owner Norfolk Southern. They were retired shortly thereafter, after 40 years of hard service hauling coal as designed. ■



No. 1386 sits loaded at the end of a cut of cars near a loadout, visible at left. Classic Trains collection

Silver Streamliners

Stainless steel has offered nearly a century of resilience and beauty

Prior to the time of the streamliners, North American passenger trains were not particularly colorful. Most sleeping cars were Pullman green, although there were exceptions; both the Pennsylvania and Canadian Pacific used shades of red on their passenger equipment, for example.

With the arrival of streamlined lightweight equipment as of the late 1930s, a rainbow of hues began to appear. Examples include the exotic scheme of the original *City of Miami*, the blue and

cream of Missouri Pacific's *Eagles*, the Milwaukee Road's maroon-and-orange *Hiawathas*, alongside regional competitor Chicago & North Western's green-and-yellow *400s*.

So, if people knowledgeable about the era of the streamlined passenger train on this continent were asked to associate a predominant color with this type of equipment, what would be the proper answer? I'll assert the correct choice is silver, and that a single car manufactur-

er, the Edward G. Budd enterprise of Philadelphia, essentially would be the responsible entity.

Widely acknowledged as the first two entries in this field of streamlined train are Union Pacific's M-10000 "Streamliner," built by Pullman-Standard, and Burlington's *Zephyr 9900*, built by Budd. The M-10000 later ran as the *City of Salina* prior to being scrapped during World War II. It boasted a brown-and-yellow exterior paint scheme, introducing the



“Armour yellow” that still adorns Union Pacific equipment today.

The other new entrant, the Burlington’s *Zephyr 9900*, also known as the *Pioneer Zephyr*, was delivered by the Budd Co. in stainless steel sans paint and would be nicknamed “The Silver Streak.” The essential message was that the unadorned silver structure featured low maintenance, as well as announced itself as up-to-the minute modern due to its shiny silver appearance. A similar trainset was delivered to the Boston & Maine Railroad, where it ran originally as the *Minute Man* between Boston and Portland, Maine.

Subsequently, Budd began to build “conventional,” individual-car trains, with the Burlington being an early and

large customer. These trains included the original *Denver Zephyr*, between Chicago and the train’s namesake, as well as the second set of *Twin Zephyrs* between the Windy City and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In the East, the Reading Co. ordered a unique five-car consist for service between Philadelphia and New York City (served via Jersey City, across the Hudson River from Manhattan) consisting of a mid-train diner and a coach and observation car on each end (which obviated the need to turn the equipment); this would prove to be the Reading’s only foray into lightweight streamlined equipment.

Other Budd streamliners that predated World War II included Santa Fe’s stunning *Super Chief* (initially only a single set of cars), as well as a trio of trains focused on the Florida market. These comprised the Atlantic Coast Line-sponsored *Champion*, the competing Seaboard Air Line’s *Silver Meteor* (see page 20) in the New York-Florida market, and the *South Wind* between Chicago and the Sunshine State. The East Coast competitors were clad in shot-welded stainless, while the *Wind*, a protégé of the Pennsy, appeared in that road’s Tuscan red.

Finally, New York Central’s *Empire State Express* was converted to the new,

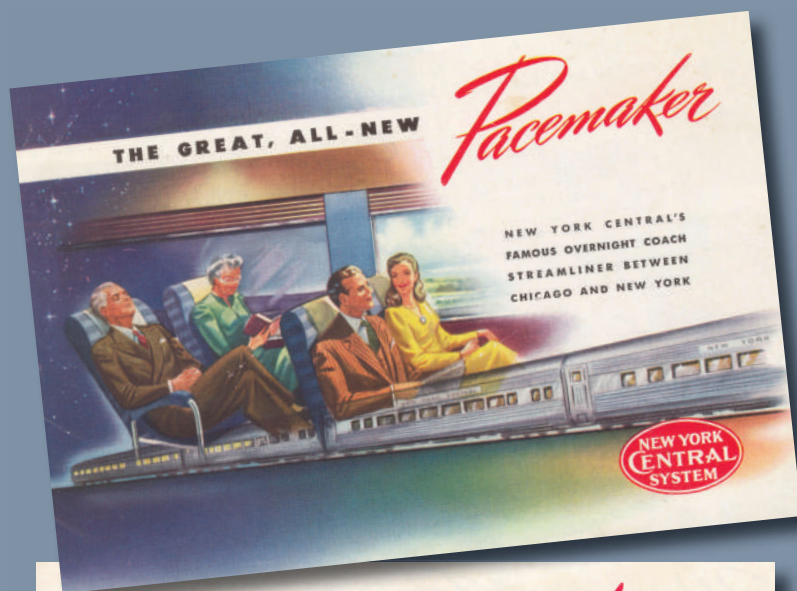
Eastbound VIA Rail *Canadian*, train No. 2, at Jasper, Alberta, in July 1992. George W. Hamlin



Painted stainless steel passenger equipment appeared on the Milwaukee Road at Chicago in April 1971, a legacy of the road’s collaboration with Union Pacific. George W. Hamlin



An brochure for early Budd Co. stainless streamliners on the Burlington Route. George W. Hamlin collection



A brochure highlights the New York Central's *Pacemaker*. The train utilized Budd-built stainless equipment, which also appeared on the *New England States*, *Ohio State Limited*, and *Southwestern*. George W. Hamlin collection

shiny Budd lightweight equipment and inaugurated on that infamous day in 1941 when the U.S. was thrust into World War II.

As the war wound down, the railroads ordered monumental amounts of new streamlined passenger equipment with the belief that the wartime traffic boom would continue, but this eventually proved to be a false hope. Budd and its stainless-steel cars benefited significantly from this euphoria.

The NYC, for example, ordered extensively from Budd and Pullman-Standard (and modestly from American Car & Foundry). The railroad intended that some of its streamliners, including the all-coach *Pacemaker*, as well as the *New*

England States, *Ohio State Limited*, and *Southwestern*, would utilize Budd stainless equipment. Others, including the *20th Century Limited*, *Commodore Vanderbilt*, and *Detroit*, would consist of Pullman-Standard smooth-side cars painted in two-tone gray.

By the postwar period, the initial all-coach streamliners to Florida had sleeping cars added. Enamored of its association with stainless equipment, the Seaboard extended the *Silver Meteor*'s influence, spawning both the *Silver Star* and *Silver Comet*, the latter operating between the Northeast and Birmingham via Atlanta.

While Budd's passenger cars were constructed entirely out of stainless steel

from a structural standpoint, some railroads elected to paint their exteriors in their company colors. The Pennsylvania Railroad, for example, had a fleet of 21-roomette sleepers, some dining cars (both standard/single and twin unit), and a few coaches built by Budd, all garbed in the PRR's standard Tuscan red.

Union Pacific followed a similar paradigm, using Armour yellow for its "Pacific" series of 10-roomette 6-double bedroom Budd-built sleeping cars. Interestingly, in order to compete with the CB&Q's installation in 1956 of "Slumbercoaches" on the newly reequipped *Denver Zephyr*, the UP leased a pair of those Pennsy 21-roomette sleepers to meet this competition; both of these cars were repainted in yellow for what turned out to be a relatively short-lived assignment.

When both Great Northern and the Northern Pacific added domes to their flagship Chicago-Pacific Northwest trains in the mid-1950s, Budd supplied the equipment, again painted to match the colorful smooth-sided cars that made up the vast majority of these trains' consists. The NP later also acquired new Budd diners in the late 1950s, which also wore the Raymond Loewy-designed two-tone green paint scheme.

A few railroads that had only a modest association with Budd streamliners also elected to retain the "house" paint scheme in lieu of unpainted stainless. Examples included Missouri Pacific's fleet of *Eagles*, as well as a pair of diners and tavern observation cars for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western's *Phoebe Snow*; these four cars were the Lackawanna's only Budd products.

A hybrid form of decoration utilized by several Budd passenger car operators was to paint only the cars' letterboards, leaving the rest of the exterior in natural metal. The Southern Pacific's *Sunset Limited* and Pennsy's *Congressional* and *Senator* trainsets (the latter in conjunction with the New Haven) used different shades of red to good effect in this manner.

As passenger trains in the U.S. declined during the 1950s, some roads that had not purchased dome cars acquired them via merger, an example being the Norfolk & Western, which added them via its 1964 acquisition of the Wabash. In this case, the surviving railroad also adopted the paint scheme of the cars' original owner.

The Illinois Central bought several dome coaches from the Missouri Pacific and repainted them into IC's iconic chocolate brown-and-orange passenger scheme. Interestingly, the IC had leased

Northern Pacific dome sleepers for several winter-seasons for its *City of Miami* train; during this period these cars were repainted twice a year so as not to mar the aesthetics of the trains they were serving.

In addition to long-haul intercity services, Budd's silver stainless look also made its way into shorter, smaller markets via the company's Rail Diesel Car. This included the rule-proving exception of the Western Pacific's use of this equipment on its long-haul trek between Salt Lake City and Oakland, Calif., operating as the *Zephyrette*.

Budd stainless steel equipment also provided electrified commuter equipment for use in the Philadelphia region (see page 30). Not surprisingly, they were termed "Silverliners," and this nomenclature has survived the Budd Co.'s exit from the railroad passenger-car business.

In retrospect, the Burlington Route

embraced the silver passenger cars to the greatest degree of any of Budd's customers. All the road's streamlined passenger-carrying cars that were acquired new came from Budd and wore their unadorned silver stainless-steel livery throughout their time with the railroad.

In addition, all the Q's streamline-era passenger cars bore both numbers, as was standard, and formal names. Only one prefix was used, for all types; you probably won't be surprised to know that word was "Silver." The general public probably associated the word "Zephyr" with the railroad most closely, but where the metal met the rail, the shiny Budd streamliners prevailed exclusively.

In truth, you couldn't have a Burlington intercity passenger train in the postwar era without cars that were both silver and named for the shiny metal. In the mid-1960s, the railroad acquired some smooth-

side coaches from the Chicago & North Western that were Pullman-Standard products; they were painted silver, but didn't carry names of any sort (which probably relieved someone in the Burlington's passenger department of the task of forming even more two-part word association exercises beginning with "silver").

Finally, while relatively late to the game, Canadian Pacific's monumental 1955 order to streamline its transcontinental passenger service with Budd products has proven to be the last stalwart, carrying on to this day under the VIA Rail banner. These cars are the sole survivors of the Budd postwar stainless-steel car extravaganza still performing a service with any resemblance to their original purpose.

The paint on their letterboards morphed from the initial maroon to "Action Red" while still at CP; following VIA's takeover of Canadian intercity passenger services, this became blue. And keeping the Budd/stainless tradition in mind, it was only natural that VIA chose to market this for several years as "Silver and Blue" service. ■

In truth, you couldn't have a Burlington intercity passenger train in the postwar era without cars that were both silver and named for the shiny metal.

VIA Rail train 2, the *Canadian*, operates into the sunrise east of Yarbo, Saskatchewan, on Feb. 26, 2002, highlighting the cars' durable stainless steel construction. George W. Hamlin



Archive Treasures

A full-page photograph of a Union Pacific streamliner train traveling from left to right. The train consists of several yellow and orange passenger cars. It is positioned in the lower third of the frame, passing in front of a massive, craggy rock formation that dominates the middle ground. The sky above is a deep blue with large, white, fluffy clouds. The foreground is a grassy hillside with some small trees and utility poles.

A Union Pacific streamliner sails past the rocks of Dale Junction, Wyoming, on a bright day near the continental divide in the late 1950s. Photographer Stan Kistler was an early and creative adopter of Kodachrome for color photography, learning its strengths and limitations to get the most out of it in his dramatic depictions of western railroading.

BY SCOTT LOTHES // Photos from Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS OF CARING FOR RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY

// WHAT I LOVE AND SOMETIMES
HATE ABOUT RUNNING AN ARCHIVE



No one told me about one of the greatest occupational hazards of working for the Center for Railroad Photography & Art. The near-constant exposure to great railroad imagery has changed — in some cases, profoundly — my own views on photography. Our in-house collections currently number about half a million images (with commitments for that many more to come), and while our archivists do the heavy lifting of processing them, I've still seen more than half of our holdings. I've also seen tens of thousands more photographs through our conferences, online programs, publications, and awards.

While seeing so much imagery that I love is on the one hand an incredible benefit of my job, it's not without its potential drawbacks. I witness firsthand the time and effort it takes to process each photograph — that's the term archivists use to describe everything they do to preserve an image. As photographers, we tend to think primarily of scanning or digitization, but that step typically comes after archival processing, which can include rehousing the photograph into an archival-safe container, organizing or arranging it to fit the overall collection and our institutional standards, and transcribing its metadata and sometimes doing additional research to add to them. Digitization is part of providing access, which can also include posting the image to our online database (with appropriate subject-tagging) so that others can find it. Now, when I'm out shooting, I often pause to ask myself whether the photograph I'm about to take is really going to be worth all that future effort.

This broad exposure to railroad photography has also given me a much wider perspective on our field, something more akin to the view of our craft from 30,000 feet. I see how certain subjects and locations have called to photographers like sirens, and how they show up in our collections again and again. As but one example: while preparing our 2023 book, *Rio Grande Steam Finale*, we surveyed all our collections for photographs of the Rio Grande narrow gauge in the late 1950s and 1960s. We found more than 5,000 images — an average of more than 17 photographs per mile of track. And that total doesn't include later imagery of the Durango & Silverton and Cumbres & Toltec heritage railroads — which also numbers in the thousands.

As photographers, we have some sense of this, especially when we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with 50 of our friends in a photo line for a steam excursion. We know we're all mostly taking the same shot and that the universe may not need 50 versions of it, but we all trip our shutters anyway, because we enjoy the shared pursuit, and we each want our own personal memento. Those are fine reasons for making photographs, but they aren't necessarily justification for archiving them.

As a result of working at the CRP&A, I'm even less able to enjoy railroad photography as a casual pursuit than before I started here. Good railroad photography usually requires effort and intentionality, and with so many railroad photographs already in



Lehigh Valley K-5 Pacific 2102 stands at the coaling tower in Newark, N.J., on June 11, 1939, just out of the shops with streamlining by Otto Kuhler for service on the new passenger train *The John Wilkes*. Photographer Donald W. Furler, 21 at the time, made this portrait with his massive 8x10 view camera; 85 years later, its page-sized negatives retain tremendous clarity and detail. It was rare for Furler to include workers in his engine portraits; the man here wears a tie under his coveralls and looks proud of his company's new train.

Right: Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range 2-8-8-4 Yellowstone 222 draws quite a crowd during an excursion in northern Minnesota's iron ore country on July 3, 1960. John Gruber joined a few other enthusiasts who climbed on top of a boxcar for an overview. While many railroad photographers sought unobstructed views of the locomotives during steam excursions, Gruber intentionally included people to capture the excitement surrounding these events.



the world, I see no reason to take the shot—or even to go out in the first place — if I don't have a plan to produce something that might be meaningful. In other words, I must work harder to continue enjoying this. That might be an oxymoron, but it doesn't keep me from continuing to try. I just think about it a lot more before I go out, and I try to enjoy other pursuits when I don't have any great ideas for photographs.

Classic Trains is celebrating 25 years, and I've been taking my own railroad photographs for just slightly longer. I've been sifting through the Center's collections for 17 years now, and with that perspective, I can offer a little of what I love and sometimes hate about looking back through other photographers' life's work.

I love that people are willing to trust us with their life's photographic work, and I love the window into a person's life that looking through their complete collection of photography provides. For people we've never met, we feel like we get to know a certain part of them in an incredibly intimate way by caring for their photography. Even for people I thought I knew well; I've learned exponentially more about them by seeing so much of their photographic work. We learn about the creator, and about the people, places, times, and railroads that were important to them. It's an incredible window to those parts of the world — and an incredible privilege to be able to peer so deeply into it. I hate that we can't do this for every one of the world's railroad photographers. Depending on its size, going through a photography collection takes months or often years, and even with all our tremendous organizational growth, we simply don't have that much time.

I love photographers who have devoted a lot of their efforts to a few places that they came to know exceptionally well. Their work is almost always better than the hit-and-run shots of photographers who made only one visit or a few short visits to a given place. Going through some of our collections, I've groaned audibly when I reached a batch of vacation photos — and then breathed a sigh of relief when I got through them and returned to "home-turf" photography. I'd be a hypocrite to dismiss travel photography, though. What I truly love are photographers who make the effort to learn as much about their subjects as possible, and then devote considerable time to pursuing those subjects, whether they're located down the street or halfway around the world.

I also love photographers who have ventured to places where few or no other photographers were going at the time. They may have had to miss out on some other popular subjects that everyone else was shooting, but they've given us images of times and places that no one else can. That's just as true whether it meant difficult international travel to countries no one else dared to visit, or stalking the lowly switch job across town that no one else bothered to shoot.

I love photographers who found ways to stretch their adolescent or young adult budgets to buy the very best gear they could possibly afford, and then to

Right: Passengers and families ride on flatcars and walk alongside a Ferrovía Oriental S. A. mixed train en route from Puerto Quijarro to Roboré, Bolivia, on Sept. 12, 1995. Henry Posner III calls himself a "photographer of last resort," as he frequently was the only person with a decent camera (or any camera at all) in many of the places he traveled. Those have ranged from forlorn Conrail industrial spurs in the Northeast to many railways in the developing world. His photography frequently provides glimpses of railroading and its effects and challenges in places no one else ventured or documented.

Below: Two Ann Arbor RS2s lead a freight train north past the depot in Durand, Mich., about to pound the diamonds with the Grand Trunk Western on April 10, 1982. Photographer John Bjorklund was a master of the Kodachrome era of railroad photography as well as an exemplar of paying attention to the local scene. His 55,000 slides cover much of the continent, and much of his strongest work falls within a couple hundred miles of Detroit.





find the time to use it frequently. I'm nearly brought to tears of mourning sometimes by seeing incredible, unrepeatably scenes in a collection's early work, rendered blurry by an inferior combination of camera, lens, and film. And if you want to join that 50-person photo line and increase the odds that yours will be the most valuable image for preservation, be the person shooting it with the best gear.

I hate when photographers took a posterity view of a great scene without a train in it and then never managed to get the shot with the train. It breaks my heart to find these might-have-been images in our collections. I'm so disappointed when photographers framed a scene perfectly in advance and then got so excited as the train approached that their aim drifted, and they ended up missing the "money" shot. Even though I rarely use one myself these days, I love when photographers lock down their cameras on tripods, even in full sunlight, to ensure their framing is perfect when the train comes.

I often hate the 50mm lens, and I sometimes even hate Kodachrome. In any given image format, the focal length that produces a "normal" perspective is the diagonal distance of the film or sensor size. For 135-format film (aka 35mm), whose image dimensions are 24x36mm, the diagonal is 42.4mm, which would be the focal length of a truly "normal" lens. The 50mm focal length is slightly long — and the 35mm focal length is just as close to the true "normal" as 50mm is. Yet we consider the 50 to be "normal" and the 35 to be "wide." In so many of the photographs in our collections, the contextual details along their peripheries are just as interesting to me as the subjects in their centers. I can only dream of how much more context many of our images would contain if only a 42mm or (better still) 35mm lens had been adopted as the "standard" of the 135-film format.

As for Kodachrome, it's certainly the most stable of early color films and utterly gorgeous when the conditions were just right. But it was also unforgiving and deeply limiting with its slower speeds and narrower exposure latitude. I hate that so many talented black-and-white photographers made a whole-sale switch to color slides at some point in their careers. And I hate that so many photographers who started shooting after about 1960 or so never learned the fundamentals of black-and-white photography. We all know how good a Kodachrome slide can look when it was shot in perfect sunlight. But trains run in all kinds of weather and at all times of day, and there can be subtle beauty in a black-and-white negative from a drab day that even the best color slide film could never match.

I love photographers who honed their craft, who took the time to understand exactly what their gear could do, how to obtain consistently high-quality results, and how to coax the absolute most out of any situation they encountered. I also love photographers who were willing to experiment, who tried different cameras, lenses, focal lengths, flashes, films, developers, papers, perspectives, and just about anything else that might lead to new and unusual re-



Top: Baltimore & Ohio's main line from Chicago stretches to the eastern horizon across the flatlands of northwest Ohio at Holgate, where HG Tower guards a crossing with the Nickel Plate on Aug. 21, 1957. Above: B&O track winds through North Vernon, Ind., here looking north from the Louisville Subdivision, on Aug. 12, 1957. David Mainey made these photographs when he was with the B&O's engineering training program. Many of his photographs focus on railroading's infrastructure with artful compositions that provide compelling views of what these places once looked like.

Right: Several Nickel Plate Road Mikados found second lives in Mexico, and two of them charged up the grade at Zacatecas and into the setting sun in this Ted Rose photograph from summer 1961, the second of two summers he spent traveling and photographing in Mexico. Steam continued operating in regular service there into the late 1960s, nearly a decade longer than it lasted in the U.S. and Canada. Many American photographers ventured south to see North America's last great steam show.





sults. Not all these experiments worked, but when they did, they helped all of us learn to see railroads — and the rest of the world — in different ways.

I love photographers who truly explored the railroad environment, who considered not only the locomotives and trains, but also the people, infrastructure, other equipment, and surrounding landscapes. We all love the trains, but the railroad is so much more than them. Having good pictures of everything else enhances our understanding of railroad history and expands our storytelling possibilities.

I love photographers who prioritized artfulness and emotional content over details and documentation. We need — and have — many outstanding representational views of trains, equipment, and other scenes. But we all love railroading because it makes us feel something, and I'm endlessly inspired by the photographers who have used their cameras to explore, visually, some of the feelings that railroading can elicit.

I love photographers who have cared for their own collections, who have taken the time to store, label, organize, edit, and otherwise preserve their work — in addition to taking the time to create it in the first place. The photographer is almost always the single person most capable of labeling, culling, and otherwise caring for their own work — and usually the single person with the greatest incentive to do so. As the number of images in our care at the CRP&A marches upwards through ever higher six-figure totals and into seven figures, photographers who truly take ownership of preserving their collections before turning them over to us — or to any other archive — can empower us to take on even more material.

Most of all, even though it can present great challenges for preservation, I love that so many great railroad images exist. Every good photograph from any point in the past that still exists today is a small miracle. The photographer had to be there in the first place, with both equipment and acumen sufficient for the occasion. The right things had to happen at the right time, whether it was a train going by, the light being right, the wind blowing a certain way, or static elements aligning into a visually compelling composition. The exposed film had to survive the trip home, get developed properly, and then be stored safely. It often had to endure moves and other major life events, and then eventually it had to be findable when it was needed for an article, book, presentation, exhibition, or just to fulfill a single interested person's curiosity.

These photographs show us what the world used to look like, how railroads used to run, and what certain people cared about enough to pursue with cameras — to the other side of town or the other side of the globe. Seeing each one of these images is incredible, and well worth the occupational hazard that being confronted with so many of them sometimes entails. I'm glad for the perspective I've gained on railroad photography by seeing it from 30,000 feet, but what I like best is when I can come back down to ground level and appreciate each individual image, on its own, for everything it must share. ■





A Southern Pacific freight roars through Shed 37 on Donner Pass in this “rush of engines” as portrayed by Richard Steinheimer on June 3, 1984. Throwing aside any expectations of sharp, well-lit, flare-free imagery, Steinheimer created photographs that do much more than document: they convey a sense of its feelings and emotions.



Riding the Silver Fleet, 1969-1970

My job on the Burlington was a classroom on passenger equipment // By Jerry A. Pinkepank



Burlington's *Morning Zephyr* waits at Chicago Union Station in the 1960s. Brian M. Schmidt collection

As an ex-New York Central refugee from the 1968 Penn Central merger, I joined the Industrial Engineering department of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy on March 3, 1969, exactly a year before the Burlington Northern merger became effective. I was assigned to installing a car grading/car distribution system intended to be carried forward on the BN.

Some of the work was in the yard office at Cicero yard in Chicago, training clerks in the use of the system, or in the yard with car inspectors for that purpose. There was a lot of time training rural station agents in the system as well, since they were supposed to grade cars when they were released empty. In grading cars, inspectors were charged with ensuring a car meet Interstate Commerce Commission classification requirements.

Much of my work required using a company automobile from Galesburg, Ill., or Lincoln, Neb.; to get to those cities from Chicago I rode trailing locomotives on fast freights. However, there was one occasion when work took me to Denver

and I had the privilege of riding a roomette on the *Denver Zephyr*.

The roomettes were not different from those I'd been accustomed to on the New York Central, and I didn't take notice of differences in decor or table spacing and seating, plates, or silverware compared to what I'd experienced on the *20th Century Limited*. Back in summer 1965 I'd put in 20,000 miles on the *Century* — on an employee pass — bouncing back and forth between my nominal home office at LaSalle Street Station in Chicago and many meetings in New York City, before I was drafted and entered the Army on Nov. 9, 1965.

The *Century* was discontinued before I returned to the NYC in October 1967, and in anticipation of the merger, my NYC pass was honored on the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Broadway Limited*, which by then was showing signs of neglect.

What really stood out in the *DZ* dining cars was the menu, with Rocky Mountain trout for dinner, as well as a

memorable waiter at breakfast time, who passed up and down the aisle smiling and saying, in a soothing voice, a drawn out litany: "Take ... your ... time, do not rush." The 4:45 p.m. Central Time departure from Chicago and 8:45 a.m. Mountain Time arrival in Denver (16 hours for 1,034 miles, a 64.63 mph average) in 1969 had been slightly extended by 1969 from the traditional 5 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. (15.5 hours, 66.7 mph average), and I think I know why.

When Amtrak took over on May 1, 1971, one of the conditions enforced by law was that train schedules would not be lengthened. In BN's Industrial Engineering department, we ended up with the task of using computer simulation to determine why Amtrak's successor to the *DZ*, the combined *DZ/California Zephyr*, could never arrive on time. The schedule was 2:45 p.m. Central to 7:15 a.m. Mountain, or 16.5 hours and a 62.67 mph average. The simulators showed that if the 79-mph speed limit prevailing on the route

The Way It Was

Burlington adopted a rule that at the conclusion of every round trip, the train would be run across the wheel truing machine at the 14th Street shop at the Q's Chicago coach yard. Instead of the normal conical wheel tread, the wheels were ground to cylindrical. I didn't pursue with him why, or how long the practice lasted, but Budd came up with a solution and the train then rode well with normal wheel contours.

My other experience with the silver fleet was on the *Twin Zephyrs* between Chicago and St. Paul. The trains ran between Chicago and Minneapolis but the prospective BN headquarters was at St. Paul. The timetable equipment columns called them *Twin Zephyrs* but the public timetables referred to them as the *Morning Zephyr* (each way) and the *Afternoon Zephyr* (each way); two sets of equipment making a round trip. Except in summer, the Chicago cars of Northern Pacific's *North Coast Limited* and Great Northern *Empire Builder* operated in the *Morning Zephyr* eastbound and the *Afternoon Zephyr* westbound.

In February 1970, with the March 3, 1970, effective date for the Burlington Northern merger looming and the transfer of the CB&Q industrial engineering department to St. Paul to occur then, I rode the *Afternoon Zephyr* to St. Paul on a Friday to look for a place to live. The rest of the week this train was scheduled out of Chicago at 1:15 p.m. but on Fridays and Sundays it went at 4:55 p.m. and reached St. Paul at 11:25, continuing to Minneapolis, arriving there at 11:50 p.m.

At the time, I was apartment hunting, my lease on my apartment in the Chicago suburb of Westmont — within walking-distance of CB&Q suburban service — was conveniently expiring in March. I'd only once previously ridden in a dome car. It was on the Baltimore & Ohio when, as a coach passenger on the *Capitol Limited*, a kind brakeman let me ride in the Pullman "Strata dome" through Pittsburgh in the 1 a.m. hour. It was June 1963; I was on my way to Washington, D.C., for a summer internship in the Justice Department and had taken the *Ambassador* from Detroit; the *Ambassador* was merged into the eastbound *Capitol* at Deshler, Ohio, at 9 p.m.

The brakeman just asked me not to sleep up there in the dome, so I returned to my coach seat after we left McKeesport at 2:22 a.m. I was familiar with Pittsburgh

because back in March 1962, future *Trains* Editor Dave Ingles and I, along with our friend Hank Goerke, had spent several days there. I knew it would be interesting to pass the many active steel mills at night. I had the dome to myself and enjoyed the experience.

But it was nothing like what I saw on that 1970 trip along the Mississippi on the Burlington. We came alongside the great river leaving Savanna, Ill., and followed it practically all the way to St. Paul. It was a moonlit night and the river was largely iced over, evident especially as we ran alongside Lake Pepin. The hills were covered with snow, and it was also interesting to pick out the prominent Maiden Rock on the Wisconsin side of Lake Pe-

pin. This was familiar territory to me because of our frequent visits to the area resulting from my parents having been born and raised in Menomonie, Wis. (60 miles east of St. Paul), and all our close relatives still living there.

None of those relatives drove, so it was a treat to take them on car rides through the surrounding scenic areas, with the Mississippi valley being high on the list. But we never saw the Mississippi from the train because Menomonie was reached via Chicago & North Western's *Twin Cities 400*. I don't remember anything of the return trip because it was made in a roomette on Burlington's overnight *Twin Cities-Chicago* train, The *Blackhawk*, discontinued in April 1970.

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Excerpts from a Burlington Route brochure on the *Denver Zephyr* highlight mountain scenery, Vista-Dome equipment, and the route traveled. Brian Solomon collection

MacTier Interlude

A chance encounter on a station platform // By Ira Silverman



The *Canadian* appears at Midhurst, Ontario, en route to Toronto in 1977. Two photos, Doug Fear

When railfans of the elderly persuasion gather, the subject of how railroaders befriended them when they were young inevitably comes up. Be they station agents, tower operators, or train crews there are many tales of how railroaders took extra time to educate young people in the ins and outs of railroading. Unfortunately, two of the three categories are extinct, and the smaller numbers of train crews are circumscribed by rules that don't distinguish between legitimate dangers and the next generation of industry leaders. I benefited from this same support, but I may be one of the few to have been blessed by the attention of a future railroad president.

While reading Douglas Fear's article in Spring 2022 on Canadian Pacific dispatchers I was shocked to see a picture of the relatively obscure Mactier, Ontario, station. In 1964 I had become enamored with the Canadian Pacific after riding the *Canadian* across Canada.

In August 1973 I was working my first full time rail job in the planning department of the Illinois Central. I decided to use my vacation time to ride the *Canadian* again to Revelstoke and spend a couple of days taking pictures of trains in the Selkirks. I flew from Chicago to Toronto and boarded my roomette at Union Station in the late afternoon. After dinner in the diner, I headed for the Skyline dome until we reached Mactier, the first crew change point north of Toronto, located on the edge of the Canadian Shield.

Arriving 10 minutes early, I detrained to stretch my legs. At the rear of the train was a heavyweight, wine-red office car. Trying to make conversation with the occupant who also had descended to station



This photo of a freight at Mactier triggered the author's memory about his August 1973 journey.

the platform I said, "a lot cooler than in Chicago today."

"Are you a railfan?" he replied.

"I plead guilty," I said. "But I do work for the Illinois Central."

After a short conversation he asked if I wanted to ride with him to Sudbury — a question akin to being asked if I wanted a check for a million dollars (Canadian, of course). On the car the attendant brought out a silver tray with coffee pots, cream, and cookies. As it darkened the tracks became illuminated from the track lights. The railroad twists and turns through the rocks of the Canadian shield and the car rocked through the curves.

We exchanged pleasantries about railroads. I told him about my plans, and he offered to give me a reference to the assistant superintendent in Revelstoke so I could ride the cab of the *Canadian* from Revelstoke to Banff. Finally, he asked, "do you need any operating timetables? Too soon we pulled into Sudbury and his car was cut off with the Park car from Mon-

treau placed on the tail end.

Now, to put an I.D. on my generous host, it was Bill Stinson, general manager of the operating region. Later, he rose to become the president of the Canadian Pacific empire.

Years later, my wife and I cruised to Alaska, of course on a CP *Princess* ship. We came back from Vancouver, and I wanted to stay at the Chateau Lake Louise. Unfortunately, the hotel was booked. I called his secretary and low and behold we got a room overlooking the lake and glacier complete with a bottle of wine!

A few years later I was going through Montreal and I called his office to see if he was available for a quick visit. At the appointed time I went to the indicated room. I walked down a long wood paneled hall. Lining the walls were floor to ceiling portraits of all the CP presidents. It wasn't clear if I was in Windsor Palace or Windsor Station. I hope that the pictures have found an appropriate place at CP's new headquarters in Calgary. ■

Saving *Silver Splendor*

Transitioning a CB&Q dome from California to the White Mountains

BY BRIAN SOLOMON // PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



The former Burlington dome was again on old home rails, pictured during a station stop at Galesburg, Ill., on the journey east to Chicago on Nov. 19, 2018.

I have a personal connection with a Budd-built Vista Dome. In November 2018, my old friend and President and co-owner of New Hampshire's Conway Scenic Railroad, Dave Swirk, called me, "Would you like to join me on a big adventure?" Before I realized what I was getting into, I said "Yes." The railroad had just bought a former Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Budd Vista dome, and Dave and his wife, Rhonda — co-owner of railroad — were flying to Los Angeles to collect the car and travel east across the country.

They hired me to accompany them and document the move. We arrived in L.A. on Nov. 15, and on the 17th, we met with the car's former owners who

had arranged the logistics for the car to travel east on Amtrak. They owned the car for 21 years, and would be joining us as far as Chicago on what was a bitter-sweet journey.

The car was built in 1956 for Burlington's plush *Denver Zephyr*. Originally named *Silver Buckle*, it had gone through a series of owners, and had spent a number of years out of service. The previous owners had restored the car, renaming it *Silver Splendor*. During restoration, they brought the car up to Amtrak's operating standards, including compatibility with 480-volt three-phase A.C. head end pow-

er and top speed of up to 110 mph. For more than a decade they operated the car on high-end Los Angeles-based excursions, largely on regularly scheduled Amtrak trains.

When Amtrak changed its policies and limited its accommodation of private cars in 2018, the business model was no longer practical. This change contributed to the decision to sell the car, which coincided with the Swirks' desire to expand Conway Scenic excursion business by adding more domes to its fleet. In the late 1990s, under previous owners Russ and Dot Seybold, Conway Scenic had bought

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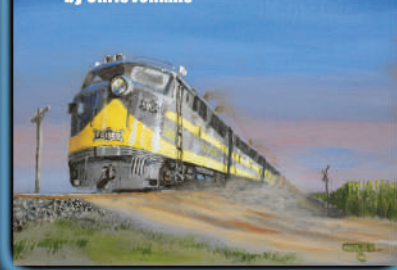
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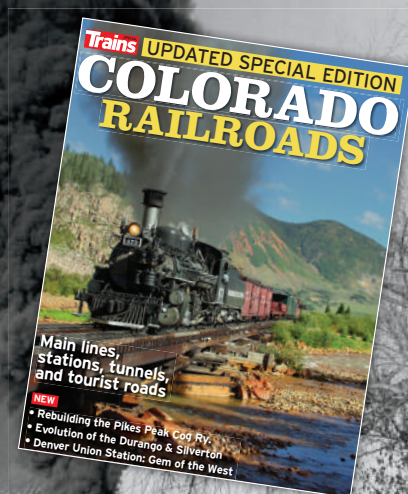
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The *Mountaineer* is seen at the Gateway in New Hampshire's Crawford Notch. Leading the train is 470 Club's former Boston & Maine F7 4266 and Conway Scenic 216, a former Norfolk & Western high-hood GP35. *Rhonda Lee* is often assigned to the west end of the *Mountaineer* consist in part because the car uses a different electrical system than the rest of the train.

and restored a former Great Northern Budd Dome, operated as the railroad's *Dorthea Mae*, and this had demonstrated the great value of a dome car in excursion service. Dome seats, despite commanding a premium fare, consistently sell out. The Swirks were attracted to *Silver Splendor's* streamlined grace, which fit perfectly with the railroad's desire to recreate the spirit of a 1950s streamliner experience condensed into a 4-5 hour round trip through the White Mountains. It could be placed into service quickly and begin earning revenue right away without the need for a drawn-out restoration.

At Los Angeles Union Station, *Silver Splendor* was coupled to the head-end of the *Southwest Chief*, which follows BNSF route to Chicago. The car had developed a loyal following during its years in California and our train was met with groups of fans at stations along the route. I enjoyed the rare opportunity to experience the former Santa Fe from the luxury of a Budd dome. Not only did the car provide me with an exclusive rolling panorama, but I enjoyed the car's excellent riding qualities.

During station stops, I had ample opportunity to make photos of the car on its transcontinental journey and talk to people along the way. Highlights of the trip over the Santa Fe were passing some of the last active semaphores in automatic block service in New Mexico on Glorieta Pass and east of Las Vegas.

At Galesburg, Ill., Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* crosses from the former Santa Fe route to the former Burlington, so from this point to Chicago Union Station, *Silver Splendor* was again riding on home rails that were historically the route of the *Denver Zephyr*. At Aurora, we joined the famous Burlington "Racetrack" for the last leg of the journey to Union Station. At Chicago, the car laid over for a night and a day and then continued its east-

ward journey at the back Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited*. We took the interval in Chicago to visit *Silver Splendor's* ancestor, Burlington's *Pioneer Zephyr*, which is beautifully restored at the Museum of Science & Industry. The trip over the former New York Central "Water Level Route" was uneventful, although I noted that we hit a top speed of 108 mph on Amtrak's high-speed track between Schenectady and Albany-Rensselaer station. At Albany we left the car, since this was as far as Amtrak could take it.

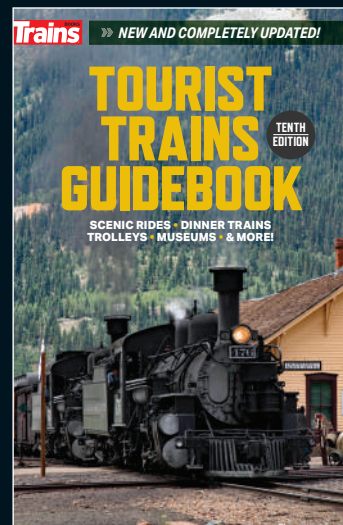
Later, the car continued its journey to North Conway on freight trains, which required circuitous routing via Worcester, Mass., Portland, Maine and Groveton, N.H., that required several months to complete, owing in part to the winter closure of the railroad over Crawford Notch.

For me, the trip with *Silver Splendor* opened a new chapter in my career. The



Silver Splendor met the sunrise, and a freight, on Nov. 18, 2018, on BNSF rails near Seligman, Ariz.

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We inspected the car at the Los Angeles coach yard before the car was attached to the head end of the *Southwest Chief* for the first leg of its transcontinental trip to New Hampshire.

following spring, I traveled to North Conway to write a story on the railroad for *Trains Magazine* and I quickly became part of the story. The Swirks hired me for the summer to help with promotion. As a result I was on the property when the new dome made its debut in excursion service. The car was renamed *Rhonda Lee* in honor of *Rhonda Swirk*, which followed a long standing Conway Scenic car-naming tradition. This included re-lettering the car, replacing Burlington with Conway Scenic. To maintain stylistic consistency of the historic vehicle, the same type face

employed by the Burlington was used for the new lettering. In June 2019, it entered service as a dining car on the railroad's Notch Train — as the Crawford Notch excursion was then known, and also worked as part of the railroad's dinner train. My seasonal employment at the railroad led to my appointment as manager of marketing in December 2019, a position I have held since.

My role at the railroad has been more involved than simply directing and coordinating the various marketing campaigns, and also includes product development, creation of the train schedules, and problem solving and refinement of operating documents, including the rule-book. Each time I boarded the car at North Conway, I thought back to my Transcon trip aboard it.

In 2020, we renamed the Crawford excursion the *Mountaineer*, which harks back to the traditional Boston & Maine/ Maine Central seasonal train that worked a portion of this route in the late 1930s and early 1940s (which for a few years employed the famous *Flying Yankee* Budd articulated set — a twin to the *Pioneer Zephyr*) while offering a name more likely to resonate with the general public. Since that time the *Rhonda Lee* has been a regular component of the *Mountaineer* consist, as well as working other prominent excursions, such as the seasonal Snow Train. In 2022, the railroad acquired a third Budd Vista Dome. Originally a Northern Pacific dome-sleeper that worked the *North Coast Limited*, this had been rebuilt for service on the Or-

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ford Express dinner train in Quebec. In summer 2024, the railroad became the new home for the *Flying Yankee* trainset, a move that coincided with the State of New Hampshire conveying ownership of the train to the non-profit Flying Yankee Association. Today, it is stored at Conway, N.H., pending a planned restoration.

Conway Scenic began winter excursions over Crawford Notch in November 2024, as a prelude to the railroad celebrating 150 years of rail service over Crawford Notch in 2025. This year the railroad plans for its most ambitious Crawford schedule since it assumed operation of the former Maine Central Mountain Division in the mid-1990s. In addition to a six-day per week *Mountaineer* schedule starting the end of June, the railroad plans to schedule up to three Crawford Notch runs daily during the peak autumn season. This will allow for expanded use of its dome cars, including *Rhonda Lee*, which remains one of its most popular cars.

Brian Solomon is the manager of marketing for Conway Scenic Railroad, he and his wife, Kris, live in Lancaster County, Pa.



The former *Silver Splendor* wears the name *Rhonda Lee* in honor of the Conway Scenic's co-owner. It is a regular on the road's *Mountaineer* train but also appears on others.

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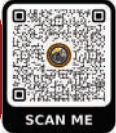
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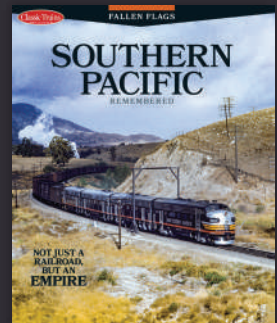
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When ‘The Bear’ made the cover

It's not often that maintenance-of-way people make it onto the covers of national publications, but a memorable exception was the April 1987 issue of *Trains*, featuring Jim Mahon, known to Southern Pacific employees and fans as “The Bear.” The year before, Mother Nature had conspired to whip up an angry Great Salt Lake and destroy significant parts of SP’s Lucin Cutoff across the top of the lake. To oversee repairs, SP dispatched Mahon, known best for his wintertime exploits keeping the railroad open over Donner Pass. This time, in Utah, Mahon and his crew worked their usual miracles, opening up the Cutoff in record time. Fortunately for *Trains* readers, photographer and writer Richard Steinheimer was there to record the project. Mahon died Dec. 9, 2024, at age 87, leaving a legacy of heroics. — *Kevin P. Keefe*

Two photos, Richard Steinheimer, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection



■ Check out the latest *Classic Trains* special issue: *Southern Pacific Remembered!* Read more about “The Bear” and other SP history in its 100 pages. [Shop.Trains.com](https://www.shoptrains.com)

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