

The **Shaughnessy** Files

Photographer Jim Shaughnessy
finds steam and diesel in Quebec,
Illinois, and New York State



In service to the *Royals*

Even in commuter service, Canadian Pacific's famous Hudsons received the best of care

By Jim Shaughnessy • Photos by the author



In September 1958, when the few steam locomotives still active in North America were generally grimy and rusty, a hostler at The Glen takes time to paint the gunmetal gray boiler jacket of a Royal Hudson.

Every steam locomotive possessed its own air of class. They all were regal, but only a select few—Canadian Pacific's semi-streamlined 4-6-4's—were Royal. I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with these great engines, and the men who cared for them.

CP's 65 Hudsons were designed by legendary Chief of Motive Power and Rolling Stock Henry Blaine Bowen. The first ones, H1a's 2800-2809 and H1b's 2810-2819 of 1929-30, were superb performers but conventional in appearance. However, the next batch, delivered in 1937 and mechanically similar to the earlier H1's, bore a distinctive, semi-streamlined look that became Bowen's trademark. In addition to their clean, uncluttered styling, these H1c's (Nos. 2820-2849) were finished in black, maroon, gunmetal gray, and gold trim. Nearly identical H1d's 2850-2859 came in 1938, followed by the final five, H1e's 2860-2864, in 1940.

As one of CP's newest passenger engines, in 1939 H1d 2850 was selected to power the Royal Train of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth across Canada. The 2850 wore a special livery for the assignment that included small crowns on each running-board skirt. In the wake of 2850's fine performance on the train, Bowen requested, and received, Royal permission to apply crowns to all 45 streamlined 4-6-4's, which became known as Royal Hudsons.

In the late 1950's, I made several trips to see Canadian steam operations. One of the last strongholds was CP's Montreal commuter service. With long-haul and intercity passenger trains increasingly in the hands of diesels, many of these local runs were powered by Hudsons, both standard and Royal. For the Royals, especially, this was quite a come-down from the *Dominion* and other limiteds. Nevertheless, these engines were well cared-for during their midday layovers at The Glen, CP's passenger engine terminal 2 miles west of Montreal's Windsor Station. I spent many satisfying hours witnessing the daily ritual of servicing the Royals.

H1c 2826 is just off a run from Ottawa, Ont., as she heads for the roundhouse at The Glen in January 1955. Copious clouds of steam in the air hint at the temperature: 5 degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

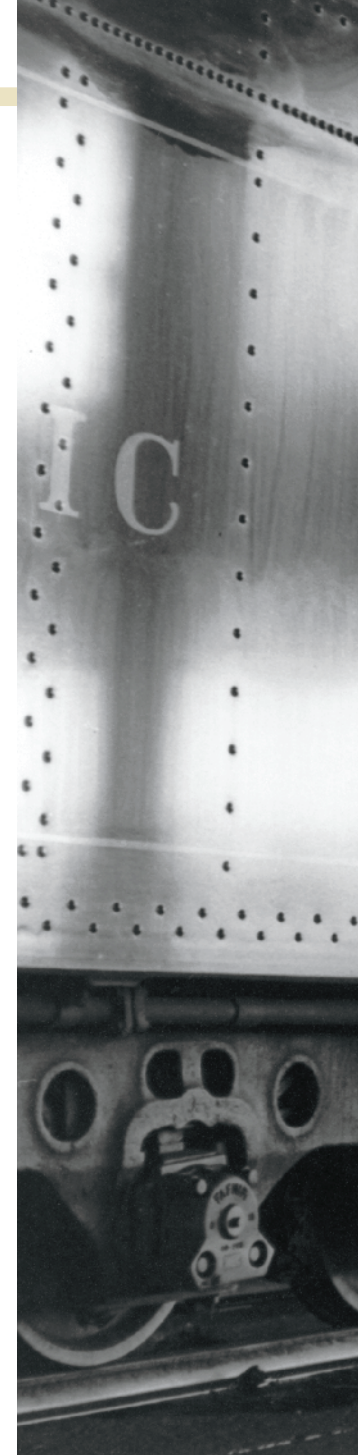




Enjoying a warmer day than the one she endured in the photo on the previous page, Royal Hudson 2826 rides the turntable at The Glen. On this date—April 27, 1957—she's working Montreal commuter trains.



Another April 27 view of No. 2826 shows a hostler moving her around The Glen. The big "steering wheel" is in fact the control for the engine's air-operated screw-type reverse, common on newer CP power.





Inside The Glen's roundhouse on September 3, 1958, H1d 2859 dozes between runs. The 1938 Montreal Locomotive Works product was the last of CP's 60 (20 standard, 40 Royal) coal-fired Hudsons; the 5 H1e oil-burners of 1940 brought the fleet to its final total of 65.



H1c 2820—the first of CP's Royal Hudson family—gets some maintenance attention on April 27, 1957. Three holes and a faint outline on her running-board skirt mark the location of a missing crown.



Three views of H1c 2828 at The Glen show some of the rituals of steam-locomotive servicing. Above, on April 27, 1957, a hostler gives the 4-6-4's running gear a good cleaning with scalding-hot water.

During the 2828's bath, another hostler gets up on the tender to top it off from the water crane. The engine has already been refueled, as evidenced by the high coal pile in her bunker, just barely visible.





Book features great photos

A 224-page album of Jim Shaughnessy's photographs, *The Call of Trains*, has just been published by W. W. Norton & Co. With text by Jeff Brouws, the book presents 170 of Jim's black-and-white photos, most from the 1950's and '60's era featured in our series "The Shaughnessy Files." Some pictures in this collection are old favorites, others rarely or never before published; all are beautifully reproduced.



Having finished oiling around, a road engineer climbs into the 2828's cab with his long-spouted oil can. Soon he'll start backing east to Windsor Station, where he'll pick up the afternoon train for Ottawa.

Pageant at Ashley

L&N diesels and Illinois Central steam staged a two-act small-town play in 1957

By **Jim Shaughnessy** • Photos by the author

The tiny town of Ashley was important, I'm sure, to the 600-some folks who lived in it, or worked there, but otherwise it was, like hundreds of other Midwestern hamlets, only a dot on the map in south-central Illinois. On the other hand, Ashley a half-century ago still had something that many other similar communities across America once had, but even by 1957 were long gone—an active railroad station.

In fact, Ashley had two: Illinois Central's and Louisville & Nashville's. On September 2 of that year, L&N's for a short time served as an outdoor stage where a scene from a theatrical pageant portraying America's past played out. The entire experience reminded me of Brigadoon, that legendary Scottish village that appeared for only one day every 100 years.

Ashley was where L&N's line linking St. Louis, Mo., Evansville, Ind., and Nashville, Tenn., crossed IC's busy "Main Line of Mid-America" running from Chicago south through the middle of the Prairie State to Cairo, then Memphis, Tenn., and eventually New Orleans. Clustered near the diamond crossing were an IC interlocking tower and the stations of both railroads.

I was on a long Labor Day weekend auto trip with Chicago-based friends John Pickett and Ray Buhrmaster. Our objective was to seek out the few remaining IC and Burlington Route steam locomotives still running in southern Illinois. We had just visited Centralia, where the CB&Q still oper-

ated some 2-8-2's to serve the surrounding district's coal mines and some big 2-10-4's to haul the coal trains north. After our interlude with the pictured IC 2-10-2 in Ashley, we would see more IC steam activity at Carbondale, Ill., and finally at IC's big shops and terminal at Paducah, Ky., before we returned north two days later.

It was mid-afternoon on Labor Day when, after leaving Centralia, we first had a brief encounter—an overture, if you will—at Irvington, a hamlet halfway to Ashley. Spotting a long, steam-powered southbound freight, we went over to see it, and found IC 2-10-2 2702





Star of the “pageant” was Illinois Central 2-10-2 2702, one of 69 among a series of 125 early-1920’s Lima engines rebuilt at Paducah shops. During the move to set out cars for Ashley customers (above), the brakeman waits for the engineer to move south of the switch so he can realign the points for the backup move into the spur.



“The curtain raised” on our Ashley interlude with the noisy arrival of L&N’s Nashville-St. Louis local train 92, a “maid of all work” (far left). After its short pause at Ashley’s picturesque depot, it rumbled off (left), and the mail handler hauled the wagons across the L&N track and then across the IC to his vehicle, setting the stage for “Act II.”



The “overture” to our Ashley “pageant” began south of Centralia, Ill., at Irvington, where we found the 2702 in a siding, waiting for a passenger train. Soon Illinois Central’s every-third-day streamliner *City of Miami* came slamming through behind a pair of E9’s (above). We then set up for an action shot of the 2702 (above right) before heading on down to Ashley.

“in the hole” for another train. This turned out to be the every-third-day streamliner *City of Miami*, train 53, due out of Centralia at 12:39 p.m.; it soon came slamming through with about seven cars behind a pair of E9’s.

We set up for a nice action shot of the freight south of Irvington, then went on to Ashley, where the 2-10-2 had been halted again, by the towerman, north of the L&N diamond. Again a passenger train was the reason, as the time was nearing for No. 92, L&N’s westbound Nashville-St. Louis local, to make its daily stop at 1:41 p.m.

It was then that the “curtain raised.” L&N’s depot at Ashley had all the elements of the classic rural American railroad station. A platform of creosoted boards, laid perpendicular to the single track, filled the area between the building and the rails. The one-story wooden building was painted gray, with white door and window trim, and had a raised platform area around the front and end of the freight-house portion of the depot. The roof extended out from the building, providing shelter outside the passenger and freight sections and overhung at each gable end to form an arch-like effect over an open area beneath, supported by a column at each corner. On the platform, two baggage wagons loaded with mailbags were spotted just about where the RPO car usually stopped. Farther down the platform, several passengers milled around. Two old gentlemen, apparently “regulars,” paced back and forth, chatting with the mail handler and each other.



Amidst the set-out moves by the IC 2-10-2 on its local, the towerman let an eastbound L&N freight behind two F7’s, which met No. 92 somewhere to the west, proceed through Ashley.



In a southward view from the Illinois Central freight house platform, the local's conductor and a brakeman swing aboard the 2-10-2 to ride south to the switch for the spur track.

Soon a headlight appeared to the east, accompanied by much horn-blowing for several grade crossings. Led by L&N FP7 610 and a Geep, the train clattered across the IC diamond and eased to a stop at the platform. No. 92 was a typical working local, with three baggage or mail storage cars, an RPO, and two coaches. The frenzy of activity was short-lived, and the train left toward St. Louis; it was carded to make 16 stops in the 165 miles between Evansville, Ind., and its terminus—one about every 10 miles! Once again, quiet settled over the scene as the two old guys strolled toward their cars and the mail handler hauled the wagons toward his waiting truck.

Then Act II of the pageant began. The 2-10-2 had cut the first two cars off

its train's front, a tank car and a reefer, and clanked south across the diamond to spot them for customers. The crew then picked up an empty Seaboard boxcar to go south. Before the towerman let the 2-10-2 return to its train, though, an eastbound L&N freight, held west of Ashley someplace to meet No. 92, rumbled through behind a pair of F7's.

After the L&N cleared, the IC 2-10-2 backed over the diamond with the one car toward its train up to the north. As the crew coupled up and made their brake test, the fireman bailed Illinois soft coal into the firebox to build boiler pressure for the impending departure.

With two blasts on his whistle, the

hogger opened the throttle and the big 2-10-2 started to move . . . slowly at first, but gathering speed with each revolution of the driving wheels. As the engine neared the diamond, the stack had cleared of the heavy smoke and sharp exhaust beats were increasing in volume and pace as the engineer got his train speed up to about 25 mph. The 10 drivers banged across the diamond, followed by a seemingly endless clatter of freight-car wheels.

As the side-door caboose faded into the distance to the south, a curtain of silence rang down over Ashley . . . for the moment at least, until the next act opened in a few hours. ■



Its work at Ashley done, IC 2702 gets its long train up to speed and heads south, ringing down the curtain on our short small-town pageant.



One foot on the platform, car 340's conductor talks to the motorman as mail and express are transferred at Fonda, where FJ&G met the NYC.

Mohawk Valley doodlebug

Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville's
1929 Brill gas-electric car
was for mail and express only

By Jim Shaughnessy

Photos by the author

Post Office Department contracts to carry mail kept many passenger trains running long after the number of travelers had dropped below the number of crewmen on board—or disappeared completely. One such instance prevailed in upstate New York's Mohawk River valley on the Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville Railroad. This steam-powered line opened in 1870 to serve a growing industrial and vacation community in the southern Adirondacks. It connected with what would become the New York Central's Water Level Route at Fonda, 26.5 miles west of Schenectady. A specialty industry in the region was leather tanning and garment manufacturing, hence the name of the line's headquarters city—Gloversville ["Part Steam Road, Part Interurban," page 34, Summer 2004 CLASSIC TRAINS].

By the turn of the 20th century, the FJ&G had evolved into a regional transportation system stretching east through Amsterdam to Schenectady. The company accomplished this expansion by absorbing several local electric trolley lines, building connecting trackage, and merging them into a single operation, separate from but under the same management as the steam division. In addition to the obvious passengers, the electric cars also carried mail and express.

By the late 1930's, the sun was setting on trolley operations all around the country, thanks to the proliferation of personal automobiles, commercial trucks, and better roads on which to operate them. On June 24, 1938, succumbing to the financial pressures of this social change, the FJ&G shut down its electric division, ending the trolley mail and express service over the 10 miles between Gloversville and Fonda. Buses assumed the remaining passenger traffic between the two towns—but not the mail and express business.

To retain the lucrative mail contract, the FJ&G shifted that traffic to the steam division. Economic prudence dictated efficiencies there as well, and the steam-hauled train that carried the mail was shortly replaced with a popular solution many railroads were employing at the time—the self propelled gas-electric car.

The J. G. Brill Co. of Philadelphia was quickly able to provide the FJ&G a 73-foot, 300 h.p. combination baggage-



NYC E8's bring a westbound into Fonda as FJ&G 340 stands at the station in December 1955.



Busy time at Fonda: Car 340 sits behind FJ&G's daily freight, which awaits clearance into NYC's yard; in the distance, steam shrouds a westbound train stopped on the NYC main line.

coach gas-electric car for \$13,776.51. This car, builder's No. 22828, was built in 1929 for the Chesapeake Beach Railway, which apparently had trouble paying for it. Brill repossessed the car and sold it to the Louisiana & Arkansas, but again it returned to Brill ownership. The car, numbered 340 by the FJ&G, had operating controls in the front and rear, as no turning facilities were conveniently available on its route. Also, since the FJ&G did not intend for the car to carry passengers, the seats in the coach section were removed and an

additional baggage door installed on each side. Anybody wanting to get to Johnstown or Gloversville from Fonda had to ride a bus. Steam locomotives and, later, Alco S2 diesels handled the carload freight traffic.

No. 340 made its first trip to Fonda on July 19, 1938, to receive mail and express delivered from NYC's dedicated mainline mail trains. The typical operation consisted of three round trips, six days a week, between Gloversville and Fonda. Deliveries to and from the villages of Mayfield and Northville to the



FJ&G's doodlebug trundles through bucolic countryside during one of its three daily runs over the 10 miles between Fonda and Gloversville.

north—once connected by rail until the building of the Sacandaga flood control reservoir starting in 1928—were transferred to trucks at Gloversville, along with the local dispatch. The operation was staffed with three employees: motorman, conductor, and express man. The term “motorman” instead of “engineer” is applicable here because the operation was considered a holdover from the trolley division. The employees from that side of the company “followed

the work,” and were represented by a different union than the men who had been on the steam division.

On March 28, 1946, FJ&G 340 was involved in a tragic accident. Owing to a misinterpretation of orders by the crews, it collided head-on with a freight train powered by S2 No. 20 near Sammons ville. The express man on No. 340 that day was crushed to death when a coffin being transported shifted with the impact and pinned him against the

wall. Repairs to the car cost \$3,084.05, and in the process three flat plates replaced the standard Brill rounded front end originally possessed by No. 340.

This gas-electric service continued for two decades, although on occasion the 340 would have mechanical failures and a truck would be summoned to make the round trip to Fonda. After the FJ&G purchased a new truck in 1958, the company shifted the express traffic to it, and 340 was sidelined to a back



track in the Gloversville yard. There it languished until June 1960, when it was sold to interests in the Winnipeg, Manitoba, area, but there is no record of it ever being operated in Canada.

The disappearance of the 340 from FJ&G rails, following the 1956 discontinuance of the bus-operated passenger service, was another ominous step toward the final demise of this unusual short line in the heart of New York State. Delaware Otsego Corp. took over the Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville in 1974, but shut it down 10 years later. ■



At Gloversville, car 340 rests between runs at FJ&G's general offices and freight house while Alco S2 diesel No. 21, just in with the freight from Fonda, switches cars in the yard.



Mail and express traffic for points north of Gloversville went by highway; at Gloversville, car 340 and an FJ&G truck exchange shipments not long before trucks took over altogether.