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This Issue



On our cover
Grand Trunk train 493
has stopped at Island
Pond, Vt., in July 1964 to
change crews. Roger Cook

Features

COVER STORY

20 **Vermont Time Machine**

ROGER COOK

A visit to Island Pond and the Grand Trunk Railway

28 **It's a Fine Pickle You've Gotten Us Into!**

STEVE LASHER

Adventures of a Rock Island yard clerk

36 **Greetings From Beautiful Murphy Dome**

DAVID LUSTIG

There weren't many trains in Alaska, but I managed to find at least a few when in the Air Force

44 **A College Kid And The Old Omaha**

ANDREW S. NELSON

Chicago & North Western around Eau Claire, Wis., offered plenty of distractions

52 **What's in a Photo: Lincoln, Neb., Revisited**

JERRY A. PINKEPANK

The rest of the Lincoln Football Special story

54 **Mikados for France**

VICTOR HAND

U.S.-built 2-8-2s saved the day for postwar French National Railways

60 **Passenger Perspectives: Santa Fe El Capitan of 1956**

MIKE SCHAFER

The "also ran" train was far from it



Departments

- 4 **Welcome** Santa Fe's grandest legacy
- 5 **Head End** A potpourri of railroad history, then and now
- 14 **Fast Mail** Letters from readers on our Summer 2023 issue
- 16 **Mileposts** Commentary by Kevin P. Keefe
- 18 **True Color** The morning rush in Berkeley
- 62 **Short Rails** Commonwealth Edison
- 64 **The Way It Was** Tales from railfans and railroaders
- 72 **Car Stop** Granite City suburban service
- 75 **Bumping Post** Detroit's Brush Street Station

CLASSIC TRAINS is published quarterly in January (Spring), April (Summer), July (Fall), and October (Winter), (ISSN 1527-0718, USPS No. 019-502) by Kalmbach Media Co., 21027 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612. Periodicals postage paid at Waukesha, Wis., and at additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Classic Trains*, P.O. Box 8520, Big Sandy, TX 75755. Canada Publication Mail Agreement No. 40010760.



El Capitan's 50-year legacy

The feast-or-famine cycle of the passenger railcar market in the U.S. has led to some odd combinations of intercity equipment. Amfleet, Horizon, and Viewliner are three styles of single-level equipment to emerge in the Amtrak era.

However, the long-distance bi-level fleet has been largely comprised of just one car style: Superliner. Built in two batches in the early 1980s by Pullman-Standard and the mid-1990s by Bombardier, the Amtrak Superliner fleet owes its existence to the Budd-built "Hi Level" cars of the 1956 Santa Fe *El Capitan*. On page 60, Mike Schafer looks back at this landmark all-coach train, which played second fiddle to the much-hyped *Super Chief*. Yet, for all the hype, the *Super Chief* doesn't have the visible legacy today that the *El Cap* can claim.

Much of the present Amtrak roster is made up of Superliners, now rebuilt many times since its construction. Nine of Amtrak's long-distance routes (and occasionally some state-supported trains) make use of the versatile bi-level equipment, including the *Southwest Chief*, spiritual successor to the much-vaunted *Super Chief*. Additionally, California's bi-level fleet can trace its lineage through the Superliners to the Hi Level cars, too.

While the Superliner era is bound to end on the U.S. eventually, I'm confident the original Superliner I cars will make it to the 50-year mark before retirement. That's quite a legacy for a train many considered to be the also-ran of the Santa Fe's shiny stainless steel fleet.



EDITOR



Descendants of the Santa Fe's *El Capitan*, Superliner cars make up Amtrak's eastbound *Empire Builder* at Wauwatosa, Wis., in February 2017. Brian M. Schmidt



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BN 12271 3209 RT. Printed in U.S.A.
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A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

HeadEnd



Three bright yellow, wooden Raritan River Railroad cabooses rest at South Amboy, N.J. Visible at far right is a cab of a RRR EMD switcher.

Bob Krone

CABOOSE CORNER

Steam, ice, and more on the 'Tip-Up'



Two models christen the resumption of service on the Toledo, Peoria & Western on June 12, 1947, following an acrimonious 19-month strike. Ice is substituted for the traditional champagne to signify the reopening of the road's Peoria icing station for perishable traffic. TP&W engineer Leo Clark, right, used the models' appearance on the railroad to exercise his own photography hobby during the occasion. Two photos, Toledo, Peoria & Western



The final Super Chief

Correcting the consist of the final *El Capitan/Super Chief* departing Chicago April 30, 1971 (see "Oldest Amtrak locomotives," Spring 2023), there were no E units on the train, pictured at left. The full consist was F7A 300L, F7A 302L, F7B 304A, F7B 305A, F7B 309B, as published in "Santa Fe Modeling Compendium" (see page 8). Co-author Michael W. Flick notes in a correction to our story that Santa Fe's E8Bs were retired by 1969, traded in to EMD for new GP38 locomotives delivered in 1970. George W. Hamlin



CSX starts heritage unit program

CSX Transportation has released its first three heritage units in May and June 2023. The locomotives, so far all GE/Wabtec ES44AC models, are the first in a series honoring the railroad's many predecessor roads.

The first locomotive features the blue, gray, and black of the Baltimore & Ohio. Previously No. 3059, No. 1827 recognizes the year B&O was founded. The locomotive made its debut May 10, 2023, on the point of Waycross, Ga.-Birmingham, Ala., manifest train M646-10. Repainting of the unit had just been completed at the railroad's Waycross shops.

"She's a beauty," CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs said in a comment on a LinkedIn post at the time.

The paint scheme is a twist on the traditional heritage livery and could be described as a mullet: It's all CSX business in the front and B&O party in the back. The current CSX livery adorns the front of the locomotive and gives way to the classic B&O paint scheme at the beginning of the locomotive's long hood.

Subsequent locomotives were released June 10 painted for Chessie System, No. 1973, and June 29 painted for Seaboard System, No. 1982. CSX is, of course, named for these two direct predecessors with the multiplication sign "X" added to indicate a greater railroad than its individual parts.

CSX has more than 20 predecessors it could feature in this way, the most recent being Pan Am Railways acquired in 2022. However, it is worth noting that Conrail, which CSX acquired part of in 1999, is already a represented in the Norfolk Southern heritage locomotive fleet launched in 2012. — *Brian M. Schmidt and Bill Stephens*



Baltimore & Ohio E8 No. 1453 and a passenger Geep display their classic multi-color paint in the snow at Detroit in December 1962. Below that, CSX's new B&O-inspired heritage unit blends the old and new at Dothan, Ala., on May 11, 2023, and is numbered to honor the B&O's founding year. Top, J. David Ingles, Brian M. Schmidt collection; above, Casey Thomason



Seaboard-inspired No. 1982 perhaps best shows the blending of the modern CSX scheme with the historic colors behind the cab.



Chessie-inspired No. 1973 carries a smaller logo than Chessie locomotives historically would have. Two photos, Casey Thomason



ALP44 No. 4424 in service on an NJ Transit commuter train. United Railroad Historical Society

Electric for URHS

NJ Transit has donated ALP44M electric locomotive No. 4424 to the United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey for preservation. No. 4424 is one of 32 ALP44s built in Sweden by Asea Brown Boveri between 1989 and 1997, and represents both the first electric locomotives purchased new by the state of New Jersey and the first time the agency had purchased inter-

nationally. The M in its model designation indicates that it is from the final group purchased, which were computer-controlled by microprocessors. Built in 1996, the locomotive is the youngest piece of equipment in the URHS collection. No. 4424 was chosen for donation as it was deemed to be in the best condition for preservation.

F unit heads west

A former Bangor & Aroostook EMD F3, which became Canadian Pacific property with its 2020 acquisition of the Central Maine & Quebec, moved to CPKC headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, in June 2023. No. 502, built in 1947, had previously been owned by CM&Q predecessor and BAR successor Montreal, Maine & Atlantic. It is reportedly in original, unrebuilt condition. The unit had been moved to Montreal for storage in 2021 after having earlier cleared out of the former CM&Q shop in Derby, Maine. BAR had eight F3 A units and four F3 B units.



F3 No. 502 crosses the Grand River at Galt, Ontario, on June 2, 2023. Stephen C. Host

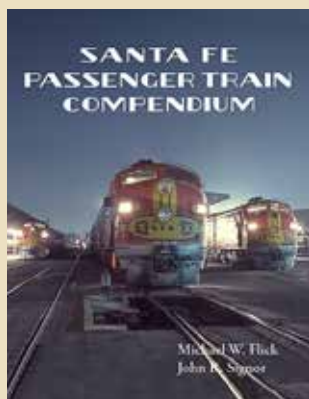


No. 537 rests at Silvis after delivery in June 2023. Railroading Heritage of Midwest America

BNSF GE for Silvis

BNSF Railway has donated former Santa Fe B40-8W No. 537 to the nonprofit Railroading Heritage of Midwest America at Silvis, Ill. (see page 16). No. 537 was constructed by General Electric for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe in October 1990 as part of its "Super Fleet" of new diesels painted in Santa Fe's famous Warbonnet passenger diesel paint scheme revived by President Mike Haverty. Santa Fe was the only railroad to order the B40-8W. No. 537 is the first of the type to be preserved, although the model is still operated by four short lines and BNSF.

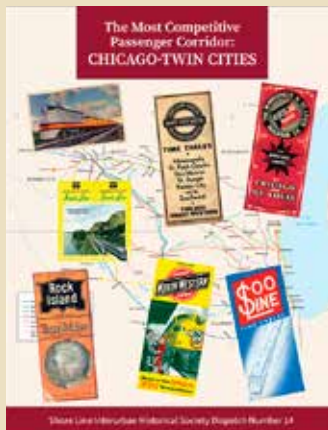
Reviews



Santa Fe Passenger Train Compendium

By Michael W. Flick and John R. Signor. Santa Fe Railway Historical & Modeling Society, 1205 S. Air Depot #101, Midwest City, OK 73110. 576 pages. \$85.

It's hard to imagine where one would start to assemble a comprehensive review of a volume covering something as beloved an institution as the Santa Fe's passenger service. Yet, this is an admirable take on that endeavor. Its many chapters cover Santa Fe's offerings from Chicago to Texas and California. Chapters include the usual *Chief*, *Super Chief*, *San Diegos*, and *El Capitan*, but also *Navajo*, *Scout*, *Ranger*, and other lesser-known services. Special coverage is dedicated to Chicago's Dearborn Station and Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, as well. Maps are provided by co-author Signor who has handsomely illustrated many other rail publications through the years. There are also tables of equipment consists, reproduced timetables and advertisements, and significant studies of various Santa Fe passenger equipment. Finally, a four-page appendix details train names and numbers by the years they operated. — *Brian M. Schmidt*



The Most Competitive Passenger Corridor: Chicago-Twin Cities

By Aaron Isaacs. Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, P.O. Box 425, Lake Forest, IL 60045. 132 pages, \$40.

Shore Line continues its series of themed publications with a look at America's most contested market for passenger trains. Previous single-railroad books have covered Chicago-Twin Cities — notably Jim Scribbins' landmark *The Hiawatha Story* and *The 400 Story* — but this must be the first comprehensive look at all the players in one place. Profusely illustrated and supported by author Aaron Isaacs' excellent text and a host of other contributors, the book devotes plenty of real estate to the Milwaukee Road, Chicago & North Western, and Burlington. Fans of the *Hiawathas*, *400s*, and *Zephyrs* will find plenty to enjoy. But the book also covers the other players, from Minneapolis & St. Louis to Soo Line to Rock Island. Photo coverage — color and black-and-white, steam and diesel — is terrific, including gems from John Gruber and the great A. W. Johnson. A real strength of the book is its coverage from the late 19th century into the 1930s. — *Kevin P. Keefe*



Rio Grande Steam Finale: Narrow Gauge Railroad Photography in Colorado and New Mexico

Editors Scott Lothes and Elrond Lawrence. Center for Railroad Photography & Art, 1930 Monroe St., Suite 301, Madison, WI 53711. 228 pages. \$60.

Like stripes or plaid, the Rio Grande narrow gauge never goes out of style. Thus, there's always room for one more tome on the topic. This photo-driven book is divided into 13 chapters covering various locations between Alamosa and Silverton, including the Farmington Branch, in the 1950s and 1960s. Photographers represented from this historic era include Tom Gildersleeve, John Gruber, Victor Hand, Jim Shaugnessy, Fred Springer, and Richard Steinheimer. The book concludes with an 18-page gallery of modern images on the narrow gauge and an essay by CRP&A board member Richard Tower. The front endpaper includes an extensive map of the lines covered in the book. This volume provides welcome additional photographic coverage to the history volumes that the Rio Grande enthusiasts likely have on their shelves already. — *B. M. S.*

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Heaviest Hudson: Chesapeake & Ohio's L2a

Ask someone to associate a railroad with the heaviest 4-6-4 Hudsons and they'll likely guess "New York Central." After all, it was NYC and its supplier, American Locomotive Co., that developed the 4-6-4 in 1927, and it was NYC that gave the engine its famous name, Hudson, after the river the Central's main line followed. The NYC also had the largest roster of 4-6-4s, with 275 on the railroad.

But other railroads had Hudsons, too, notably Chesapeake & Ohio. And while the Richmond-based Pocahontas coal hauler didn't have a huge roster of Hudsons — a total of 18 — it did boast the heaviest of all, the five engines of the L2a class, built for C&O by Baldwin in 1948 and numbered 310-314. These engines were slight improvements on an earlier batch of eight L2 machines delivered by Baldwin in 1941, but a variety of upgrades added up to 3,500 extra pounds, bringing the total weight of the engine to 443,000 pounds, making it the biggest 4-6-4 ever. By comparison, NYC's famous J3a engines of 1938 weighed 360,000 pounds, and Santa Fe's vaunted 3400-class machines came in at 412,380 pounds. As longtime *Trains* Editor David P. Morgan noted of C&O, "Its ponderous Baldwin Hudsons, the world's heaviest of course, had an engine weight only 7,500 pounds less than that of a Canadian Pacific 2-10-4!"

Until the Hudsons came along, the C&O was known for its large class of Pacifics, the standard passenger power on the railroad. Beginning in 1902, Chessie fielded 73 4-6-2s in various F classes until the last four F20 engines of 1927. The Pacifics were a reliable workhorse for C&O, but by



No. 314 blasts out of Russell, Ky., with the westbound F.F.V. on July 1, 1951. *Classic Trains* collection

the late 1930s it was obvious something bigger was needed as passenger trains often required doubleheading, especially over the rugged section of main line through the Alleghenies between Hinton, W.Va., and Cincinnati, where the 4-6-2s hauled such C&O signature trains as the *George Washington* and *Sportsman*. That led to the purchase of the first eight Hudsons in 1941, featuring 78-inch drivers and roller bearings on all axles as well as main and side rods. With the heavier L2a engines of 1948 came other improvements: poppet valves, a cast-steel pilot, and a combined steam and sand dome. All that and a huge boiler — with a firebox identical to that of a Nickel Plate and Pere Marquette 2-8-4 — added up to 52,100 pounds of tractive effort, nearly 3,000 pounds more than Santa Fe's 3400s. The C&O engines also employed Franklin E-type booster engines to assist in starting on heavy grades.

Despite the effectiveness of C&O's L2a Hudsons, the railroad ultimately had to confront the advantages of dieselization and by 1952 the 4-6-4s were running on borrowed time. Here's how C&O historian Eugene Huddleston described

their fate: "When the passenger diesels began arriving in late 1951, the Hudsons were hit and hit hard. They were not as suitable for freight service as were the (4-8-4) Greenbriers and when bumped off the varnish they were finished. Through 1952, the Hudsons ran out their miles on secondary runs, extra trains, and in standby service, but by 1953 enough EMD E8s had been received to dieselize all regular passenger trains ... so the big 4-6-4s were placed in storage." Despite having been built so recently — 1948, just seven years earlier — the L2a Hudsons began to be scrapped in 1955.

C&O's roster of 4-6-4s also included five famous "outliers," a group of F-19 Pacifics converted into L1 Hudsons at the railroad's Huntington (W.Va.) Shops and streamlined with a stainless-steel cowl painted yellow and silver, with tenders clad in stainless steel to match new Budd-built passenger trains. Of all the C&O's Hudsons, only the streamlined 490 survives today, in the collection of the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. Alas, the heaviest 4-6-4 Hudsons of all time didn't make the cut. — *Kevin P. Keefe*



C&O's L2a class Hudsons weighed in at 443,000 pounds; NYC's famous J3a engines weighed just 360,000 pounds. *Classic Trains* collection

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Head End

Fairbanks-Morse H12-44TS diesel



No. 541 switches at Chicago's Dearborn Station in 1961. Two photos, Brian M. Schmidt collection

Fairbanks-Morse was a fierce competitor in the early days of dieselization, perhaps remembered most for its H24-66 Train Master, a six-axle 2,400 hp road-switcher that impressed almost every railroad it demonstrated on.

Among its lesser-known successes were three specialized units produced at the request of the Santa Fe to replace steam locomotives at Dearborn Station in Chicago. Looking to all the world like the light road-switchers offered by the builder, the unit was dubbed H12-44TS. Designers took the successful H12-44 switcher, put it on an elongated frame, added a short hood to house a steam generator and added the TS designation for Terminal Switcher. In the end, it looked a lot like the more familiar H15/16-44 road switchers also turned out by the builder's Beloit, Wis., plant, but with a lower horsepower output. The trio was powered with FM's standard six-cylinder, opposed-piston, two-

stroke diesel engine. They were geared for a top speed of 60 mph.

Delivered in 1956 and numbered 541-543, they were immediately set up and put to work at Dearborn Station in the road's then current zebra stripe scheme. The three units, eventually painted in the road's latter blue and yellow colors, worked routinely until 1972, after Amtrak had assumed intercity passenger train operation but the railroads still provided crews and support services under contract. At that time, the first unit was retired with the other two following a couple of years later. Nos. 541 and 542 went to the scrapper, but the last, 543, was saved, along with other locomotives, for preservation. Stored in the railroad's Albuquerque, N.M., roundhouse, it was donated to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento in the mid-1980s.

But why Fairbanks-Morse? Why not an EMD Geep or an Alco RS-series, both of which Santa Fe owned at the time. The answer was that the railroad, like many other large railroads then and now, wanted to keep specific builders, if not models, in certain geographic areas. By doing so it made it easier to stock parts and have mechanics familiar with their idiosyncrasies to keep them running.

Were they a success? Absolutely. Once tamed by knowledgeable railroaders, the three units performed well over their career, only to be sidelined by age and when their passenger car terminal job was no longer necessary. — David Lustig



Blue-and-yellow 542 works Dearborn in 1972, by this time switching Amtrak trains.

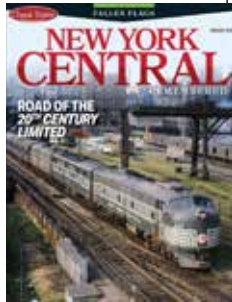
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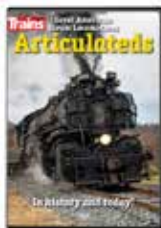
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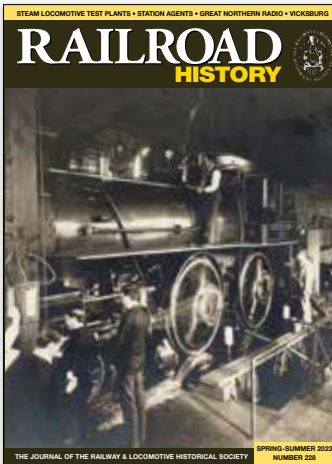


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Head End

VIA Rail No. 6910 is at Windsor, Ontario, in February 1987.

L. N. Herbert, Brian M. Schmidt collection



Bombardier LRC diesel locomotives

Bombardier LRC locomotives were built for the future using beloved Alco-designed components of old.

"From the tip of its pointed nose to its electric tail-end markers, the LRC locomotive is refreshingly different, but at heart it is nothing more than a third-generation FPA," wrote Greg McDonnell in the July 1983 issue of *Trains*. This, of course, referenced the beloved Montreal Locomotive Works FPA4 of diesel passenger locomotives that hung on in Canada into the 1980s.

MLW first offered the futuristic, low-slung LRC — Light, Rapid, Comfortable — train and locomotive in 1973. The aluminum-bodied prototype unit was developed by MLW and two partner suppliers, Alcan Canadian Products and Dominion Foundries & Steel (a.k.a. Dofasco). It was powered by the venerable Alco-design 12-cylinder 251 prime mover generating 2,900 hp and measured just 11 feet, 5 inches over the rails and 66 feet, 4 inches long. After diversion of head-end power for the passenger cars, the unit was left with 2,000 hp to

deliver to the rails.

That demonstrator was followed by two similar units leased to Amtrak in 1980 and a production order for 31 units for VIA Rail Canada. (In the interim, MLW morphed into Bombardier in 1978.) They were powered by 16-cylinder 251F prime movers generating 3,725 hp. Nos. 6900-6920 were delivered in 1982 while Nos. 6921-6930 were delivered in 1983. The LRC was the first new equipment ordered by VIA Rail after its creation in 1977.

VIA Rail's Bombardier LRC diesel locomotives and the complementary passenger equipment were built for service in the Montreal-Toronto-Windsor corridor. They were equipped with tilting technology to enable quicker running over existing infrastructure, which proved troublesome.

"While the introduction of LRC equipment on all premier trains on this route has been frustrated by their mechanical troubles, the low-slung, blunt-faced Canadian speedsters do run regularly, albeit at conventional veloci-

Mark Train Zephyr family memories

Steve Smedley's article brought back memories of my encountering the *Mark Twain Zephyr* while it was on display at the Midwest Old Threshers Reunion in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in 1967. I would take my children for afternoon car rides in those days, often to the Old Threshers Reunion. As a Burlington fan I was interested in the *Zephyr* and aimed my camera at it often. In one photo I am holding my son Steve who was less than a year old with my five-year-old daughter Beth while looking at one of my favorite trains. —
Richard Anderson, Iowa City, Iowa

The upper photo shows Richard Anderson with his son and daughter in front of the shovelnose *Mark Twain Zephyr* in 1967. The lower image shows the disparity between the standard gauge MTZ and the Old Threshers Reunion ground's 3-foot gauge operation. Two photos, Richard Anderson



Clock tower clarification

Another great issue! This magazine has become my favorite of all the train-related magazines available. I always find the articles enjoyable and educational and many bring back memories of my younger days. Mike Schafer's stories of his many travels are a favorite.

Just curious, though, about the caption for "Bumping Post" of Hoboken Terminal. If the clock tower was dismantled in 1942 for the war effort, how is it in the picture of train 11 in 1949?

— *Dave Clinton, Hingham, Mass.*

¶ The clock tower was scavenged for copper during the 1940s; it was removed in the 1950s due to structural issues. — *B.M.S.*

Northeast notes

I always anticipate the arrival of *Classic Trains* and immediately opened up the Mike Schafer piece on their Summer 1968 trip to the area of the Northeast where I grew up. I was particularly interested in days 6 and 7 where Mike and Jim Boyd toured the New Haven and eventually ended up just outside of Penn Station Newark. Certainly not to detract from this fine article, I want humbly to point out that the New Haven GE Rectifier units in the 300 series were not E44s, but classed as EF4. Only after Penn Central acquired them at the absorption of the New Haven, they were reclassified as E33s. The former PRR GE units bought new by the Pennsy were

E44s and were referred to in my railfan social circles as "Bricks."

During Mike and Jim's short stay at South Street platform in Newark, the Jersey Central train was pulled by an H24-66 Train Master, not an H16-44. This section of track was heavily affected by the introduction of the 1967 Aldene Plan. Both Raritan-bound trains and New York & Long Branch trains now funneled through here. Hunter Tower diverted the Raritan trains to the Lehigh Valley tracks. The newly constructed ramp at Aldene got the CNJ trains back onto their home tracks, thus bypassing Jersey City.

Classic Trains articles are excellent; keep up the good work.

— *Paul Carpenito, Little Gap, Pa.*

Got a comment? Write us at Fast Mail, *Classic Trains*, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612; email: fastmail@classictrainsmag.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Port Road photography

While reading Victor Hand's fine piece on the "Port Road" I noticed that the photograph at the bottom of page 48 looked very familiar. I was standing next to Victor for the shot, along with our mutual friend, the late Ellison "Elly" Wefel.

The opening picture of the article was taken from the Mann's Run "flume" just east of Creswell. That spot was one of the best on the Port Road, with superb views of trains in both directions in addition to being so close to the parallel Atglen & Susquehanna line on the adjacent hillside that it took less than a minute to relocate for shots of trains on the A&S. Photo angles were tight, but good shots could still be had, especially of westbound trains when the leaves were off the trees.

— Bob Davis, *Thayne, Wyo.*

Summer 2023 corrections

¶ Regarding Baldwin Centipede diesels on page 10, total production was 54 units; Seaboard Air Line had 14 units, Nos. 4500-4513. On page 14, the first Fast Mail letter under "Furler and Uncle Phil" should have been attributed to Lou Millan of Somerville, N.J. On page 19, the Great Locomotive Chase occurred in 1862. — B.M.S.



Westbound Penn Central train P-3 follows the Atglen & Susquehanna on March 3, 1975. Bob Davis



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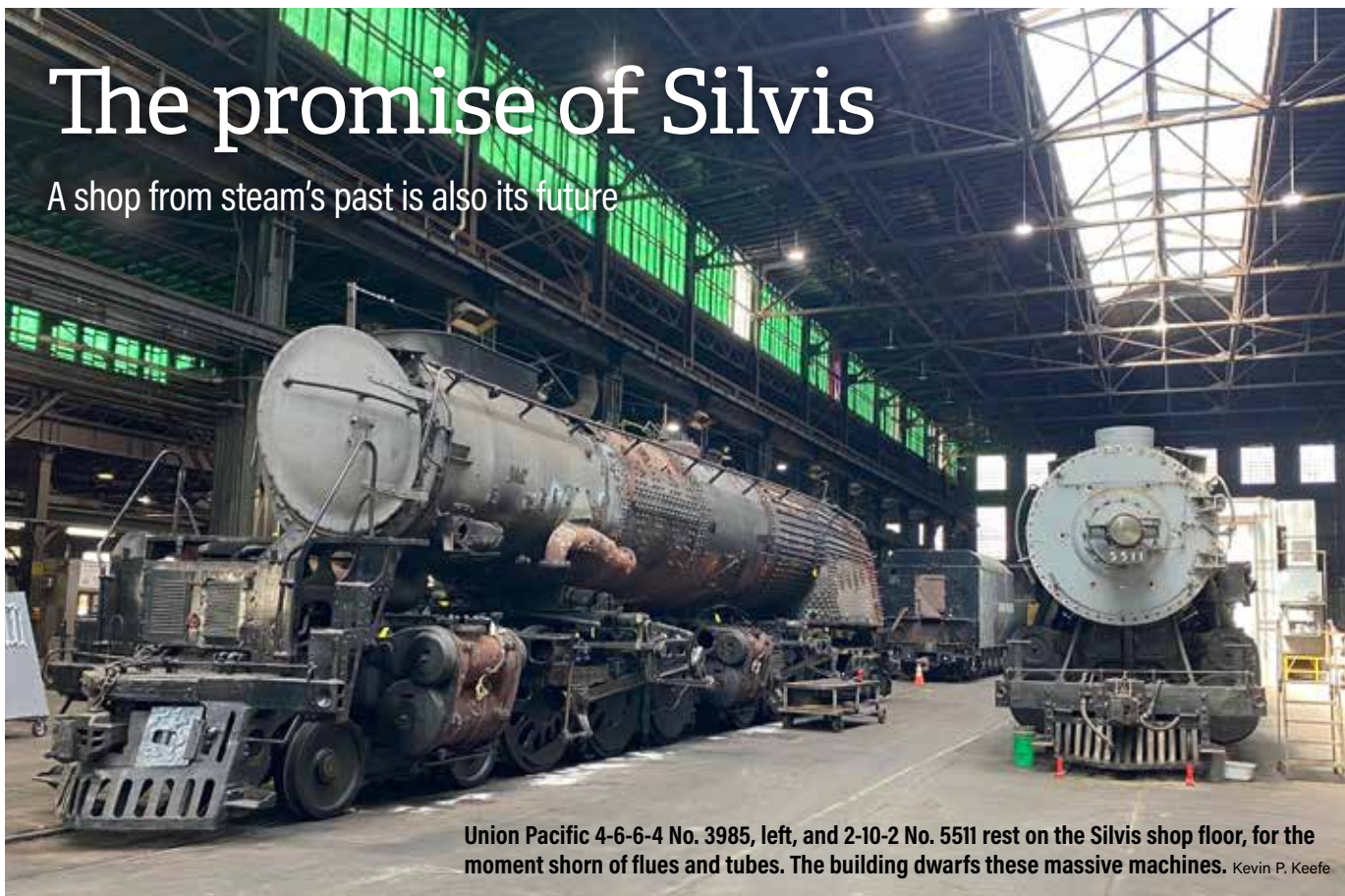


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The promise of Silvis

A shop from steam's past is also its future



Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 No. 3985, left, and 2-10-2 No. 5511 rest on the Silvis shop floor, for the moment shorn of flues and tubes. The building dwarfs these massive machines. Kevin P. Keefe

When we drove off Illinois Route 92 onto former Rock Island property recently at Silvis, I was singularly focused on seeing steam locomotives. Three of them, to be specific, including one very special engine, former Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 Challenger No. 3985.

The Challenger was among equipment that made headlines last year as Railroad- ing Heritage of Midwest America bought the 90-acre Silvis shop facility from National Railroad Equipment, then took ownership of much of UP's heritage fleet. On Nov. 22 a small crowd was on hand as the entire collection — two steam locomotives, one huge diesel, and several cars — eased into the giant old erecting hall. It was enough to cause *Trains Magazine* to call it the No. 5 news story for 2022.

There's no doubt this was a blockbuster event. Backed by significant funding from its members, RRHMA not only bought a famous old shop, it set the ambitious goal of re-

turning the 3985 to steam operation — it's been dormant since ending UP excursion service in 2010 — as well as its companion UP 2-10-2 No. 5511. Also on the repair schedule: Centennial DDA40X diesel No. 6936.

When I stopped by, the 3985's flues and superheater units were piled neatly on the shop floor in front of the engine's

open smokebox door. As master mechanic Alex Beams showed me around, he explained how his crew was preparing the Challenger for the intense inspection that comes with FRA 1472 compliance.

"These guys are really serious," I thought: experiencing the Challenger in steam seems not a matter of whether but when.

"This is really the first time since regular service that it's had a full teardown," Steve Sandberg, RRHMA president, explained later. "Obviously UP had done a considerable amount of work on the engine, but maybe not to the extent of the boiler survey we are. We're projecting a three-year range to get this done, although that target floats depending on what is happening."

The crew is addressing the 5511, as well. "We're basically



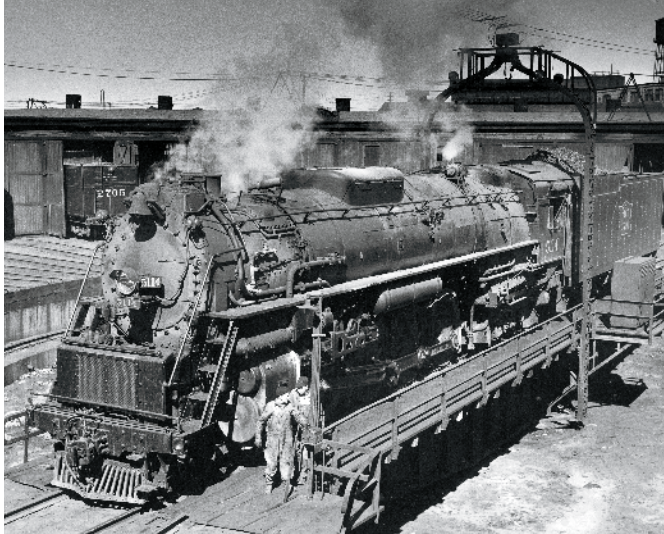
Vintage diesels cover the Silvis shop floor in the early 1960s, hey-day of Rock Island's customization program. *Classic Trains* collection

working on both locomotives simultaneously, although not with the intent they operate at the exact same moment,” Sandberg said. “The reality is, the 2-10-2 needs far less work. It’s more likely we’ll use it as a kind of tourist locomotive we’d run around the yard. Compared to the Challenger, it’s a much simpler locomotive.” The Silvis complex has more than 10 miles of track.

Wandering among the equipment under that vast roof at Silvis — including Iowa Interstate’s Chinese-built QJ 2-10-2 No. 6988 — it occurred to me that I shouldn’t focus all my attention on the locomotives or rolling stock, for the miracle of Silvis has as much to do with the edifice as it does the engines. How many classic erecting halls are left in America? And how many shelter the overhaul of mainline railroad equipment?

“You know a building is huge when it makes the Challenger look small,” Beams says.

Silvis already had plenty to brag about when its new owners came along. Every Class I railroad had big shops in the steam era, including the star-crossed Rock Island, but Silvis was special, home to the nation’s largest fleet of 4-8-4s. That caught me by surprise when I looked it up, but it’s true: the Rock’s roster of 80 R-class Northern’s topped all other U.S. railroads. You might say the 4-8-4s Silvis maintained were existentially important to the Rock. The company was staggering



Imperious Rock Island R-67-class 4-8-4 No. 5114 rides the 90-foot Silvis turntable in May 1952.

Charles H. Kerrigan

aging Alcos re-equipped with EMD prime movers; some of this work was performed at EMD, including the celebrated re-powering of an Alco DL109. At one point, Silvis shop forces were maintaining the products of eight different builders.

The work at Silvis led former *Trains* Editor J. David Ingles to label the Rock as “possessor of one of the most interesting fleets of diesels in the land. Re-powerings, secondhand purchases, unique models, ‘firsts’ and ‘lasts’ in the diesel world — all are part of the Rock’s roster.” And all had a direct connection to the mechanical forces at Silvis.

My visit to Silvis was brief, but I came away thinking we’ll be seeing great things come out of that ancient brick fortress. Beams exudes nothing but quiet confidence, and as he escorted me back to the parking lot, I couldn’t help but notice the handsome tattoo on his forearm: “Ain’t no rest for the wicked.”

That’s the spirit! **I**

through bankruptcy when it received the first batch of Northern’s from Alco in 1930, and concurrently had to make significant investments in physical plant — notably a bridge-strengthening program — to make fullest use of its big engines at a time it could ill afford it.

The expense was worth it. Steam historian Lloyd H. Stagner put it in perspective: “Without the service of the 5000s during the first three years of World War II, the Rock Island would not have had a successful operation.” Even late in life — as the accompanying 1952 photo of No. 5114 on the Silvis turntable shows — the Rock’s 4-8-4s were beautiful to behold.

The Silvis legend didn’t end with steam, however. The shops made headlines again in the 1950s and early 1960s when the Rock, hurtling again toward final insolvency, proceeded with one of the most extensive and unusual diesel rebuild programs of all time. Its mix-and-match approach was notable for the number of



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

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The morning rush

Train No. 60, the morning *Golden Gate* to Bakersfield, heads north through Berkeley, Calif., in beautiful early sunlight on June 13, 1958. Train 60 departed Emeryville (as an Oakland station) at 8:10 a.m. and is leaving a long stretch of street running at its north end on Sacramento Street near Oregon Street. The two-story structure behind the vintage autos is gone, but the other white building with the angled portico appears to remain today. In a few days Santa Fe trains would no longer serve Emeryville, instead originating and terminating at Richmond where passengers could board a bus to San Francisco.

Clark Frazier, Brian M. Schmidt collection; research by Otto P. Dobnick



Vermont time machine



A VISIT TO ISLAND POND AND THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY

BY ROGER COOK // Photos by the author

The phone in my parents' bedroom woke us at almost midnight. "It's your friend Steve," my father said. "Make it quick."

Steve Ward had just returned home in July 1964 after visiting northern Vermont. Since he knew I'd be leaving in the morning, bound for my aunt and uncle's Vermont dairy farm, he was anxious to describe his experience at Island Pond, deep in Vermont's "Northeast Kingdom," a division-point yard midway between Portland, Maine, and Montreal on Canadian National's U.S. subsidiary Grand Trunk Railway.

"I spent all day there, everyone was friendly, and it looked like diesels replaced steam only the day before I arrived," Steve said. "You've got to get there!" He said there was even a Saturday-only Montreal-Portland round-trip passenger special that carried Canadian vacationers to Maine coast beaches in July and August, as well as daily through freights 490 and 493 that met at "the Pond" in late afternoon to change crews and vans. There also were way freights: a Canadian National Richmond (Quebec)-Island Pond turn, and an Island Pond-based Grand Trunk turn that mainly served the paper mills around Berlin, N.H.

Island Pond seemed a place to see, and so after four days visiting the farm, I arose before dawn on Friday, bound for the North Country while the cows were still being milked.

What I found in addition to the train operations Steve had described was a town that looked more Western frontier than New England Colonial. Mostly wooden, multi-story commercial buildings faced the imposing 2½-story brick and granite GT depot. The town's main street (Vermont Route 105) climbed a wooden ramp just east of the depot and made a sharp left turn to cross a wooden

six-span truss bridge over 12 yard tracks. Heavy planks rumbled and the bridge shook whenever vehicles crossed.

Two wooden churches dominated the hillside across from the yard and depot:

First Congregational, Colonial in style, built in 1854; and an 1871 Episcopal church, a board-and-batten Carpenter Gothic structure with an impressive steeple clock. A boardwalk, stairways, and wood pedestrian bridge over the yard tracks connected that part of town with the station area.

AN INTACT STEAM TERMINAL

East of the highway bridge, I saw the town's namesake pond with its central island, as well as GT's 20-stall roundhouse, backshop, support structures, car-repair area, and lakeside freight house.

Although locomotive repairs had been transferred to Central Vermont Railway's St. Albans shop in July 1963 when CV and GT locomotive rosters were combined, the roundhouse remained open, and GT GP9 No. 4905 was spotted near the turntable, opposite a standpipe that had once filled steam locomotive tenders with water. It was still occasionally used since the Island Pond wreck train included a steam crane.

The Geep was one of five steam-boiler-equipped GT passenger units, and its



GP9s 4449 and 4448, train 493's power, are spotted on the roundhouse lead for a crew change while their train's head end is being worked by the yard switcher.



Opposite the depot, First Congregational Church overlooks the Berlin way freight and its van, a former Central Vermont car.



The switch crew plans its moves in front of the yard office while GP9 4905 waits nearby. The former ice house is visible behind the crew members in the distance.

olive-and-yellow livery was so glossy it appeared to have been delivered just yesterday rather than in June 1956. It would be the afternoon yard switcher.

This sleepy facility once saw busier times. Island Pond became the midpoint of Canada's first railway to the Atlantic coast when the St. Lawrence & Atlantic building east from Montreal and the Atlantic & St. Lawrence building from Portland met there in 1853.

Both lines then were leased to the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, becoming an all-weather route for Canadian grain, forest products, and other exports until eclipsed by later-constructed all-Canadian northern routes to Halifax via the Maritime provinces.

About 2 p.m. the five-man yard crew reported for duty. They seemed to have plenty of time to talk since the Richmond way freight, train 490 from Montreal, and 493 from Portland wouldn't arrive for



The switch crew works at the east end of the yard. This view provides a better look at the ice facility, first seen on the previous page.

hours. They suggested I look over the ice house, which although no longer used still held a few blocks of frozen water insulated between layers of sawdust. They explained that until recently, ice had been harvested with saws from the pond each winter. An elevated conveyor once lifted the chunks into the house.

Part of the structure's coal bunker — that used for sand storage — still stood. Island Pond in 1964 was an almost perfectly preserved steam-era facility — sans the related locomotives.

A GOOD PLACE TO FIND GEEPS

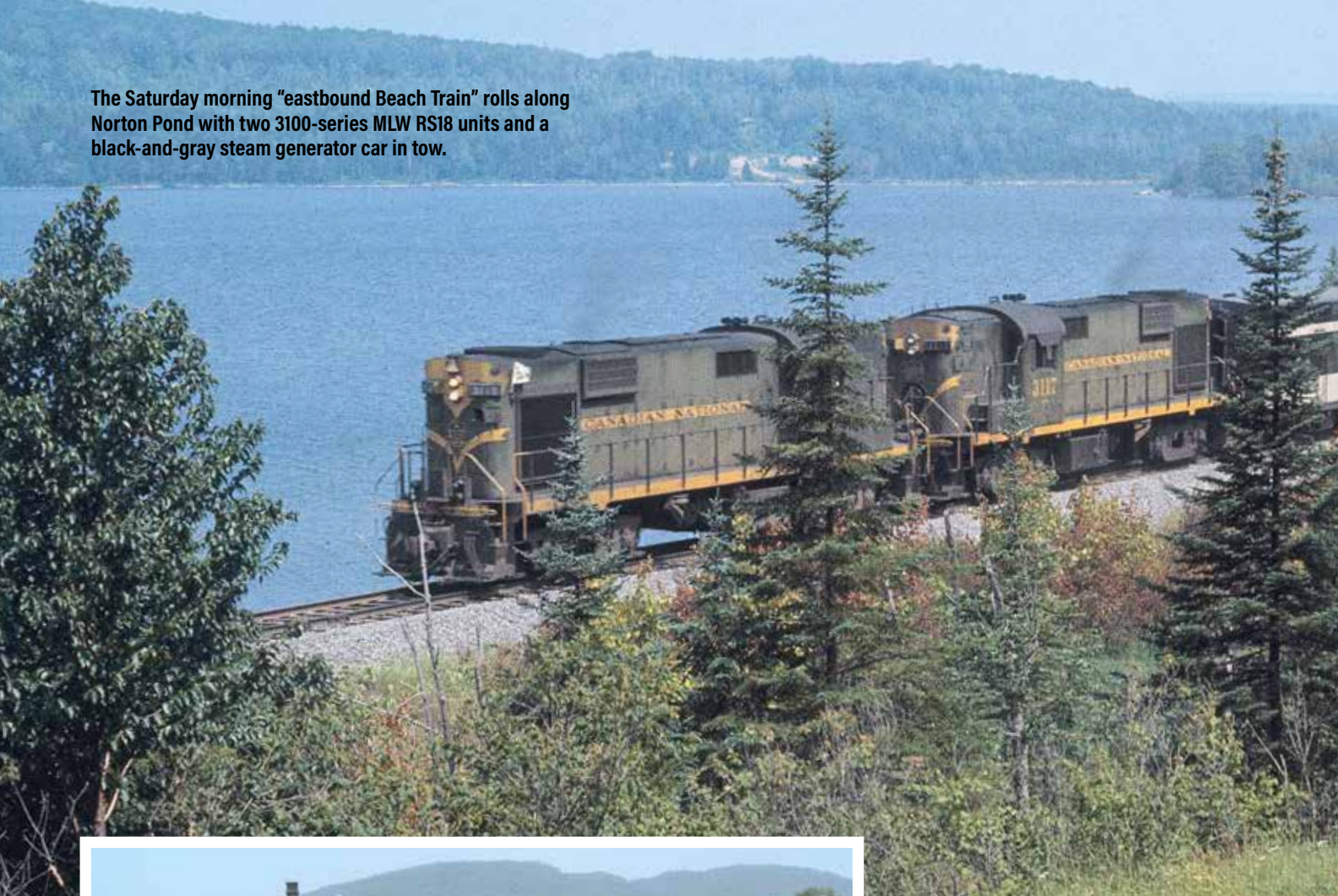
About 4 p.m. a locomotive horn sounded west of town. It was the way freight from Richmond. After its CN GP9 entered the yard, I moved to the wooden pedestrian bridge and was joined by a young fellow who also liked trains.

"Mister," he said, "I don't know where that train is going but I'd like to take it



A Geep shoves GT van 77964 into the yard. It's one of three ex-Grand Trunk Western cars assigned to the GT, the others being 77965 and 77971. GTW was a CN subsidiary in Michigan.

The Saturday morning "eastbound Beach Train" rolls along Norton Pond with two 3100-series MLW RS18 units and a black-and-gray steam generator car in tow.



The Beach Train changes crews at Island Pond. It departed Montreal at 7:15 a.m. and would tie up later in Portland, Maine, providing patrons easy access to the Atlantic coast.

there." On a different day I might have shared that desire, but the action had just begun. I soon realized Island Pond was everything Steve had described, and more.

When 490 and 493 arrived, that "time machine" quality shone as brightly as the glossy olive-and-yellow GT GP9 sets powering both freights. All the inbound Geeps were vintage 1956, and like 4905 appeared to have just left EMD's factory in La Grange, Ill. The orange wooden vans (as cabooses were known on Canadian rails) still displayed GT's CN-inspired maple leaf heralds. Except on some boxcars and other rolling stock, not a single 1961 CN new image "noodle" was in sight.

I visited the depot while the freights were being switched and noticed the passenger train arrival board mounted outside. It indicated train 17 from Portland to Montreal would arrive at 6 p.m., though regularly scheduled service had ceased in September 1961.

I did learn the "Beach Train" would arrive mid-to-late Saturday morning, since it was scheduled to depart Montreal at 7:15 a.m. I also found out all GT trains



GT 4446 goes for a spin on the Island Pond turntable. Its mechanism operates on compressed air from the roundhouse.

were operated as “extras,” unscheduled movements having timetable authority.

The lead Geeps on 490 and 493 carried white flags, signifying they were “extra” trains, even though all the GT men I’d met used their former timetable numbers.

On Saturday I was parked beside Norton Pond, about 11 miles north of Island Pond, listening for an approaching train. Almost as soon as I heard it, the Beach Train became a blur in my camera’s viewfinder: two olive-and-yellow diesels trailed by a black-and-gray steam generator car, baggage car, and a string of black and green passenger stock. It was moving fast but I did manage another photo before the Island Pond crew change.

The locomotives were CN Montreal Locomotive Works 3100-series RS18s, geared for 80 mph with pass-through steam lines to work in passenger service despite lacking boilers. Hence the steam generator car — the only discordant note in otherwise traditional CN livery.

The two incoming GT enginemen looked enough alike to have been brothers, and perhaps they were, since many railroad families called Island Pond home.

The Boy on the Bridge

Did that young railfan ever take a train out of town? Fifty years after taking his photo I learned his story. While corresponding with fellow Rutland Railroad Historical Society member Will Davis, he mentioned that his grandparents had once lived in Island Pond and he grew up spending summer vacations there. He wrote, “I’m excited to learn you are working on an article about Island Pond; it’s funny to think that as a kid I might have been walking around there while you were taking shots.”

So, I sent him a print and asked, “Could this young fellow be you?” Will wasn’t sure, but his mother knew her son and remembered her seven-year-old’s hat, sweater, and corduroy pants.

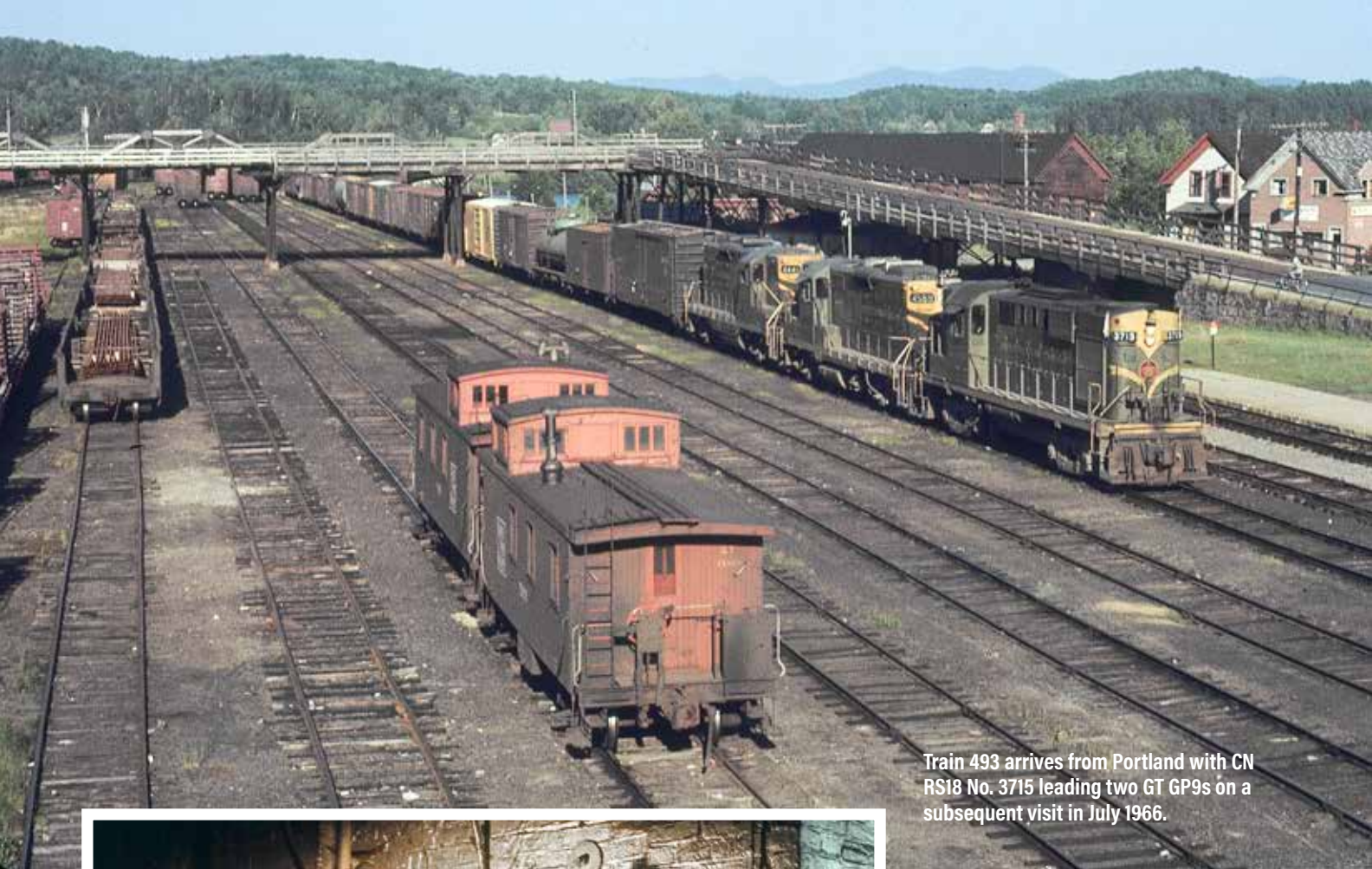
Will is a native Vermonter who grew up in Rutland before moving to the Albany, N.Y., area, where he had a 40-year career in law enforcement. Although he never rode a train out of



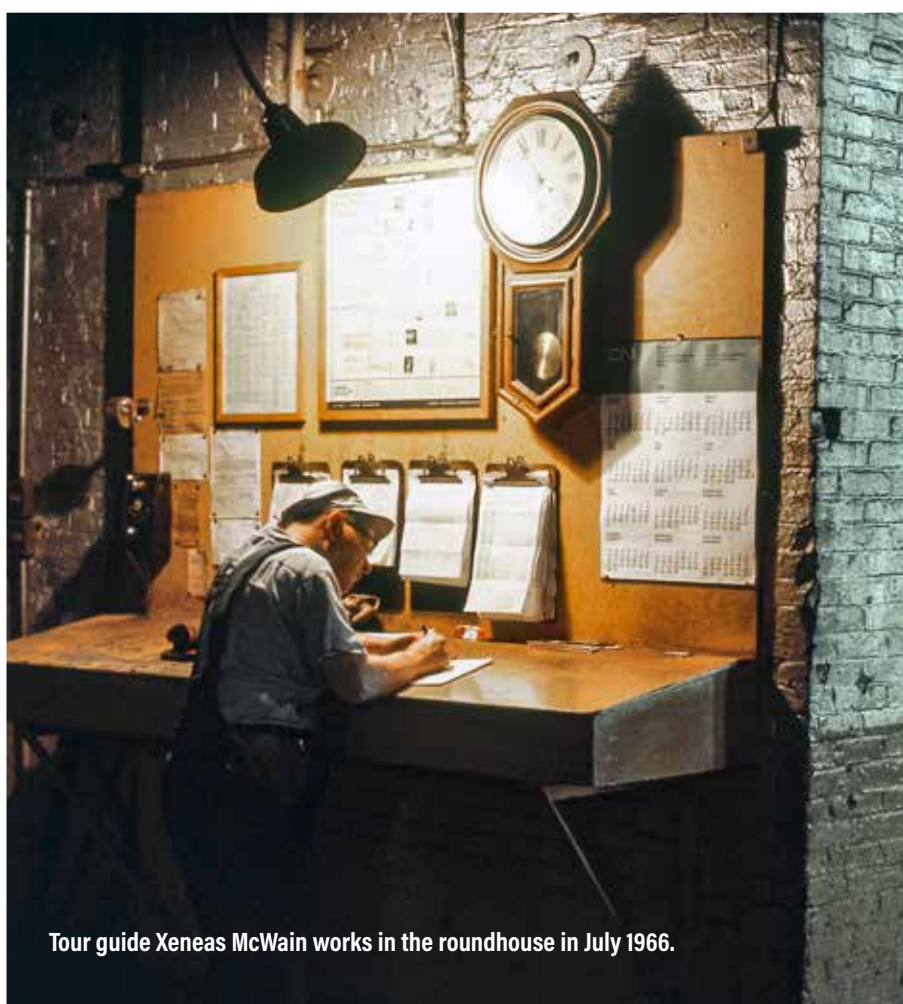
Young Will Davis stands on the bridge at Island Pond, Vt., in July 1964.

town, Will did get to ride trains for three years as a spare brakeman for SMS Rail Service in Waterford, N.Y.

I greatly appreciate Will’s assistance in refreshing my half-century-old memories and helping me keep facts straight. — Roger Cook



Train 493 arrives from Portland with CN RS18 No. 3715 leading two GT GP9s on a subsequent visit in July 1966.



Tour guide Xeneas McWain works in the roundhouse in July 1966.

When the special rapidly accelerated toward Portland, I realized the time watching the crew change could have been better spent finding another photo location. I followed the fast-moving train east, saw it cross the Connecticut River bridge to North Stratford, N.H., and knew I'd never catch up. The chase was over — but I knew I'd be back.

ISLAND POND REPRISE

It wasn't until July 1966 — on another Saturday and after several solo trips — that Steve and I would visit the North Country together.

Operationally nothing had changed and the roundhouse remained open. The sole worker, who might have spent most days washing and painting the spotless walls and floor, escorted us through the cavernous, mostly empty space.

Though no locomotives were inside, one stall was occupied by rows of pallets containing the wall clocks removed from now-closed lineside depots, awaiting shipment to CN's Montreal headquarters for future sale. Looking through one of the office windows we saw several large-scale wooden models of GT and CN steam locomotives, built by the shop foreman.

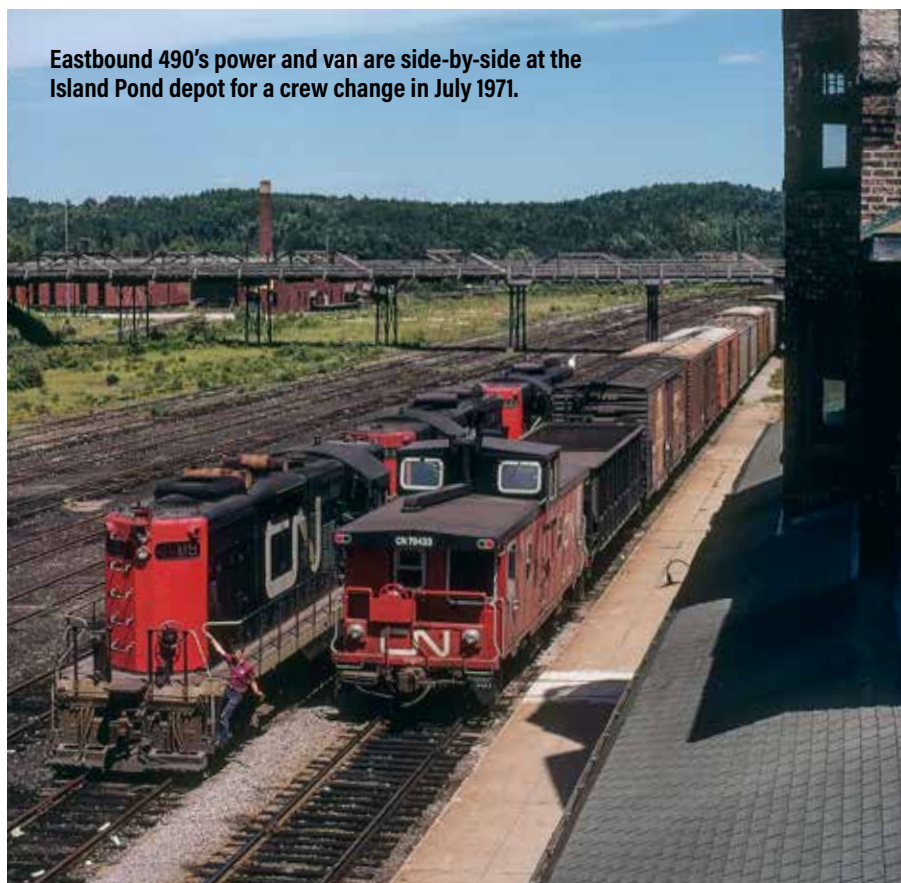


In July 1966, the westbound Beach Train has arrived behind a CN FP9 and CV GP9. A Canadian crew will board here for Montreal.

The Beach Train was shorter than it once had been, with a CV GP9 and CN FP9 for power, both in that new-image livery. We wondered if 1966 would be the train's last year. When 490 and 493 arrived late in the afternoon, we noted the diesels, though all still in olive and yellow, had lost some of their former luster. A special treat, however, was 493's lead unit: CN RS18 No. 3715, a number once carried by one of GT's last operating steamers, a USRA-design 2-8-2.

I didn't get back until July 1971. Although Island Pond's physical plant remained, the roundhouse had closed in September 1966 and the Beach Train ceased operations after the July-August 1967 season. Many yard tracks were weed-grown and some even removed. Portland-bound 490 was in town for a crew change, powered by three GP9s in new image GT and CN livery, with a modern steel van on the rear.

The time machine had broken down, and would be scrapped in 1973 when the roundhouse, wooden highway, and pedestrian bridges were demolished. Only the depot remained. It would later become a bank, with an upstairs museum housing the Island Pond Historical Society. ■



Eastbound 490's power and van are side-by-side at the Island Pond depot for a crew change in July 1971.

It's a fine pickle you've gotten us into!

ADVENTURES
OF A ROCK ISLAND
YARD CLERK

BY STEVE LASHER



Rock Island U28B No. 279 leads an EMD unit with an eastbound freight at Peru-La Salle, Ill., in March 1973. The train is operating east from the classification yard at Silvis.

Randy B. Olson, David P. Oroszi collection





Pacific Fruit Express 57-foot mechanical reefer No. 455118 is exemplary of hundreds of such cars in use in the early 1970s to move West Coast produce to Midwest and Eastern markets. PFE was a joint venture of Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. *Classic Trains* collection

Although the accompanying headline might seem like just a clever title, if you ever worked the second shift in the yard office at Rock Island's Kelly Yard in Silvis, Ill., you'd be wise to the inside joke. Because it wasn't really a joke — it was closer to the truth.

It's also my way of describing one of railroading's many unsung jobs, one the average enthusiast probably knows little about. It wasn't a glamorous assignment, but it was absolutely necessary to keep the wheels rolling.

I held the job of second shift "Precise Inventory and Car Location" or PICL (pickle) clerk.

I had hired out in the fall of 1973 as a clerk and floated around a bit before bidding on and winning (much to the dismay of officialdom) that second shift "PICL" job. At least it was inside, out of the weather, and climate controlled (OK, except for all the hot air coming from some of the terminal trainmasters). At last, I could wear decent clothes to work. It would be the last clerk's job I would hold before transferring to engine service in 1974.

The paperwork involved in getting cars and locomotives from point A to point B was as important as pulling the throttle. At Silvis, the PICL clerk was in the thick of it. It's worth noting that second shift was probably the busiest at Silvis. Kelly Yard's primary purpose in life was sorting and blocking cars to go east.

It was the Rock's favorable fast connections to eastern carriers that kept it afloat for many of its last years. The fact that its crumbling main lines were infested with 10-mph slow orders wasn't so important when you could save a day or more at Chicago.

As it happened, many of the hot trains to Chicago connections were built and departed on the afternoon shift at Silvis. It was usually a crazy time at "Silly Ville" on second shift, and it lasted into most of third trick as well.

What exactly did the PICL clerk do? First, let me describe my work area. There were two large rooms in the northeast corner of the yard office. My area was in one of the big rooms on the upper floor, with large windows that allowed me to watch the crest of the hump one way and the expanse of the classification bowl in the other. A corner office with a view.

I had three large boxes of pigeonholes, very much like letter cases in the post office, except that these had been subdivided into two compartments: one for the waybills on the bottom and another for the IBM punch cards that accompanied them on top. There was a pigeonhole for every track in the yard.

The adjacent room held but one item: a huge IBM card-punch printer. When I say that I mean massive — they may have had to have built the yard office around it. When it was printing a list, the whole floor shook to its rhythmic clattering.

To help clarify all this, let's trace a single car through the yard, then I'll describe a typical shift for you.

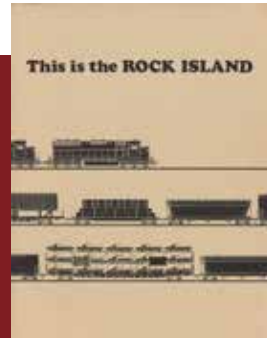
Inside Kelly Yard

The Illinois division is composed of 728.8 miles of main line, plus six branches — Toulon, Keota, Clinton, Montezuma, Postville, and Iowa Falls — of 341.3 miles, for a grand total of 1070.1 miles of railroad under the jurisdiction of the superintendent.

It is busy track, with fast freights and numerous passenger and commuter trains speeding goods and people to their many destinations.

Every Chicago-originated or Chicago-bound freight train, except those to and from Peoria, must go through or past Kelly Yard at Silvis. Most eastbound trains are yarded and classified there, blocked for their Chicago connections.

A good portion of the west-bound trains, having already been blocked at Chicago, never see the inside of Kelly, but are "mainlined," with cars added and taken off right on the main track, thus avoiding time-consuming yarding. Crews are also changed there, speeding the trains through the Quad Cities with



Let's follow that typical car. Any car will do, but, for interest's sake, let's call it Pacific Fruit Express 455118, a 57-foot mechanical reefer loaded with lettuce and destined, at least for the moment (perishables could be diverted multiple times), for a consignor at Hunter's Point Produce Terminal in New York.

The car is routed via Penn Central, on the old New York Central side. Let's say it arrives in a train from Kansas City (via Southern Pacific at Tucumcari, N.Mex.) late in the afternoon. The inside perishable protective service clerk at Six-Ring shanty on the west end of the receiving yard will process the list and waybills and send them to the yard office via the pneumatic tube system. This inbound train has hot traffic on it and the carmen are busy inspecting it and bleeding off the air on the

cars while the perishable protective clerks complete their inspections to ready the train for classification over the hump.

Next will come the three clerks who will shepherd our car's paperwork and journey through the yard. First will be the inbound bill clerk. He receives the waybills and inbound list along with the west walk checker's (mud hop's) handwritten list of the actual train as it arrived. It's not uncommon for there to be discrepancies between the inbound list as received from the last originating terminal and what actually shows up, but today, we'll assume the train accurately reflects the inbound list.

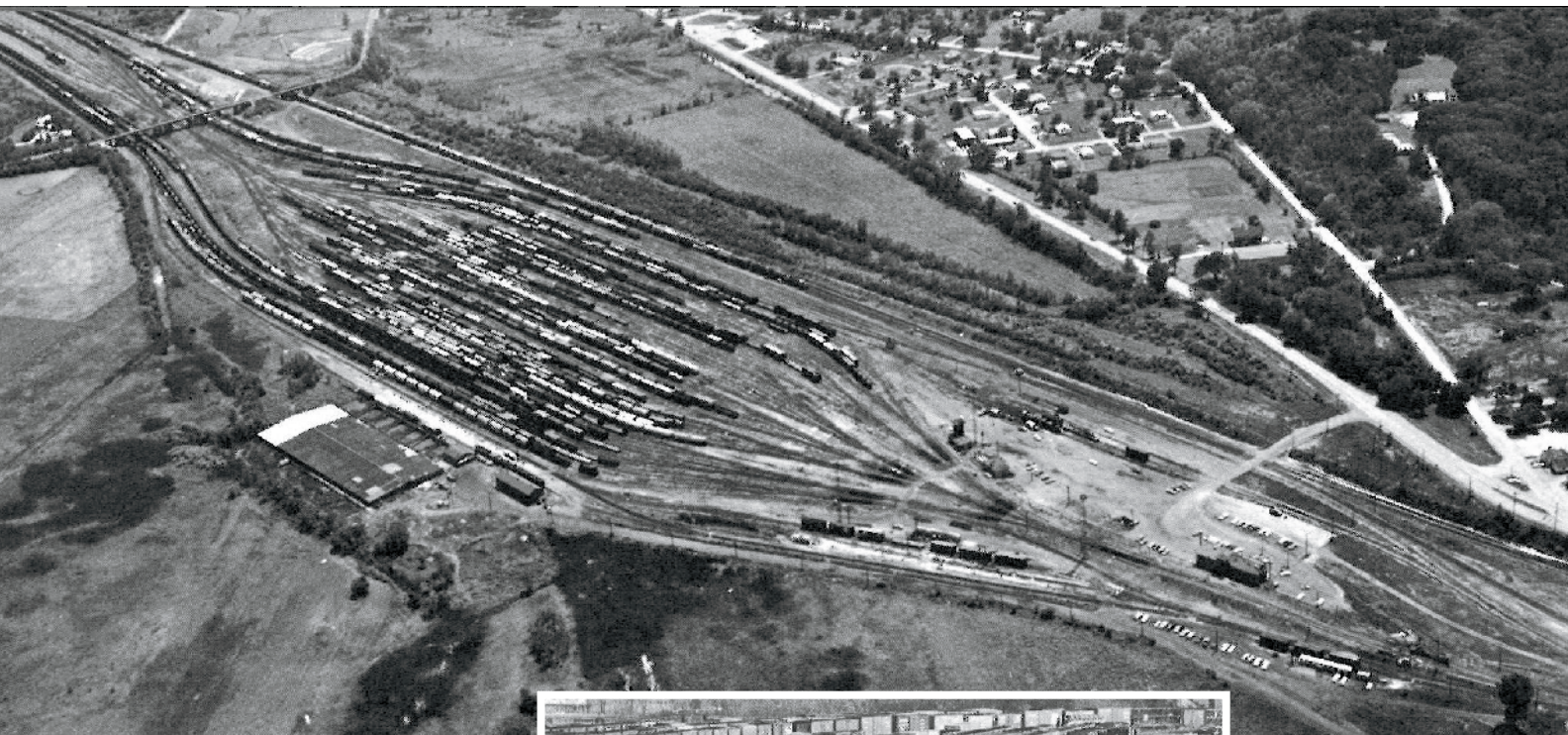
All three clerk jobs are pressure-packed because of time, but in slightly different



ways. The inbound clerk has to finish his work before any classification can begin. He has to take the waybills and list, and, one at a time, make an IBM punch card for each car. Sometimes he can get a leg up on things by punching cards from the inbound list sent from Armourdale Yard (Kansas City), Short Line

(Des Moines), or Cedar Rapids, but he'll have to correct any problems that show up on the train as it actually arrives in Silvis. For instance, bad-order cars may have been set out en-route.

There's a machine on a small desk in our room with a typewriter-like keyboard that, instead of a piece of paper, spits out an IBM punch card. Every car will have a card made for it as it actually stands in the



a minimum amount of dwell spent in the terminal area.

Kelly Yard has a gravity retarder hump with 50 bowl tracks, plus five long make-up departure tracks and a 20-track receiving yard where the trains are put prior to being run over the crest.

Approximately 26 through freights are scheduled daily between Silvis and Chicago. Along with the many locals and transfers, this equals a train in and out of the yard every 30 minutes, all day long.



These views of Kelly Yard at Silvis, Ill., come from a Rock Island-issued brochure highlighting freight service investments throughout its system in the 1970s.

Classic Trains collection



The brightly painted depot at Bureau, Ill., matches the third unit on this eastbound freight led by U25B No. 230 in July 1976. The first cars behind the power are likely 57-foot PFE mechanical reefers like the car that the story follows. Randy B. Olson, David P. Oroszi collection

inbound train. You can imagine the time this will take for a train of 100 cars or so. It's tons of fun when an impatient terminal trainmaster is looking over your shoulder, waiting.

When the inbound clerk is finished, he'll load the cards into the big printer in the next room and print multiple copies of the inbound train list. The printer produces six copies at a time. The humpmaster will mark the still-carbon-papered lists with the tracks the cars are to be sent to. Then the lists are separated and distributed. One copy goes to the terminal trainmaster's office, one is retained by the humpmaster. Another copy will go to the hump job foreman, who sits at track level at the crest of the hump and lines the switches for the proper bowl track. One copy each goes to the two retarder tower operators and, last but not least, one goes to the PICL clerk.

In the meantime, the inbound clerk will have delivered a pack of punch cards and waybills to me, the PICL clerk. There is a pigeonhole for each arrival track but, since the humpmaster has already called down on the intercom to tell me they will be humping this train next, I'll leave the pack sitting on my desk until the list comes down. Meanwhile, one of three Rock Island SW1500s — Nos. 940, 941, or 942, serving the only terminal they would ever see on the Rock — will have gone down a clear track and coupled onto the waiting inbound train. Its engineer will be

waiting for the hump repeater signals to change so he can begin shoving the cut to the crest of the hump.

Next, I verify that the first car over the hump matches the list and begin sorting. I put each car and waybill in its pigeonhole according to how the list was marked.

I always thought Kelly Yard at Silvis was remarkably well laid out for its intended purpose. It was built in 1949 during John Dow Farrington's administration and, unfortunately, probably had little in the way of maintenance since. One major improvement it did receive was to remove every other receiving yard track, leaving an access road between what remained, making it easier for the car department to quickly work inbound trains.

In each gap was a paved road that permitted mobile icing equipment to service trains on either remaining track. These changes were definitely a case of less is more, allowing a material improvement in workflow. In general, the yard — like most on the Rock Island — wasn't poorly designed; it just suffered from an anemia born of inadequate upkeep. However, like the pet dog of a poor master, it served faithfully to the end.

The physical tracks in the bowl matched my letter case. Each track held cars according to their specific destinations. Track 20 could be cars for Chicago and delivery to Grand Trunk Western, while another track could be for "C&O ones" (C&O ones were destined for the



old Pere Marquette to Michigan), while C&O twos were destined for the old Chesapeake & Ohio to Cincinnati. In this case, there were PC ones (old NYC) and PC twos (old Pennsylvania Railroad). Thus were the cars sorted by delivery destination while the waybills and punch cards wound up in my appropriate pigeonholes.

What made it really efficient, though, was that the first five eastbound departure tracks on the north side of the bowl had their own lead off the hump, and cars could be sent directly into them. Eastbound departure tracks were on the north side of the yard, and five westbound tracks on the south side.

About two-thirds of the way out, the departure tracks were bisected by double-slip switches from dedicated leads out of the east end of the bowl. An eastbound train could be quickly built by humping cars directly into a track on the west end, and classified cuts added by the “trimmer” engine working the east end of bowl.

There was a lot of versatility available with this arrangement. Once the slips were “closed” and the cuts coupled up, the new train would be turned over to the car department and this process would be aided by the terminal air available at the east end of each eastbound departure track. Thus, it wasn’t uncommon for the east-end yardmaster to tell a trimmer crew to “close the slips and spot the head end for air.”

The humpmaster could call down any changes but today, for simplicity, let’s say the train is humped exactly as marked. A 100-car train could be classified in 30 or 40 minutes if there were no problems. Officialdom considered it really good day if 3,000 cars went over the hill. At the end of the process each car would be in its appropriate track and its matching punch card and waybill would be in the appropriate pigeonhole.

For today, our car, PFE 455118, is going to be on the head end of what will become train “44aXX” with XX represent-

ing the date. The 44 is a hot train to be delivered to the Indiana Harbor Belt via a connection track directly from the Rock Island’s main line at Blue Island, on Chicago’s south side.

The outbound train will be built on one of the long departure tracks, say 8/20 (the five long eastbound departure tracks had dual numbers, all adding up to 28 for some reason). Due to the agreed-upon blocking for expeditious handling by IHB, it will go into a bowl track, let’s say track 26. Later it will be pulled along with one or more other bowl tracks by an east-end trimmer engine and dragged through the slips to become the head-end of “44a01.” For now, though, since it’s going to be in track 26, that’s where its card and waybill will wind up in my pigeonholes.

Now the third member of the team, the outbound bill clerk, comes into action. The humpmaster comes on the intercom and tells Smitty, the outbound clerk, “Smitty, we’re gonna pull 25, 26, and 34 and double them to 8/20 and that’ll be 44’s

This westbound Rock Island freight near Utica, Ill., is likely to terminate at Silvis on this September 1972 day. Motive power is an F7 and Geep. Randy B. Olson, David P. Oroszi collection





Train 57 works at Rock Island's Blue Island, Ill., yard southwest of Chicago in May 1973. This entrance to the Windy City made connections to the east easier and gave the Rock an advantage compared with competitors who entered from the west. Ken Crist, J. David Ingles collection

train. We're bidding it for 8:45 p.m." The "bid" time is the proposed time they think the train can be run.

That time will be conveyed to the roundhouse foreman so he can come up with power. Assuming he can dredge up something capable of tractive effort, and all else is well, the bid time will be changed to a "call" time. To make that happen, the dispatcher's office in Des Moines will be notified and, if it's OK with them, the call time will be confirmed and the crew clerks for trainmen and enginemen notified so they can call the crew.

As far as Smitty is concerned, it means he'll come over to my desk and pull the cards and bills so that when he's done, the cards will be in proper order to go through the big printer and print a correct list for the new, outbound 44's train. He'll separate the list and three copies will be folded and bundled with the waybills for the outbound train.

When the conductor arrives he'll come upstairs and pick up the waybills and lists along with the clearance and train orders from the wire chief/operator down the hall (the next room down). Then he'll be ready to leave town. While this is happening, the engineer and head brakeman will have reported to the roundhouse and brought out the train's power to tie onto the head end and do an air test.

This, of course, is an example of everything going perfectly. There were a thousand ways for things to go wrong. Bad-or-

dered cars sometimes had to be kicked out. Sometimes a "no bill" meant a car arrived with no matching waybill. It usually fell to the inbound clerk to try to resolve the issue, but there was also a full-time day shift clerk whose job it was to figure these things out. It was a case of knowing who to call and where to find out the rest of the story, which could be time consuming.

There was a time-saving solution for this. I always loved Pennsylvania RR railroader Lloyd Arkinstall's description of the railroad's yard at Harsimus Cove, N.J., as having a "time being" track. That is, a track where the cars with question marks were put until they could be figured out. I suspect every large terminal yard has its equivalent track. Silvis always had at least one track in the bowl reserved for the "no bills" or "strangers."

That pretty well describes the process of how a car made its way through Silvis. If everything went well, as described above, a car could be in and out of town in a few hours. That was the best-case scenario. But, to continue our story, let's look at how a typical shift went.

The average shift dealt principally with cars moving from the receiving yard into the bowl and outbound trains being built. There were other duties, though. One of them was the "RIP OK's". We had something called the bum jobs, assignments that varied at the direc-



tion of the yardmasters, which were daily tasks to switch out the cars that had been repaired at the mechanical facilities or RIP (repair in place) tracks. This happened on second shift.

Once cars had been switched into a cut, the west checker walked them and brought the list to the office. I had to pull the cards and print a list for the humpmaster, who marked them up for their trip over the hump and sent the list back to me. He'd eventually tell me when they were going to classify them because it was one of those "when we get around to it" jobs. Occasionally, though, there might be a hot car or cut of cars that required priority treatment.

One disaster that could interrupt smooth functioning was for the big list printer to go down. When you came to work, you knew there was trouble if the business machine company's repair van was parked next to the yard office. You could hear it almost constantly clanking,

clattering, and thumping the floor in its room, printing its little heart out.

Another huge fly in the ointment came on days when Federal Railroad Administration inspectors were on the property. If it was locomotive inspectors, things came to a standstill; the Rock had few, if any, engines that could survive an FRA inspection. If the federal guys were car inspectors, it was almost as dire because they had no trouble finding bad-order rolling stock that had to be switched out and sent to the RIP track. You knew, though, that the lull would end and it would be a--holes and elbows once they were gone.

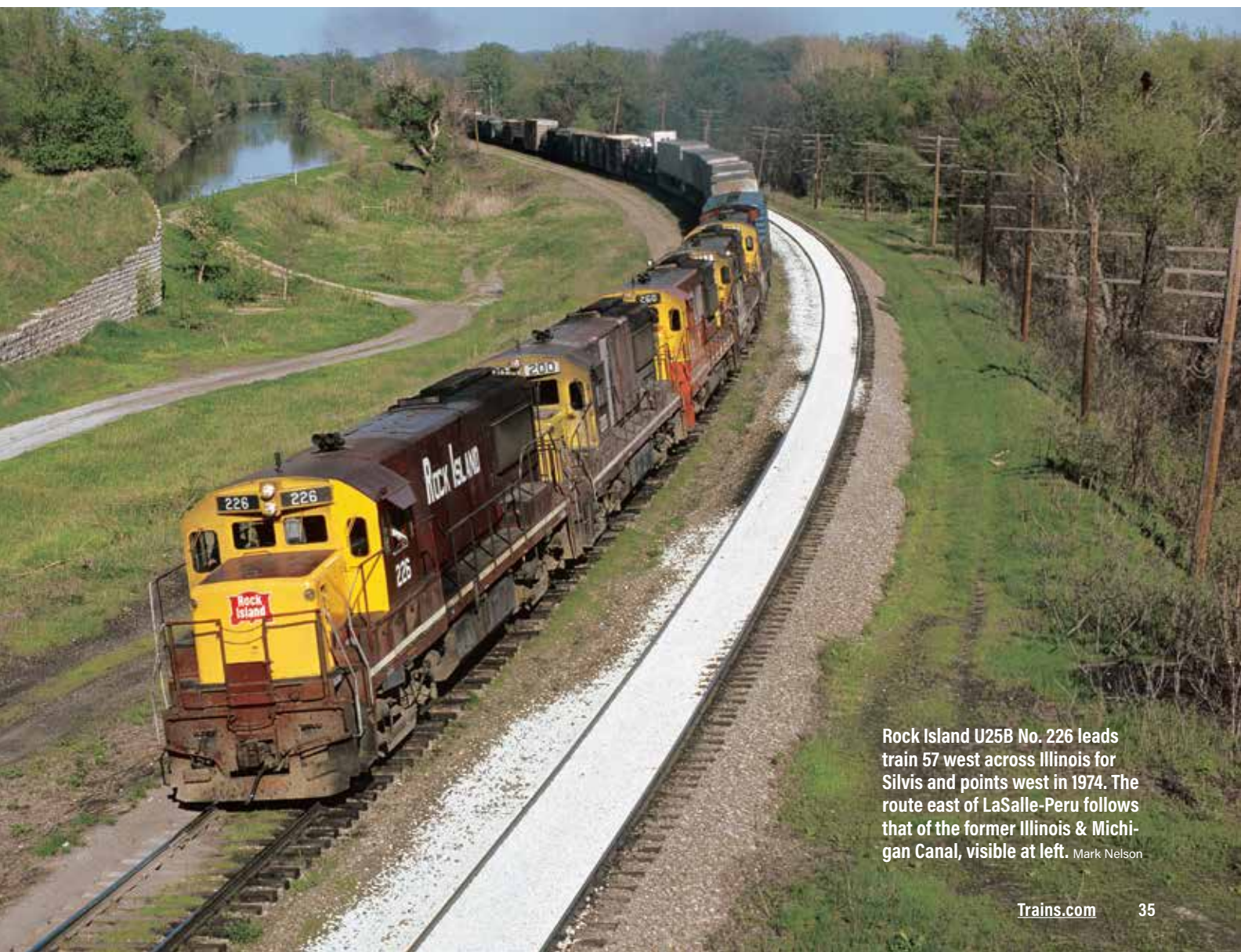
The grand finale of the evening, sort of the "Ode to Joy" for the PICL clerk, was printing the "master" PICL: a document of every car in the yard and its location. Each slot in the letter cases had a header card that identified the track and stayed permanently in its slot. You went through the letter cases and pulled every slot, in order. You wound up with a huge deck of

cards, and God help you if you dropped it. It was a good idea to make sure the printer had enough paper while printing the list — you didn't want to run out.

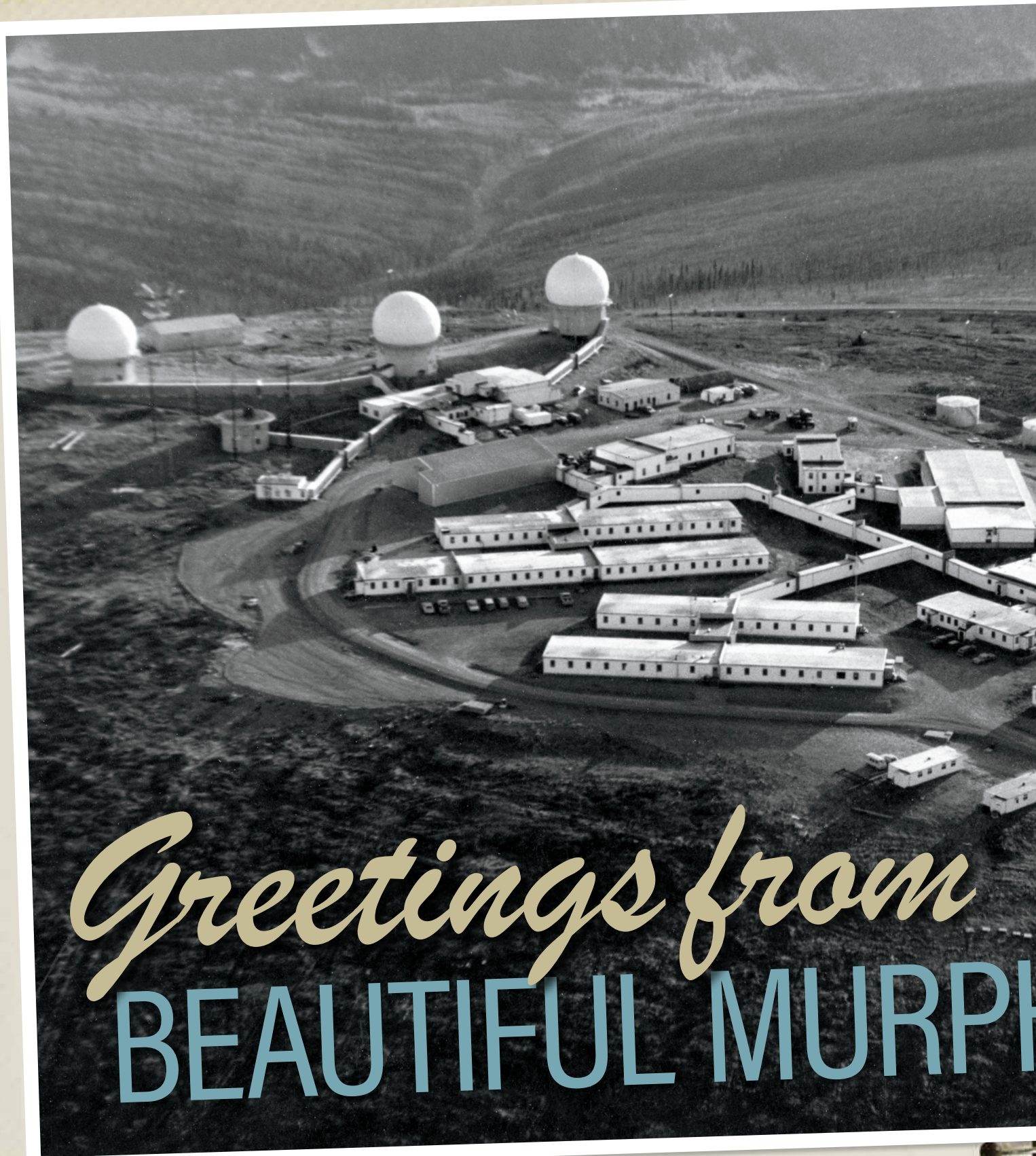
After what seemed to be an interminable amount of clattering, the machine would produce a huge list. I seem to remember we had a set of pins mounted on the wall where we could hang the printout and strip out all the carbons at one time. You wound up with several large copies that were distributed to involved parties.

To finish, you had to take the huge deck of cards back and replace the cards, in reverse order, back into their slots. This happened three times a day at the end of each shift.

So it went, three shifts a day. I think of my account here as a lot like the job itself: not very glamorous, but without it there wouldn't have been many trains for us to watch and photograph. Owning stock in the company that made the printer paper wouldn't have been a bad idea, either. ■



Rock Island U25B No. 226 leads train 57 west across Illinois for Silvis and points west in 1974. The route east of LaSalle-Peru follows that of the former Illinois & Michigan Canal, visible at left. Mark Nelson



Greetings from
BEAUTIFUL MURPH

MURPHY DOME



THERE WEREN'T MANY TRAINS IN ALASKA, BUT I MANAGED TO FIND AT LEAST A FEW WHEN I WAS IN THE AIR FORCE

BY DAVID LUSTIG // PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Memories are funny things. It's almost always easier to remember the good times rather than the bad. I'm reminded of that 50-plus years after a hitch in the United States Air Force in the mid-1960s sent me all over the world — even to a remote mountaintop in Alaska.

The Air Force, in all its wisdom, trained me to be a radar operator, or more precisely an Aircraft Control & Warning Specialist. It told me it would be a skill I could take back to civilian life. Yup. If a Delta Air Lines pilot wanted to intercept a United Airlines jet, I could make it happen.

In 1969, I was stationed near Corvallis, Ore., considered one of the best duty assignments on the West Coast. A comfy place like that usually meant that next up would be someplace a little less appealing.

Watching others receiving orders for assignments in Southeast Asia, I waited impatiently for mine. So, nobody was more surprised than me when a single request came in for a radar operator at Murphy Dome Air Force Station in Alaska.

It had my name on it.

A surprisingly short time later, after cold-weather briefings and signing out arctic gear at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, I was given a day off before heading to my permanent duty station.

ANCHORAGE

While most people about to spend their last days in a major city like Anchorage would have hit the night life, I set my sights on the Alaska Railroad's nearby major shop complex.

Murphy Dome Air Force Station, Oct. 10, 1969, taken from a Piasecki H21 "Flying Banana" helicopter. The next day we had a snowstorm. First-termers barracks were on the lower right. At top right, the author poses on duty in Alaska.



The carcass of an RF1B. The Alco RSD1 road switchers were rebuilt as A and cableless B units for a more streamlined look when coupled together. The shrouding protected the operating crews.



A few RF1s lasted into the early 1970s. Being worked on in the Alaska Railroad shops in Anchorage, 1076 was part of an ABBA set. These were unique to Alaska.



Finding locomotive numbered 1027 at Anchorage in June 1970 meant an instant dispatch to *Trains* at 1027 N. 7th St. in Milwaukee. This was an RSD1 before having AAR road trucks slid under it.



Approaching Healy where a branch line served a coal mine. What I saw there was a four-unit set of EMD F7s waiting to head up the line with No. 1500 in the lead.

Armed with a 35mm camera, I hoofed over to the adjacent yard. My shiny shoes and close-cropped hair let everyone know I was in the military. A quick conversation with a foreman brought a world of equipment I had never seen before. It was almost worth being sent to Alaska.

The last of the railroad's RF1As and cableless RF1Bs, 1,000 hp Alco road-switchers rebuilt with full-body cowling to protect crews from the elements, were still active. Unique to Alaska, they served a variety of assignments over the years, particularly on the passenger runs between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Low-nosed EMD GP7s on AAR switcher trucks were nearby, as was a small cadre of slant-cab Alco RSD1s, along with lots of EMD F7s. In the back of the shops, was the last of the railroad's EMD SW1s, rotting with other discarded equipment.

Returning to the Temporary Duty Barracks that night with a couple of rolls of exposed film, I thought this part of my military life was starting off on the right foot.

MURPHY DOME

The next day I flew to Fairbanks where I was met by a couple of guys in fatigues who had been sent down the mountain

to get me. Little more than one dusty, bumpy hour later I reported in to the 744th Aircraft, Control & Warning Squadron and was assigned a bed in a two-man room. I sat down and said to myself, "Three hundred and sixty-four days to go."

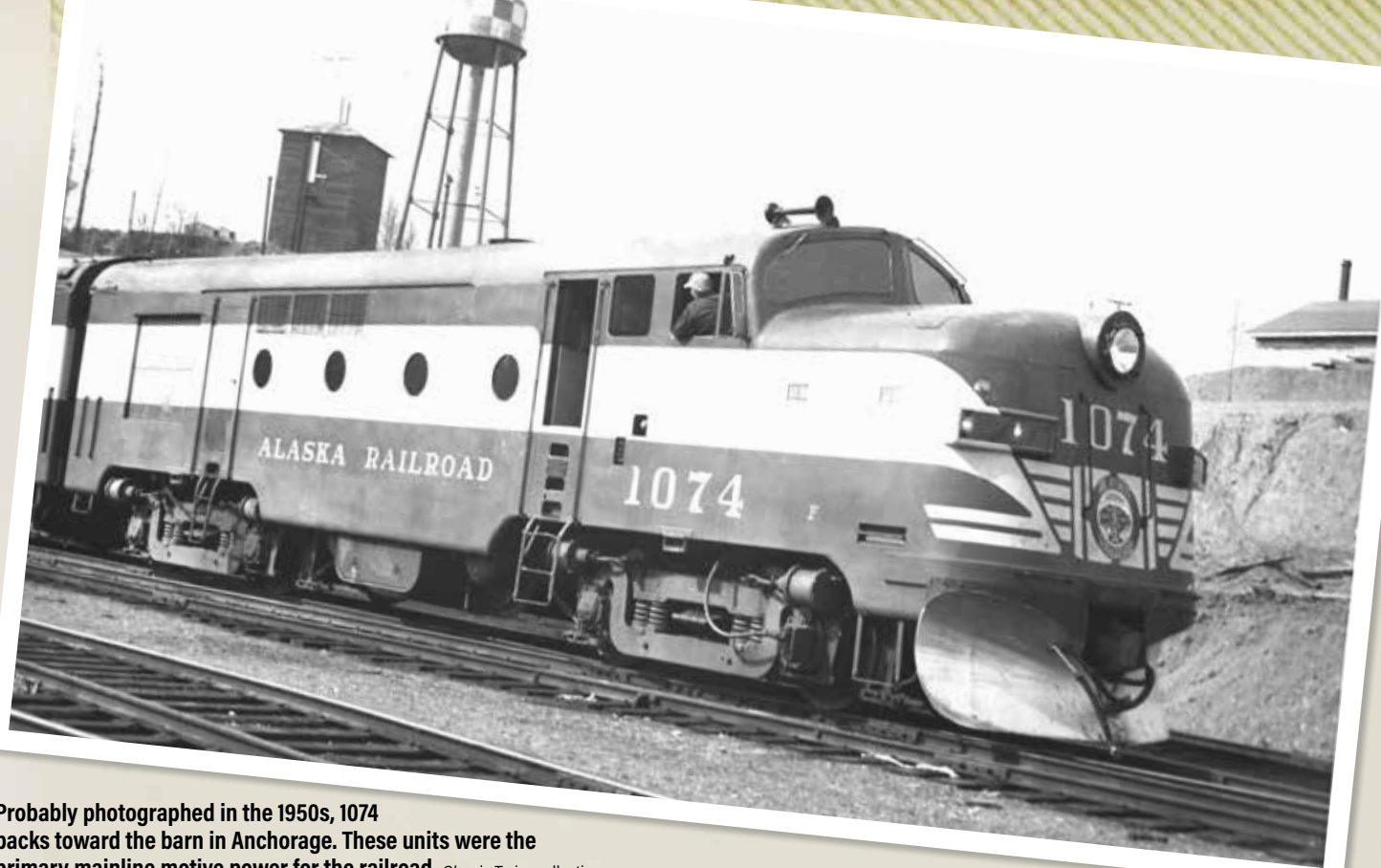
Trying not to feel too sorry for myself, I remembered what my friend Brian once said. "Always try and look on the bright side of life, Dave." OK, then, I would get to see the Alaska Railroad first-hand.

SURVIVING REMOTE DUTY

If I had to be sent to Alaska, I soon learned I was lucky enough to get Murphy Dome, some 30 miles of winding road west of Fairbanks. Of the 17 remote radar sites active in the state at the time, this one was unique. Typically, all structures were connected by enclosed corridors to protect us from the weather, which could get down to the -40s Fahrenheit.

Murphy was the only one with heated corridors, something you appreciate in December when going to the latrine would otherwise require donning your parka.

Second was it was the only site — severe weather aside — that had access to a major city pretty much all year. That meant



Probably photographed in the 1950s, 1074 backs toward the barn in Anchorage. These units were the primary mainline motive power for the railroad. *Classic Trains* collection



Alaska picked up a batch of U.S. Army EMD GP7s to supplement the RF1s in road service. They came with a homemade chop nose and AAR trucks. This one is at Fairbanks in July 1966. *Carl P. Munck*



When the site's mail pickup wasn't available, its Dodge Power Wagon ambulance was the vehicle of choice to get into Fairbanks and to the station, here in January 1970. It had a great heater.

we got mail every day and fresh food whenever we needed. Most other sites had to rely on Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft to bring in supplies once a month. Some of the super remote sites, such as Point Lay or Cape Romanzov on the Bering Sea, relied on a barge every few months.

LEARNING THE ROPES

After acclimating myself to life in Alaska — somewhere there is a photo of me snapped at midnight with the sun in the background — getting a seat in pick-up that made the daily mail run was a must.

Whenever I wasn't working, I was on the mail truck. First stop, the post office in Fairbanks. The second stop was finding

an excuse to go J. C. Penney department store to socialize with the women; and third, the Alaska Railroad passenger station where, when luck was on my side, I could check out the EMD F7s waiting to depart on the daily passenger train.

Catching trains was hit or miss, as I couldn't exactly duck out of my duties whenever I thought one might be near. When I did find a freight it was usually a string of SeaLand containers on flatcars with an occasional boxcar thrown in.

Still, watching a train literally swoosh through a layer of fresh snow on a bright sunny day was exhilarating, even if my camera froze up half the time. Before returning indoors, I would stuff it in a plastic bag to let the condensation form on it, rather than the camera.



In winter the sun is only up for a short time in Fairbanks. Nose-coupled or not, if a unit could be photographed, I took advantage of it. This passenger train had just arrived at the station.

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE

As I accustomed myself to my environs, I applied for and got an off-duty job maintaining the on-site photography lab, one of the many recreational activities available provided by the military for bored airmen. I was now in charge of 4x5 enlargers, giant drum dryers, all the chemicals, paper, and film I could order, including Kodak Ektachrome E-3 development kits for slides.

Now I could have my hobby, not worry about the price of materials, and get paid an additional \$75 a month to do so. At the time, that amount of money went a long way.

Anyone with a camera could use the lab, which was well and good, but I had to keep it inspection-ready at all times. Since it only had to be open 15 hours per week, I usually timed it around my rotating work schedule, which sometimes meant it was only available in the wee hours of the morning. In Alaska, you adjust to little things like that.

I learned that Eielson Air Force Base, 50 miles on the other side of Fairbanks, was served by the railroad with solid trains of hoppers bringing in coal to feed the massive on-base steam generation plant. Doing the daily switching was a pair of pristine 1,200 hp Baldwin S12 switchers decked out in Air Force blue. I wanted to see and photograph them, but Eielson was a large, super secure facility. Walking around with a camera was not considered a good idea.

I learned a couple of Air National Guard fighter squadrons from the Lower 48 were conducting their two-week annual training drills at Eielson, and we were their radar control. I called base ops and told them I was the official photographer for Murphy — well, I was — and we would like to come down and photograph the F84F Thunderstreaks and RF84 Thunderflashes for our files.

Permission was granted, and toting

35mm and 120 roll-film cameras, I borrowed one of the ambulances and headed to Eielson. Along for the ride was one of my crewmates, Joe Figueredo, who brought his own camera.

I should have asked to see it beforehand. When clearing the gear through base security, Joe pulls out a Kodak Instamatic. For a second I thought our goose was cooked, but nobody said a word and we were issued flightline clearance with a slight detour to the Baldwins.

Of the two, I found the 1842 basking in the winter sun between moving cuts of cars. It looked like it just rolled out of the erection bay at Eddystone. I never did locate the other one. I also found a homemade snowplow and some other maintenance-of-way equipment.

ROAD TRIP

People get bored quickly at a remote site and you figure out things to do on your off time besides watching television, going to the Non-Commissioned Officer's Club, another word for a bar with pool tables — and watching the Aurora Borealis do its magic in the night sky.

So, in the warm 24-hour sun of summer, the crew I was on decided to take a train trip from Fairbanks to Mount McKinley National Park (today known as Denali National Park).

Behind a pair of yellow-and-black EMD F7s was a motley collection of second-hand streamlined passenger cars originally from the Lower 48. We congregated in the dining car, in reality just a bunch of unbolted tables and chairs.

I opted for an open Dutch door and watched the scenery punctuated by an occasional freight train. We passed Healy, at the base of a branch line and found more F7s. They were in coal service, waiting for their train.

Arriving at Mount McKinley station — about halfway between Anchorage and Fairbanks — we managed to explore only a fraction of the park before it was time to take the return train. On the trail back to the railroad I turned a corner and came head-to-head with a grazing moose.

He, or she, saw me, and I saw him or her at the same time. We were both startled. My only photo of the encounter was



A typical 1960's freight train at Turnagain Arm between Seward and Anchorage. Four A-B-B-A units would be a typical example of head-end power. Usually there were a lot of SeaLand containers on flatcars in the consist. Mac's Foto

the moose's rear end making a hasty retreat. At the same time, I being the great adventurer, beat a quick path in the other direction.

The sun was still high in the sky, but it was late. I longed to get back to the train.

HIT OR MISS

I did as much train chasing as I could but still missed out on a lot. I wanted to return to Alaska as a civilian some day so I could track down more of the railroad.

The chance came unexpectedly 25 years later when I contacted Princess Cruises about Alaska rail and bus tours. Tacked on to the rear of the daily passenger train was a pair of streamlined blue-and-white bi-levels fully decked out with first-class accommodations for tourists to see the state. When I broached the idea to my then-new wife, Diane, she thought it would be a great adventure. I even told her if I had the opportunity, I'd show her where the now shut-down Murphy Dome site once was.

U.S. Air Force Baldwin S12 No. 1842 was one of two assigned to Eielson Air Force Base to feed the massive coal-fired steam generator. November 1969.

On the same trip, I caught Eilson's X-175 snowplow. I would guess it's a homemade creation from an ARR gondola. It was nicknamed "The Green Monster."

A MORE CIVILIZED TRIP

Compared with the original adventure a quarter-century before, we were truly in the lap of luxury with air-conditioned cars, superb food, and an incredible outdoor viewing deck on the last car. I even got some time in an open Dutch door again.

Unlike my first visit to Anchorage, this time the modern passenger station and the makeup of the train matched each other perfectly; the hodge-podge of second-hand equipment had been replaced by state-of-the-art rolling stock.

After we boarded, I wandered up front. Instead of the F7s from a couple of decades previous there was a set of clean EMD GP40-2s. As I was about to take a photo, the engineer approached and helped his four-legged friend onboard. It must have been "take your dog to work day."

Clearing the yard, we quickly left civilization behind and the beauty of the largest state in the union unfolded before us. That part had not changed. The food, however, was a substantial upgrade from the cellophane-wrapped sandwiches in the 1960s. Fresh fruit and salads were a prelude to a main





The Alaska Railroad daily passenger train No. 5 from Fairbanks at Mt. McKinley station at the entrance to the national park on Sept. 8, 1975. A pair of EMD F7's was standard power on this date. Ken C.

Brovald

course that could easily be compared to the great dining car fare of passenger travel past.

A STRANGE REQUEST

Wandering through the cars, I soon found the conductor, and before I could ask him a question, he saw the camera around my neck and said, "No, you cannot ride in the locomotive." I figured he would say that so I said, no, I didn't want that, but could I ride in the baggage car? He was dumbfounded. No one ever asked to ride there. He checked with the crew and soon I had a great view of the railroad from an open sliding door along with baggage, weapons, a couple of off-road vehicles, and crates of live chickens.

We disembarked at Mount McKinley station and overnighted in a modern hotel that certainly did not exist during my first visit. The next day we made our way to Fairbanks and



If you ever wondered who was manning the barricades in 1969, it would be me and my mates on Murphy Dome's "A Crew." We were deep inside the Mount McKinley National Park when I took this photo. From left, Sgts. Wyatt, Caralin, Mazur, Badman, Ferrel, and Phelps. The gentleman in plaid on the far right was our guide for the day. Dig those high-water pants!

THE ALASKA RR





The head end of my 1990s train at Anchorage, with EMD GP40-2 3013 on the point. The engineer was partaking in "Take your dog to work day." You see just about everything in Alaska.



Definitely a more streamlined look compared to my first trip in 1969, there were a combination of private tour cars and regular Alaska Railroad cars on our train, here heading toward Fairbanks.



The stop at Mount McKinley. The passenger platform is now asphalt instead of wood and the building has had a complete facelift. The Princess Cruises cars were our chariots on this day in 1992.



Convinced I wanted to ride in the locomotive cab, my intrepid conductor for the 1990s trip was surprised when I asked to ride in the baggage car. It was a grand view.

the end of the ride. Maneuvering into the Fairbanks yard, I asked one of the train attendants if residents could still hear gunfire on Saturday nights when the pipeline crews were in from the North Slope. "Oh yes," she said. "Nothing's changed."

One other thing that did not change was the mosquitoes. Big ones. Some of them were so large they could carry away a small animal. That, and tiny weeny ones that tended to gather every time there was still air. Long sleeves and bug repellent were a must.

The rest of the adventure was by tour bus from Fairbanks north, paralleling the pipeline to Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of the state. We flew back to Anchorage the next day and then on to Los Angeles.

REFLECTIONS

Landmarks I remember from my service days came and went, as desolate as they were in the 1960s. The radar stations that dotted the landscape back then were eventually replaced by minimally manned sites.

Now, instead of one hundred souls at each station, only a handful of technicians were left to keep the electronically


linked chain of surveillance stations functioning. The barracks, dining halls, command centers, and everything else were all bulldozed. Grass was seeded throughout the area.

I know that because when we had a free day in Fairbanks, I rented a car and drove to what was Murphy Dome, determined to show Diane how I had suffered. To my surprise, most of the road was now paved and there were even nice homes that had been built along the way.

Arriving at the now-denuded hilltop, I didn't recognize the place. There was nothing standing but a pair of radomes. I spotted someone exiting one of towers and explained to them why I was there.

"You're not the first guy that ever came back to see this place," he said with the same nonchalance as a traffic cop in New York giving directions to Times Square. I thanked him for his time. I wouldn't be coming back again.

On the way back to Fairbanks I heard an air horn in the distance. I looked at Diane and she smiled. Or maybe she rolled her eyes. Either way, I headed to the train station to see what might be there.

I had no need to wander around the J.C. Penney this time. 



A college kid & the old Omaha

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN

AROUND EAU CLAIRE, WIS.,

OFFERED PLENTY OF DISTRACTIONS

BY ANDREW S. NELSON // Photos by the author



DWBRA's engineer grabs a message hooped up by the Eau Claire Tower operator on April 30, 1986.

On May 17, 1984, a chop-nosed GP7 leads two cars and caboose across the Shawtown Bridge. This was the original Omaha Road main line over the Chippewa River.



Ibought my first decent 35mm camera in February 1984, a Minox X-700 that I kept perpetually loaded with Kodachrome 64 film. I was a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire at the time. The town and nearby Altoona were situated squarely along the Chicago & North Western's main line between Chicago and the Twin Cities, former subsidiary Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul & Omaha territory.

That X-700 would come to capture a lot of C&NW action (and some Soo Line as well) in the area from 1984 through my college graduation in May 1986.

In 1984 I had no scanner and no car

tion, about six miles. The tower also controlled the C&NW diamond with Soo Line's Chippewa Falls-Eau Claire branch.

The normal pattern was to walk to the tower after my classes were done (or once the Wisconsin weather allowed, I rode a bike), and asking the operator if anything was close.

I soon figured out C&NW's train EM-PRA (East Minneapolis-Proviso, Ill. manifest) was a regular late-afternoon eastbound through Eau Claire. There was also a pair of Duluth/Superior-Chicago trains: DWBRA (Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific-Belt Railway manifest) and counterpart BRDWA. The unfortunate thing is their running times tended to be unpredictable.

The C&NW's other regular trains were PREMT (Proviso-East Minneapolis trailers) and its mate EM-PRT. Both ran at night.

EMPRA's opposite number PREMA was also a nocturnal beast, but if it fell down

coming west out of Proviso, it could hit Eau Claire after dawn. There were also various grain, potash, and taconite extras thrown into the mix.

The C&NW main through the Eau Claire-Altoona area was still two-track territory, though trains ran right-main instead of left as this was old "Omaha"

territory, in contrast with most North Western lines.

All through trains stopped at Altoona for a crew change and made any pickups or set-outs. Altoona yard was also the base for locals that worked various industries in the area, including the Uniroyal tire plant and Pope & Talbot paper mill.

In addition to Eau Claire Tower, there were plenty of other highlights in the vicinity. The eastbound grade into Altoona was steep enough that the west end yard lead was on a fill above the twin mains. The primary tracks crossed the Eau Claire River on what initially appeared to be a single-track bridge – I'll explain more about that later.

West of the tower, the main entered S-curves between the Uniroyal plant to the still-standing passenger station (the last 400 called on July 27, 1963). West of the depot was another sweeping curve leading to the wye at Yukon Junction, where the line to Duluth/Superior split.

The C&NW had two Chippewa River crossings: the Shawtown Bridge, and the big double-track span built in a 1909 line relocation. There were also plenty of semaphores in the area.

The Soo Line served Eau Claire customers via a branch from Chippewa Falls. It crossed the C&NW main at Eau Claire Tower, then ran along the south

I couldn't figure out why I was hearing more units. I then saw the profile of two helpers pop around the corner.

to monitor or chase trains. However, I did have a good set of legs – I lived near the university on the near south side of town, and the C&NW was on the near north side. I also knew a friendly operator at Eau Claire Tower, which controlled the C&NW from Eau Claire Junction on the far west side of town to Altoona Junc-

side of Uniroyal parallel to both Galloway Street and the Eau Claire River, then crossed the latter to reach its freight house on South Dewey Street.

THE HELPERS

My first outing, on foot, to Eau Claire Tower on a warm March 1984 afternoon still ranks as one the more surprising moments I've witnessed in over 50 years being trackside.

I had just gotten to the tower when I heard howling turbocharged EMDs west of the tower. A few minutes later two SD40-2s popped out of the reverse curves crawling at about 10-15 mph. As they got closer, I figured out why there were working so hard: the train was an "all-rail" taconite extra off the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range. Between the 9,000-ton weight, the curves, and all those friction-bearing trucks on the Missabe ore jennies, the power was struggling to keep the train moving.

After the howl of those units subsided as the train clumped across the C&NW-Soo diamond, I net heard the roar of non-turbocharged EMDs to the west. For a few minutes I couldn't figure out why I was hearing more units. I then saw the profile of two helpers pop around the corner. It was two SD18Rs shoving hard

as the train was beginning its slow run for the hill into Altoona.

Those units had tied on at East Minneapolis to help the train navigate the hogbacks to Altoona, where they were cut off.

As I later discovered, C&NW would also occasionally use helpers on extra heavy DWBRAs and loaded pot-ash trains out of Duluth/Superior.

THE BRIDGES

I was quickly enamored of the previously mentioned four bridges in the Eau Claire area, the three on the C&NW and the one on the Soo Line.

Back to C&NW's bridge over the Eau Claire River – it looked like a single-track deck bridge, with its easiest view from a parking lot on the east side of what was then U.S. 53. It wasn't until I hiked to its west approach in April 1984 that I realized it was a gantlet bridge, with the track at both ends protected by a semaphore. The Eau Claire Country Club's golf course butted up to the bridge's south side, and as such, I managed to sneak in once or twice during the off-season to capture east-bounds from the river bank.

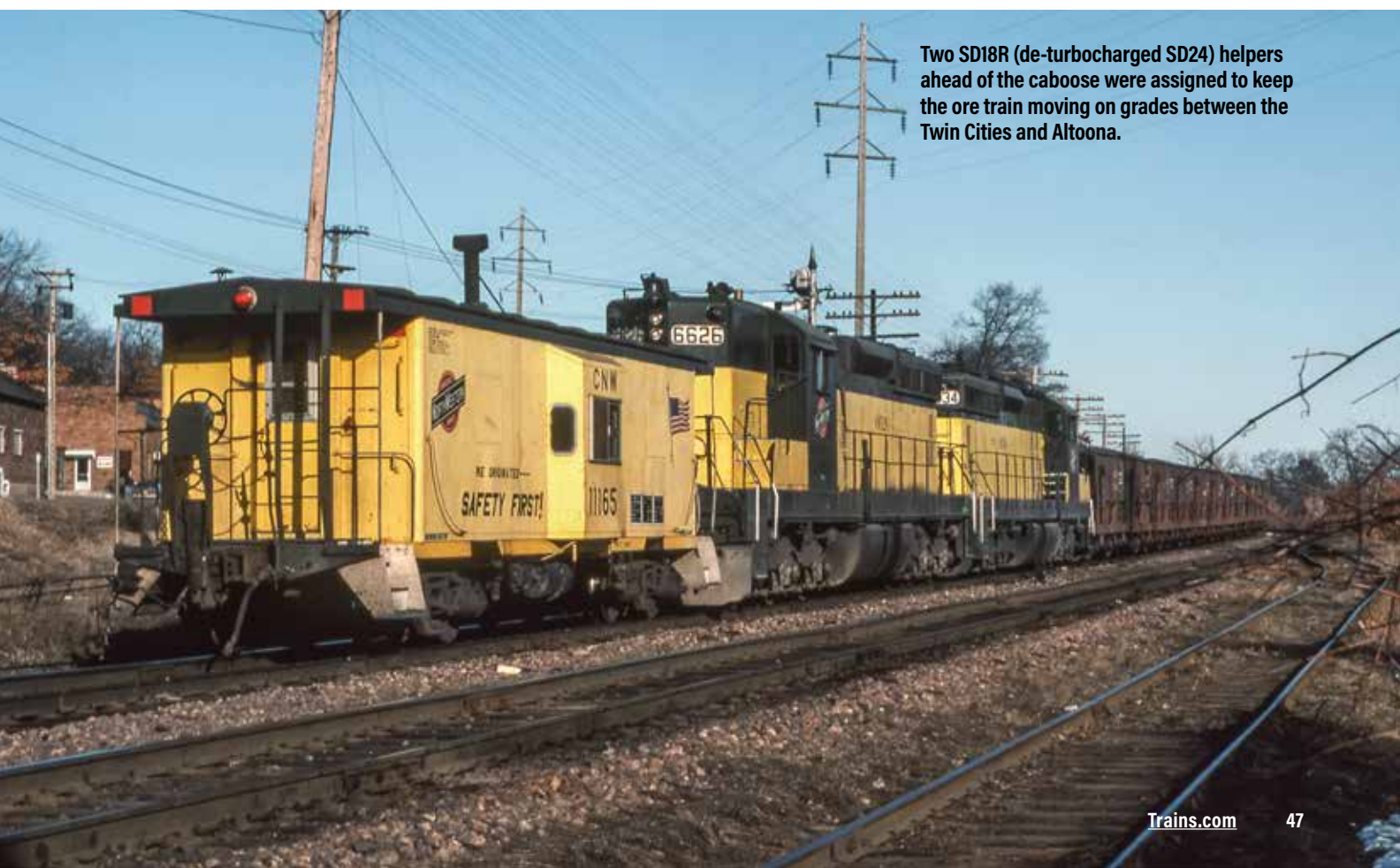


The second bridge across the Eau Claire River belonged to the Soo Line. From the side, it looked like a normal straight deck-truss bridge. That view was deceiving, as the span was laid out as an S-curve to accommodate the acute angle the tracks had to assume on the north bank parallel to the Uniroyal plant along Galloway Street.

I was determined to catch a train on that bridge, and chanced a phone call to the Soo's yard office in Chippewa Falls to get information on running times of the Chippewa Falls-Eau Claire local. My "bravery" paid off and I was able to catch the Soo local a few times.

The Shawtown Bridge was the C&NW's original Chippewa River crossing until 1909, when it was replaced by a bigger bridge about a mile upstream. This span was a picturesque single-track deck-truss high above the water.

A C&NW local crossed the bridge a few times a week to serve the remaining customers in Eau Claire's Shawtown area. After several tries in spring 1984, I finally caught the train creeping across not long before I headed back to my hometown of Wausau for the summer.



Two SD18R (de-turbocharged SD24) helpers ahead of the caboose were assigned to keep the ore train moving on grades between the Twin Cities and Altoona.



SD45 959 leads train EMPRA along U.S. Route 12 near Fall Creek on Aug. 10, 1985. The ever-frugal North Western opted for SD45s without dynamic brakes, giving the units a distinctive appearance. Stephen Nelson, Andrew Nelson collection

The North Western's mainline bridge across the Chippewa was a beefy double-track deck truss erected as part of the Omaha's 1909 double-tracking project through Eau Claire. It was an excellent spot to catch train EMPRA broadside from the river's west bank.

The challenge after getting that photo was seeing if I could get through Eau

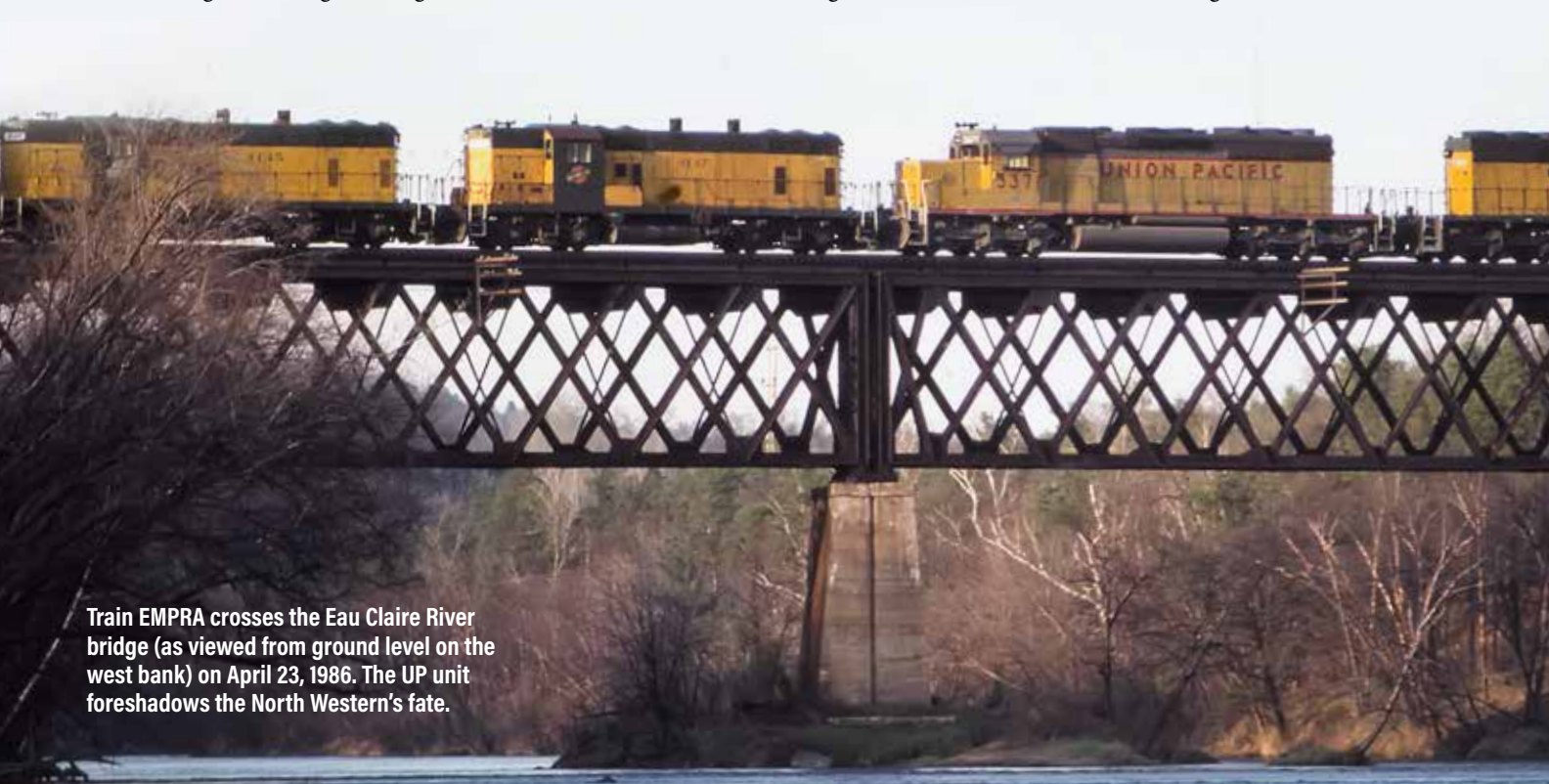
Claire fast enough to catch it again on the Eau Claire River bridge on the east side of town. I almost always failed in that endeavor, usually thwarted by ill-timed stoplights.

A TRAIN CALLED EMPRA

"Em-Pra," as the C&NW employees referred to the train, was a regular fixture in

my railfanning life in the mid-1980s. Some of the best photos in my C&NW collection are of it.

The hard part of shooting it, though, was it was an afternoon eastbound on a line that ran mostly east-west. Once I got more mobile with a car in early 1986, I started heading west of Eau Claire on nice afternoons, listening to the hand-me-



Train EMPRA crosses the Eau Claire River bridge (as viewed from ground level on the west bank) on April 23, 1986. The UP unit foreshadows the North Western's fate.



A heads-up from fellow railfan Rick Knutson saw the two of us capture the executive F units on C&NW president James Wolfe's train at Eau Claire Tower on April 29, 1986. We almost got skunked by an eastbound grain extra, right, that was blocking our view of the westbound main.

down scanner my brother had given me and keeping a close eye on the semaphores that protected the railroad with ABS. I usually ran into the train somewhere near Knapp Hill west of Menomonie. I was often rewarded with a mix of SD40s, SD40-2s, SD45s, GP40s, and GP7Rs.

One of my best EMPRA encounters happened on Aug. 10, 1985. My Dad and

I were photographing the Eau Claire 400 excursion behind North Western's executive F units between the Twin Cities and Eau Claire. On the westbound trip, the excursion met EMPRA led by SD45 No. 959. The C&NW's SD45s delivered in early 1969 were unique in that they were the only ones built without dynamic brakes, giving them a clean-lined long hood. The Eau Claire 400 met EMPRA at Menomonie. We took a few photos of EMPRA off the Wisconsin Highway 25 overpass, and then let it go as we continued to follow the excursion west to Knapp Hill.

Once we broke off the chase at Knapp Hill we headed east back to the Eau Claire-Altoona area where we caught back up with EMPRA. As it turned out, EMPRA's outbound crew had been ready at Altoona, and without much work was ready to head east with clouds breaking and strong western sun lighting up the countryside.

We followed it along U.S. 12 between Altoona and Fall Creek where the tracks take a more north-south axis. I decided to crawl into the back seat of my Dad's Ford Tempo as he drove and started taking pacing shots at 1/60th of second with both of our cameras as the sun hit the flanks of the 959. The big unit rolled along on jointed rail, clacking its way toward Proviso on a pleasant late summer evening.

'SORRY I'M LATE, MISS ROUNDS'

I met fellow railfan and all-around good guy Rick Knutson at UW-Eau Claire in 1985. Had it not been for him, I wouldn't have gotten some of the prized photographs in my collection. He was also "responsible" for making me late to class once and once to work.

One of the best and luckiest catches with Rick happened in April 1986. He called to tell me he had learned via his

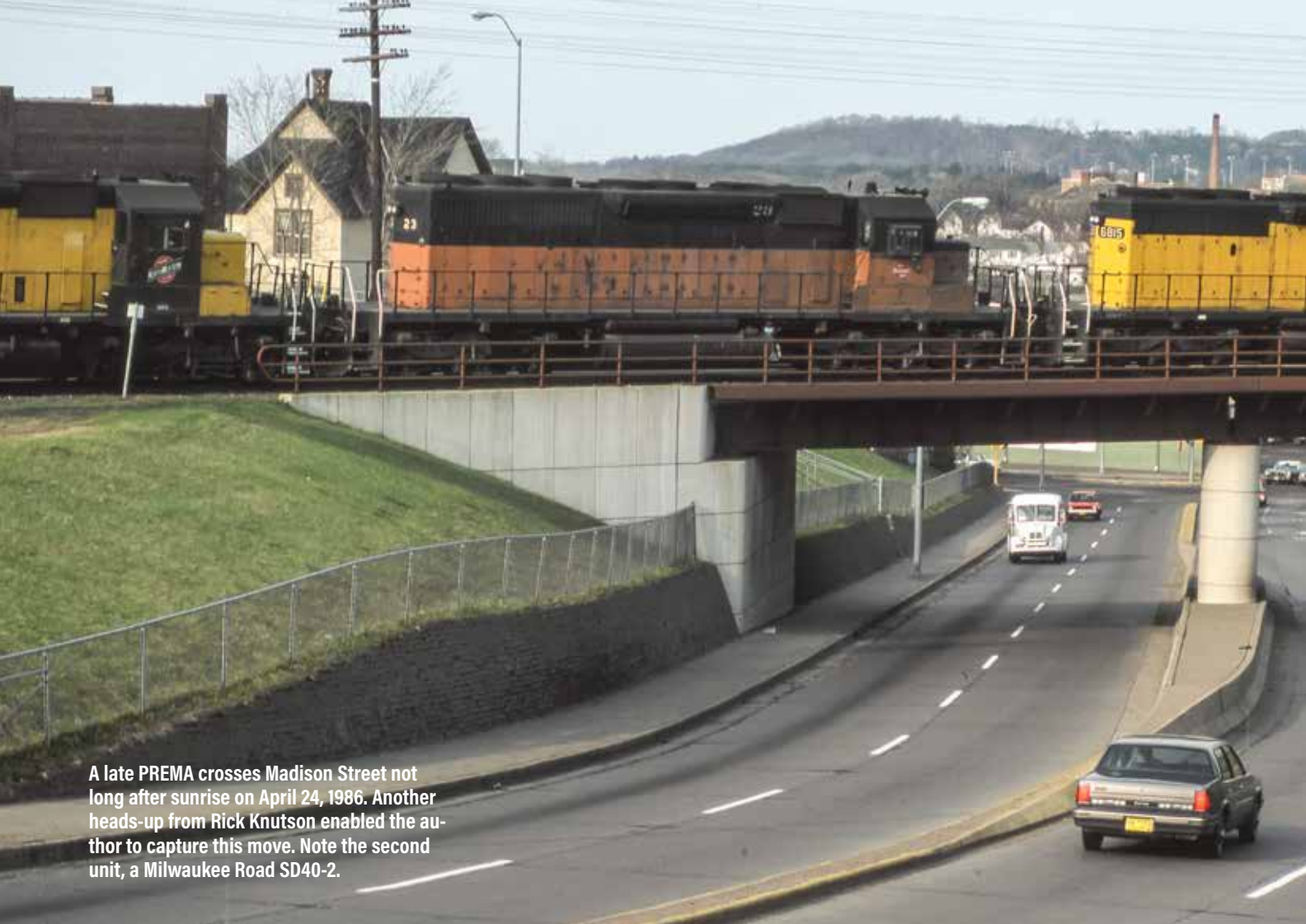
I crawled into the back seat of my Dad's Ford as he drove and started taking pacing shots at 1/60th second.

home scanner than C&NW President Jim Wolfe's train was westbound and close to Altoona. He picked me up in his Ford Pinto station wagon and we beat it quickly to the tower, hoping to catch the executive Fs.

As luck would have it, an eastbound grain extra popped around the corner west of the tower and was blocking our view of the westbound main. Disaster!

But just as the eastbound train's caboose cleared the Soo diamond the F's and train popped around corner, allowing us to capture the rear-end crew waving at the head-end crew. We tried to chase the train west, but it was miles





A late PREMA crosses Madison Street not long after sunrise on April 24, 1986. Another heads-up from Rick Knutson enabled the author to capture this move. Note the second unit, a Milwaukee Road SD40-2.

ahead of us before we could get going in the Pinto and out of town.

Then on May 3, 1986, Rick called me in the morning and said, "Hey, PREMA's late and he's got a Milwaukee SD40-2 second unit out." He picked me up in his trusty steed and we headed to Eau Claire tower, then drove the mile west to catch it broadside crossing Madison Street. I ended up being late for class that morn-

I said, "Sorry I'm late, Miss Rounds." I didn't think she'd understand I was out photographing a steam engine.

ing, but I didn't care. A late PREMA with a Milwaukee Road SD40-2 could not go unphotographed.

Then there was the rainy, foggy morning of May 14, 1986. I don't remember the circumstances, but Mid-Continent Railway Museum's ex-

C&NW R-1 4-6-0 No. 1385 was headed west for the Twin Cities. Rick called me and asked if I wanted to chase it with him. Of course, I said yes, even though I had to be at UW-Eau Claire's McIntyre Library by late morning for a short shift.

We caught up with Ten-wheeler and short train at the Chippewa River bridge and started following it west. Not surprisingly, we overestimated how far west we could go and still get me back to Eau Claire and to work on time.

I ended up being 15-20 minutes late. Evelyn Rounds, my nice but quite prim and proper supervisor at the library, was a little put out when I finally got to the main desk. I said, "Sorry I'm late, Miss Rounds." I just told her I lost track of time and that's why I was late. I didn't think she'd understand that the real excuse was I was out chasing and photographing a steam engine, so I didn't bother trying. 📷





After a short chase from Eau Claire, we see No. 1385 at the bottom of Knapp Hill on May 14, 1986. The author was late for work at the university library on account of this adventure.

Soo Line GP38-2 No. 4450 has just crossed the S-curve of the Eau Claire River bridge on a dreary March afternoon in 1984. The Uniroyal complex is in the background.



Colorado & Southern observation
Cheyenne/Denver at Cheyenne, Wyo.,
in 1937. Otto Perry, Denver Public Library collection

The rest of the Lincoln Football Special story

BY JERRY A. PINKEPANK // Photo collection of Brian M. Schmidt

In the Spring 2023 issue of *Classic Trains*, the subject for "What's in a Photograph?" was "Burlington Football Specials Converge on Lincoln, Nebraska, Oct. 31, 1964." Reader Michael Bartels emailed us that he was there on that day, and provided enough useful points for this follow-up. A main feature of the Spring 2023 article was the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad business car *The Roundup*. An interesting chapter in that car's exceptional his-

tory was its transfer in 1936 from parent Burlington to subsidiary Colorado & Southern, and its reconfiguration to add parlor seats to its original solarium-lounge layout for use on C&S trains 31 and 32, the *Zephyr Connection*, between Denver and Cheyenne, carrying passengers to and from the *Denver Zephyr*.

1 C&S train 31 backing into Cheyenne

The depot was along a spur connecting end to

end with the CB&Q branch from Sterling, Colo. It was directly adjacent to the Union Pacific station across 15th Street. The photo was made Jan. 24, 1937. The *Denver Zephyr* arrived Denver from Chicago at 8:30 a.m. and 31 departed there at 8:40, arriving Cheyenne at 12:10 p.m. and departing almost immediately as train 32 at 12:25, reaching Denver at 3:50, just in time for the 4 p.m. eastbound departure of the *Denver Zephyr*.

2 C&S 4-6-2 350 same train and day

C&S Nos. 350 and 354 (Baldwin, 1911), C&S's first 4-6-2s, were copies of the CB&Q S-2 class; 350 was the only oil-burner of the class, converted in 1918; 350-354 were heavily rebuilt in 1922-25 including new cylinders, and in 1929-30 received feedwater heaters. Otto Perry photographed the engine at the station during the 10 minutes in which train 31 became train 32.

3 Conductor protecting backing move

On most cars this would require a tail hose, but in this case, there was probably a permanently mounted air valve inside. The street crossings along the way would have either watchmen or automatic signals. Note the radio antenna extending along the top of the car on pylons; this would be for the tunable radio in the lounge, which occupied the rear third of the car, with the parlor car seats ahead.



C&S 4-6-2 at Cheyenne, Wyo., in 1937.

Otto Perry, Denver Public Library collection

4 Car name *Cheyenne*

The car was unique in that it had two names, with *Denver* on the opposite side. The car was C&S No. 340 but it doesn't appear that was applied to the car.

5 Major track changes in Lincoln

Since 1964, downtown Lincoln has been transformed by the West Haymarket development. This resulted in the trackage shown in red being removed. The towers shown here have been replaced by CTC.

6 Old passenger station on isolated track

Seen in the photo below the map, looking south from the intersection of Q Street and new Canopy Street, named for the two old parallel platform shelters running where other depot tracks once stood. O Street viaduct, now widened as the Harris Overpass, can be seen in the background. BNSF still has offices in the upper floors of the former depot, now called Lincoln Station. It has a Great Hall used for events, two restaurant/bars, retail, and offices. On the isolated track, Burlington 4-6-0 No. 710, built in Havelock shops in suburban Lincoln in 1901 and donated to the city in 1954, is displayed with a waycar, as cabooses were called on the Burlington.

7 Amtrak station

Located in 2012 on the freight mains, this is where newly extended Q Street stub-ends against new north-south Pinnacle Arena Drive, running through what had been vacant land west of the X Yard.

8 Former depot tracks and coach yard

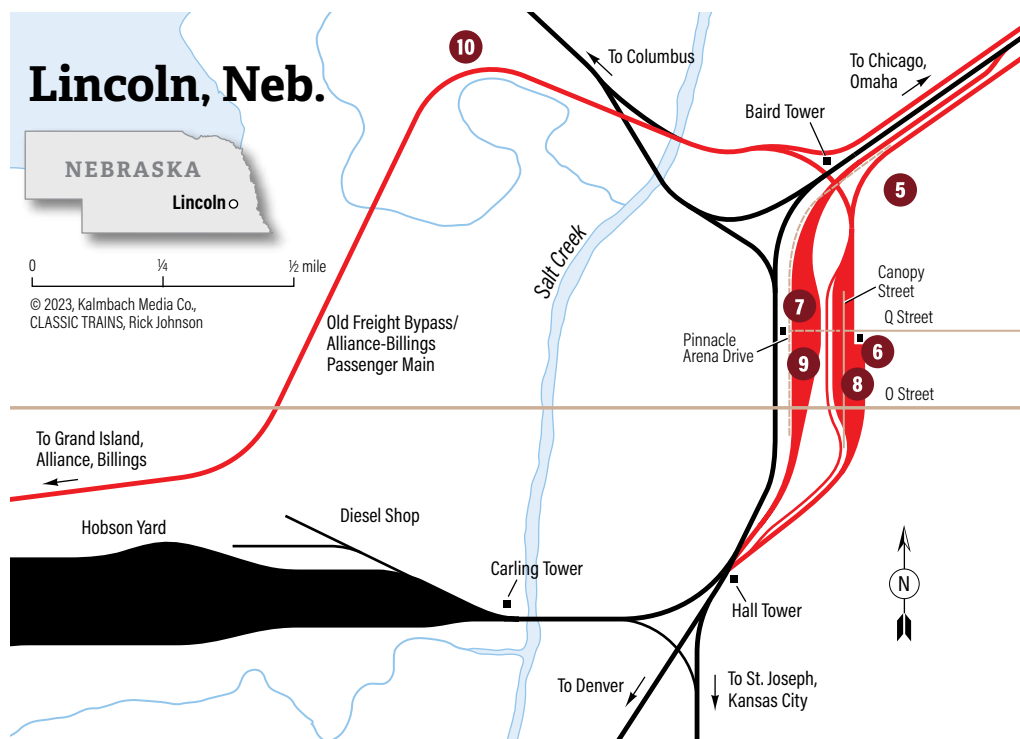
The old depot platform tracks were astride the former passenger mains with the former coach yard west of them. The track looping to the west was a servicing track for passenger trains, passing over an inspection pit. Reader Scott Kiefer has the station register for Oct. 31, 1964 and it lists the five football specials that ran that day:

XW 285 w/13 cars
XW 9923A-9920B-9923B w/18 cars
XW 9989B w/18 cars (we know from the photo this was 9989B/E7A/E7A)
XW 9917A-9919A-9928B w/16 cars
XW 9935B-9932A-9912B w/14 cars

In the photo, XW 9989B hadn't yet been turned; it would depart west because it would run via Pacific Junction, then south; before the 1977 opening of BN's Rulo bridge over the Missouri River, 114 miles southeast of Lincoln, this was the St. Joseph-K.C. main line maintained for passenger speeds.

9 Former X-yard

This yard was used for industry cars. Correcting an error in the Spring 2023 issue, mixed trains didn't originate here; they came out of the main



Burlington Route 4-6-0 is displayed outside the Lincoln, Neb., station. Michael M. Bartels



The *City of Wabash* at South Bend, Ind., in 1959. Louis A. Marre

freight yard, Hobson Yard. There were two surviving mixed trains in 1964, one north to Columbus, Neb., which stopped for passengers at the old station, and one south to Nebraska City via the St. Joseph freight route, which probably backed into the old station if there happened to be passengers originating at Lincoln.

10 Former north bypass

Used by passenger trains through Alliance to Billings, and by freights that bypassed Hobson Yard using the Cobb junction complex west of Hobson, it was eliminated with the construction of a yard on the north side of Hobson used for inspection of loaded and empty coal trains.



Burlington dynamometer car 30 resides in a museum at Green Bay, Wis. Bob Lettenberger

11 Wabash observation car *City of Wabash*

In the Spring 2023 issue of *Classic Trains*, this car was shown on the stub tracks south of the old depot and incorrectly identified as a coach for mixed train service. In 1964, the *City of Wabash* was owned by a group of local railfans. The other cars on that track were for maintenance-of-way use.

12 Burlington dynamometer car 30

Also in the Spring 2023 issue, this is the red car on a stub track south of the old depot, not identified by a number. The car was donated in 1971 to the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wis., where it is seen in the above photo. ■

Archive Treasures

U.S.-built 2-8-2s saved
the day for postwar
French National Railways

Mikado *for France*

BY VICTOR HAND // Photos by the author, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

Coal-burning 141R-607 heads a Nevers
to Moulins freight at Saincaize in cen-
tral France on Jan. 10, 1968.





On June 6, 1944, Allied armies invaded Normandy in German-occupied France. Fighting was intense, but by August, American troops were advancing through Brittany and the Loire Valley, and by Aug. 29 Paris was liberated. A second invasion in the south of France occurred on Aug. 14, and these armies linked up with the Allied armies fighting in the north. The last German troops on French soil surrendered in February 1945.

The Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (SNCF), or French National Railways, had been formed in 1938 to manage all of the country's railways, both private and state-owned. The end of fighting left the railway system devastated, with infrastructure and rolling stock largely destroyed. Thousands of steam locomotives had been damaged or destroyed. Of the 17,000 locomotives on SNCF before the war, only about 3,000 were operable. The French railway supply industry also had been gravely damaged, and was in no position to produce new locomotives. SNCF needed locomotives, and it needed them fast.

Even before the end of fighting, railway reconstruction plans were underway. North America was quickly identified as the only place with the industrial capacity to produce the needed locomotives.

A team of French engineers went to the U.S. to work with designers at Baldwin Locomotive Works to design the new engines. They were basically a medium-size American 2-8-2 with some European features. Specifications were as follows:

Two cylinder — simple expansion

Cylinders: 23½-inch diameter, 28-inch stroke

Drivers: 65 inches

Weight: 256,000 pounds

Tractive effort: 44,500 pounds

Axle loading: 20 tons

Designated as the 141-R class, these engines were called the "Liberation" type by the French. The use of 141 reflects the French tradition of organizing engines by counting axles instead of wheels.

A first order was placed in February 1945 with the three major U.S. builders, Alco, Baldwin, and Lima. The first engine was turned out by Lima in July 1945, and all 700 were delivered by May 1946. These engines were coal-fired, with stokers and standard American drafting. They had bar frames, standard spoked drivers, and Worthington feedwater heaters. A second





Baldwin-built 141R-797 shows off a Boxpox main driver on the service tracks at the huge Le Mans engine terminal on Aug. 19, 1964. The 141Rs shared freight duties with French-built 141Ps west of Le Mans.

FIRST ORDER

Number	Builder	Year	Quantity	Fuel	Drafting	Drivers	Frames
141R 1-180	Lima	1945-46	180	Coal	American	Spoked	Bar
141R 181-440	Alco	1945-46	260	Coal	American	Spoked	Bar
141R 441-700	Baldwin	1945-46	260	Coal	American	Spoked	Bar

SECOND ORDER

Number	Builder	Year	Quantity	Fuel	Drafting	Drivers	Frames
141R 701-860	Baldwin	1946-47	160	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox -main only	Bar
141R 861-1020	Alco	1946-47	160	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox -main only	Bar
141R 1021-1120	Lima	1946-47	100	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox -main only	Bar
141R 1121-1139	Alco	1946-47	19	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox -main only	Bar
141R 1140-1160	Alco	1946-47	21	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox -main only	Cast
141R 1161-1200	Baldwin	1946-47	40	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox - all	Cast
141R 1201-1219	Montreal	1946-47	19	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox - all	Cast
141R 1220-1300	Montreal	1946-47	81*	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox - all	Cast
141R 1301-1340	Canadian	1946-47	40	Oil	Kylchap	Boxpox - all	Cast

* 17 engines, 141R 1220-1235 plus 1241 lost at sea.



An Alco-built 141R hurries west at Bandol on the Riviera line with train RS, a Vintimille to Strasbourg summer-only service, with through cars to Frankfurt. The buffers cover the last digit of the engine number.



141R-688, a coal-burning Baldwin product, prepares for a night freight south to Moulins at Nevers roundhouse on Jan. 10, 1968.

A Nevers to Moulins freight accelerates out of Saincaize on Jan. 12, 1968, behind 141R-223, an Alco product of 1945. Saincaize was a busy junction just to the south of the city of Nevers. In 1968 it saw heavy freight traffic pulled by 141R Mikados.





On June 27, 1962, the author rode train 59, a Paris-Toulon overnight express out of Marseille. A few miles out, the train met 348, a local accommodation from Les Arcs to Marseille.



order was placed in 1946 for another 640 engines, this time with Alco, Baldwin, Lima, and the two major Canadian locomotive manufacturers, Montreal Locomotive Works and Canadian Locomotive Co. Of these engines, 621 were oil-fired and 19 coal-fired. All had single Kylchap drafting arrangements, a French design employing multiple exhaust nozzles.

A total of 460 of the second order of 141-R class had Boxpox main drivers and were equipped with roller bearings on all axles. The next 180 had all Boxpox drivers and roller bearings. The last 201 engines had one-piece cast-steel engine beds, the first of this type to be used in Europe. The second batch were all delivered by July of 1947, paid for by the U.S. government as a part of the Lend-Lease Act of 1941 which was still in effect before the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe came in 1948.

Seventeen locomotives built by Montreal Locomotive Works were never delivered, being lost at sea when the *M.S. Belpamela* sank in the North Atlantic in April 1947 during a New York-to-Cherbourg voyage. Investigations concluded the Norwegian flag freighter foundered when its cargo of 2-8-2s shifted during heavy seas off Newfoundland.

I first encountered the 141-R as a teenager on a 1956 trip to Europe with my parents. These 2-8-2s put on quite a show wheeling the fast passenger trains along the French Riviera to and from Vintimille on the Italian border. When I returned to France in 1962 with a camera, I found these engines all over the country, working freights, local passenger trains, and intercity expresses. Most of the coal-burners were assigned to the northern and eastern parts of the country, while the oil burners mostly worked southern and western areas.

The French built quite a few of their own locomotives after the war. Famed locomotive engineer André Chapelon designed and oversaw the construction of some of the most sophisticated and efficient steam locomotives ever built. But it was a 141-R that closed out the steam era in France in 1975. They were simple, rugged, and easy to maintain. They served SNCF well for more than 30 years. ■

VICTOR HAND is an acclaimed photographer with countless credits in Classic Trains and Trains. He would like to thank Ad Van Sten for his assistance in gathering data for this article.

The eastbound combined *El Capitan/Super Chief* — note the equipment variety — descends Edelstein Hill in April 1968. Next stop, at the bottom of the hill, is Chillicothe, Ill., gateway stop for nearby Peoria.

Santa Fe *El Capitan* of 1956

The “also ran” train was far from it

Just say “Santa Fe” to anyone in the realm of railroading and they’ll likely think “*Super Chief*.” Truly, that first-class-only Chicago-Los Angeles streamliner was about as top-notch as they got here in North America. But here I’m focusing on the *Super*’s companion train, the all-coach *El Capitan* — specifically, the 1956 version.

First, a bit of history, zeroing in on top-of-line Chicago-California passenger trains. Ultimately, afternoon or early evening departure times from the end-point cities — Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco — became quite popular, and therefore, those trains got the best equipment. Think *City of Los Angeles*, *California Zephyr*, *Golden State*, and of course the *Super Chief*.

Ridership on Santa Fe trains remained super strong into the early 1950s, and by this time, the railroad had learned not to ignore the coach-travel market. Even in the 1930s Santa Fe believed there was a market for a fast, deluxe, all-coach train with high-end appointments (e.g., lounge-observation cars and full-service

diners) with a schedule mirrored that of the *Super Chief*.

Thus was born, in 1938, *El Capitan*. As with the *Super Chief*, the *El Cap* operated on a 39¾-hour schedule between Chicago and L.A., though initially just twice weekly. Nonetheless, it was a hit.

Like so many U.S. railroads, Santa Fe got caught in the post-World War II euphoria that prompted new, streamlined trains or the re-equipping of earlier trains with modern, lightweight equipment. In 1947, both the *Super Chief* and *El Capitan* were re-equipped, and both put in daily service.

By the end of 1951, both had received still more new equipment, including the *Super Chief*’s *Pleasure Dome* lounge cars, complete with a private dining room,

no less — but that’s another story.

In 1954, attention turned to the *El Capitan* when two new experimental, “Hi-Level” coaches built by the Budd Co. showed up on the train, both with a “step-down” section at one end, enabling them to be mixed with conventional rolling stock.

According to Santa Fe historian and author Michael W. Flick, the two prototype cars were ordered by Santa Fe in

1952. Their production was the answer to the question of whether a long-distance chair car could be built that would combine the capacity and economy of a double-deck commuter coach with the luxury and public appeal of a dome car.

Whoa, some of you might say! Burlington Route and Chicago & North Western were

1956 EL CAPITAN FACT FILE

- Nos. 21-22
- Chicago to Los Angeles via Kansas City and Albuquerque
- All-coach service
- Features “Hi-Level” equipment as of June 15, 1956
- Significant competitors: Union Pacific-Milwaukee Road *Challenger*, Rock Island-Southern Pacific *Imperial*

EL CAPITAN TIMELINE

- Inaugurated Jan. 22, 1938, as Nos. 21-22 on a twice-weekly schedule
- Operated with two consists powered by new EMC E1 diesels
- Featured exclusive "Adobe" dining car china from 1941 to 1969
- September 1946 operates same schedule, alternating departure days with *Super Chief*; employee timetables show as Nos. 17-18
- Daily operation commenced Feb. 29, 1948, again with Nos. 21-22
- Extra fare eliminated Jan. 10, 1954
- Assigned full-length domes March 1, 1954
- Converted to Hi-Level cars on July 8, 1956
- Combined with the *Super Chief* on Jan. 12, 1958, as Nos. 17-18
- Additional Hi-Level cars delivered in 1964 for regular use on the *San Francisco Chief* and the *Texas Chief*

already operating bi-level commuter trains in Chicago early in the 1950s. True, but those were gallery-type trains.

Santa Fe declared that the Hi-Level concept was a winner. In 1956, *El Capitan* became a true double-deck train, though with emphasis on the upper level. Hence Santa Fe's "Hi-Level" marketing strategy for the new train.

Most, if not all, coach seating was in the upper level, with restrooms and baggage on the lower along with air-conditioning and related equipment in compartments rather than hung under the car, exposed to weather conditions — a long-time problem with traditional single-level cars. In the Hi-Level diner, seat-



Winding through the throat tracks of Chicago's Dearborn Station (note the clock tower), the eastbound Santa Fe *El Capitan* is at the end of its run in April 1971. Two photos, Mike Schafer

ing was upstairs and the kitchen below. *El Capitan's* Hi-Level lounge included a compact magazine stand while downstairs seating catered to travelers in need of snacks and other refreshments.

Does this all sound somewhat familiar? Yup, I've just described the format of most Amtrak long-distance trains that would follow. Thus, the importance of the 1956 edition of the Santa Fe *El Capitan*.

The Hi-Level *El Cap* was a stunning success for Santa Fe, prompting the carrier to explore bi-level sleepers for re-equipping the *Super Chief*. Years ago, a friend who worked for the railroad showed me its car plans for bi-level sleepers. That was as far as Santa Fe got — designs.

No doubt even the Santa Fe knew that intercity passenger trains were facing a bleak future, what with the coming of the jet airliner and interstate highway system.

In 1958, *El Capitan* and the *Super Chief* were combined except during the summer or other heavy travel seasons — a sign of things to come, and an arrangement that lasted into the Amtrak era.

From the get-go, Amtrak knew it had to address the fact that a wholesale

SANTA FE REMEMBERED

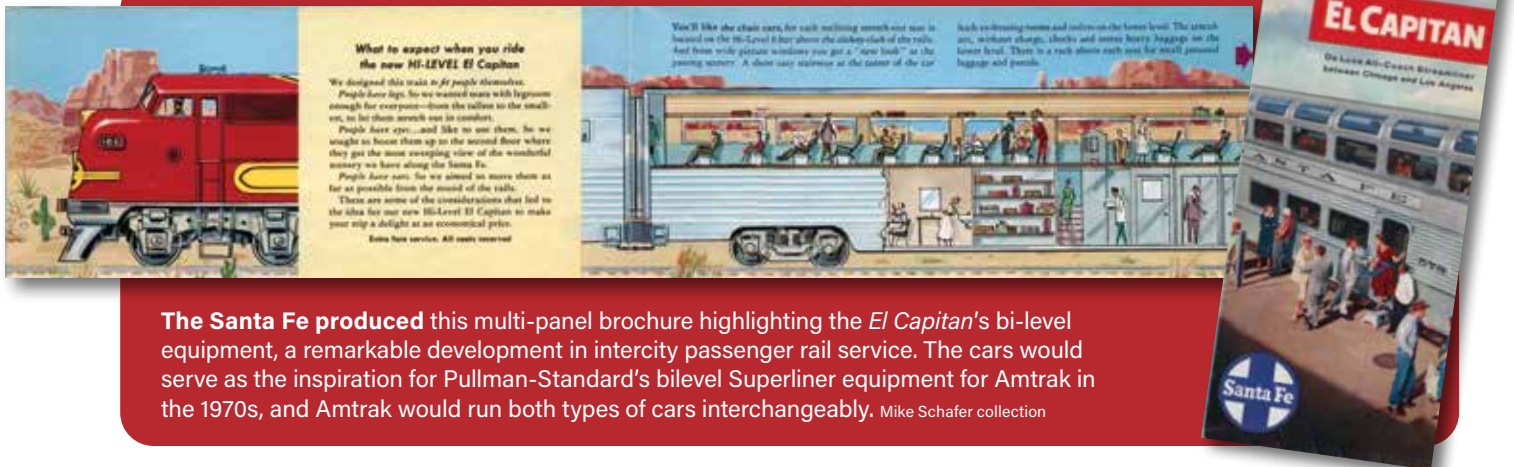
The Santa Fe Remembered

special issue highlights America's beloved "Super Railroad." It covers freight and passenger operations, remarkable steam locomotives, and famous places along the railroad and is available at www.KalmbachHobbyStore.com.



re-equipping of its entire fleet was imperative. The young carrier recognized the huge cost and operational advantages of Hi-Level design for trains running where there were no serious height restrictions.

Further, the bi-level *El Cap* equipment would serve as inspiration for the next generation of long-distance bi-level rolling stock — the Pullman-Standard-built Amtrak Superliners of the late 1970s. ■



The Santa Fe produced this multi-panel brochure highlighting the *El Capitan's* bi-level equipment, a remarkable development in intercity passenger rail service. The cars would serve as the inspiration for Pullman-Standard's bilevel Superliner equipment for Amtrak in the 1970s, and Amtrak would run both types of cars interchangeably. Mike Schafer collection

Utility in Chicago

Chicago's Commonwealth Edison (Com Ed) had a reputation for extensive forethought in the design of its power-generating facilities. Its two southside plants (Fisk and Quarry) were located along the South Branch of the Chicago River. Construction on the third plant, the Northwest Generating Plant, along the North Branch of the river, began in 1912 and included a dedicated electric railway to serve it and connect to the nearby Chicago & North Western. The railway was double-track and used 500V D.C. third-rail for power distribution.

The three power stations had a total capacity of about 200,000 kW, and Com Ed noted that about half that capacity was being consumed by Chicago's street railways. Com Ed S-4, at right, was the first articulated-truck GE steeplecab built. The design meant draft and buffing strains were carried through the trucks, instead of through locomotive center pins. The 4 was sold to the Illinois Electric Railway Museum (now Illinois Railway Museum) in June 1961.

Com Ed S-5's full 33-foot, 2-inch length along with the rigid connection between the two trucks is readily visible in this view looking south on California Avenue at bottom right. Under-running third rail, based on the New York Central installation, was used for this project.

The former North Shore Line No. 450 was added to the Com Ed fleet in 1948 as its S-6, below. Superseded by heavier locomotives on the North Shore Line, Com Ed sold the 6 for scrap in March 1959. In the background is the coal storage for the plant. About 300,000 tons could be stored on-site. — *Art Peterson*

Photos: right, H. M. Stange; bottom right and below, George Krambles; all: Krambles-Peterson Archive





Sunday wakeup call

A quiet afternoon at a Los Angeles-area yard turns red hot

I was barely a teenager when I found the wonders of Gemco Yard in the 1960s.

Even back then it seemed Southern Pacific's Coast Line slowed down a bit on the weekends. Growing up in Van Nuys, Sundays would usually find me pedaling my fat-tired Schwinn down Hazeltime Avenue to where it stubbed into Gemco, a small yard built in the late 1940s to serve the General Motors Corp. assembly plant (hence, GeMCo).

The auto plant predominantly churned out all models of Chevrolets with occasional runs of Buicks and Pontiacs. To shuffle the never-ending empty auto racks in, and loaded ones out, a quartet of switchers rotated from Taylor Yard, the major SP facility in the Los

Angeles area. At one time or another, almost every model Alco, Baldwin, and EMD end-cab unit put in time here.

At that time, Gemco was also home of the Chatsworth Hauler, a 15-mile switch job that served various industries between Van Nuys and its namesake town, the power pulled from whatever was assigned to the yard that day.

On one Sunday, it was the Hauler crew, SP's generic term for a local, that turned a summer's day into chaos with the introduction of unrepeatably words indelibly etched into my vocabulary.

This section of the Coast Line was especially quiet on Sundays and a lineside fan would consider himself lucky to see more than one train in daylight hours.

The Hauler crew, as usual, shuffled its eight or nine cars in switching order on the quiet main, putting the caboose right behind the locomotive to minimize the number of times they had to uncouple it when they reached an industry.

At about 10:45 a.m. with a rather lazy blast of the horn, the crew headed off toward Chatsworth. The sole employee on duty, a guy named Richard, did not even look up. As I remember it, he was sleeping soundly with his feet up on the table office.

But I didn't care. He allowed me to sit in the office, listening to the company radio that was eerily silent and read worn copies of the *SP Bulletin*, the company employee magazine.

Southbound with the Coast Mail in the early 1960s was F7 6386, an F7B, and a passenger GP9 normally assigned to San Jose-San Francisco commuter service. The latter was likely bound for maintenance in Los Angeles. David Lustig



It was like that for hours until all of a sudden, the radio came to life with an angry voice.

"Coast Mail to Gemco," the words came spitting out of the speaker, waking up Richard. "Coast Mail to Gemco, where the hell are you?"

Grabbing the mic, Richard answered, still half-asleep. "This is Gemco."

"Are you the guy in charge today?" Richard applied in the affirmative.

"You're a moron; you almost killed us."

"Who are you?," replied Richard, now fully awake.

"I'm the conductor of the Coast Mail and you have a boxcar on the main!"

"Where?"

"Look out the window, idiot."

Richard looked out across the empty tracks to see an FP7 a few feet from a 40-foot boxcar. Somehow, when the Hauler left, the crew never coupled up the last car.

When not stopped by an errant boxcar, SP's Coast Mail normally flew through Gemco at track speed.

"Impossible," replied Richard.

"We had to go into emergency and almost hit it. Now get someone out here and get it out of my way!"

Trying to be helpful, Richard said, "Ah, can you shove the car onto Schlitz siding?" He was referring

to a switch a few yards farther down the main that led to the brewery tracks.

"Get that damn thing out of here now!"

That got Richard's attention.

He quickly tried to call the Hauler but there was no answer. He looked at

the clock on the wall and realized they were out to beans.

"Damn," he said out loud.

"Hey kid, do you know how to throw a turnout?"

I stared at him blankly.

"Just throw the switch. I'm getting into one of the locomotives."

Now this was cool. I was a railroad-er! I ran out to the turnout and with all my might aligned it so the engine — for some reason I remember it was

"Are you the guy in charge today?" Richard applied in the affirmative.

"You're a moron; you almost killed us."

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A new EMD SW1200 works at Van Nuys in the 1960s among empty auto racks for loading at General Motors. David Lustig

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the 1310 — could move.

Richard cranked it up but just as soon as it started to move, the locomotive died.

Just as quick as it started, my career as a railroader ended.

We ran back to the office and he tried to raise the Hauler again. This time they answered.

"Hi Richard, what's up?"

"You idiots left a car on the main and the mail train almost plowed into it. Get back here now!"

Twenty minutes later the fastest NW2 I ever saw was roaring down the main. A switchman hopped off the still-moving locomotive and threw a switch, then began running to the next switch. He reminded me of a sprinter in a race.

The switcher crew got to the other side of the yard, grabbed the car,

"You idiots left a car on the main and the mail train almost plowed into it. Get back here now!"

threw the turnout to Schlitz siding and pulled the car out of the way.

The conductor, all this time glaring at us from the cab of the FP7, demanded an answer.

"Err, some kid must have uncoupled it before we left," came the lame reply. "You bet, then tell me why the brakes are still set? And who is this kid?" he asked, impatiently glaring at me.

"Oh, he's a trainee," said Richard.

"You S.O.B.s stink. You can't even come up with a good lie," the conductor said.

With that, not wanting to wait to get back on the Harriman coach that subbed as a caboose at the rear of the train, he climbed back into the F unit and yelled at the engineer to "get the hell out of here."

The Hauler crew headed back to Chatsworth to finish its work, and Richard went back to the yard office, put his feet up on the table and promptly went back to sleep.

The following Sunday I dutifully pedaled my Schwinn back to Gemco. There was a new guy there, his feet on the table.

He said Richard was on vacation. — *David Lustig*

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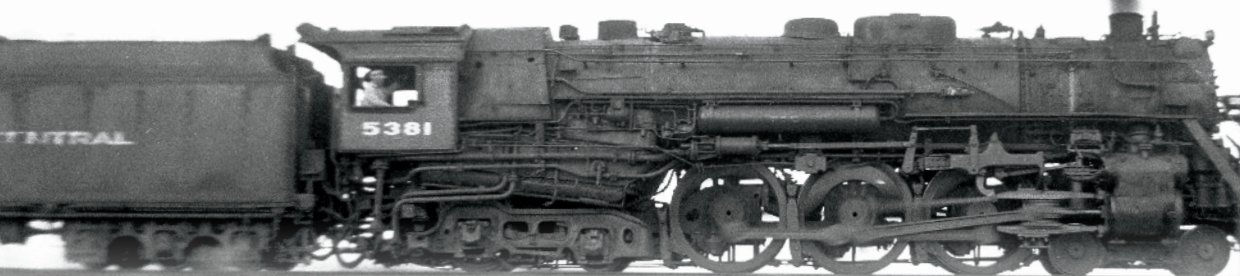


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Big Four speedway

A Buick was no match for a Hudson



The right place at the right time is the best way to sum up how disparate elements converged to enable this unique image capture.

After the end of the war, Dad ordered a new car from the Buick dealer in Geneva, Ill., which operated out of a storefront on South First Street. The order specified

“green, four door, manual transmission.” I think Buick changed the shade of green several times before the car was finally built and delivered – a 1949 Super (with three VentiPort portholes on each fender).

More than 70 years ago — summer 1950 — that car was carrying my family home after a vacation trip to Mammoth

New York Central 4-6-4 No. 5381 flies by the family Buick with the streamlined *James Whitcomb Riley* from Cincinnati in tow. Philip A. Weibler

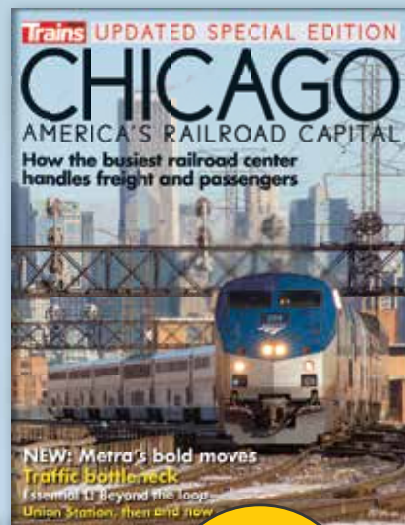
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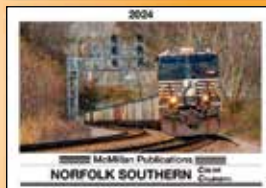
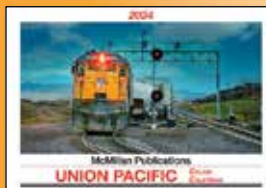
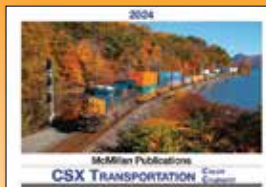


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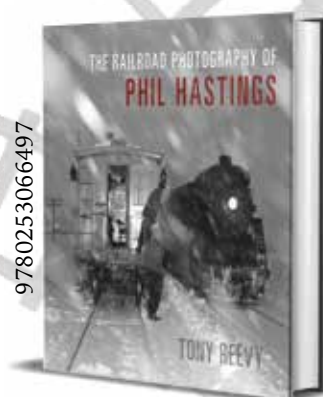
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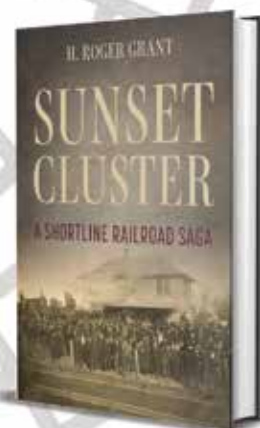
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The New York Central's westbound *James Whitcomb Riley* speeds along U.S. 41 in northwest Indiana. Philip A. Weibler

Cave in Kentucky. Our route followed U.S. Highway 41 north through Indiana, near the Illinois border. A little south of Earl Park, Highway 41 turned to the northwest and, for several miles, ran parallel to the New York Central. This route from Cincinnati through Indianapolis and Kankakee to Chicago was a main line

of the "Big Four" — the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway — that the New York Central acquired in 1906 and operated as a separate entity until the 1930s.

On this leg of our trip Mom and my sisters were in the back seat while I had the coveted "shotgun" position in the

front. As we drove along right next to the track, I squirmed around to look out the back window and spotted smoke. A train was coming up behind us and coming fast.

"Come on, Dad, let's race him," I begged.

Back then the speed limit on an open highway in Indiana was "Reasonable and Proper" — maybe 55 or 60 mph — but as the big locomotive drew abreast of us Dad pushed hard on the gas and for a brief moment we stayed with him — at 80-plus mph. As we slowed to a proper speed the locomotive and a beautiful stainless steel passenger train swept by us.

The year-old Buick with a 249 cubic inch straight 8 — and two barrel carburetor — was no match for a 1929 Hudson. I envied the engineer who was in charge of such a marvelous machine as the 5381.

How did I know it was a Hudson? It was right there in my well-worn Lionel catalog! (There was, of course, also an automobile named Hudson but I didn't know much about that.)

The Michigan Central and the Big Four each got 30 of the J-1d locomotives. They were renumbered into the NYC roster in the 1930s, with Big Four No. 6606 becoming NYC 5381.

The train was the *James Whitcomb Riley* which had departed Cincinnati at 8:30 a.m. and would arrive at 1 p.m. in Chicago at the Illinois Central's lakefront station.

The camera used was a Kodak Baby Brownie Special purchased at Marshall Field's in Chicago for \$1.98. The size 127 Verichrome film was processed at the drugstore on State Street in Geneva. — Philip A. Weibler

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The Venice “high line” opened on Dec. 10, 1927, starting from the east end of the McKinley Bridge, and avoided conflicts with numerous railroads and yards in the area.

The new terminal in St. Louis opened Jan. 1, 1933. After that year, the trip included sections of subway, private right-of-way, street running, and elevated operation (bottom left). Here, an ex-Alton, Granite & St. Louis car in the classic IT orange scheme traverses the short section of private right-of-way leading from the St. Louis subway terminal to two blocks of street running.

Big-city rapid transit (bottom right): the 453, one of eight double-end PCCs delivered in 1949 by St. Louis Car, makes the outbound station stop on the St. Louis elevated structure. Replacing the St. Louis street running, along with the Venice “high line,” allowed IT to dramatically-reduce running times.

On the same day that IT’s mainline passenger service ended, March 3, 1956, a pair of the ex-East St. Louis & Suburban cars are spotted on the lead track to the Granite City yard-shops (left), with the Granite City Steel plant forming the backdrop. Acquisition of IT by 10 “steam roads” was in progress; IT would apply to end suburban service (amounting to 134 daily trips) on Nov. 19, 1956. The end for this service came on June 22, 1958.

— *Art Peterson* Photos: W. C. Janssen, Krambles-Peterson Archive



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Ad Index

Agawa Canyon Tour Train	11
Big E Productions	12
Catenary Video Productions	10
Center for Railroad Photography & Art	65
Chicago Special Issue	68
Don Pelletier	74
East Troy Electric Railroad	74
Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec	15
Genesee & Wyoming Railroad	13
Grand Trunk Western Historical Society	74
Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau	67
Herron Rail Services	65
Indiana University Press	69
Leadville Colorado & Southern Railroad Company	74
Malarkey Wall	11
McMillan Publications	69
Minnesota Transportation Museum	74
Monte Vista Publishing	12
Mount Washington Cog Railway	13
National Railroad Museum	74
Nevada Northern Railway Museum	76
New York Central Remembered	71
Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association	70
Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society	70
Railroadbooks.biz	10
Railway & Locomotive Historical Society	11
Ron's Books	10
Russell Fierce	74
Shore Line Interurban Historical Society	17
Steam Across America from Trains	66
Steam Into History	74
Sundance Marketing	74
Trains All Access	2
Trainshipsplanes	12
Western Pacific Railroad Museum	13
Whitewater Valley Railroad	74
Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad	74

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Main photo, George L. Schlaepfer; inset, Herbert C. Wright

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