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PC POST

PENN CENTRAL RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY



■ **MOVING THE MAIL** ■

■ **PENINSULA POSTSCRIPT** ■

■ **PC PERSPECTIVES** ■

■ **MY LAST TRIP** ■



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I recently asked myself, "When was the last time we needed to increase our membership dues?" I checked with several board members and it had been so long no one could remember offhand. On digging further, former PC Secretary, Chuck French, determined it's been over ten years, about half the lifespan of the Society! This, despite postage and publishing cost increases over the past decade.

The reason we've been able to hold the line for so long is member-

ship growth. We typically retain about 90 percent of our members from year to year and the 10 percent we lose has so far been replaced by new members every year. After growing steadily for about the first 18 years, we have been hovering right around the 600-member mark now for several years in a row. Simply put, the best antidote to increasing costs is more members. Why not reach out to someone you know and introduce them to the Society?

Gary

Since this is the last issue of the *POST* for 2020, I want to thank you for continuing with us year after year and remind everyone that the earlier you renew, the better it is for our volunteers. Please take a minute and renew now for 2021 using the enclosed form, or online at <https://www.pcrrhs.org/store/memberships>, at the same prices we paid in 2010!



LETTERS — WE GET LETTERS

We here at the Penn Central Railroad Historical Society, like any other organization, get letters, lots of them in fact, even in this age of electronic communications. But imagine PCRRHS Trustee Jim Homoki's surprise when he went to the PCRRHS Store's postal mailbox in Flagtown, New Jersey, one day this summer and found letters from the Treasurer of a certain county (let's call it "Anywhere," to protect the innocent) in the state of Ohio, containing invoices for the payment of property taxes on nine different plots, totaling \$56,807.07.

After his initial shock upon opening the letters, Jim solicited the society's officers for suggestions on how to handle this correspondence. My first reaction was to ask why the invoices were not sent to the successors to the Penn Central, but I'm thinking as a railroad enthusiast who knows the history of the company, not someone sitting in an office somewhere who has probably never heard of the Penn Central and has absolutely no idea that it ceased to exist as a railroad in 1976.

To whoever generated the correspondence from Anywhere, Ohio, the Penn Central was probably just the name of a property owner with delinquent taxes, and nothing more. They probably had no knowledge about the woebe-gone railroad that once dominated rail transportation in the state and most of the northeast quadrant of the country. I understand that, for as

a recent retiree from another Penn Central descendant (though one that is once removed), I was reminded of all the times I found letters in my departmental mail bin addressed to the Penn Central, or even the New York Central Railroad, as these entities were on municipal tax and property documents or other mailing lists which were never updated as the ownership changed over the decades. I always found it humorous to find letters addressed this way, even as recently as earlier this year, and explaining to younger colleagues who these railroads were. (And yes, before you ask, I forwarded those letters on to the appropriate departments!)

After some good natured back-and-forth amongst the PCRRHS's officers, our erstwhile President, Gary Farmer, was tasked with contacting the Treasurer's Office in Anywhere, Ohio, and explained what the society is, that we don't own any real estate, and that we have no responsibility to pay Penn Central property taxes. Although they could not collect any funds from us (and given the state of the world today, they, like every other government entity, probably desperately need them), the Treasurer's Office was also humored by their sending us the invoices, and absolved the society of any requirement to pay.

But there were several other intriguing points that arose from this situation. First, all nine invoices were addressed to the Penn Central at an

office suite on the 28th floor of a building at a non-existent address in Cincinnati. There's not even anything close to the address to which these letters were mailed. But, someone, somewhere, received the letters and they must have Googled "Penn Central." When I did this, the second item that came up after a Wikipedia article about the railroad was a link to our society's website. Whoever received the letters then hand wrote the society's address on the envelopes, and mailed them to our store at the Flagtown, New Jersey, address. This was pointed out to the Treasurer of Anywhere, Ohio, who confirmed that they would not have done something like that, so clearly there was a mysterious third party involved.

As Jim himself admitted, he has seen his share of odd correspondence over the years, often from people thinking that the society represents an active railroad, and not a group of 600 people who are just fans of one that is long extinct. Other PCRRHS officers also recalled some strange letters over the years, usually regarding property ownership questions, but never property tax invoices. And why, 50 years after the Penn Central's bankruptcy, and 44 years after it ceased operations, are these invoices now being sent out? We will probably never know these answers, but it makes quite a story, very much like the Penn Central itself.

Scott Ornstein

PENN CENTRAL RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Information

Annual Membership

U.S. — \$35, Canada — \$40, Foreign — \$45

Sustaining Membership

U.S. — \$70

Join online using credit card or PayPal at store.pcrrhs.org or, using a membership application form available at www.pcrrhs.org, send check or money order, U.S. funds only to:

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POST



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FRONT COVER: Westbound train #11 rolls into Wayne Avenue Junction on the Dayton Union Railway in May 1972. Wayne Avenue was the eastern junction of the PRR-NYC-B&O lines through Dayton Union Station. *David P. Oroszi photo*

ABOVE: A pair of SDs move the mail as eastbound train #10 passes through Xenia, Ohio, on November 3, 1974. Xenia was the junction of the former PRR main line between Columbus and Indianapolis with the line to Cincinnati. *David P. Oroszi photo*

BACK COVER: Here are two views of train #10, the East St. Louis to South Kearny, New Jersey, mail train, rolling off the Great Miami River bridge and into the west end of Dayton Union Station. U25B 2648 was in-charge on May 1, 1973 (above). A year and a half later, on October 22, 1974, GP40 3138 had the head-end honors (below). *Two photos, David P. Oroszi*

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MAIL TRAFFIC — 1973

By Walter Stringer

This article was originally published in PC Railroader Volume 1 Number 6, November-December 1973, pages 32-33. Reprinted with the written permission of Charlie Horan.

Mail traffic on the Penn Central has suffered a decline in the past year. There are now only ten dedicated COFC Flexi-Van mail trains still running. Since the summer of 1972, Flexi-Van mail trains #5 and #6 between New York City (High Bridge Yard) and Chicago (Park Manor/Englewood) via

Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland and Toledo have been discontinued. Connecting service between Boston and Albany and Detroit and Toledo have also been discontinued.

The Flexi-Van trains #18 and #19 between Cincinnati (Riverside Yard) and Chicago were also discontinued. These trains operated over the former NYC between Cincinnati, Greensburg, Indiana, Indianapolis and Chicago.

Penn Central 4700-4725, passenger service cabooses with steam and signal lines, were often assigned to these trains. (PC 4700-4710 were rebuilt N8s. They were placed in-service by November 1968. PC 4711-4725 were a mix of N5s, N5bs and one N5c, from the former PRR 5001-5034 series passenger service cabin roster. - Ed.)

PC MAIL TRAINS IN SERVICE: JUNE 15, 1973

- #3 Depart New York City/Penn Station at 11:40 p.m.
Arrive Washington, D.C/Union Station at 4:05 a.m.
- #4 Depart Washington, D.C/Union Station at 10:00 p.m.
Arrive New York City/Penn Station at 2:50 a.m.
Note: Trains 3 and 4 carry three working RPO cars
- #8 Depart Chicago/Lumber Street at 11:00 a.m., Day 1
Arrive S. Kearny, New Jersey at 10:25 a.m., Day 2
- #9 Depart S. Kearny, New Jersey at 4:00 a.m., Day 1
Arrive Chicago/Lumber Street at 11:59 p.m., Day 1
Note: Lumber Street facility located adjacent to the Chicago Post Office
- #10 Depart E. St. Louis at 2:00 a.m., Day 1
Arrive S. Kearny, New Jersey at 7:30 a.m., Day 2
- #11 Depart S. Kearny, New Jersey at 3:30 a.m., Day 1
Arrive E. St. Louis at 4:40 a.m., Day 2
- #14 Depart Baltimore at 2:00 a.m.
Arrive Philadelphia/30th Street Station at 3:35 a.m.
- #15 Depart Philadelphia/30th Street Station at 09:55 a.m.
Arrive Baltimore at 11:30 a.m.
- #16 Depart Philadelphia/30th Street Station at 8:55 a.m.
Arrive Springfield, Massachusetts at 3:00 p.m.
- #17 Depart Springfield, Massachusetts at 10:35 p.m.
Arrive Philadelphia/30th Street Station at 3:30 a.m.
Note: Train operated via New York City/Penn Station

Consist make-up of the mail trains pretty much follow this pattern:

- #3 and #4, 10-30 Flexi-Van cars, three RPOs and a passenger caboose.
- #8 and #9, 20-50 Flexi-Van cars and a passenger caboose.
- #10 and #11, 10-30 Flexi-Van cars and a passenger caboose.
- #14 through #17, 5-20 Flexi-Van cars and a passenger caboose.

RUNNING THE MAIL TRAINS

By Jack Neiss

The only mail trains I ever ran were the Meadows (S. Kearny, New Jersey) to E. St. Louis trains, #10 east and #11 west. These were a Meadows (S. Kearny, New Jersey) – East St. Louis trains. When I first went firing on the passenger runs, I worked with engineer Jack Norton. We went east from Harrisburg on #40, the *Broadway Limited* and returned west on #11.

As a promoted engineer after 1974, I took advantage of bumping onto vacancies and worked the trains until someone with more seniority claimed the job. I worked #10 on its relay through Harrisburg, usually, but not always, trading the inbound diesel power for a single E-44. On Sundays, we relayed

OPPOSITE PAGE ABOVE: E8 4083 prepares to lead train #1, the *Toledo Mail*, out of Detroit and "Down River" (as the route between Detroit and Toledo was called) on the quick run to Toledo on September 21, 1971. At Toledo, #1's Flexi-Vans connected with either train #5 to Chicago or train #6 to New York City. *Ray Sabo photo, Louis Marre collection*

OPPOSITE PAGE BELOW: Train #11 snakes through the Dayton Union Station leads in September 1969. Train #11's schedule put it through west-central Ohio in the afternoon, making it a prime photographic target. Note that a year and half into the merger, all visible cars still carry NYC logos. *Don A. Pope photo, David P. Oroszi collection*



AT RIGHT: A short eastbound mail train, most likely train #10 given its tendency to set-out a substantial part of its train at Philadelphia, rolls past Shore Tower in Philadelphia on May 10, 1972, en route its final destination of South Kearny, New Jersey. *Doug Cummings collection*

BELOW: Although not technically a mail train, TV-5 (Boston to E. St. Louis) handled Flexi-Vans as-needed. On May 27, 1972, TV-5, operating on joint PC and EL tracks, enters the interlocking at AC Tower in Marion, Ohio. *David P. Oroszi photo*



AT LEFT: E44 4416 has a westbound mail train dashing through the snow at Eddington, Pennsylvania on the morning of February 10, 1974. This pastoral scene has been erased by the suburban sprawl of Philadelphia. *William F. Strassner collection*

BELOW: Train #11, with Alco C-630 as helper, makes steady progress in its climb toward the summit at Gallitzin, Pennsylvania on September 31, 1970. Even though the mail was moved in Flexi-Vans rather than RPO's or other storage cars, Penn Central continued to designate its mail trains as first class. *David P. Oroszi photo*





ABOVE: Passenger service caboose 4702, an N8, brings up the markers on train #18 at North Judson, Indiana, on September 22, 1972. Train #18 operated between Chicago, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati. Those three passenger cars are most likely dead-head equipment for repairs at Amtrak's former PC (NYC) Beech Grove Car Shop at Indianapolis.

OPPOSITE PAGE ABOVE: Train #11 makes a crossover move at Summit Tower in Summit Station, Ohio, on the joint B&O/PC Columbus & Newark Subdivision on October 14, 1973. The C&N was maintained and operated by the B&O but used PRR position light signals. *David P. Oroszi photo*

OPPOSITE PAGE BELOW: Train #19 (Cincinnati to Chicago) accelerates out of the Ohio River valley west of Cincinnati on September 5, 1971, as it rolls along the former NYC "Chicago East" route to Indianapolis. *Three photos, David P. Oroszi*

E7s and E8s assigned to NY&LB trains between the Harrisburg diesel shop and Meadows, four or five units at a clip. They were Penn Central junk, and more than once, I enveloped the east end of Harrisburg with thick, noxious diesel exhaust.

Train #10 ran the Main Line from Harrisburg to Philadelphia, where we sometimes set-off half the train. Then, it was up the Corridor to Waverly, where we diverged onto the P&H Branch to Kearny and termi-

nated at Meadows Yard. We deadheaded home from Newark. Train #11 avoided the P&H Branch by using the Government Lead via Hudson and going through the Newark station.

Initially on Penn Central, I don't recall ever seeing anything other than the Flexi-Vans in mail service. However, when I was in college during the 1960s, they were occasionally seen on westbound passenger trains through Lancaster. Equipped with signal and steam lines, they were up front with the other head-end cars, usually on #33 in the afternoon. There were never more than one or two cars but they were there, just the same.

I remember enormous mail trains coming through Lancaster, sometimes more than 40 cars long. The usual power for a train of this size were two GG-1s or a trio of E-units. West of Harrisburg, #10 and #11 usually ran with two of the newer EMD units, SD40s or GP40s, but sometimes a GE would show up. Trains #8 and #9 (Meadows-Chicago) typically had a group of E-units for power, but usually with at least one newer EMD or GE locomotive, whatever model the Harrisburg Diesel shop could spare. I never saw an Alco used on a mail train. ❖





PENINSULA POSTSCRIPT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM McCOY

BELOW: SW1 8484 works PC's Norfolk, Virginia, float terminal at Little Creek during 1975. The original Norfolk Southern interchanged directly with PC at Little Creek, as did the Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line, which handled transfers between PC and the N&W and SCL.

In the summer 2020 issue of the POST (Volume 21, Number 2), we took a look at Penn Central's operations on the Delmarva Peninsula. We offer two stories as a postscript to the story that Glynn Williams first sent us a few years back. Ed Sharpe, who worked for two short-line successors to Penn Central, paid tribute to his former PC co-workers to Joe Walder. Joe, a current employee of the Delmarva Central, shared Ed's recollections with us. Bill McCoy worked for the Seaboard Coast Line in Norfolk and was able to document the end of Penn Central float operations.

MY TIME ON THE ESR

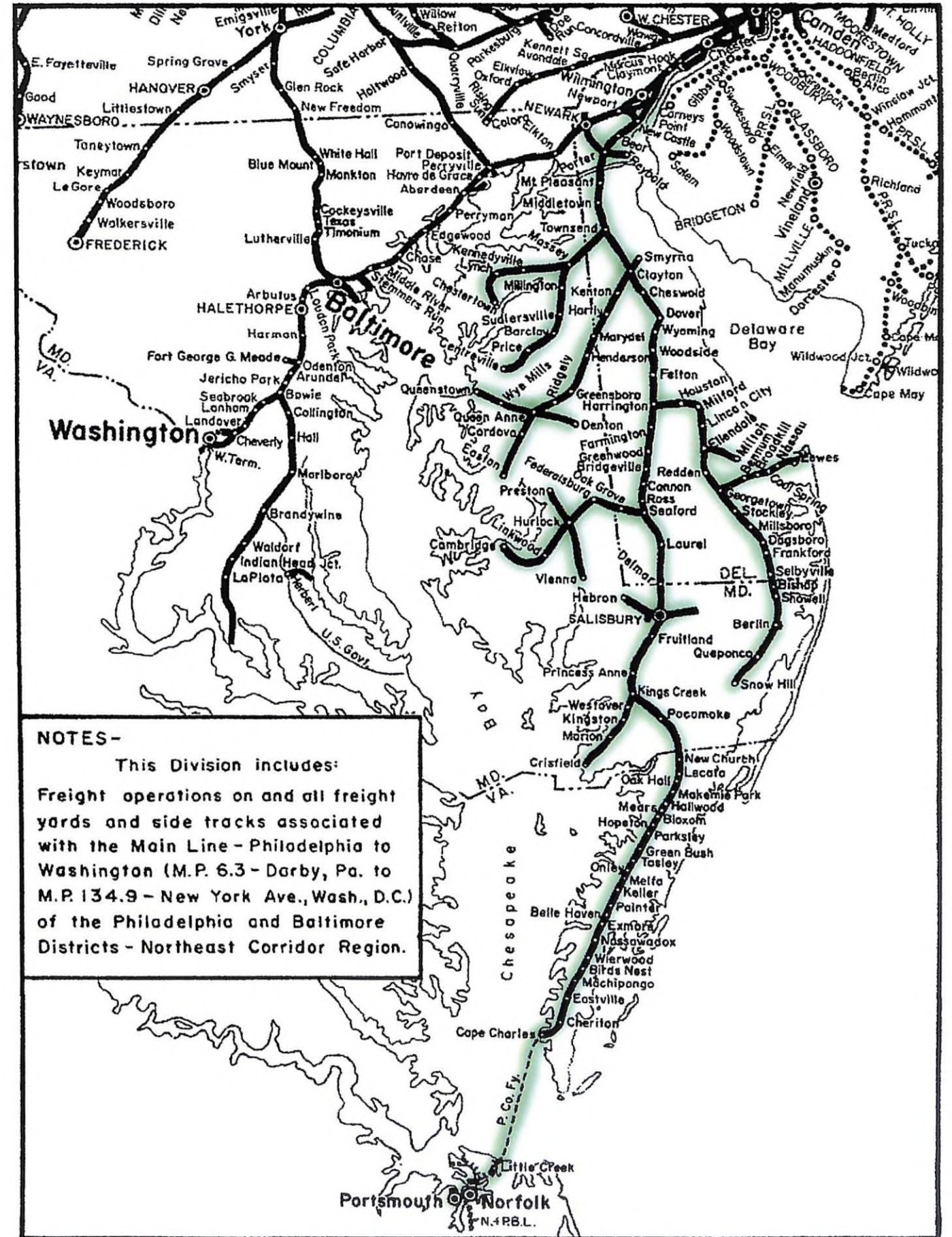
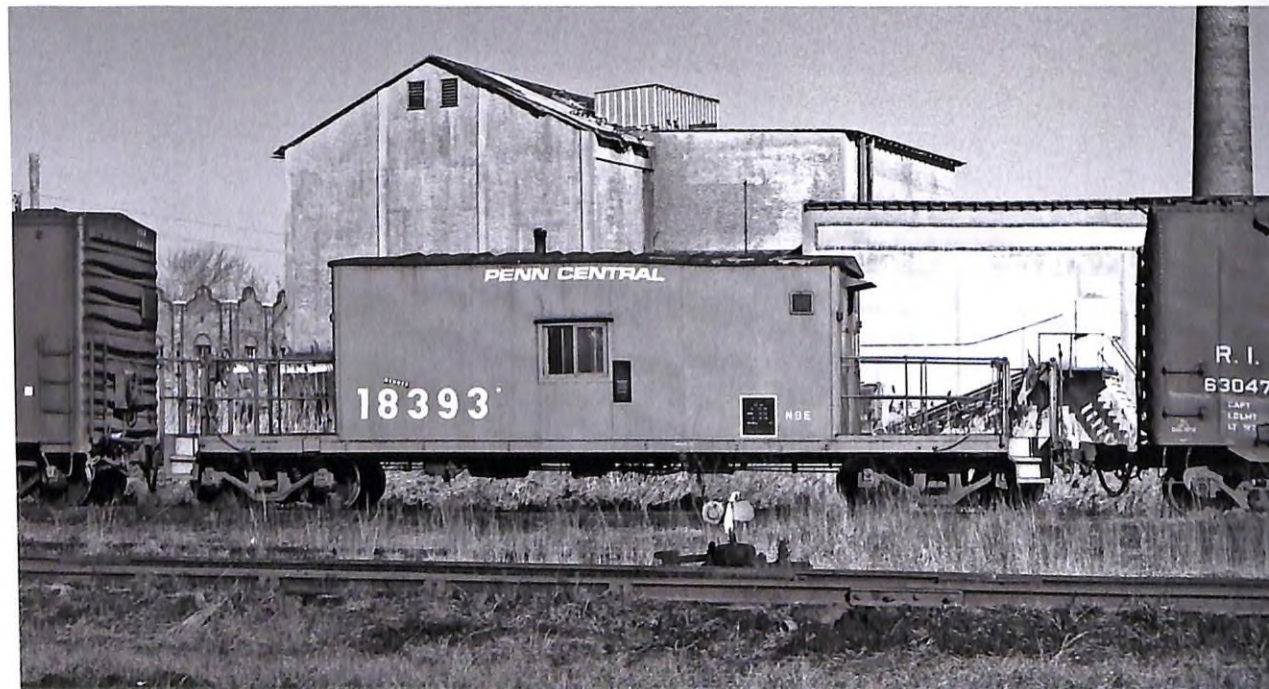
By Ed Sharpe, Courtesy Joe Walder

In 1974, at Cape Charles, Virginia, Penn Central EMD GP38s replaced the Alco RS-3s (which themselves replaced the Baldwin end cab switchers earlier on), that were used on the Cape Charles-Pocomoke City (Maryland) turn job. In the 1970s, Cape Charles had a yard job on-duty every shift except one on Saturday nights. At Little Creek, Virginia (Norfolk yard), located across Chesapeake Bay, Penn Central had a yard job on every shift except the last shift on Saturday and the first shift on Sunday. There were usually two EMD switchers at Little Creek at any given time. The original Norfolk Southern Railway (later Southern Railway) still ran to Little Creek to interchange with Penn Central, as did the Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line.

The freight train from Delmar, Maryland, to Cape Charles and return, still referred to as the D2 northbound and D3 southbound, ran about as much as it could in 1974, according to Lawrence Nottingham. Lawrence started with the Pennsylvania Railroad and worked all the way through Penn Central, Conrail, Virginia & Maryland Railroad and finally, the Eastern Shore Railroad. He retired in the mid-1980s after working as a clerk, agent, operator, yardmaster, and trainmaster. I worked with him and knew him well. He lived in Cape



AT RIGHT: N9 transfer caboose 18393 was assigned to Cape Charles. As Ed wrote, it was often on the Cape Charles-Pocomoke City local turn job. Here it rests between runs at Cape Charles in 1976.



NOTES-
This Division includes:
Freight operations on and all freight yards and side tracks associated with the Main Line - Philadelphia to Washington (M.P. 6.3 - Darby, Pa. to M.P. 134.9 - New York Ave., Wash., D.C.) of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Districts - Northeast Corridor Region.

CHESAPEAKE DIVISION
Northeast Corridor Region
Office of Chief Engr. 1/76



Charles and moved to Cheriton, Virginia, after he retired.

Trains D2/D3 took around thirty hours or so to make a roundtrip. The D2 was built at Cape Charles by the yard jobs so all they had to do was set-off their train and pick up the built train (off of the ground air in the yard). The yard job would add the cabin car to the rear of the train.

The local turn job from Cape Charles worked to Pocomoke City, Maryland, and return. It left Cape Charles approximately two or three hours after the northbound freight train departed. The local would usually take two crews to get back to Cape Charles. A transfer caboos (PC 18393) was usually assigned to this job.

The United States Railway Association (USRA) determined in its early studies for the future Consolidated Railroad Corporation that the line between Pocomoke City and Cape Charles was "potentially excess" due to the lack of on-line traffic and the expense of the car float operations between Cape Charles and Little Creek. In fact, it was decided that Conrail would only operate lines on the Delmarva Peninsula from Newark, Delaware, to Pocomoke, Maryland, and between Harrington, Delaware, and Snow Hill, Maryland (the DM&V — Delaware,

Maryland & Virginia — Secondary Track. That meant all of the other branch lines on the peninsula were considered excess.

There was a provision in the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 that would permit another solvent railroad to take over any rail line as long as it did not affect Conrail or adjacent carriers and if agreements could be reached with the affected unions. The USRA received four bids for the entire Delmarva (from Newark/Wilmington down to Cape Charles, Virginia, and all of the branches). Southern Railway, Seaboard Coast Line, Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac, and the Eastern Shore Railroad Company all submitted proposals. The Southern was the only company that put together a bid that met the federal requirements. They immediately began negotiations with the unions. Unfortunately, the Southern could not meet all of the unions' demands and the entire Delmarva was handed over to Conrail on April 1, 1976.

In 1976, Conrail formally abandoned the Crisfield Branch, the original main line between Delmar and Crisfield, from the Kings Creek-area granary to Crisfield. Conrail would eventually operate this line, under subsidies provided by the states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, up until

OPPOSITE PAGE AND ABOVE: Bill McCoy documented the final float from Little Creek to Cape Charles on March 30, 1976. GP30 2212 worked the final PC switch job at Little Creek, loading nine cars on to the float barge *Captain Edward Richardson*.



ABOVE: The tug *Philadelphia* prepares for its final revenue trip on March 30, 1976.

April 1, 1977, when the line was sold to the Accomack-Norhampton Transportation District Commission (Virginia).

Rail Service Associates, a New York investment firm headed by J. Anthony "Tony" Hannold, became the designated operator of the line. The Virginia & Maryland Railroad was incorporated on March 10, 1977, and immediately took over all operations, including putting the car float back in service after Conrail had embargoed the operation thinking that the line would be abandoned rather than turned over to a shortline.

Mr. Hannold would go on to other adventures and would turn over the Virginia & Maryland Railroad's contract to the Eastern Shore Railroad in October 1981, as he focused on his Maryland & Delaware Railroad operating the former PRR/PC/Conrail Cambridge (Maryland) Branch, the Snow Hill (Maryland) Branch, and the Massey/Chestertown (Maryland) Branch. After exiting the Delmarva altogether, he would form the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad on a former Frisco line that Burlington Northern decided to spin-off.

Canonie Incorporated of Muskegon, Michigan, a marine transport and construction company, purchased the line from the Accomack-Norhampton Transportation District Commission in

1985 and took over the Eastern Shore Railroad. Unfortunately, Canonie realized within two years that the cost to keep the trains and car float operating did not match the revenue generated. The states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia helped the Accomack-Norhampton Transportation District Commission repurchase the right-of-way in 1987, so Canonie could continue to operate the Eastern Shore Railroad, with subsidies.

The Superintendent on the Eastern Shore Railroad was Ira Higbee. Ira started his career as a brakeman on Penn Central. He worked up to be a conductor on Penn Central, Conrail, Virginia & Maryland Railroad, and finally, the Eastern Shore Railroad. He retired from the railroad in 2014 or 2015, when he turned sixty years old.

I also worked with the Rasmussen Brothers — Danny (Penn Central, Conrail, Virginia & Maryland Railroad, and the Eastern Shore Railroad) and his younger brother Tommy, who also started with Penn Central and followed the same succession of railroads as his brother. Both worked as conductors for Penn Central.

The Eastern Shore Railroad still blocked the northbound train according to the old Penn Central destinations: Block 1 — Cape Charles/Pocomoke City and Block 2 —



ABOVE: The *Philadelphia* tows the *Captain Edward Richardson* up Little Creek toward Chesapeake Bay on its final Penn Central cross-bay trip on March 30, 1976. There will be no Conrail tomorrow for these two pieces of Penn Central equipment.

north of Pocomoke City/Delmar/Harrington, Delaware.

Canonie spent a lot of money on the railroad. A heavy tie replacement program increased the speed limit to 20 mph. The saving grace was that most of the rail, except for a short section near Pocomoke City, was all 130 PS rail that dated back to the Pennsylvania Railroad days. That heavy rail really helped.

PC's LAST DAY IN NORFOLK

By Bill McCoy

With the creation of Conrail, the final map did not include most of the Delmarva operation, among others. A designated operator would operate any of the lines which were not candidates for abandonment. Tony Hannold, who owned the Bath & Hammondsport in New York state, would operate the Virginia lines as the Virginia & Maryland while operating the lines in Maryland and Delaware as, appropriately, the Maryland & Delaware Railroad. I'm certain traffic formerly routed to or from Penn Central via the Norfolk gateway was embargoed in time to clear out anything moving on the cross-bay route. The PC operation was to end on or before April 1, 1976, the first day of Conrail operations.

I kept up with what was happening through Ray Dodd, the PC freight agent at Cape Charles. On the afternoon March 30, the last day of the operation, I went by the Little Creek terminal to see what was going on. The yard was empty except for nine cars of northbound traffic, including a high and wide load of machinery, and GP30 2212. The 2212 ran around the cut of cars to get on the south end to load the *Captain Edward Richardson*. It had apparently just been brought over from Cape Charles for the clean-up. The 2212 shoved the small cut with the wide load leading, which was loaded by itself on the starboard outboard track. The remaining eight cars were distributed between the two center tracks, and then the 2212 came aboard.

The tug *Philadelphia* moved out to attach the tow line while the stevedores and crew detached the float bridge. The *Philadelphia* slowly paid out the tow line and the *Capt. ER* moved away from the float bridge and up the channel leading out of Little Creek and into the Chesapeake Bay. As the float disappeared toward Cape Charles, everyone got in their cars and left, leaving me alone at the totally deserted terminal. The era of cross-bay service provided by the New York, Philadelphia & Norfolk, PRR, and Penn Central was over. ❖



BLOWING BY BOYD

By George Hamlin

BELOW: The southbound South Wind, train #90, kicks up the dust as it passes Boyd Tower in Jeffersonville, Indiana, on July 5, 1968. In just a few minutes, #90 will arrive at Louisville Union Station where PC will hand-off the train to the L&N for the middle leg of the train's three-railroad journey between Chicago and Miami tower, July 5, 1968. Two photos, George Hamlin

In July 1968, I had the chance to visit several railfan friends in the Midwest, including both St. Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky. On July 4, I had traveled on B&O train #2 from St. Louis to Seymour, Indiana. My friend, Skip Hansberry, picked me up and drove me down to Louisville, stopping at several rail facilities on the way home. One of the stops was Boyd Tower in Jeffersonville, Indiana, where the Penn Central (former PRR) line to Louisville crossed the B&O. While there, we watched PC freight JA-1 head north behind a former NYC F-unit, including taking orders from operator Cecil Justus. The next day, hosted by Skip's friend, Steve Evans (who would soon join the Penn

Central's rotational management training program), we began the day by looking at the L&N at several locations, including Louisville's Union Station and Crescent Hill.

Later, we headed back across the Ohio River into Indiana for a visit to the former Pennsylvania Railroad facilities in Jeffersonville, where SD45 6177 was duly photographed. That was the lead-in for viewing the South Wind on its every-other-day jaunt southward, and where better to view it than nearby Boyd Tower?

By 1968, the U.S. intercity passenger train was in extremis, virtually everywhere, and Louisville was no exception. Hometown carrier L&N still had the Pan American, but with one sleeper, a few coaches and a counter-lounge, it was the proverbial "shadow of its former self." On the C&O, the Louisville section of the George Washington rated five cars, including a sleeper, behind a single E8.

Thus, by default, the South Wind was the best to offer as far as Louisville passenger trains were concerned. It was part of a major through route (Chicago-Florida), and was interchanged intact, as a full train in Louisville (from PC to L&N), as well as in Montgomery, Alabama (L&N to SCL).

Leading PC #90 into town was E8 4263, still wearing its single-stripe Pennsy paint scheme, complete with keystone emblem on the nose. Trailing unit 4247 was fully up-to-date in PC black, but with the "Red P" in the PC emblem; this was the only one of these variations that I ever saw. An ACL heavyweight baggage trailed the two locomotives.

Behind it were eight passenger cars, including what appear to be four sleepers up front, followed by a Budd-built six double bedroom lounge car from the NYC's "Stream" series. Next was a Pennsy diner, and finally, a pair of ACF-built coaches from the L&N that were that railroad's last passenger equipment acquired new, in 1955.

Not exactly a classic passenger train, but one that still offered food, refreshments and space to relax, as well as ample first-class accommodations. Not exactly high-speed transportation, but it was kicking up the dust as it passed by Boyd.

Postscript: I didn't know it then, but about 18 months later, I'd ride the South Wind from Miami to Montgomery. By then, the train didn't operate through north of Louisville; if you wanted to get to or from

Chicago, a cross-platform transfer to a coaches-only Penn Central consist was required. I prefer what's pictured here ...

NORRIS AND ME

By John Springer

When I was 11 years old, I was very lucky to meet many engineers on the New York Central who invited me into the cab for a ride. I rode the head-end from North White Plains to New York City and went as far west as Chatham, New York. I can talk about these rides because none of the men I rode with can get fired for letting a kid in the cab. Sad to say, many of them have passed away and have gone off to Heaven where the trains never break down, all signals are clear, and all the jobs work days with weekends off. Some of the jobs even pay overtime!

However, my story is not about those men who were so great to me as a kid. It's about a very special engineer that I fired with on the New Haven line. Back in 1973, I was lucky enough to bid the firemen job on trains NU-2 and UN-1. These trains ran between Cedar Hill Yard in New Haven and New Bedford, Massachusetts. Norris Myers was the engineer, John Molyneux was the conductor, Bernie Sullivan was our head-end brakemen and Eddy Sapinski was our flagman. Without a doubt, they were one of the best crews I had the privilege of working with at any time during my railroad career. This crew could really make the best out of one workhorse of a job.

We reported at 8:00 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Yard engine house in New Haven. After we put our grips on the power, I would check our three locomotives to make sure everything was in working order. After a call to the yardmaster, we would take the power to our train in the departure yard. After we tied-on and started pumping air for the air brake test, our conductor made his calls to the powers-that-be to obtain operating clearances and finalize the work we needed to do out on the road. This crew was always prepared for what was ahead when we departed the yard. I mention this because later in my career, I worked with train crews that left much to be desired in this area.

The NU-2 typically departed Cedar Hill with 80 to 100 cars. Our first work was at New London, Connecticut. We always set-off twice there, once in Fort Yard and once

on the siding behind Groton Tower. You must understand this was before radios so all our switching was done "in the blind." You had to have a good ground crew to make these moves efficiently and safely. Today, with radios, just about anyone could do the job, but back then, there could be one hell of a pile-up if someone made a mistake. Even Jim, the Groton Tower operator, knew how to pass signals to us. He would blink the signal west of the tower to let us know when to stop and do it again to back up. These are tricks that the people I worked with on Amtrak probably could not do, you see, because there are no old timers left to show them how.

After leaving New London, our train was light, with only about 20 to 30 cars. It was on this portion of the run where Norris first let me start running. The first night I sat in the engineer's seat, it was so foggy you could not see 10 feet in front of the locomotive. Prior to this particular night, Norris had asked if I had done any running over the Shore Line. With a bit of a cocky attitude, I assured him I had and knew what I was doing. So when he told me to come over to the right-hand seat, little did I know it was a set-up. I sat down and took the throttle in-hand. It didn't take me long to realize how different it would be running 30 cars, with three engines, in the fog. I knew I had shot my mouth off too much. I totally missed blowing the horn at the next crossing. Norris asked if I knew where we were. With my head down, I mumbled something under my breath. He then said that perhaps he should take over. It was a humbling experience, something I have never forgotten.

But Norris being Norris, he used it as a teaching moment, not as an opportunity to humiliate. As we continued through the fog, he pointed out that to do this job right, you had to look out the side windows. Looking this way, and not straight ahead, you would see landmarks that you saw during the day and use those landmarks to know exactly where you were on the railroad. He taught me how to do the job right and feel confident in myself.

After a few trips, he put me in the right-hand seat again and I would run from New London to Providence. We would drop all but 10 or 15 cars and pick-up about 50 or 60 more. After leaving Providence Yard, we pulled back onto the main line at Lawn Tower and headed east. 15 miles up the line, we came to Attleboro Tower in



Attleboro, Massachusetts. Here, we were routed onto the New Bedford Secondary Track. After getting a clear block and a big wave from Rick Murray in the tower, we were on our way into "dark territory." This is track that is run on paper work and had no signals.

The next stop was Taunton, Massachusetts, where we made a set-off of cars for a local freight that worked out of the small yard. At that time, there were four or five highway crossings in Taunton that required us to "stop and protect"



ABOVE: Norris Meyer (left) and John Springer reminiscing on a cold winter's day during the 1990s. Norris was retired by the time of this photograph. *John Springer collection*

before proceeding. This meant we would stop the train, Bernie would come up and flag us across the crossings. He did this by lighting two fusees and dropping them on each side of each crossing. Bringing a 70 car train of mostly loaded cars down to a crawl was something I had to learn because Norris did not want me to stop for each crossing. After a while, I got good at crawling the train through town.

After leaving Taunton, we came to Myreks, which was a junction in the middle of nowhere where the line split. If you went right, you would go to Fall River, Massachusetts. If you went straight, you continued south to New Bedford. If you went left, you went over to Middleboro, Massachusetts. Standard procedure was to leave part of our train at Myreks and take 30 to 35 cars to Fall River. We ran light back to our train, tied it back together and then continued our trip to New Bedford.

After yarding our train and taking the locomotives to the house, Norris and I would walk to the Skipper Motel, our home away from home in New Bedford. Norris felt that after sitting all night, it was good for our legs to walk, and he was right.

After sleeping all day, we would go out to dinner. Norris had a friend in New Bedford who would take him to a really good fresh fish take-out and he would bring back our dinners. The local car knocker, a fellow named John, allowed Norris to borrow his car while on layover. We would all go out to eat at Louie's, located on the wharf on Buzzard's Bay.

We would go to work on the UN-1 at about 6:00 p.m. and head for home. We would make the same stops in reverse order only we would be picking up the empties instead of dropping off loads. Many nights, we would have to wait at Attleboro for westbound freight NE-97 to pass. During this wait, I would run up to the tower to use the phone, call my father to see how things were at home and tell him how I was doing. That's how I got to know Rick Murray in the tower. Rick later became a train dispatcher in Boston and I always would say hi to him since he let me tie up his phone so much. After a few years, Rick went west to the BN (later BNSF) to be a dispatcher and I lost touch with him.

About a year and a half after I started working with Norris, I was "set up" as an engineer. I'm retired now. Thanks to the things that engineers like Norris and others taught me, I was only in trouble a couple of times during my career; once for getting by a red signal and once for shooting my mouth off. Norris and I remained friends for many years. My wife and I spent time with him and his wife at their farm in Vermont and I took him fly fishing several times. As he got older, I had to give him a hand with some chores, just like I did with my father. Norris was always saying he did not want to bother me. It wasn't a bother; I enjoyed helping him, just like I did my father. I was never a problem at all.

Both men played a big part in my life. I think it's sad that more young people do not think back to the people that helped make them what they are today. Norris and most of the others who helped me are gone now. I think of them at different times, smile and wish we could all sit around, have a drink and talk about the old days, how we did our jobs and how we took pride in the work we did. Don't get me wrong, I know many young people out on the railroad today that take a lot of pride in their work and do a great job. By working with men who were around in the days of steam as well as going through the Great Depression and World War Two, it was a lot different. I can only imagine today, with the in-cab cameras, with microphones recording every radio transmission and having to take classes on what you can and can't say so you don't



offend anyone, I guess I saw the last of the best of times.

I hope you enjoyed this story. As I have told people many times, I'm not a writer, just a story teller.

A SUNDAY AT SCIOTO

By Brett Atkins

I grew up in suburban Columbus, Ohio. The C&O was my neighborhood railroad, with its Columbus-Toledo main line located less than a mile from our house. The C&O was a reasonably busy, well-maintained, CTC signaled controlled route. Since this was the railroad I grew up with, it was what I thought all railroads were like.

I knew other railroads ran through Columbus besides the C&O. The B&O, N&W, PRR and NYC all had routes in the city but I rarely saw these other railroads. Every now and then, I would catch a glimpse of something different as we travelled around the city. We were once stopped by a train on our way to visit family friends in Grandview Heights, another Columbus suburb. I didn't see the engines but still remember the orange cabooses with a PRR Keystone. I also remember watching the cars of the train rock back and forth as

they went across the grade crossing. The best thing about going to the state fair in August was catching some N&W coal trains on the viaduct on the west side of the fairgrounds. But that was about it. Our universe revolved around the northwest side of the city. The C&O was the only railroad that ran through those neighborhoods.

I was in high school when the Penn Central was formed. I remember reading about the merger in *Trains* magazine. When it actually happened, the Columbus newspaper wrote that the merger meant fewer passenger trains for Columbus. Since PRR and NYC passenger trains went to the same cities, they would discontinue the duplicate service. The paper said nothing about freight trains, yards or anything else.

Fast forward a couple of years. On a wonderful fall Sunday in 1970, I met up with my friend, Curt, who also liked trains, to do some exploring. We decided to follow the C&O southward into downtown Columbus. We studied a city map and noticed it crossed other railroads at a couple of different locations. Our goal was to find and check-out those crossings. It would be about a six-mile ride each way, but that was no problem as we rode our bikes everywhere. Driving the family car was a rare treat. I was not allowed to go train watching in the car.

ABOVE: The conductor steps out on the platform of PC 19842, a freshly outshopped former New Haven NE6 caboose, to catch a warm breeze as winter fades away at New London, Connecticut, in March 1972. *Bob Gambling photo*



As we approached downtown, I reflected about how my family rarely visited this part of the city. I had been to the state capitol building and a couple of the museums, but otherwise, I didn't know much about downtown Columbus. I knew there was a "Union Station" on High Street because I saw it on the map. Other than the short passenger trains the C&O operated, I had no idea what other trains called on Columbus.

The streets in the northwest part of downtown Columbus were not very busy on this Sunday afternoon. I have to admit, Curt and I were a little uptight as we came upon the Ohio Penitentiary. Talk about a scary place! But wait, running along the north side of the pen were a set of tracks. They were elevated, and we rode through three underpasses. We didn't see an easy way to reach track level. For whatever reason, we forgot to bring the city map so we were navigating by feel. As we turned down a side street that paralleled the tracks, off to our right, we heard the unmistakable throbbing of EMD locomotives, the squealing of steel wheels on a tight rail and then heard what we called the "grade crossing song" being played on the air horn as the train approached a street crossing.

We peddled as fast as we could in the direction of the sound and saw a train

OPPOSITE PAGE ABOVE: A pair of Geeps bring a transfer job down the former NYC/T&OC Western Branch and across the C&O and former PRR at Scioto Tower in Columbus, Ohio, on October 11, 1975.

OPPOSITE PAGE BELOW: The mud-fouled right-of-way that the author noted is very much in evidence among the three sets of diamonds at Scioto Tower in this April 8, 1973, view. The building with the pagoda tower in the background is the former Toledo & Ohio Central passenger depot.

ABOVE: A westbound freight behind U25B 2504 rolls past Scioto Tower on March 23, 1975. *Three photos, David P. Oroszi*

heading southwest on another set of tracks. It had three black engines but we recognized the logo — Penn Central — from the many PC cars we saw on C&O trains. As we reached the end of the street, we came upon a very cool sight: The tracks came out of the downtown buildings area, crossed the Scioto River on a multi-span truss bridge and then crossed some other railroad tracks along the south bank of the river. There were PRR position lights signals everywhere and standing by the crossing of the rail lines was a tower.

We knew what towers looked like thanks to *Trains* and *Model Railroader* but this was the first time to actually see one. I didn't even know Columbus had a tower! As we



ABOVE: You can see SD45 6144 rocking its way across the Western Branch and C&O diamonds at Scioto Tower on October 11, 1975. Those were some rough diamonds!

David P. Oroszi photo

watched from across the river, the train crawled across the bridge and clunked over the diamonds. We could hear BANG-BANG —BANG — BANG-BANG — BANG as box-cars rolled westward.

We quickly found a highway bridge, Broad Street, crossed the river and rode towards the tower, which we could see just beyond and north of the bridge. A green bay-window caboose brought up the markers and the train was gone before we were across the bridge.

There were a pair of underpasses on Broad Street, one marked for the New York Central System and the other with the C&O for Progress logo. Neither Curt nor I made the connection about the C&O as we rode up an alley that led to the tower.

What a sight to behold! Three double-tracked lines crossed each other in a triangle-shaped pattern. The tower, with a green and white sign that read SCIOTO, had a brick first story and peeling paint around the windows on the second story. The tower looked like it had been there for a hundred years.

As the train disappeared around the curves off to the west, the tower operator appeared at the second-story doorway. "Can I help you guys with something?" he asked. "Oh, hi. We're just checking out the railroad. We've not been here before" I said. "Well, okay," he responded. "Feel free to

check things out, just be careful. I don't have any other trains close right now."

As we tramped around the interlocking, we figured out that the north-south line was the C&O, the east-west line was the former PRR and the southeast-northwest line was the former NYC. Neither of us thought to bring a camera, so we were making mental notes about what we were seeing. One thing we noticed right away was the muddy track and uneven rail on the Penn Central tracks. We knew Penn Central was bankrupt, but when we compared their tracks with those of the C&O, we understood what that meant.

After Curt and I walked around the plant for a half hour, the tower operator stuck his head out of a window and said if we wanted to see the inside, we were welcome to come up.

I will never forget that afternoon. We spent about an hour and half in the tower. Pat, the operator, patiently answered all of our questions and explained as much as he could about the railroads of Columbus. Soon, it was time for us to go. We didn't see any more trains at Scioto before we had to leave. Three or four trains ran on Penn Central's other east-west main line, the one by the Ohio Pen, while we were at Scioto. We didn't care; our knowledge of railroading took a quantum leap that afternoon. Pat told us he was the regular

Sunday 2nd trick operator and since we had proven ourselves to be safe, careful and polite, we were welcome to come and visit him anytime. He made us an offer we couldn't and didn't refuse. Curt and I made four or five more trips to Scioto to visit with Pat and learn more about railroading. We would usually see anywhere from two to six trains during a visit, most of them Penn Central trains. Despite the bad track, we came to appreciate the busyness and diversity of Penn Central operations.

GCT SUPERVISORS

By S.H. Lustig

Like most railroad managers, I moved around the railroad with some frequency. If you wanted to move up, you literally had to move. When I was transferred from the Cleveland Division, working at Motor Yard in Walton Hills, Ohio, to the Metropolitan Region in New York City, it was a move from the world of mostly freight operations to a very high density, 99 percent passenger operations environment. I was assigned as Transportation Inspector (or more accurately, Chief Spy for General Manager J.F. Spreng).

After a quick promotion to Assistant Trainmaster at New Haven working for Superintendent Larry Forbes, Trainmaster Bill Sorrentino, and Road Foreman of Engines Rich Callaghan, I was reassigned as trainmaster/supervisor of T&E crews at Grand Central Terminal (GCT). Joe McAvoy previously had this job but he wanted no part of the actual operational responsibility which came with a revised job description and exercised his prior rights. During the interval between Joe's departure and my arrival, two senior crew dispatchers covered the position, meaning their positions had to be covered by others, usually at overtime rates.

This was a most fortunate change, as the supervision at GCT worked as a team under Terminal Superintendent R.W. "Bob" Collins. The group included trainmasters Dennis Healy, Dick Rowe, Jack Swanberg, George Kuiper and Saxton Kendricks and road foremen of engines Bob Sherbloom and Peter Hansen.

When I arrived at my new office, the desk and work table were stacked with piles of correspondence that had not been handled in the interim. Ed Herman, who was the chief clerk, tried to explain what everything was and what was most important and needed to be handled quickly. My response was to have the station janitor deliver a dumpster which we promptly loaded. Ed insisted that we could not do that, but my

comment was that if anybody wanted an answer, they would write again.

Given the high-profile nature of passenger operations, a rush-hour office was established at CGT 25 Track which was manned by both transportation and mechanical department personnel in order to expedite the response to any problems which arose. We were often joined by the General Station Master Ed Quinn.



Prior to the joint facility at 25 Track Office, the M/E forces were dispatched from their office, which was the old stationmaster's office at 39 Track. If there was a problem that needed M/E personnel, the Transportation Office would call the Chief Train Dispatcher at 466 Lexington Ave. (NYC corporate offices), who would then call 39 Track and report the problem. 39 Track would then dispatch somebody to the scene. Having both Transportation and M/E at 25 Track really expedited the response.

While we were aware of the "Red Team vs. Green Team" problem on PC, we did not allow it to disrupt our style of operation, even though at one point the Mechanical/Engineering Department was instructed not to work directly with the Transportation Department. This led to the yellow tape division of 25 Track Office into sections for M/E (closest to the door), Transportation and "Visitors." This was something from higher management. Metropolitan Region General Manager R.K. Pattison considered himself a visitor; this set a precedent for others.

Twice a year, our group enjoyed a social gathering; a summertime pool party at the Collins' home, and a Christmas party near GCT. The photo shows our group at the December 1975 affair, which was the last such gathering of our team in the Penn Central era. ❖

ABOVE: Seated are (L to R) RFE Pete Hansen; General Foreman-M/E Joe Perotti; GCT stationmaster Ed Quinn; General Foreman-Locomotives Fred Poggi; General Foreman-Car Department Alan Fultz; Master Mechanic Ed Whitney; Terminal Superintendent R.W. Collins; General Foreman-Car Department Stan Rydjeski; TMs Jack Swanberg and Dennis Healy. Standing (L to R) TM/Supervisor S.H. Lustig; RFE Bob Sherbloom and TMs Saxton Kendricks and George Kuiper.

ARTICLE/PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN FULLER

INDY SERVICE OVERVIEW

At the dawn of the Penn Central era, there were two survivors of the post-WWII streamliner era remaining in my hometown of Indianapolis. The former Pennsylvania Chicago-Florida *South Wind* had long, varied-road consists of diners, lounges, Pullmans, coaches and, for several winter seasons in the 1960s, a leased Northern Pacific dome car. On the former New York Central, the

former NYC coach-only train between Chicago and Indianapolis in January 1969. This train was a truncated version of the Chicago-Cincinnati *Sycamore*.

By PC's first anniversary, passenger service in Indianapolis had dropped to 11 daily trains. The Chicago-Florida *South Wind* was still impressive during most of 1969. The train was a pool operation with the Louisville & Nashville and Seaboard Coast Line. In a sudden move in November 1969, PC pulled out of the pool arrangement and stopped forwarding the *South Wind* between Louisville and Chicago. The PC replacement train consisted of one or two coaches and a light meal service car that provided connecting service to the *South Wind* at Louisville.

The *Riley* slowly declined following the merger. By May 1970, when the full diner was removed, the train operated with two or three coaches, one of which had been rebuilt with a small snack bar.

NEW YORK-ST. LOUIS

There were two through and redundant New York-St. Louis trains on the former PRR, *The Spirit of St. Louis* and the *Penn Texas*, each complete with sleepers and dining/lounge service. These two trains ran about three hours apart. Historically, the *Spirit* had been the premier New York-St. Louis run while the mission of the *Penn Texas* was to carry western sleepers through the St. Louis gateway. The western business disappeared by the early 1960s and by the mid-1960s, these two trains were shells of their former selves. To somewhat economize, the *Spirit* would regularly drop off its diner, full sleeper(s) and a coach or two in Indianapolis and then continue to St. Louis with head end cars, a coach and a bedroom/lounge car. Penn Central was able to rationalize this service by combining the two trains in June 1970.

Sharing a portion of the former PRR New York-St. Louis route were a pair of coach-only trains that ran between St. Louis and Pittsburgh. These lightly patronized trains, #13 westbound and #32, passed through Indianapolis in the evening. Through travelers on these 13+ hour runs needed to carry their own food, do without or take advantage of unadvertised food service in the Indianapolis and Columbus stations during the train's extended stops.

Not long after the combination of the *Spirit* and *Penn Texas* in 1970, the federal

government placed a freeze on passenger train discontinuances nationwide. None were allowed until May 1, 1971, when the federal government would take over all intercity passenger service.

During that final year of private operation in Indianapolis, the Penn Central's passenger train count in Indianapolis had fallen to nine daily trains. As Amtrak's routes were being established during my final year in high school, it was announced that Amtrak would retain the combined *Penn Texas* and *Spirit*, now simply named *Spirit of St. Louis*, and drop coach-only trains #32 and #13. The Amtrak *Spirit of St. Louis* would reinstate through sleeper and coaches to Washington DC, dropped by PC in May 1970. The *South Wind* would be reinstated as an upgraded, daily through train to Chicago. *The Riley* would be also be retained and upgraded. The coach-only former NYC Cleveland-Indianapolis train would be discontinued.

MY FINAL PC TRIP EAST

With family living in Springfield, Massachusetts, I decided my April spring break would be an ideal time for a final excursion on PC-owned and operated trains. My plan was to travel by first class sleeper from Indianapolis to North Philadelphia, do some train watching, then catch one of several later trains that would take me to Springfield via New Haven. I thought it would be appropriate to arrange my return trip so I could travel on #13 between Pittsburgh and Indianapolis, as this soon-to-be-discontinued train offered the only daylight ride between Pittsburgh and Columbus, Ohio. This would require a New York-Pittsburgh ride on the *Pennsylvania Limited* to connect with #13.

I consulted my friend and well-known local railroad enthusiast, Bruce McClary, to arrange a joint venture. Bruce, a PC electrician at Beech Grove Shops, was on a temporary assignment in New York City. He spent his working hours riding a daily round-trip New York-Washington Metroliner as a trouble-shooter and analyst for a US Department of Transportation-funded study of the new service. Bruce would regularly "commute" between New York and Indianapolis on days off via Penn Central's *Spirit* first-class sleeper.

It turned out he would be travelling on "The Spirit" eastbound from his

Indianapolis home to his temporary living assignment at the PC-owned Commodore Hotel adjacent to Grand Central in New York at the same time I would be travelling east. Bruce was able to secure a double bedroom on his pass — this allowed me to "stow away" in his room with my coach ticket and utilize his extra bunk.

INDY UNION STATION

Our trip began at Indianapolis Union (IU) Station, an 1888 Romanesque Revival cathedral-like structure with a magnificent three-story high barrel-vaulted ceiling, complete with stained glass windows and skylight that had been painted over during WWII. The facility had a huge public grand hall with a restaurant, barber shop and newsstand, all permanently closed by the 1960s. Walking through the dimly-lit facili-



ABOVE: In March 1971, train #31, the westbound *Spirit of St. Louis*, is minutes from its arrival at Indianapolis Union Station on a dreary morning. #31's consist included three head-end cars, one coach, one sleeping car, one diner and one sleeper-lounge car. The dining car and sleeper were dropped at Indianapolis as the rest of the train continued to St. Louis. The diner and sleeper were cleaned and readied for pickup by train #30, the eastbound *Spirit of St. Louis*, later in the afternoon for an overnight trip to New York.

Chicago-Cincinnati *James Whitcomb Riley* normally ran with eight to ten matching Budd-built stainless steel coaches and a full diner. Interestingly, just prior to the merger in December 1967, NYC eliminated names on all trains except the *Riley*.

On Merger Day, February 1, 1968, 17 PC passenger trains serviced Indianapolis — eight on the former NYC and 11 on the former PRR. With the exception of Chicago, Indianapolis saw more PC intercity passenger trains than anywhere west of Buffalo or Pittsburgh. PC also lost about \$100 million (\$930 million in 2020 dollars) on passenger operations that year, according to Association of American Railroads statistics.

During PC's first year, six trains were eliminated. Several weeks following the merger, the one unit-one coach daily Union City, Indiana-St. Louis runs were discontinued. This was the remnant of NYC's New York-St. Louis *Southwestern Limited*. Ohio regulators approved the discontinuance, Indiana did not, so this required the trains to continue only in Indiana and Illinois.

A pair of daily trains on the former PRR between Chicago and Louisville, once named *The Kentuckian*, were axed in April 1968. PC was also able to discontinue a



ty was always a depressing experience. Echoing sounds of pinball machine bells along with voices emanating from the small lunch counter located near the departure/arrival board were the only signs of life.

The departure/arrival board was regularly updated by station employees and we happily noted "O.T." next to our train arrival time. Train information was transmitted to station workers from IU Tower. IU's train director was still using a vintage Edison Telautograph Machine. This utilized a stylus and specially designed pad so the tower operator's handwriting was electronically reproduced at several small paper-fed terminals throughout the station. One of the terminals sat on the counter in front of the departure/arrival board.

ABOVE: Train #31 appears to be doing a somewhat reasonable business in this December 1969 view taken just east of Indianapolis Union Station. The ten-car consist, which was led by the 4300, one of two ex-PRR E8s with a headlight in the nose door, included a Railway Post Office car.



ABOVE: Combined *Spirit of St. Louis* and *Penn Texas* speeds east-bound in the summer of 1970 at St. Elmo, Illinois. The trains were combined in June. Not long after this photo was shot, the diner was dropped between Indianapolis and St. Louis with food service being provided in the New York-St. Louis bedroom lounge car.

At various locations throughout the building were 22" x 16" "Proposed Discontinuance of Intercity Service" notices. These notices had been placed throughout Penn Central facilities and on many pieces of passenger equipment on the system. The notice listed all passenger stations served by Penn Central, and stated that effective May 1, 1971, Penn Central would cease intercity passenger service but that most stations would continue to be served by the newly formed Amtrak (but at greatly reduced frequencies). In this nearly abandoned atmosphere, there were still many workers required for the station operation, all employed by the Indianapolis Union Railway. Well into the Amtrak era, the station employed a full-time station master and assistants, ticket agents, baggage handlers and several shifts of car inspectors and supervisors. There were also three full-time IU police officers who patrolled the facility (as well as the 13-mile Belt). Besides the round-the-clock IU

Tower train director, switch tenders were required to line movements on the depot's west end. All freight and passenger movements around the depot and on depot tracks and yards were governed by the IU train director. Prior to the merger, PRR and NYC each had a terminal dispatcher, but the IU train director had final authority over movements on IU tracks. The NYC housed their terminal dispatcher inside IU Tower, adjacent to the IU train director and interlocking machine. This tower, built in 1925, was about twice as large as originally needed in order to house the future interlocking for the station's west end. This expansion did not occur until the mid-1970s and took the form of a small CTC-like machine. During the merger's first year, the two terminal dispatcher jobs were combined and moved to the Central's Big Four Building in downtown Indianapolis. PRR dispatchers had been housed on the second floor of the station. Eventually, a PC terminal dispatcher supervised the operations at IU. Attached to the 1888 original station structure were boarding gates and additional waiting areas located directly underneath the 12-track shed, one level above. This additional facility was constructed between 1915 and 1924 when the tracks were elevated above the streets. The \$18 million project was split 75/25 between the railroad and the city.

SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS

It was a gray and rainy April 1, 1971, afternoon when Bruce and I were delivered to the station by my worried mother (who along with my patient father, had for several years enabled me to partake in various railroad related excursions). I surely terrified my mother with the information that we planned to disembark at North Philadelphia to photograph GG1s and Reading commuter trains and then explore PC facilities in New Haven, Connecticut. "Egads, you're going to do what?" I think she was able to take some solace that I was being accompanied by a professional rail-roader whom she knew and trusted. A rumble that quickly turned to thunderous shaking marked the arrival of our east-bound train on the tracks above. My mother decided not to make the trek up the flight of stairs to trackside, so after a quick "See you a week from Sunday," Bruce and I headed for our New York-bound accommodations. During the final months of PC operation, *Spirit of St. Louis* passenger traffic had dwindled to the point that one coach, one bedroom/lounge car, one diner and one 10/6 sleeper could handle the business

NOTICE OF PROPOSED DISCONTINUANCE OF INTERCITY SERVICE

Acting in accordance with the requirements of Section 403 (a) (1) of the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 (Pl. 91-518, 94 Stat. 1227), the Trustees of the Property of Penn Central Transportation Company, Deter. of the New Center Plaza, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania hereby announce that they will terminate their responsibility for the operation of the following intercity passenger trains effective May 1, 1971.
The National Rail Passenger Corporation plans to continue the operation of most of these trains after that date with out interruption.

Table with columns for route names and train numbers. Includes routes like 'NEW YORK, N.Y.—CHICAGO, ILL.', 'PITTSBURGH, PA.—CHICAGO, ILL.', and 'PHILADELPHIA, PA.—WASHINGTON, D.C.' with various train numbers listed.

Printed: March 21, 1971

Trains discontinued on and after May 1, 1971 which any State, Region or Local Agency desires to continue run under the Act as operated by the National Rail Passenger Corporation if the passenger agency is willing to reimburse the Corporation for associated costs and losses.
This Notice is the official notice of the Discontinuance of Service under Section 13a of the Interstate Commerce Act.

Table listing stations served by trains. Includes locations such as 'ANN ARBOR, MI', 'BOSTON, MASS.', 'CHICAGO, ILL.', 'CLEVELAND, OH', 'COLUMBUS, OH', 'DETROIT, MICH.', 'INDIANAPOLIS, IND.', 'KANSAS CITY, MO.', 'MEMPHIS, TENN.', 'NEW YORK, N.Y.', 'PHILADELPHIA, PA.', 'PITTSBURGH, PA.', 'RICHMOND, VA.', 'ST. LOUIS, MO.', 'WASHINGTON, D.C.', 'WHEELING, W. VA.', 'WILMINGTON, DE.', 'YAKIMA, WASH.' and many others.

W. H. MOORE, President and Chief Executive Officer Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AT LEFT: A prelude to Amtrak was Penn Central's final notice of proposed discontinuance of intercity passenger train service. The notices were posted throughout the system in passenger cars and at stations.

BELOW: Dick Hoover photographed train #13 just west of Scioto Tower in Columbus sometime between 1969 and 1971. The consist was typical for the final days of #13: two head-end cars and a coach.



east of Indianapolis. As was probably the case most days, few people boarded the train. We were quickly out of the damp, chilly train shed and into our room. Since Bruce knew the crew, we had the "green light" to head to our car's vestibule for a Dutch-door inspection of IU tracks. The train eased out of the train shed, passed the three-story IU Tower and lurched through several switches where the passenger tracks joined the freight tracks that bypassed the station's shed and split from PC mains to Cleveland and Cincinnati. Just prior to leaving IU's plant, the B&O's line to Hamilton, Ohio, separated, running to the south of us. Our train began accelerating and by the time we reached Pine, located about two miles east of IU where the former PRR ducked underneath the Belt, we were running near our 70 mph track speed.

Just outside the city limits, we passed Thorne Tower, where the two-track secondary connection to Hawthorne Yard merged with PC's Main Line Columbus to Indianapolis. The rain and chill cut our

Dutch-dooring short, so we retreated to our room for lengthy conversations with our PC conductor, most likely discussing the upcoming takeover of passenger service by Amtrak.

PC DINING CAR SERVICE

Not long after our 6:15 p.m. departure from Dayton, we moved to the dining car. Our train carried a former NYC Budd stainless steel diner. Bruce and I were seated at one of six tables set for the evening meal. There were a number of bare tables toward the rear half of the car that could be set in case of an unexpected and unlikely crush of customers. Our table had a variety of flat-wear that was marked for NYC, PRR and, surprisingly, PC. China plates were of the PRR Mountain Laurel pattern. We had a PRR water pitcher and NYC menu holder. Linen napkins had been replaced by paper advertising "Penn Central — Route of the Metroliners."

I recall Bruce ordering the table d'hôte special while I had Swiss Steak. Our full-course dinners came complete with salad and rolls. Together with the Boston-New York *Merchants Limited*, the New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago *Broadway Limited* and one unnamed New York-Buffalo-Chicago run, our train was one of only four PC passenger trains that still carried a full dining car.

As a 17-year old, I did not yet have much of an appreciation for fine dining. I do recall the fascinating experience of enjoying a chef-prepared meal while speeding through the Midwestern landscape. That memorable event, however, was only contributing to Penn Central's daily hemorrhaging of much-needed cash.

Following dinner, we attentively watched the approach to Columbus from our bedroom window. After sitting in the depot for several minutes, we felt a slight bump as cars from Cincinnati (most likely one coach and one 10/6 sleeper) were added to our consist. The train from here to the east was still advertised as the *Spirit of St. Louis - Cincinnati Limited*. The Cincinnati section of this train was not included in Amtrak.

Leaving Columbus, we entered the joint PC-B&O line for 33 miles to Newark, Ohio, the first of four stops between Columbus and Pittsburgh. The rain subsided and we were able to do some Dutch-door riding.

AT LEFT: Thanks to Bruce McClary's (right) familiarity with PC crews, we had parlor seat accommodations in the ex-New Haven parlor club car, *Roger Williams*, between North Philadelphia and New York aboard the Washington-Boston *Colonial*.

AT RIGHT: Indianapolis Union Station's departure and arrival board in 1970. The Edison Telautograph Machine can be seen to the far left.

Our train stopped in Coshocton, Dennison and Steubenville. As midnight approached, we were well into the greater Pittsburgh area. A 20-minute stop allowed time to hop off and inspect the train. Leaving Pittsburgh, it was "lights out" as we had a relatively early arrival for our inspection of North Philadelphia railroading.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Prior to our departure from Indianapolis, Bruce advised me to bring a coat and tie to help dissuade anyone from reporting us as trespassers. At 7:30 a.m., with coats and ties on, we disembarked at North Philadelphia. After stashing our bags in the depot's lockers, we returned trackside and walked to the south end of the platform and down the steps into a "no-man's land" of cinders, ballast, weeds and side tracks. It was a short hike to the Penn Central's overhead crossing of the Reading Railroad. We photographed a parade of Reading RDCs and electric commuters, along with PC commuters, "Clockers" and variety of corridor trains.

One of the highlights was the New York-bound (via Newark PATH connecting train) Reading *Crusader* remnant with a conventional F-unit on each end of the six-car coach train. While PC New York-Philadelphia trains were considered intercity and taken over by Amtrak, the lone Reading train was not, thus keeping Reading out of Amtrak. At this point in their history, the Reading was on the verge of bankruptcy. Penn Central had declared bankruptcy nine months earlier; the Reading would follow in November 1971.

We returned to the North Philly platform to board the 9:20 a.m. New Haven bound *Colonial*. Once on the train, we found ourselves in very friendly territory as Bruce had worked with the crew members on previous Metroliner runs. We were then seated in the mostly-empty parlor-lounge car *Roger Williams*.

Following a lengthy scheduled stop and crew change in Penn Station, Bruce commented that we would probably need to move to coach for our remaining journey to New Haven. "I don't know these New Haven guys and they are 'by the book,'" Bruce said as the conductor approached. After inspecting Bruce's pass and my coach ticket, the conductor said Bruce could stay but I needed to move to coach. So we left our first class accommodations

BELOW: Penn Central electrician Bruce McClary enjoys passing scenery in the former NYC diner. Flatware was marked PRR, NYC and PC while plates were of PRR design.



and moved to coach for our remaining jaunt to New Haven.

We had about 90 minutes in New Haven. Still attired in coats and ties, we walked through the engine facilities not far from the station's platform, exchanging pleasantries with various carmen and workers. At 2:30 p.m., I boarded an RDC bound for my Springfield, Massachusetts, destination. Bruce hopped on a Grand Central commuter train to return to his Hotel Commodore "home away from home."

This was my first RDC ride. It was a rough and noisy two-hour journey as we sped along the former New Haven track that was suffering from deferred maintenance. About 22 hours and just over a thousand rail miles from my home town,

ABOVE: During Penn Central's short-lived operation of passenger service, specialized menus, towels, placards and flatware were produced.



ABOVE: In this view from the North Philadelphia platform, a New York-bound train slows for its station stop.

the first half of the journey came to an end at Springfield, Massachusetts, certainly one of the most miserable, dark and unkempt stations in the country at that time.

JOURNEY TO NYC

One week and one day later, on April 10, I returned to the pitiful Springfield station. Fortunately, passengers were allowed to wait on track level, avoiding time in the dark tomb-like waiting room. I boarded the coach-only *Yankee Clipper* connecting train to New Haven and arrived at Penn Station at 5:25 p.m. In order to connect with #13 at Pittsburgh, I was required to travel on *The Pennsylvania Limited*. It departed Penn Station at 9:25 p.m.

New York City's new Pennsylvania Station was seven years old when I stepped into it late that Saturday afternoon. There was quite a crowd in the brightly lit but spartan-designed main concourse and waiting areas. It was quite a contrast to the Springfield and Indianapolis stations. I ventured outside to experience the hustle and bustle of the big city. At 17 years of age, with a camera bag over my shoulder, I had "young tourist" written all over me. Within minutes, a rather unkempt fellow came up to me and said he could give me a tour of the city for

a fee. I declined his offer. He remarked about how it must feel to have a full belly. This encounter reminded me that it might be a good time to locate food so I ducked into a cramped and crowded delicatessen. I recall Bruce reminding me that if I ever found myself in this situation, I'd better be ready with my order or the proprietor would simply go on the next customer, "That's how things operate in New York," he warned me. I was able to navigate it all and got out with my brown bagged meal that I took back to Penn Station's main waiting area.

Once back inside, I found myself enthralled by the station's mid-century modern split-flap departure board. This state-of-the-art electromechanical display was commonly found in airports. (Probably the last operational US railroad split-flap board was located at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station; it was retired in early 2019 and donated to the Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum.) At Penn Station, the display contained ten lines each showing expected departure time, train name/designation, and destination. Each line also displayed the track number, but that information would not appear until several minutes before boarding time. There were a variety of Boston, Philadelphia and Washington trains listed in order of depar-

AT RIGHT: Busy Reading commuter lines went underneath PC's NEC main. PC commuter train from Chestnut Hills is pictured above an outbound Reading RDC commuter train.

ture. Each display line would change with each departure (or two or three).

A well-trained live train announcer supplemented the visual display. The announcer sat in a darkened glass booth that jutted from the station's wall about 10 feet above the main waiting area. Passengers would gather in front of the board waiting for track numbers to be announced or displayed. Each time the board's display would change, it made distinct clacking sounds as the split-flap wheels turned the various display lines. This sound would attract the attention of nearby waiting passengers anxiously awaiting their track designation. Once the information was displayed, a crowd would rush to the gate.

I watched as the *Pennsylvania Limited* appeared on the bottom line of the display, probably 45 minutes or so prior to departure. A fairly good-sized crowd mulled around the departure board. It appeared we would have a pretty good load on our 9:25 p.m. train. The crowd waited in anticipation as the split-flap board rearranged itself and *Pennsylvania Limited* worked its way to the top line, but no gate number was yet listed. More attentive passengers, myself included, noted a station worker unlocking a gate nearby, and assuming it was our train, we quickly moved toward the gate. Soon the announcement came, "Penn Central *Pennsylvania Limited* now boarding." A crowd of people then followed us to the gate, which was wide open by the time we arrived. The booming voice of the train announcer could be heard as he rattled off the approximately 25 station stops. As we approached the gate, an attendant emphatically and repeatedly announced "This is a Chicago train ... this is a Chicago train." I followed as we descended the stairs to track level. A trainman inquired as to each passenger's destination as we filed onto the cars.

PENN STATION

Even though my car was probably three quarters full. I was fortunate to have both seats to myself for the overnight journey to Pittsburgh. The train carried a sleeper and several coaches, one of them being a snack bar coach. I recall thinking at the time that there was certainly nothing special about this train ... why bother keeping the name? This would be a moot point in a few weeks



as Amtrak had already answered negatively to a more important question, "Why bother keeping the train?"

Speeding down the high-speed corridor tracks toward Philadelphia, we flew by numerous large and small industries still serviced by rail. Things outside seemed to be thriving and busy. At the time, I was unaware that this was part of the dying and decaying "rust belt" and within 20-30 years, many of these industries would be gone forever.

Sleeping in coach was a challenge for me. As daylight approached, we were departing Greensburg. I watched through the coach window as we approached Pittsburgh. At about 7 a.m., our train came to a stop at the Pittsburgh depot. I followed the crowd of departing passengers and we filed past the station's arrival and departure board where eight eastbound and eight westbound trains were listed. In a few weeks, this board would see five trains each way deleted. Amtrak would retain only the *Spirit*, the *Broadway Limited* and a Pittsburgh-New York train.

ABOVE: Two Reading commuter lines merged just north of the PC/RDG overpass in North Philadelphia. Here's the *Crusader* at the junction.



ABOVE: Located 7.8 miles from downtown Pittsburgh in Carnegie, Wagner Tower was at the junction of the Scully (left) and Chartiers branches. The tower was built in 1950 and named in honor of Pittsburgh Pirates star Honus Wagner, who was born nearby.

OPPOSITE PAGE ABOVE: Uhrich Tower in Uhrichsville, Ohio, protected the crossing with B&O's CL&W Subdivision between Wheeling, West Virginia, and Lorain, Ohio.

OPPOSITE PAGE BELOW: Bricker Tower was located in a rural area midway between Coshocton and Newark. It was built in 1946 and named after former Ohio Senator and Governor, John W. Bricker. A CTC machine was located in the tower that controlled Bricker's crossovers and both ends of eastbound and westbound sidings. Only a portion of the CTC machine was put into operation. Plans to expand the CTC never came to fruition. The tower received "the Penn Central treatment" with a new sign and PC green trim.

The final leg of my adventure would be the daylight trip between Pittsburgh and Indianapolis. Train Number 13 had always been a Pittsburgh to St. Louis mail and express train, was always unnamed, and always carried only coaches, normally just one. Prior to the US Post Office reductions in moving first class mail by train, this

train had impressive consists of RPOs, storage mail cars and express cars. A 1960 photograph shows #13 with 19 cars, including three RPOs, and the train was powered by three E-units. During its final years of operation, the train normally operated with one E-unit, two head-end cars and one coach.

When the boarding of #13 was announced at Pittsburgh, about a dozen passengers embarked on the single coach for the non-stop trip to Columbus. I thought it interesting that #13 made none of the intermediate stops (Steubenville, Dennison, Coshocton and Newark) yet the named train *Spirit of St. Louis* called on those towns (as did the *Penn Texas* prior to its discontinuance).

Number 13's coach was the last car on the train with the non-vestibule end facing to the rear. Prior to our train's departure, I grabbed a paper towel from the men's room, went to the end of the car, opened the door as quietly as possible and quickly cleaned off a spot to allow for picture taking. I returned to my seat and our train departed on time at 10 a.m. The conductor





ABOVE: Entering Newark, #13 rattled across the B&O's Sandusky branch at Lake Erie Crossing. PC trains moving with current of traffic could proceed over the crossing at 15 mph as long as crossing watchman vertical target and favorable signal indication were displayed. All B&O trains and PC trains moving against current of traffic were required to stop at the crossing.

quickly punched the tickets of the few passengers. According to the timetable, we would cover the next 191 miles to Columbus in four hours and five minutes.

SPEED ON THE PANHANDLE

The entire Pittsburgh-Columbus "Panhandle" line had been built and rebuilt to high mainline standards. Additional signal modernization, clearance and relocation projects took place just prior to and during WWII. In 1971, traffic on this line was quite heavy. There were about 30 towers and cabins still in operation between Pittsburgh and Indianapolis. As a tower enthusiast, I knew there would be many new ones for me to see and photograph this day.

After crossing the massive Panhandle Bridge over the Monongahela River not far from Pittsburgh's station, our train curved to follow the Ohio River for a short distance. Not far from downtown Pittsburgh, we passed Wagner Tower, which was easy to photograph since we were travelling at a restricted speed at that point. About 40 miles west of Pittsburgh, we entered the Steubenville area with the Weirton Jct. and Mingo Jct. interlockers, quite a bit of heavy

industry and the towering bridge over the Ohio River.

About 30 miles west of Steubenville, we passed Custer Tower and slowly transitioned out of the Appalachians to a less rugged but still hilly and winding terrain. Twenty miles later, we flew by Uhrich Tower (crossing of the B&O CL&W branch) just west of Dennison/Uhrichville. Town Tower (crossing of the ex-PRR Marietta-Cambridge-Cleveland branch) at Newcomerstown was just west of MP 108 with Morgan Run Tower (N&W's ex W&LE crossing) ten miles further west.

About 25 miles later, we passed Bricker Tower, a standard PRR brick structure with an air-operated interlocking plant. Bricker was among a number of towers between Pittsburgh and Columbus located in obscure rural areas, yet PC had gone to the expense of replacing tower and depot signs along this stretch with new green and white italicized-lettered versions to show off their new corporate identity.

About 30 miles east of Columbus, we entered Newark, Ohio, and slowed to the required 15 mph to cross B&O's Sandusky Branch at Lake Erie Crossing. A crossing watchman shanty with target signal protected the B&O crossing with PRR inter-



locking signals on the eastbound and westbound mains. Travelling west through Newark, we passed the ex-PRR passenger station, freight house and ND Cabin, where our tracks joined the joint PC-B&O C&N Sub Division to Columbus. This section was owned, maintained and operated by the B&O, yet all block and interlocking signals were of PRR design. A B&O operator at ND controlled the signals from inside the cabin, but the switches were hand-thrown by the operator. We remained on the C&N until US Tower at Columbus Union Depot.

About three miles west of Newark, was a handsome brick tower at Heath, where we crossed the Central's ex-T&OC Eastern Branch. About 13 miles later, we passed Summit Tower, a standard B&O wooden tower design and the beginning of triple-track running to Columbus. We entered greater Columbus in about nine miles as we passed East Columbus Tower, which was similar in appearance to Summit. Another mile and a half west was Alum Creek Tower, which appeared to be of standard brick PRR design.

Just past Alum Creek was the now silent expanse of former PRR yards and facilities that lined the main for the next couple of miles to Union Depot. Penn Central's new

Buckeye Yard had replaced the PRR facilities. Buckeye, located west of the downtown area, was opened near the end of 1969. We entered Columbus Union Depot at US Tower, a two-story, slender B&O wood structure that had been updated with tinted and outwardly slanted second-story windows giving it the look of an air traffic control tower. The operation of US Tower was anything but modern. The US operator controlled signals for the maze of switches at the station's east end. Several switch tenders on the ground threw the switches by hand. The operator communicated with the switch tenders via-talk back speakers near the switch tender sheds. We arrived in Columbus ahead of schedule. The conductor informed us we would be there 20 minutes if we wanted to visit the station's snack bar.

I had loaded up on snacks, not expecting this meal stop, but decided to take the opportunity to grab a sandwich at the snack bar. After disembarking, I found myself once again in a large and mostly empty station facility. I made a quick walk around the waiting room and upon hearing the boarding announcement, returned to my mostly empty coach for the final four hours-leg of my journey.

ABOVE: Standard B&O-design Summit Tower was about 13 miles east of Columbus. The interlocking controlled crossovers, a westward siding and the end of triple track from Columbus.



ABOVE: By April 1971, much of the former PRR yard and facilities on the east side of Columbus had been abandoned or removed in favor of the new facility at Buckeye Yard, located on the west side of the city. As #13 passed St. Clair Ave, the former PRR coaling tower, later converted to a sanding facility, loomed over a changed and doomed railroad landscape.

I once again returned to the door, opening it to again clean some grime off the glass. At the west end of the depot tracks, we passed High Street cabin and veered away from the maze of tracks, soon crossing the Scioto River and Scioto Tower. The tower was a standard Big Four tower on stilts that had been covered with a brick veneer.

A couple of miles west, I was surprised to see that Miami Crossing Tower was still standing. The elevated Big Four tower was abandoned and diamonds had been removed; the merger and the opening of Buckeye Yard made the Big Four line redundant. The same Big Four line had crossed the PRR about 20 miles west, at London. At this point, the former NYC Cincinnati-Galion line merged into the former PRR, but the diamonds were gone, replaced by two turnouts. The tower was gone as well. About ten miles west, at the crossing of the DT&I, South Charleston Tower was still in service.

Our second stop this day was Dayton — another maze of tracks about two hours from my final destination. My legs had grown weary by this point and I spent most of the remaining time seated and sometimes dozing. Our third stop was

Richmond, Indiana, 68 miles and one hour and 35 minutes from Indianapolis.

This final stretch of main line had a recent reputation for wrecks. Several weeks prior to the February 1968 merger, two trains sideswiped at Dunreith, Indiana, causing a massive explosion, the release of toxic chemicals and the destruction of several buildings. Two more major derailments, each without damage to adjacent property, occurred near Greenfield and Germantown in 1969 and 1970. These three wrecks were on an approximate 30 mile stretch of the line. On Sunday, April 11, I stepped off #13, back home in Indianapolis, after a 1,890 mile round trip journey.

Six years prior, when I was 11, I took my first ever rail trip aboard #13. It was a short, 70-mile trip to visit my grandparents in Terre Haute. I recall my mother insisting I wear a coat and tie on that trip. "That's what you do when you travel on a train." My interest in trains had already been established when I talked my parents into allowing me to take the 1964 trip. That first train ride certainly took my interest to a higher level that led me to a serious avocation in the study, recording and sharing of railroad history.



ABOVE: Train #13 enters Wayne Avenue Junction in Dayton. The train is curving off the former PRR and entering Dayton Union Railway trackage, which served Dayton Union Station.

AT RIGHT: Standard Big 4 tower on stilts at Miami Crossing, about 3.5 miles west of Union Depot, protected the crossing of ex-NYC Cincinnati-Columbus-Galion line. When Buckeye Yard opened west of Columbus, this portion of the ex-NYC became unnecessary so the interlocking was removed.

The final 1971 trip marked the end of the era, although on most roads it had been on a years-long decline, where individual roads had their own unique cars and service. Much more economic and necessary (yet uninteresting) standardization began with Amtrak. Mercifully, the railroads were relieved of their burdens to spend millions of dollars on money losing service.

In 1968, noted railroad author and former professor of economics at Stanford University, the late George W. Hilton wrote, "Railroad passenger service had demonstrated itself to be the most uneconomic activity ever carried on by private



firms for a prolonged period." He further noted that if it had not been for state control of train discontinuance and a large stock of passenger equipment not fully depreciated, passenger service would have probably been mostly eliminated by 1958. Statistics from the American Association of American Railroads show



that in 1957, passenger deficits nationwide totaled \$723 million (\$6.7 billion in 2020 dollars). Fortunately for me, the extended life of the streamline era trains allowed me to experience diners, sleepers, coaches and parlors that were largely unchanged since their late 1940s to early 1950s construction.

OPPOSITE PAGE ABOVE: A Grand Central Terminal-bound commuter train of former New Haven equipment passes the New Haven coach yard.

OPPOSITE PAGE BELOW: Parlor Club Car *Roger Williams* brings up the rear of *The Colonial* departing New Haven for Boston.

ABOVE: It's May 1, 1971, and the first Amtrak eastbound *Spirit of St. Louis* departs Indianapolis. Behind a pair of PC E8s and baggage car are seven matching Budd-built stainless steel cars of NYC heritage. At Harrisburg, a coach and sleeper will be forwarded to Washington as a separate train.

EPILOGUE

Several weeks later, I was back at Indianapolis Union Station to witness Amtrak's first day on May 1, 1971. Amtrak's westbound *Spirit of St. Louis* arrived with PC E-units and eight cars. With the exception of the baggage car, all cars were matching Budd built stainless steel. Behind the baggage car was one 10/6 sleeper, two coaches and full diner followed by another 10/6 sleeper and two coaches. These last three cars were most likely through cars to Washington, DC. Amtrak restored through St. Louis to DC service that had been dropped by the PRR years earlier. This service restoration was most likely due to Amtrak's decision to eliminate the B&O's *National Limited* St. Louis-DC run effective April 30.

Amtrak eventually renamed the *Spirit of St. Louis* to *The National Limited*. This train, along with the remaining Amtrak trains in Indianapolis, suffered along with PC as deferred maintenance took its toll. In 1974, the Chicago-Florida *Floridian* was removed from its PC and Indianapolis route in favor

of a routing over L&N's former Monon between Chicago and Louisville. The Chicago-Cincinnati-Washington D.C. *Cardinal* was routed off PC and moved to C&O's Cincinnati-Chicago line.

As a result, only the *National Limited* passed through Indianapolis and it was tough going. Penn Central moved much of its freight off the Indianapolis-Richmond-New Paris route as a result of the new connection in Union City, Indiana/Ohio, where the former NYC Indianapolis-Cleveland line crossed the former PRR Chicago-Columbus line. Freight traffic dried-up east of Indianapolis and Amtrak would either need to pay maintenance costs or switch to the Union City route, bypassing Dayton. This all became moot in 1979 when government-mandated reductions in Amtrak routes resulted in the discontinuance of *The National Limited* on September 30. ❖



