

CINDERS

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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TWIN STACKS IN THE SUNSET

Shortly, if not already, a deep-throated whistle will echo down the narrow streets of Norfolk at 7:35 PM, surmounting the noises of traffic and people, just as it has for many years. "Cast off the bow line," and the Elisha Lee will back out into midstream - for the last time.** The big white steamer, last of the Pennsylvania Railroad's passenger-carrying vessels, has finally run out of time in her 60 year career. Death has been coming for some time: her C&O floating comrades at Norfolk terminal were discontinued several years ago, while her Cape Charles berth is shared with new diesel tugs and served by new diesel trains. A storm and a Coast Guard inspector will probably provide the coup de grace for the valiant craft, as much a part of the DelMarVa peninsula and Norfolk as the numerous truck farmers and Granby St. Her decks have resounded to the tread of thousands of sailors and soldiers bound for Norfolk, throngs going to the South on vacation, and even the common-place Old Point - Norfolk commuters. Soon she will, if she already hasn't, tie up to her Cape Charles berth on her final run, victim of the passing parade.

With the death of the Elisha Lee the DelMarVa peninsula faces a profound change. Buses will take over the Cape Charles - Norfolk run via the Virginia Ferry Corp. boats. The Pennsylvania has already indicated its desire to remove the Chavelier, night New York - Norfolk train, due to anticipated loss of traffic. However, to replace this train the company proposes to put on a through New York - Norfolk train via Washington and Richmond. While your editor prefers to adopt a "wait and see" attitude on the outcome of this proposal, operation of this train would be something new and possibly very beneficial to Norfolk.

One serious drawback that immediately arises is the three types of motive power required; electric on the Pennsy, diesel on the RF&P and ACL, and steam on the N&W. This condition has made the present thru cars via the all land route mediocre at best due to lengthy terminal delays. If the new train is operated, but cannot overcome this difficulty, it will add nothing to present service and would probably face an uncertain future. The end of steamer service brings a new opportunity. Let us hope the Elisha Lee won't have gone in vain.

**The Elisha Lee was withdrawn from service Feb. 28th for Coast Guard inspection. Since permission to end ferry service has not yet been obtained we imagine service is being supplied by the VFC ferry Accomac which will probably continue until permission is granted. The Elisha Lee has probably made her last trip unless the abandonment plea is turned down.

A WORD OF WARNING

Many of you were probably disappointed to find our March 8th trolley trip sold out way in advance. It is not too early to start thinking of the coming Gettysburg trip because there are many factors which indicate tickets for this jaunt might not be too plentiful at the last minute. BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY.

STEAM WHISPS

The Jersey Central recently pulled off numerous passenger runs among which was the last Barnogat-Rod Bank train and #7209, the famous "Lonesome Train" between Newark and Elizabethport.

PAST AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Jim Dillon entertained the Feb. meeting with memories of the past in local trolley and rail lines. He finished his excellent talk with a series of slides showing more modern steam and electric views.

March 7th promises to be a very special night when Charles Houser and the Lehigh Valley chapter join us for an evening of Charlies' slides and movies.

CONTROLLER CLICKS

Birmingham placed trolley buses on E. Lake and S. East Lake rts. Feb 8th. West End & Ensley, the last two lines, are due to go in early March and April respectively. Seems streetcars with southern draws are becoming few and far between.

A trip thru the new 36th St. subway answered an inquisitive mind: How does the dirt get to the surface? A miniature steam shovel and a bull dozer are hidden under the boards and when enough dirt is accumulated the boards are removed, the dirt lifted out by scoop, and the boards replaced.

(OVER)

WE WONDER WHY

On February 14th NRRS, Midwest Chapter, operated a Pennsylvania R.R. trip from Cleveland to Wellsville, Ohio commemorating one hundred years of Great Lakes - Ohio River rail service. The train, 16 cars pulled by a road diesel, was greeted at Wellsville by assorted freight equipment new and old, a J-1 class steamer, D-16 #1223 (4-4-0), and a narrow-gauge mogul, Waynesburg & Washington #9684.

Last year Philadelphia Chapter tried for several months to operate a PRR trip, first to Stroudsburg, later just a mainline trip Phila.-Harrisburg-York-Baltimore and home. Both of these attempts were met with extremely high trip guarantees; failure to, or great delay in giving any sort of rates, ridiculous operating restrictions, and long periods of evasiveness and unsatisfactory answers. We wonder why this disparity between Eastern and Western Region treatment of public and fans alike. Midwest Chapter is not being favored, nor Phila. Chapter discriminated against since numerous instances are available to show similar excellent treatment by Western Region in both passenger and freight, while Eastern Region has a similar list, unfortunately of abuses, to its credit.

Since charity begins at home, certainly progress should. We believe in the necessity of railroads to our country and the need of selling them to everyone that might ship or ride by rail. It is very difficult to sell a railroad that has not taken a positive, but rather a negative attitude toward its own services. The Pennsy's own Western Region is pointing the way. Perhaps 16th St. should bend an ear before all the mortar in the disappearing Chinese Wall is insufficient to cement back the good public relations so necessary to operations of our present day railroads.

STEAM WHISPS (cont'd)

A Budd RDC has recently (Feb. 2nd to 28th) been given a rigorous workout on the rapidly dieselizing CPR. It provided one round trip daily between Montreal and the Laurentian Mt. resort of Mont Laurier.

The H&BTM, over which the NRRS had their enjoyable convention steam trip last year, has failed to surmount reorganization difficulties and has applied to abandon the entire line.

The Western Maryland has lost their mail contract which about ends all hope of survival for the passenger service or that of the Hagerstown & Frederick.

The Reading - at long last - sports a new revised map in their current thru schedule. The Mauch Chunk Switch Back has at last been replaced with the new Fairless Branch.

Violent opposition at the Feb. 20th hearing has required another hearing for the Lancaster - York gas cars the Pennsy wants to take off.

At long last the Pennsy is going to modernize Altoona station including a complete face lifting. There is nothing in evidence as yet on the complete rebuilding of Paoli station.

A new wrinkle on the Long Island - monthly reports are now being issued accounting for all delays during the month.

CONTROLLER CLICKS (cont'd)

Locust St. car tracks are in place - where they cross the 36th St. subway. Some sunny day soon should see this work resumed if the PUC ever gives its permission. Meanwhile material and temporary construction offices have appeared at 22nd & 23rd on Market, indicating activity in that quarter.

Well, IT opened, didn't it. The facilities haven't exactly been thronged, we're told.

Newspaper headline, "Motorman held up on Route 62 car." Goes to prove these modern Jesse James' will strike anywhere. The loot of \$30.00 indicates the operator was carrying a large personal bankroll.

The recent PST schedule change cut more cars off the line. Missing, among others, are the evening Clifton and the Saturday morning trippers.

Reliable sources had Public Service officials leaving for Minneapolis last week, PCC bound we hope. Funds have already been set aside for the Franklin Avenue loop.

Have you seen the furious pace of construction along West Chester Pike? PST's car stop shelters were the latest item to disappear under the wreckers hammers.

Cleveland will replace two of its five lines (Superior & E. 55th.) on March 8th. They were served by the PCCs which went to Toronto.

Illinois Terminal dropped the Decatur-Peoria line Feb. 21st. Alton goes March 8th, we're told.