

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CINDERS

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER



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THE VIEW FROM NEVIS

The Great Airline Strike

For nearly six weeks last summer the skies over Philadelphia and other cities across the nation were relatively quiet, thanks to a strike against the five major airlines by the Machinists Union. Gone was the thunder of the jet's exhaust and the house-rattling vibrations of a Constellation's engines at full throttle. It was nice while it lasted.

An interesting aspect of this strike was that even though the five struck lines carry nearly 75% of the domestic airline traffic, it was not serious enough to be considered a national emergency. Apparently the buses, trains and feeder airlines were sufficient to fill the void. This makes me wonder whether we really need airplanes as badly as the airline fanatics say we do. The Federal Government continues to pour billions of dollars into a transportation industry which the greater portion of the American population probably will not use more than once or twice during their lifetime. Nobody bats an eyelash at this but just try to spend a few bucks on rail service. Dollarwise, the Interstate Highway System makes a lot more sense to me than does the airway system.

I imagine that the hardened airplane nuts remained at home rather than try another form of transportation. But some folks did return to the rails. Reports were that the Western lines handled most of the DP's, although the Florida trains also benefited. Unfortunately, the Western roads were already busy with the summer tourist trade and must have been hard pressed to maintain their usual high standard of service. No doubt many comments were made about "cattle cars" --- "square wheels" --- and the like.

This brings to mind a note which appeared in the press shortly after the strike was settled. It stated that the passenger trains may not be around to help fill the void for the next airline strike. Not a nice thing to think about in a country which takes mobility for

DIXIE RAILROADING

Train watching by Roger Fredrick

"Being married somewhat limits a railfan in his vacation activities, especially when one must drag his infant son along. However, I gritted my teeth and made the best of a one week trip by auto to Virginia and North Carolina.

"We left Norwood on a Saturday morning, bound for Hampton, Va. Except for glimpses of some mainlines and the freight bypass around Washington, the drive along expressways was boring, until we left I-95 near Doswell, Va. I had planned to shoot some movies of the R F & P at this point but was rained out. We continued over back roads to West Point, where we inspected the Southern's facilities, and then on to Hampton.

"Sunday was spent visiting with the relations but Monday we were able to leave the boy with my sister, and the wife and I set out on the ferry to Currituck. Alas, the ferry was out of service for repairs and we had to backtrack about 50 miles to reach Currituck. However, this offered a drive along the Norfolk Southern mainline, which appeared to be in respectable condition despite 85 lb. rail and light ballast. We continued to Kitty Hawk to see the Wright Brothers Museum, then turned west to Plymouth, N. C., where we stopped for the day. After dinner we watched the NS and ACL switching the big paper mill on the west side of town.

"Tuesday morning dawned bright and clear. We saw the NS through freight head south; then we drove to Tarboro, N. C. where we looked for the East Carolina RR. However, we learned that it had been abandoned

DIXIE RAILROADING(Condt.)

just last November, with the NS taking over a few miles on the south end at Farmville. We continued west to Rocky Mount. Shortly after our arrival, ACL No. 376 rolled into town with two E units on the point, four headend cars and two coaches. It departed ten minutes late. Just a few minutes later, the southbound piggyback special eased through town with four units and 72 trailers.

"We then struck out over Route No. 58 for the Piedmont country. Our next point of call was Warrenton, N.C., where we looked for the Warrenton RR. We found the office and spent a few minutes chatting with the agent, who opened the enginehouse so that we could inspect their one engine, No. 5, a Whitcomb with siderods, which formerly operated in Jacksonville, Fla., for the US Navy. The Warrenton is a typical short line railroad, rather weed grown with 50 lb. rail and a right of way that meanders through front yards, past chicken coops, and along the side of the road. Following our inspection of the WRR, we drove on a few more miles to Norlina, the junction of the Portsmouth branch with the SAL mainline. We found a motel with a good view of the railroad and, after a gigantic fried chicken dinner, I spent the evening train-watching.

"The first train due that evening was No. 21, which was running 45 minutes late and to add to its detention, some miscreant had put a large timber pole across the tracks just north of town. It wedged under the pilot of the lead unit but, fortunately, did not derail the train. The train sheet indicates the activity:

8:25 PM	No. 20	Office car "Jacksonville"
8:54 "	No. 17	
9:20 "	Freight,	Portsmouth ballast train
9:35 "	No. 33	Office car "Richmond"
9:55 "	Freight to	Richmond
10:33 "	No. 10	Two SDP-40's on headend
10:55 "	Freight,	Portsmouth- Norlina local

"I was up early Wednesday to record the following activity:

THE VIEW FROM NEVIS(Condt.)

granted. Is there any hope for the long haul passenger train? I doubt it, unless the government enters the picture, and this appears to be very unlikely. I am afraid that the few passenger trains which might operate into the 70's will be commuter operations or perhaps something like the proposed Northeast Corridor. It isn't a pleasant prospect for those few of us who enjoy riding a train. To tell the truth, I am beginning to wonder if even railfans bother to ride trains anymore. At almost every railfan gathering someone is loudly telling about driving to some city to watch old number six or whatever train it might be arriving some two or three hours late, usually accompanied by much guffawing. Yet these same individuals will shell out ten cents a mile or more to ride some dinky steam railroad, even though you can still ride up to New York and back on a weekend for a little over three cents a mile on the Pennsy.

Know what? The government should allow the railroads to divest themselves of passenger trains right now. Then everybody would be happy, including the airlines, the bus lines, the highway industry, the automobile firms, and even some so-called railfans. Oh well, most people are convinced that we didn't need passenger trains, that is, until the next Great Airline Strike, which just might be a complete shutdown of the airways. Say, maybe we should have kept a few trains running, just in case.

Ben Nevis

SCRAP LINE

Pittsburgh's PAT plans a major reduction in rail rolling stock effective with the conversion of the East End Lines early next year. Only the 1700 series PCC's, except for the two cars already scrapped and the two involved in the recent Route 38A accident, will be retained. 28 of the 1600 series will also be kept for a total rail fleet of 128 cars.

Currently about 60 of 1400 and 1600 series cars are being cut up with the with GE equipped cars going first. Only twelve of the 1400's are in operating condition. Most of the Craft Ave. work equipment has been transferred to the Tunnel Car barn preparatory to scrapping.

All is not lost however, for some new rail and ties are appearing in spots on the Shannon Lines.

DIXIE RAILROADING(Condt.)

5:55 AM No. 9 SDP-40's, extra Pullmans
6:20 " No. 34 Running Late
6:35 " No. 22
7:20 " "The Fox," fast freight to Richmond
7:35 " No. 18 Office car "Virginia"
7:37 " Freight, Richmond-Norlina turn

"After breakfast, we drove back to Warrenton to learn if the railroad would operate that morning, as I wanted to take a few movies. As luck would have it, they did not expect to operate until the afternoon so we resumed our journey, this time heading north to Charlottesville, Va. The ride through the Piedmont country was pleasant, as usual. We crossed the NF&D at Boydton, then paralleled the SR from Chase City to Keysville. Just north of Keysville, we saw the N&W and former VGN freight lines, then again at Farmville the N&W passenger line. We stopped at Scottsville on the James River to rest in the shade of the C&O station, finally arriving at Charlottesville about 3:00 PM where we spent the night with my brother and his family. That evening I drove downtown to the Southern station to see No. 37, the Crescent. E units Nos. 6913 and 2928 had 13 cars in tow.

"Thursday morning I returned to the station to watch the activity. No. 45 arrived 20 minutes late with a motley consist, a far cry from the days when it was a fine streamliner. Then the southbound piggyback train rolled through with four units and 96 cars. Our son arrived from Hampton at noon with my sister and after lunch we departed for Leesburg, Va. Along the way, we paralleled the SR mainline for awhile but did not see any action. We stopped at a motel just north of Leesburg and after checking in, I zipped up to Point of Rocks to shoot movies of B&O No. 5. Too late! However, on arrival at the station, an eastbound coal drag rolled through with an A-B-A combination of F units and, shortly after, No. 39 slid by with three RDC's for Brunswick.

"We inspected the W&OD after dinner and found two diesels tied up for the night. One was No. 57, a GE

MAIN LINE NEWS

The future of the passenger train never looked worse. The famous and the not so famous are disappearing from the Official Guide at a quickening pace. Gone is the SRS's Tennessean and the Rock Island's Rocky Mountain Rocket. Gone too, is the C&O's lonely Traverse City-Grand Rapids service. Service between Atlanta, Montgomery and New Orleans was slimmed as the L&N-A&WP-WRofA dropped trains. The ICC plans to do likewise with several runs between Memphis and Carbondale, Ill. No. 8, now a New Orleans-Chicago train, will end at Memphis, while its counterpart, No. 25, will go only to Carbondale. The ICC, however, has ordered the Seaboard to continue its Portsmouth, Va.-Raleigh, N. C. trains Pullman and dining service will be dropped. In the west, officials of the Western Pacific testified that the California Zephyr is losing between \$816,000 and \$2,700,000 annually. Robert Downing, vice president of the Great Northern, said that the road has launched an intensive study of its passenger service. The study was prompted by need to replace the present passenger equipment in the near future. The original Denver Zephyr equipment made its farewell trip on November 6th over the C&S.

Today's long haul passenger produces only about 41 cents out of each passenger train dollar. Mail and express adds almost 37 cents and the commuter contributes some 13 cents. According to the AAR, expenses exceed revenue by 36 cents for each dollar earned.

The PRR's Ashtabula Coal Dock project is about a year ahead of schedule. Contracts have been let for the \$7.5 million project with completion set for the spring of 1968. The new facility, which will be able to store over a million tons of coal, will utilize high speed dumpers and modern infra-red thawing sheds.

Local news included the ICC's permission to abandon 26 miles of the Pennsylvania and Atlantic from South Pemberton to Toms River, N. J. The section is operated as part of the PRR's Birmingham Secondary Track.

The Budd Company, long a major auto parts producer and passenger car builder, may soon enter the freight car market if its merger talks with North American Car Corp. are successful. North American, a builder and lessor of specialized freight cars, would help reduce the ups and downs of Budd's rail division.

DIXIE RAILROADING(Condt.)

70 tonner painted in W&OD colors, but the other was a GE steeple cab lettered STR 9332 with a blue paint scheme. Both were MU'd together, using a home-made jumper cable to accommodate two plugs on one engine but just one on the other.

"Friday after breakfast we crossed the Potomac River on the GEN. JUBAL EARLY and then drove to Germantown, Md. on the B&O main. An eastbound freight roared by within minutes of our arrival, then a westbound with some C&O power on the headend, followed by No. 11 (still a heavy headend train,) and finally No. 6 sans dome cars at 8:45 AM. We continued on to Baltimore, where we stopped to see the B&O Museum. After lunching in the coffee shop car, we rolled on home to Norwood. It had been an interesting and educational journey.

IMPROVEMENT

The average freight car moves only about 52 miles each day. In 1965, this was almost equal to the record set in 1944. Things are changing! Starting in mid-August, the N&W and the UP have been operating experimental transcontinental freights between Decatur, Ill. and North Platte, Neb. The four freights have reduced terminal delays as much as 12 hours by eliminating switching at Kansas City and Moberly, Mo.

The Lehigh Valley is expanding the idea into the East in conjunction with the N&W-UP program. The LV will adjust schedules for three of its trains to make direct connection with the N&W at Buffalo. From there the cars will be relayed to Kansas City where the UP will consolidate the cars into a single train for the west coast. Savings in time should run as high as 48 hours.

These improvements followed an NYC development which reduced delays on southwestern traffic moving via the St. Louis gateway. Two daily freights operate from the NYC's new Big Four Yard at Indianapolis to either Pine Bluff, Ark. on the Cotton Belt or Little Rock on the MOPAC. Power and cabooses operate without change.

* * *

PLEASE return Membership Inventory forms as quickly as possible. Results will be carried in the December issue.

Mail forms to: Sam James
914 South Ave.
Apt. F-4
Secane, Pa. 19018

IT CAN'T BE DONE

By now almost every railfan is familiar with the Southern Railway's 2-8-2 No. 4501. The finely tuned green and gold mke is just one of five steamers owned by the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum.

This NRHS chapter, formed in June, 1961 with just 25 members, has become one of the Society's largest, with more than 175 members, and one of the most progressive. The museum proper now includes 13 passenger cars, two freight cars, PRR MU No. 525, NOPS streetcars Nos. 952 and 959, a TVA electric locomotive as well as the five steamers.

The restoration of No. 4501, which ended its active life as Kentucky and Tennessee No. 12, is ample evidence that when interest is coupled with energy progress results. It was so in Chattanooga. It can be so in Philadelphia.

NORTHERN LINES

The merger of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and the CB&Q took a long step forward recently when the Milwaukee Road and the CNW withdrew their objections to the Northern Lines union. The GNP&B, who's petition for review is presently before the ICC, agreed not to oppose the planned CNW-MILW merger providing the usual operating and traffic conditions are imposed. Spokesmen for all the involved carriers pointed out that the area would continue to benefit from strong rail competition while allowing the roads to make substantial economies.

TURBOLINER

The Budd Company has prepared a booklet about its experimental gas turbine car now being tested on the LI. Copies may be obtained from:

The Budd Company
2450 Hunting Park Ave.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19132

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Deadline for next issue, Dec. 5, 1966. Send news to M. S. Bennett, Amosland Apts. A-48, Morton, Pa. 19070