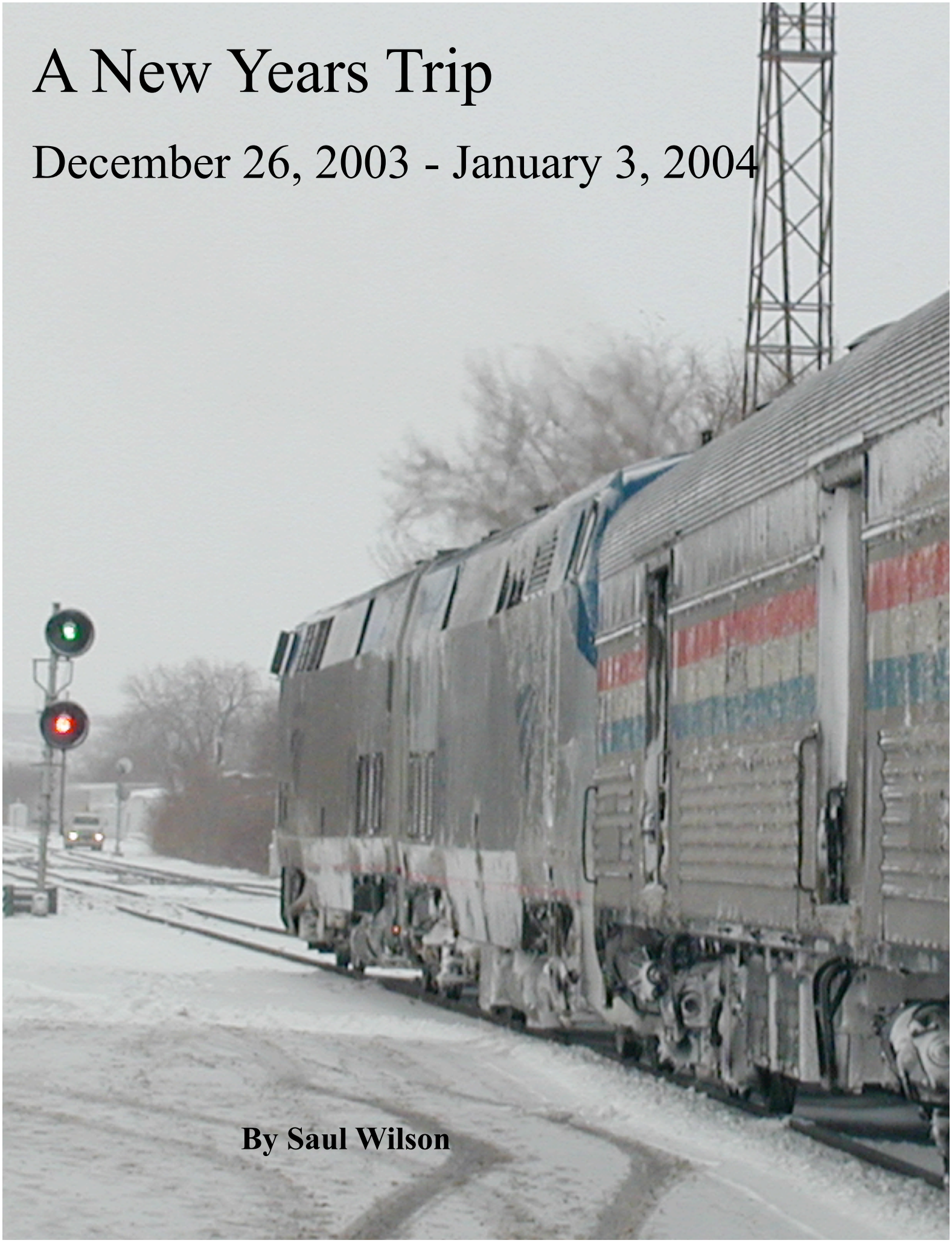
A New Years Trip

December 26, 2003 - January 3, 2004



By Saul Wilson

For the hard working crews that made this trip possible, my parents, and especially for my former English tutor, Joyce Steeves, without whom this paper would not be reality.

Singing through the forests,
Rattling over ridges,
Shooting under arches,
Rumbling over bridges,
Whizzing through the mountains,
Buzzing o'er the vale,—
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Riding on the Rail!

-John Godfrey Saxe
Rhyme of the Rail

Contents

Introduction 7
Baltimore - Washington: *MARC* 9
Washington 11
Washington - Chicago: *Capitol Limited* 14
Chicago 22
Chicago - Seattle: *Empire Builder* 30
Seattle 42
Seattle - Sacramento: *Coast Starlight Bus and Coast Starlight* 44
Sacramento - Chicago: *California Zephyr* 50
Glossary of Abbreviations 74
Bibliography 76

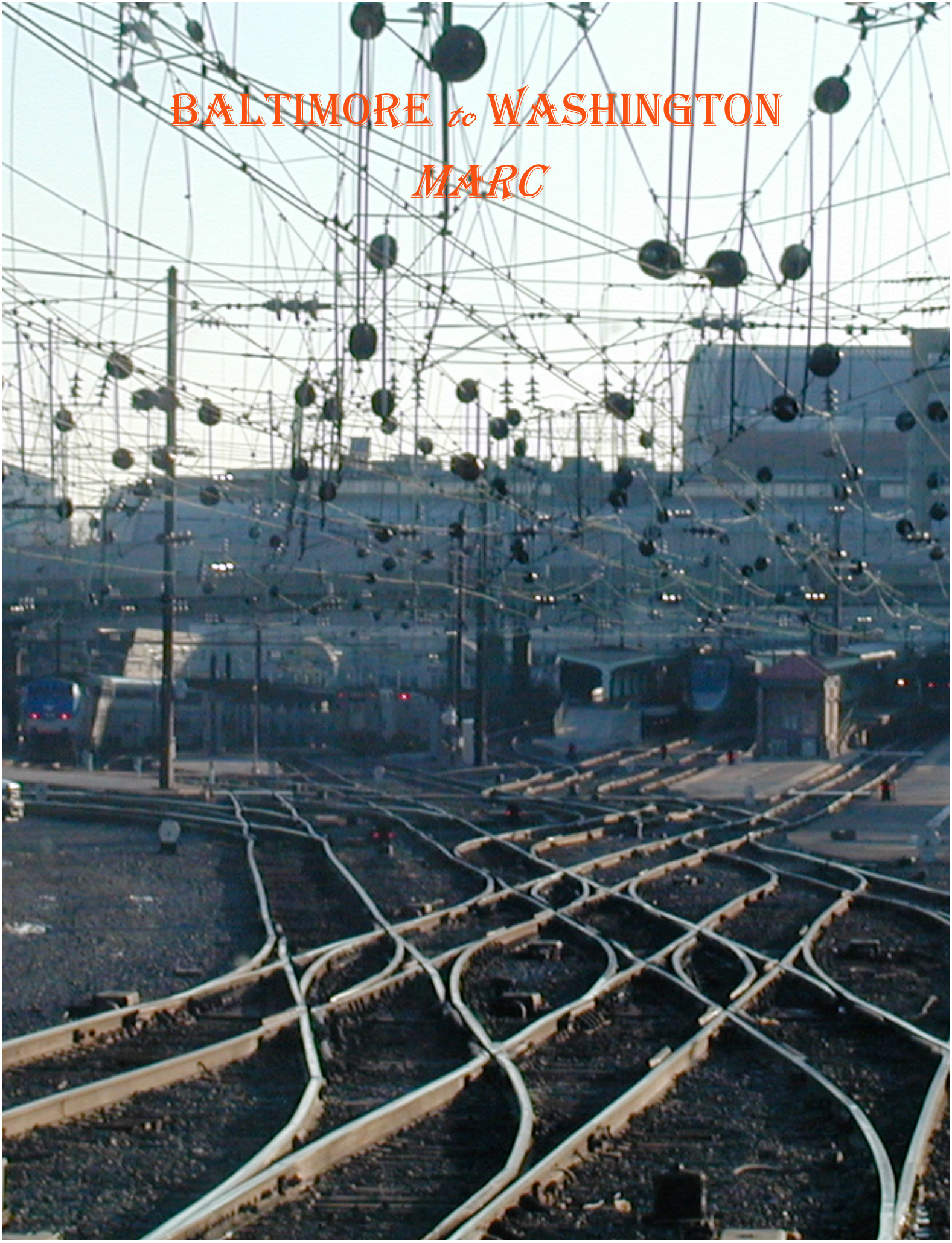
I dreamed I'd delectably dined with the gods,
Had crammed down Olympian fodder in wads;
I dreamed I had quaffed on the nectar they serve
That thrills every fiber and steels every nerve;
But, waking, my memory's sweeter by far—
I've eaten the grub in a dining car!

- Strickland W. Gillilan, January 1904
In the Dining Car, *The Book of the Royal Blue* (by way of *Dining by Rail*)

INTRODUCTION

From December 26, 2003 to January 3, 2004 my dad and I traveled, by train, from Baltimore, Maryland to Chicago, Illinois, via Seattle, Washington; Sacramento, California; Sparks, Nevada; and Green River, Utah. The whole trip was a present to me from my dad, for an unknown holiday. Many, many thanks to him for providing it.

Of course, this trip had to be planned and sold, mostly in late October and throughout November. As I landed (chose) the job of salesman, the planning and selling fell upon me. The trip originally started off as an entire circle around the country on trains; however, for affordability and time-saving purposes, it ended up terminating in Chicago. After preparing a couple dozen route plans and attempting to sell each of them, we agreed to the one described in gruesome detail on the following pages: the *Capitol Limited* from Washington to Chicago, the *Empire Builder* to Seattle, the *Coast Starlight* to Sacramento, the *California Zephyr* to Chicago, and a flight home to Baltimore from there. For each of these trains, of course, I ended up taking along half a dozen old route guides, pieces on their histories, and track maps. Also, I boarded with folders crammed with the locations of local transit system headquarters, weather forecasts, a printout of one of the Amtrak menus, a rating rubric for transit systems (part of my transit activism), and the necessary Amtrak System Timetable, not that it is ever accurate.


BALTIMORE to WASHINGTON
MARC

My dad and I started off our journey in Baltimore by taking a MARC train to Washington, District of Columbia. Although this part of our trip was rather uneventful, I did have the opportunity to ride in the cab for a brief time prior to our arrival at Washington Union Station. This was thanks to the kindness of the conductor and engineer, who permitted me to stand in the cab until the risk of me being sighted by other Amtrak employees was too great. Shortly before pulling into Union Station, I saw a train of Sounder cars parked just south of Amtrak's Ivy City car shops. (Amtrak is the abbreviation of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation's trade name, AMerican TRavel, tracK.) Sounder, the Seattle commuter rail operation, at that time, had leased a couple trains to the Virginia Railway Express.

MARC Commuter Service

Commuter rail service in Maryland has a long history, dating back to the 1830s when the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) started operation (more on that later). The history of MARC (Maryland Rail Commuter), though, does not begin in earnest until the 1960s, when commuter train service over what would become the MARC Penn Line (Perryville - Baltimore Pennsylvania Station - Washington) hit its lowest level in years. In 1974, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) started providing funding for the Penn Central operated commuter service between Baltimore and Washington. Penn Central, the product of a merger between the New York Central and Pennsylvania Railroad, was at the time failing, leading to federal intervention and the creation of Conrail to take over the Penn Central's operations, including those in Baltimore.

The MARC services, thanks to bills passed by the Maryland General Assembly, avoided severe cuts in 1981. In the 1980s, two major changes occurred: the B&O/C&O conglomerate merged into CSX Transportation, and Conrail handed over operations of commuter trains all along the Northeast Corridor, including those in Baltimore, to Amtrak. Since that point, service has increased, but Amtrak remains the Penn Line operator. CSX still operates the Camden and Brunswick Lines.

The Pennsy's Service to Washington

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) reached Washington on August 24, 1835, but the Pennsylvania Railroad (Pennsy) didn't reach the city until July 2, 1872. The reason for the Pennsy's delay in challenging the B&O in this market was that the B&O had persuaded the Maryland General Assembly to give it all rights to the Baltimore-Washington corridor. The Pennsy had to get its hands on the unused Baltimore & Potomac Railroad charter, allowing it to build to Maryland's southern plantations, with a branch line of up to 20 miles. The Pennsy built a mainline to southern Maryland, and a branch from Bowie to Washington. Even then, though, a horse-carriage connection was necessary to travel north of Baltimore; this problem was not fixed until June 29, 1873 with the opening of the Baltimore & Potomac tunnels in Baltimore. The Pennsy's line was electrified as far as Washington on February 10, 1935.

"The railway porters treat each individual piece of baggage as if they owed it a personal grudge. Easy as it may seem to take the lightest and frailest of boxes as the basis of a pile and then bring down upon them the iron-bound edges of a Saratoga trunk, it requires a great deal of skill and practice to so deal with whole carloads of luggage. Yet I have never seen at any station along four thousand miles of railway a single instance of failure."

-Henry W. Lucy, 1885
East to West (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

WASHINGTON
UNION STATION

When we went into Union Station, I picked up some schedules. My dad and I searched for the baggage check-in. Someone from Amtrak told us that it was around the corner, which I knew to be where the ticket counter was. First, we got into the wrong line, the one for tickets, but then we noticed the signs over the lines stating the purpose of each queue. We walked over to the baggage check-in line, where we checked our bags to Chicago Union Station.

My dad and I then went to the ClubAcela waiting room, named after the Acela Express, but accepting all of Amtrak's first class passengers. Though we were not taking an Acela ourselves, sleeping accommodations are considered first class bookings - correctly so, because of their exorbitant price. The Washington ClubAcela had beautiful woodwork, a Christmas tree, great old train posters, free internet access, a free coat check, and, most important of all, early access to the trains, with an escort. It did, however, have a constant, annoyingly loud broadcast of CNN Headline News. After taking plenty of pictures and settling down, I decided to meander over to the station bookstore, in search of train books, but I already had all of those for sale. On the way back, I stopped to view the Norwegian model train layout, provided annually by the Norwegian Embassy. Located in the middle of one of the grand rooms, the layout was dotted with very large trains and the landscape was full of deep snow and large mountains, not to mention trolls and a Santa Claus. I then drifted back to the ClubAcela to wait for our train's boarding time.

Union Station was built because both the B&O and the Pennsy had separate, small depots on Capitol Hill, which many thought were not worthy of Washington. On their way into the two stations, trains would block twenty-eight streets. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law a bill to order the construction of a "Union Station."

The first stone for the station was laid on April 15, 1905, and it opened at 6:50 am on October 27, 1907, although it was not completed until the following year. It was designed by Daniel Burnham, a famous architect who also designed buildings such as Merchandise Mart, the headquarters of the Chicago Transit Authority. During the construction of the station, a total of seventy pounds of gold leaf was expended on the ceilings. The exterior of the building is made of white granite, from Bethel, Vermont, which covers the steel structure of the station. The depot, including the approaches, cost a total of $25 million. Union Station has housed many interesting operations, such as a bowling alley, a mortuary, a YMCA, a Turkish bath, and a nursery. It now houses over 130 shops and Amtrak's corporate headquarters.

In early 1953, the *Federal Express*, a train operated from Boston to Washington by both the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad, lost control of its brakes. It had been experiencing brake problems since departing Boston the night before, but two miles from Union Station, operating at 80 mph, its brakes completely failed. It slammed through the station and collapsed onto the floor of the concourse at 8:38 A.M., January 15, 1953. The cars were removed, but since President-Elect Dwight Eisenhower was coming by train to be inaugurated, a temporary floor was built over the locomotive. Both the fake floor and the locomotive were later removed.

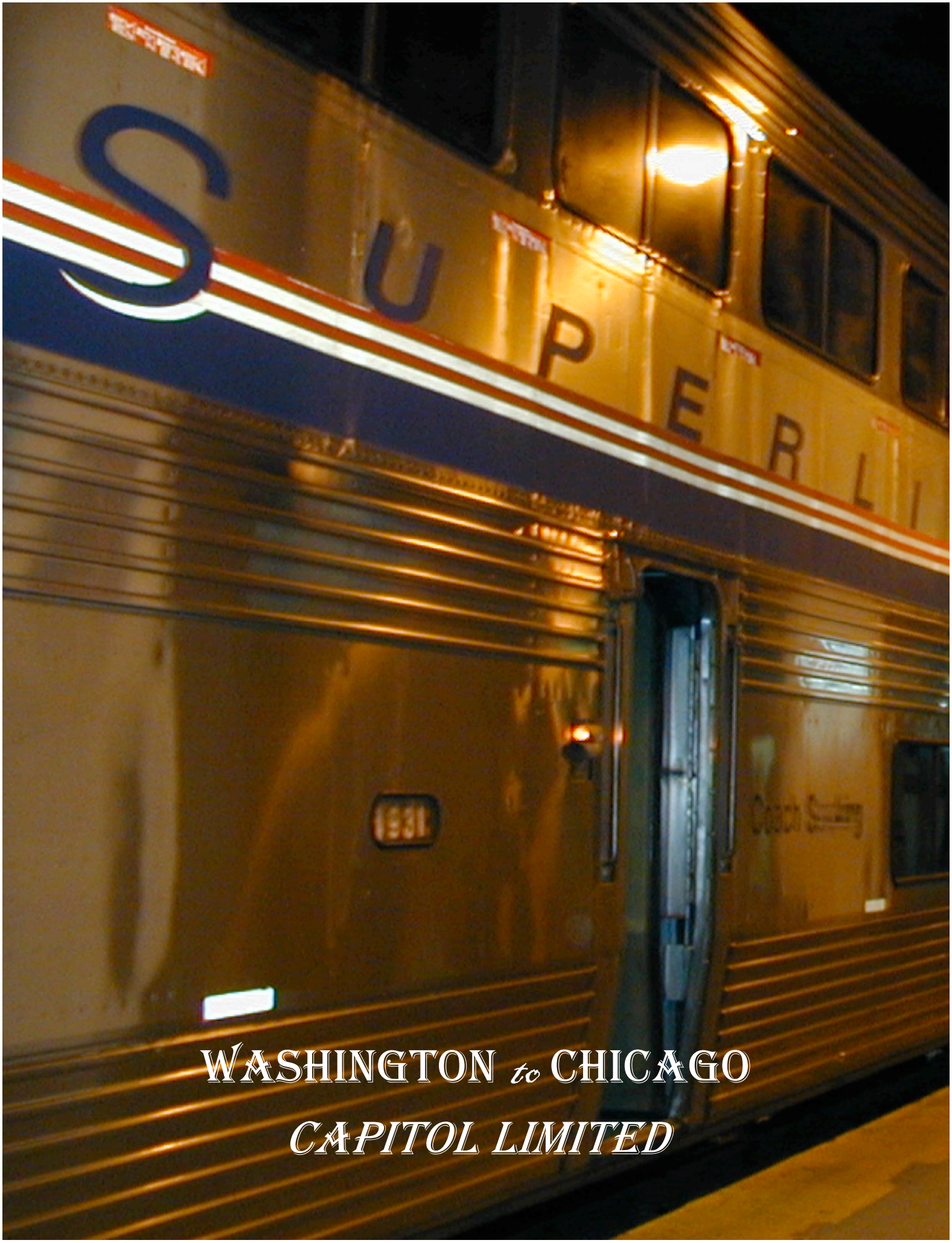
In 1968, it was decided that the station should be made into the National Visitors Center, and it opened for that duty on July 4, 1976, just over three months after the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority commenced operations on its first route (the Red Line), which went through Union Station. The National Visitors Center, pushed through congress by Representative Kenneth Gray, a Democrat of Illinois, cost a total of $122 million, and was considered a boondoggle by many in congress. Not only did the National Visitors Center cost millions, but the Penn Central, produced by a merger of the Pennsy and New York Central System

(NYC), and the B&O were forced to pay for parts of it! The understanding was that the government would lease the station for 25 years at $3.5 million a year, and then buy the station. As it happened, the National Visitors Center failed to garner large enough crowds, and was therefore closed in 1978.

The entire building was closed on February 24, 1981 because the day before a portion of the roof had collapsed due to a leak. President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Union Station Redevelopment Act on December 29, 1981, but by the time that renovations began, mushrooms were growing from the station's walls. The U.S. Department of Transportation bought the station from the Penn Terminal Realty Company and from the Baltimore Terminal Realty, subsidiaries of the Pennsy and B&O, respectively, for $10 million and took on $11 million of debt from the National Visitors Center construction. The Department of Transportation then leased the station to Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, which sublet to Union Station Venture Limited, which, in turn, leased space to Amtrak and the stores in the stations Main Hall. (The Main Hall, 760 by 130 feet, used to be one solid room, but since the station reopened on September 29, 1988, the Main Hall has had stores on two levels, though the original roof is visible from the second level.) The redevelopment of the station cost $160 million—$70 million from Amtrak, $40 million from the District of Columbia, and the balance from Union Station Venture Limited. Between the opening of the National Visitors Center and the reopening of the station, Amtrak was forced to use a small, stuffy, 'modern' station, only accessible through a 100 yard "temporary" walkway.

"We started from Washington by steamer for Richmond by way of Acquia Creek. It was a lovely morning and the passengers were scattered about smoking, reading or playing euchre when a person came around with a sheaf of newspapers which he began to distribute. Judge of my surprise when I found it to be what might be called the Railway Accident Gazette, in fact a record of the principal accidents that had happened in the United States in the last six months. All the most frightful cases of smashing to pieces, scalding to death, drownings, blowing up into the air were arrayed before the eyes of the dismayed traveler. I was at a loss to conceive the meaning of the cold-blooded cruelty of giving the unfortunate passengers such a record. This, however, was presently explained by the return of our tormentor bring [sic] with him a note book and a bundle of tickets and I found that he was the agent of a Life Insurance Company whose business it was, first to terrify the passengers into a suitable frame of mind, and then to insure their lives for them."

- Robert Ferguson, 1866
America During and After the War (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)



WASHINGTON *to* CHICAGO

CAPITOL LIMITED

We took the opportunity offered by the ClubAcela to board the *Capitol Limited*, our train to Chicago, prior to the other passengers. The train was boarded at one of the lower level platforms that are accessible from both the north and the south of Union Station. On the other side of the platform from our train, a Virginia Railway Express train consisting of Sounder cars was boarding for the 5:15 P.M. service to Fredericksburg. The platform was set up in an interesting way, with a break for a train track crossing it. When we boarded the all-Superliner *Capitol Limited*, it was getting dark. We had the end room on the car, which happened to be next to the diner car.

The *Capitol Limited* was the B&O's premier passenger train. It was inaugurated on May 23, 1923 as an all-Pullman, Washington to Chicago train, with a through sleeper car to Jersey City. The amenities on the train included a manicurist, a barber, a valet, and a train secretary.

As could have been expected, competition from other rail systems, particularly the Pennsylvania Railroad, soon started to intensify. In 1923, the Pennsylvania's premier train, the *Broadway Limited*, had started operating a Washington section, which merged into the main Philadelphia section at Harrisburg. In 1925, the Washington section was separated to form its own train, the *Liberty Limited*, which had a running-time advantage over the *Capitol Limited*. Thus, the B&O lost a sizeable share of its business the *Liberty Limited*.

Also in 1925, the *Capitol Limited* was re-equipped. This was followed seven years later by its being completely air-conditioned. In 1934, the B&O scored a major coup against the Pennsy. The New York Central, which was also in competition with the PRR,owned the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad. In the interest of its competition with the Pennsy, the New York Central decided to grant the *Capitol*

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad is considered by many to be the first railway of the United States, though it was preceded by a few minor train lines, such as the Delaware & Hudson. Additionally, a few railroad companies were chartered, but never constructed

In 1825, Evan Thomas, the brother of a Baltimore banker, toured the Stockton & Darlington railroad in Britain, on behalf of the Alex, Brown & Sons banking house of Baltimore. Talk of building a railroad continued. The main line would be from Baltimore west to compete with the Erie Canal from New York and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal from Washington. (A canal was not feasible for Baltimore, as it had been for the other cities.) On February 28, 1827, the B&O was chartered and started designing and engineering their line to Ohio using military planners, oddball inventors, and National Road planners.

July 4 of the next year was the start of construction, with the ninety year old Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, removing the first shovel of dirt. What followed was a debate on how to construct the line, which pitted design for eternity against that for speediness. The proponents of speediness claimed that a lengthy line such as one to Ohio would take forever to build if all of the major structures were stone. However, stone won out. But in 1934, when the reality of the cost of stone forced wood to be adopted as the pri-

The 5:15 P.M. Virginia Railway Express train awaits departure at Union Station , Washington.

mary construction material. The evolution continued, and, after 1850, bridges were constructed with metal.) These stone structures generally were quite grand; an example being the Carrollton Viaduct, which is the oldest surviving railroad bridge in the country.

On January 7, 1830, ticketed passenger service began from Mt. Clare to the Carrollton Viaduct (a very short distance). This was followed on May 24, 1830 by the first scheduled operations (two per day) between Baltimore and Ellicott's Mills (now Ellicott City). This 13 mile line had taken two years to construct. The trains on the line were operated by horses, which had to be switched at Elkridge Landing (now Relay). (The B&O soon reverted to steam power.) At first, only one passenger car was in service. Five more cars were built in 1830 to handle the successful business along the line. The B&O was ordering steam locomotives, too, though the company had originally planned only to use horses all the way to the Ohio River.

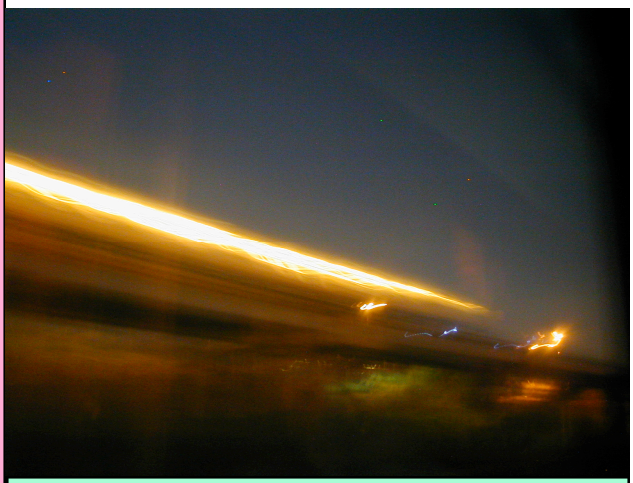
The Frederick Branch was opened on December 1, 1831. The next year, the main line was extended to Point of Rocks. From there, the B&O intended to build on to Cumberland, along the Potomac. Unfortunately, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal reached Point of Rocks around the same time as the B&O and with the same intentions. Thus, a long court fight began, resulting in the C&O Canal winning and the B&O being allowed to build along the river only as far as Harpers Ferry, (West) Virginia. Service along the Potomac in Maryland to a location across the river from Harpers Ferry, (West) Virginia began in December 1834. A bridge carrying a single track and a road opened to Harpers Ferry, (West) Virginia in 1836; the B&O had been building its line double tracked after reaching Point of Rocks. A trip from Baltimore to Harpers Ferry, in 1839, took seven hours at an average speed of 12 mph.

In 1833, construction started on a route from Baltimore to Washington, known as the *Limited* trackage rights over the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie's faster tracks from just west of Pittsburgh to New Castle, Pennsylvania. This gave the B&O a time advantage over the Pennsy. Combined with its higher quality of onboard services, such as dining, the higher speed of the *Capitol Limited* made it a clearly superior train to the Pennsy's *Liberty Limited*.

In 1937, the *Capitol Limited* became the first diesel-powered train from the east coast to Chicago. The following year it was streamlined, using a combination of new and old heavy-weight equipment. The new train was designed by Otto Kuhler, who had earlier designed the B&O's *Royal Blue* trains and the New York Central's monumental, streamlined *20th Century Limited*. New cars were built by Pullman and old cars were redone by the B&O's Mt. Clare shops in Baltimore.

In preparation for the inauguration of its all-coach sister train, the *Columbian*, the *Capitol Limited* carried coaches for a short period, from August 1940 to 1941. On December 19, 1941, the light-weight, streamlined *Columbian* was inaugurated. Beginning in April, 1946, a through car from Los Angeles (and later San Diego) was operated over the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway.

Starting in 1948, the *Capitol Limited* was reequipped with lightweight cars; this process was not entirely completed until 1958. In 1951,



Something that we passed during the night.

Washington Branch. The idea for this line had been floating around since 1828, and the decision to build it was made in 1830. The alignment departed from the main line at Relay, where it immediately started across the Patapsco River on the Thomas Viaduct. This 612 foot long structure was completed in July, 1835. The bridge, designed by Benjamin Latrobe, is the oldest continually operating multi-arch bridge in the United States. Service to Washington began on August 25, 1835. The Branch was double tracked in 1863.

In 1842 a very successful extension to Cumberland, Maryland was built, which gave the B&O a part in the coal shipping business. The B&O continued to build on to Wheeling, (West) Virginia, but this elongation was more difficult due to Pennsylvania's ban on the B&O entering that state. Nonetheless, the B&O made it to Wheeling on December 24, 1852, albeit with 2.2% grades at places along the route. Service started in January, 1853, with the first trains taking three days to traverse the Baltimore to Wheeling line.

In 1850, the B&O had started using Bollman Truss bridges, designed by Wendel Bollman. These bridges were built of iron and could be constructed and *later* sent to the location that was in need of spanning.

The Civil War brought with it hardships for almost all railroads, the B&O especially, as it ran right along the Union-Confederacy border. Its main line was severed twice by Confederate troops; all of its service out of Baltimore was temporarily blockaded by northern forces; fourteen of its locomotives were stolen by Stonewall Jackson (and moved to southern railroads by *dirt road*); and many of its facilities were burnt by southern troops, including the bridges over the Potomac, Shenandoah, and Monoacacy Rivers. For all this, the B&O could rejoice in receiving $3 million dollars after the war.

The late 1860s brought prosperity for the B&O, with coal tonnage tripling and double tracking occurring with vengeance. In Stratadomes, which were dome cars with searchlights on their roofs to illuminate the night scenery, were added to the *Capitol Limited's* consist. In the early 1950s, ridership started to slowly decrease on the *Capitol Limited*, leading to the cutting of a few sleeping cars. But, in 1955, ex-New York Central twin-unit dining car sets were added to the train's consist. In 1957, the *Liberty Limited* was eliminated by the Pennsy, leaving the *Capitol Limited* without serious competition.

Starting April 26, 1958, the B&O stopped operating all passenger service north of Baltimore, so the *Capitol Limited* was cut back to that point. Later that year, the *Capitol Limited* and the *Columbian* started to operate together west of Willard, Ohio; the next year the two trains were completely merged. Also in 1958, the run through sleeper to the west coast was removed. In 1961, the *Capitol Limited* was combined with the Detroit to Washington *Ambassador* east of Willard.

In December, 1964, as part of a larger, last ditch effort to save the B&O's passenger services, films started being shown on the train. This, sadly, was not effective, and the cuts continued: in 1966 the *Capitol Limited* was cut back to Washington; in 1967 its twin-unit diners were replaced by single-unit diners; and in 1968 its dome cars were removed from service. Dining car service fell into disrepair and

A large steel plant in northwestern Indiana.

1867, the B&O reached St. Louis; on February 13, 1869 it reached Sandusky, Ohio. In June, 1871, Pittsburgh was finally brought into the B&O system and in 1873 the Metropolitan Division was built from Washington to Point of Rocks, shortening the rail distance between those two points by 54 miles. On November 24, 1874, the B&O started service to Chicago, where it soon utilized the Illinois Central passenger station and downtown trackage.

On July 16, 1877, with a 10% wage cut being enforced, B&O workers went on strike. It started in Martinsburg, West Virginia and spread to Baltimore, other cities, and even other railroads (all the eastern railroads had agreed to institute such a pay cut). It took nearly two weeks for order to be completely restored; state troops were used to quell the revolt in Maryland and West Virginia. In the latter, they were wholly ineffective and no "progress" was made against the strikers until federal troops were sent in. Following the strike, the B&O instituted a pension and insurance system, but the pay cuts remained for a few years.

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, the rivalry between the Pennsy and the B&O grew. Before 1881, the B&O had been operating over the independent (not owned by another railroad) Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore from Baltimore to Philadelphia and from there to New York on the Pennsy itself. In 1881, the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore was bought by the Pennsy after a takeover competition between it and the B&O. The B&O continued to operate over the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore until 1884, when the B&O was forced off that line. Anticipating this, the B&O had started construction of a double track line from Baltimore to Philadelphia, completed on July 11, 1886 - two years earlier, the B&O had started operating at a loss. At Philadelphia, the B&O handed over its trains to the Philadelphia & Reading, which carried them to the Jersey Central, the last line in their journey to most other trains between Washington and Chicago stopped operating. On April 30, 1971, the B&O operated two final, commemorative *Capitol Limiteds*. The trains route had not been picked to continue operating under the Amtrak system. However, it was reinstated on October 1, 1981, making it possible for my dad and I to ride it (albeit with different routing: the *Capitol* now traverses the former Pennsylvania Railroad from Pittsburgh to Cleveland and the former New York Central the rest of the way to Chicago).

Our train departed at 5:20 P.M., on time! (The B&O would not have been happy had it seen the on-time performance records of Amtrak's *Capitol Limited*.) By then, it was pitch dark out. I had a couple of route guides, a few of which were printed from the web and a useless one given by a crew member on the train. When one of the waiters came around, we made reservations for the first seating of dinner. When we were called to the diner, we were the first in to the dining car and were seated at the table virtually across from our bedroom. The car quickly filled to capacity. The dining car staff then took orders from the outside to the inside of the dining car, so we gave our orders first. Then, they served us from the center to the outside of the dining car, so we waited an *hour*, just to get served! Though this may not sound long for a nice res-

The snow-coated northern Midwest, as seen from the *Capitol Limited*.

Jersey City. Service to New York was by ferry, and later by bus. This service was known as the Royal Blue and was among B&O President John Garrett's last major accomplishments (he had run the railroad since before the Civil War).

With the drag of having two main lines into Baltimore, connected only by ferry, the B&O in 1888 decided to build a tunnel under Howard Street to connect its Philadelphia and Washington/Chicago lines. Construction started in 1891 on what would be an electrified tunnel (so as to avoid soot interfering with operations and passengers). This was to be among the first electrification projects ever. The electrification was to be done by the General Electric Company. The tunnel was opened on June 27, 1895. It was converted from overhead to third rail electric operation in 1902 and the tunnel has more recently been served by only diesel locomotives.

In 1896, after being seriously in debt for many years, the B&O went into receivership. Five years later, the PRR gained control of the B&O and held it until 1906.

From 1918 to 1926, the B&O was able to use the Pennsy's Pennsylvania Station in New York city because of an arrangement set up by the United States Railroad Administration of World War I and carried over by the Pennsy (until 1926).

Nineteen twenty-seven was the 100th birthday of the B&O. This it celebrated from September 24 to October 8 with plenty of festivities at the Fair of the Iron Horse in Halethorpe, Maryland. Performances, displays, and speeches were all in abundance and a gigantic pageant was put on under the direction of Edward Hungerford. No admission was charged, even though the show cost $1 million to put on.

In June of 1930, B&O President Daniel Willard purchased new, lightweight, air-conditioned, streamlined trains for the *Royal Blue* service, but these were not successful, prompting their banishment to the Chicago & taurant, it is a long time when waiting on Amtrak. Especially so, as our company consisted of a quiet woman from Chicago and an equally quiet man from Bethesda, Maryland. I had chicken cordon bleu, a special, with rice pilaf and corn. My dad had a steak, in his trip-long attempt to get mad-cow disease. Luckily, so far, he has not been successful.

During dinner, we passed through Point of Rocks, Maryland, formerly Washington Junction. Point of Rocks is located at the junction of two B&O lines, one coming west from Baltimore and the other from Washington. They were opened on April 1, 1832 and in 1873, respectively. In 1871, the first portion of the current station was built, and four years later, the spire was completed. The station is currently used by MARC.

> "B.&O. diners in the great years ran to rich and somber decor and their staffs, recruited from the best available pools of domestic help, suggested antebellum days on the old plantation and urged corn pone and hush puppies on patrons in defiance of modern notions of caloric intake."
>
> - Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg
> *The Trains We Rode*

For dessert, which came far faster than dinner, I ordered the Chocolate Bombe, a very good chocolate mixture. When my dad and I went back to our room, our car attendant had made our beds. I strolled up to the Sightseer Lounge in time to see us cross the Potomac River and roll into Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, a relatively minor stop at the confluence of the Shenandoah and the Potomac Rivers.

Unable to see anything other than small dots of light, I slowly walked back through the diner to our room. After climbing into my bunk, I read a few pages of *Uptown, Downtown*, a book by Stan Fischler about the New York City subways. This was a Christmas present from my dad.

I was unable to get to sleep, but when I did drowse off a bit, we entered a city and I

Alton. The train, which had at times been pulled by #50, the first self-contained passenger diesel locomotive, was replaced by refurbished, streamlined heavyweight cars. Work on these cars was done by Otto Kuhler, a world-famous streamliner. The B&O's service between New York and Philadelphia was an hour longer than that of the Pennsy, causing the B&O to get special attention to the quality of its service.

The rest of the B&O's history is one of a downfall. It again and again narrowly avoided bankruptcy. It trimmed, cut, and finally outright butchered its passenger services. All service north of Baltimore was cancelled in 1958. And, in 1963, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway took over the B&O, which just that year had managed to churn out a small profit. Soon a $232 million, 5-year rehabilitation plan was put in place for the former B&O. (The mere prospect of this hadled to envy by other ailing roads. The New York Central had also wanted to merge with the Chesapeake & Ohio, but the latter could not afford reconstructing both the B&O and NYC.) In 1973, the B&O, C&O, and Western Maryland were all melded together to form the Chessie System, which seven years later merged with the Seaboard System to create CSX Transportation.

immediately woke up. I know that I was awake for Pittsburgh, where I saw a humongous maze of dimly lit tracks, and for Cleveland where I got a couple glimpses of the rail transit system. I am unsure whether I was awake for Connellsville, Pennsylvania, a small stop between Cumberland and Pittsburgh. Connellsville's population is only 9,000 people and the old Amtrak route guide said simply of it: "Depending upon the time of year, dawn may be breaking as you pass through this town." (In the more recent 2004 version, the following was added: "In 1770, Zachariah Connell settled the Connellsville area with his family on the Youghiogheny River. In 1793, he surveyed and secured a charter from William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, for the town of Connellsville.")

The sleeping rooms are set up with two seats on the lower level and a bunk that can come down at night on the upper level. The two lower seats can be pushed down to form a bed at night. When both beds are made, there is very little space for a cicada, let alone a human, except if the human is in bed, and even then it is a very tight fit. The very idea of having private sleeping quarters was somewhat revolutionary when it was introduced in the 1900s. The newer cars had divisions between sleeping compartments, while the older ones just had curtains.

My dad stands in front of the *Capitol Limited* at Union Station, Chicago

As dawn breaks, the *Capitol Limited* passes by cattails in Indiana.

I missed Toledo, Ohio by an hour or so during one of my short naps, but I woke up shortly after, in time for Waterloo, Indiana. It was already light out, and I could see a thin dusting of snow on the many fields. At that time, the train was running about an hour late. My dad and I then ate our breakfasts, prior to our arrival in South Bend, Indiana. There I saw the old South Shore Line route's end in the Amtrak station. This line was opened on September 6, 1908, but is now out of service—another line (to Michiana Regional Airport), opened in November, 1992, has replaced it. As we left South Bend, far in the distance, I saw a South Shore Line train departing on the new line. We paralleled the old line for a long time, and later on we followed the route of the current line for some miles. As we got closer to Illinois, we started seeing less snow on the ground and endless, colossal, polluting steel plants. Before crossing the Indiana/Illinois state- and time-line, we passed a pair of trains consisting of Amfleet, Horizon, and Superliner cars.

"The choice [in the hotel-car, a car that is both sleeper and diner] is by no means small. Five different kinds of bread, four sorts of cold meat, six hot dishes, to say nothing of eggs cooked in seven different ways and all the seasonable vegetables and fruits, form a variety from which the most dainty eater might easily find something to tickle his palate and the ravenous to satisfy his appetite. The meal is served on a table temporarily fixed to the side of the car and removed when no longer required. To breakfast, dine and sup in this style while the train is speeding at the rate of nearly thirty miles an hour is a sensation of which the novelty is not greater than the comfort. An additional zest is given to the good things by the thought that the passengers in the other cars must rush out when the refreshment station is reached and hastily swallow an ill-cooked meal."

- W. F. Rae, 1870
Westward by Rail (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

"I clambered to my perch [in the sleeping car] and found it was like lying on one's back on a narrow plank. If I turned my back to the car wall the motion of the train bumped me off my bed altogether and if I turned my face to the wall I felt a horrible sensation of being likely to roll backward into the aisle, so I lay on my back and settled the question. It was like trying to sleep on the back of a runaway horse. At each place the train stopped there was the clashing of the bell and if I peered through the zinc ventilator into the outer darkness a flying scud of sparks from the engine did not serve to divest my mind of all chances of being burnt alive."

- Walter Thornbury, 1873
Criss-Cross Journeys (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

CHICAGO

As we arrived in Chicago—on time, having miraculously made up for our lateness—we passed over the four track Metra Electric Line. We zigzagged through many rail yards prior to receiving a wonderful view of the Sears Tower and the rest of Chicago.

On our way through Chicago's maze of tracks, we crossed the South Branch of the Chicago River on the South Branch Lift Bridge. This bridge has a history of being stuck in its up position at times, causing much confusion. Just before we went into the covered Chicago Union Station, there was a spectacle of mostly empty tracks in the Amtrak and Metra rail yards. There were only a few trains, including P-42s, Horizon cars, Amfleet cars, ExpressTrak cars, Superliner cars, a single Superliner Sightseer Lounge that had been refurbished recently by Beech Grove (Amtrak's Indiana shops), and only one Metra train.

Every day, 37,500 freight cars travel through the city of Chicago, the most of any city in the U.S. Twenty thousand intermodal cars travel through the city, which has 125 interlockings and 57 train yards. Mark Hemphill and Curt Richards raised two good questions in the July, 2003 *Trains Magazine* that pop into the mind of anyone looking at Chicago from the perspective of rail: Why Chicago? and "Why did railroads stop at Chicago, and not simply continue through the city?"

The two authors answer both questions. Why Chicago? Because of the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes, the Grain Belt, and their fellow railroads: once one railroad was there, the next railroad felt the need to connect to it; the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes provided transportation; and the Grain Belt provided something to transport. The reason the railroads didn't go through the city is "the fundamental difference between grangers [farm product carriers from the west] and trunk

Amtrak's Locomotives

When Amtrak took charge of passenger rail operations in the United States, all its locomotives and passenger cars were hand-me-downs from former passenger operators—creating the famous Rainbow Fleet. The locomotives were in horrible condition, as many of their former owners had lost interest in passenger operations. Most of them had already made it into the history books, but nonetheless sustained their presence in the timetables. Amtrak ordered new SDP40F locomotives, a spin-off of the SD40-2 freight locomotive design, from the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors. The one hundred fifty locomotives ordered were delivered during 1973 and 1974.

By mid-1976, the Federal Railroad Administration had reported thirteen SDP40F derailments. Some blamed these derailments on bad trucks (the engine's wheel assembly); Amtrak and EMD blamed bad tracks. In an interview with *Trains Magazine*, Deane Ellsworth, Amtrak's manager of motive power development at the time, provided a different explanation. She said that the passenger engines, unlike identical freight engines, were carrying "3500 gallons of water sloshing around 'above deck.'" The water was for the steam generator, which provided for the electrical needs of the train's passengers.

In December of 1976, the *San Francisco Zephyr* derailed on the Burlington Northern, prompting the Burlington Northern, Chessie

Amtrak train cars sit in its Chicago yards.

System, and Conrail to ban the operation of SDP40F locomotives on their tracks. Amtrak rebuilt forty SDP40Fs with Head-End Power (HEP—electrical, rather than steam, power), but, in the end, Amtrak, through a variety of trades, was able to rid itself of SDP40Fs. Amtrak needed locomotives, of course. Some of the trades were for EMD to build Amtrak F40PHs, while others were for switch engines. Before experiencing problems with its SDP40Fs, Amtrak had, on May 8, 1975, ordered 30 F40PHs to augment its SDP40Fs. The F40PHs—built with HEP, thus eliminating the derailment hazard—were expected to operate only in corridor service upon their delivery in 1976, but this was not possible. They were forced into long-distance service, as the SDP40Fs trotted back to the EMD plant.

The design of the F40PH had been considered when the SDP40F was being planned, but it was rejected. F40PH stood for Full width cowl, 40-series engine, Passenger, Head-end power. The engine would have been streamlined, but neither the money nor the time (and possibly the will) was available to do so. From 1977 to 1979, 99 more F40PHs were delivered, followed by 81 more during the 1980s. Many other reliable F40 variations were delivered to commuter rail operations throughout the United States and Canada.

By 1997, all F40s in long-distance service had been replaced by P42s, though the former continued to operate from Boston to New Haven, until that portion of the northeast corridor was electrified. Today, F40s are almost completely limited to the west coast, normally operating the *Pacific Surfliners* (San Diego - Los Angeles - San Luis Obispo) and the *Cascades* (Vancouver - Seattle - Portland - Eugene). Many of the F40s still in service are "cabbage cars" - NPCU, or *Non-Powered* Control Unit - which provide both a cab and space for baggage. A few F40s survive in various duties, having avoided the scrap heap.

In 1989, Amtrak began toying with designs to replace the F40. First, they had EMD

lines [main lines from the east]." The grangers had to pick up grain from small, separated farms, while the eastern mainlines could carry large quantities from one end of their line to the other. "Moreover, the grangers, because of the unconcentrated nature of farming and stock-raising, were inherently weak," which meant eastward expansion would further strain their finances.

In 1848, the Galena & Chicago Union, later the Chicago & North Western, was constructed to Maywood, just west of the Des Plaines River, making it Chicago's first railway. Since then, Chicago's railways have expanded dramatically, along with its population and city limits.

Michael Blaszak described the competitive culture of Chicago railroading in the July, 2004 *Trains Magazine*, writing "It was a Chicago tradition among towermen to drop red signals in the face of the competition's hot [fast] freights. Crews on transfer freights from one side of town to the other - say, Union Pacific's Proviso Yard to CSX's Barr Yard - often reached their 12 hours of service limit long before completing the 50-mile round trip."

We pulled into track #26, the third most easterly track in the South Concourse of the station. The station is configured with two concourses, one on the north and the other on the south. There is one through track, and the rest dead end on either side.

Two Amtrak Superliners sit in Chicago Union Station.

construct two F69PHACs, which used a.c. traction. The F69s traveled the country during 1990 and 1991, and again during 1993, that time pulling the visiting German ICE train. The fleet of F40s was deteriorating, and the replacement chosen was the AMD-103, or AMtrack Diesel, 103 mph. The engine, designed by renowned industrial designer Cesar Vergara, was put into a new class, called Genesis. The engine was later renamed Genesis-Series 1, and, when the engine was constructed by GE, it was dubbed DASH 8-40BP.

To maintain the DASH 8-40BP, due to its single-panel sides (instead of multiple-panel sides through which parts can be removed), parts must be lifted out through the roof. The DASH 8-40BP was tested at speeds of up to 116 mph in Pueblo, Colorado, but, in regular service, it only operates at 103 mph. The original paint scheme for the DASH 8-40BPs, and their successors, P-32AC-DMs and P-42DCs, was a red/white/blue stripe that went around the two sides and front of the locomotive, dissolving into dots near the rear. Later, the paint scheme was changed to a series of red, white, and blue stripes, followed by a large blue ribbon wrapping around the locomotive, on the same silvery background as before. Most recently, the engines have been given a blue and silver paint job, which is impossible to accurately describe.

The forty-four DASH 8-40BPs were delivered in 1993, and two hundred, twenty-eight P42DCs were delivered to Amtrak from 1996 until recently. Twenty-one P42DCs were delivered to VIA Rail Canada. Also, fifty-three P-32AC-DMs were delivered to a slew of companies. The P-32s included a third-rail shoe, so the engines could operate both in diesel territory and in the New York region where third-rail is available - and sometimes required.

On the west coast, the F40s successor was definitely the F59PHI, produced by EMD. It is used by Amtrak on the *Pacific Surfliners*, *Cascades*, and Capitol Corridor services.

Metra and Amtrak share both concourses.

Once we had disembarked from the train and thanked our car attendant, we wandered down our platform, which our train was sharing with another long distance train. We then made our way to the main concourse of the train station. As we drifted around the station, I picked up all of the available schedules and observed some of the Metra and Amtrak trains. Every single one of the Metra trains in the station had consistently boring bi-level gallery cars, which are used extensively on United States commuter rail systems. There was a variety of engines on the Metra trains, but, as I did not walk down to the end of the platforms, I was unable to view them. The local Amtrak trains consisted of Horizon cars and P-42s for locomotives, while the long distance Amtrak trains were pieced together with Superliners and P-42s.

After tolerating my meandering around, my dad waited to pick up our bags

A Metra commuter train stopped in Chicago Union Station.

Bi-level Cars and Amtrak's Superliners

Amtrak's Superliner cars are descendants of a half century of bi-level cars. The first, ordered in 1950, were commuter coaches for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy known as gallery cars. They went into service on the Burlington's Chicago commuter lines, where there were no major height restrictions, allowing them to be 2 feet, 2 inches higher than normal cars. The cars were built by Budd manufacturing and designed so as to permit easy fare collection. (The upper level was simply two balconies, permitting the conductor to collect all tickets without leaving the lower level.) These cars have since been reproduced for many different commuter agencies, and some are still in service.

In 1954, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe took delivery of two Hi-Level cars from Budd, beginning a style of bi-level construction that survives to this day in Superliner cars. The Santa Fe was satisfied with the cars, and ordered more for its all-coach, Chicago to Los Angeles *El Captain*. The *El Captain*'s Hi-Level cars, operated by the Santa Fe, were delivered, by Budd, in 1956. All of the mechanical equipment on the Hi-Level cars, as on the Superliners, was stored on the first level, while revenue generating passengers were stowed upstairs. The train possessed a mammoth diner, the heaviest one ever to operate, and the crew had a large kitchen on the lower level. A total of 47 Hi-Level cars were ordered: 35 coaches, 6 lounges, and 6 diners.

In 1958, Chicago & North Western ordered 13 intercity gallery cars including a coach-lounge, a coach-parlor, a parlor, and 10 coaches. The cars were paid for by savings from cutting over a dozen other trains.

In the 1970s the now-popular "tri-level" car design was constructed for GO Transit in Toronto. In these cars, there are two entirely separated levels, with a mezzanine level at both ends connecting the two.

Superliner cars are based mainly on the Santa Fe's hi-level cars. Four hundred, sev-

from the Amtrak baggage carousel. These were much like those at airports, but there is only one, at most, per station. As my dad waited, I perambulated over to the North Concourse and picked up more timetables, large ones and some smaller ones which I did not know existed, and I looked at more Metra trains.

The North Concourse, like its southern counterpart, was dimly lit, in fact, so badly lit that I had to use the flash just to get any (and even then, only a few) of my pictures to turn out. By this time, my dad had gotten our bags and we proceeded to buy a Metra ticket, purely for my collection. The ticket agent, a human, in contrast to most transit agencies' machines, was very kind and offered me many maps and plenty of information. My dad and I then walked to the main station building, which was a beautiful stone structure with a huge, seasonal Christmas tree accompanied by colossal ornaments.

Union Station was one of Chicago's six stations: Central, which was destroyed before World War II; Dearborn, now out of use, but restored as a shopping center; North Western, replaced by a skyscraper, though its tracks are still used and were renovated in the early 1990s; La Salle Street, which was replaced by a blander, modernized Metra station in the 1990s; Grand Central, which has been destroyed; and Union Station, which is now Chi-

The main waiting room of Chicago's Union Station.

enty-nine Superliner cars were built, but only four hundred, twenty-five are in service. The Superliners were bought in two orders, the Superliner I cars being designed and ordered in 1974 and Superliner II cars being delivered from 1993 onward. The Superliner I cars do not have names. There are fifty-five Superliner II sleeper cars named after forty-eight states and the District of Columbia. The other six cars, which provide service on the Auto-Train, have other names. (The Auto-Train is a non-stop Amtrak-operated service from Lorton, Virginia to Sanford, Florida. The train carries both cars and people, and is one of Amtrak's most successful services.)

The sleeping cars that serve the Auto-Train have ten bedrooms (at the time of our trip, they were deluxe bedrooms) upstairs and four roomettes (then standard bedrooms), one accessible bedroom, and one family bedroom on the lower level. The Superliner I & II sleeping cars, which don't run on the Auto-Train route, have the same lower level configuration as their Auto-Train counterparts. On the upper level, they have five bedrooms and ten roomettes. Half the upper level of the car consists of five roomettes on each side of the corridor, while the other half has bedrooms on one side, with an isle on the other side. The Superliner cars have hinged lower level doors to the outside. Passage to the other cars on a train are on the upper level.

The Superliner II cars were constructed by Bombardier, based on plans bought from Pullman Standard, the constructor of the Superliner I cars. The Superliner II cars have the same outside as the Superliner I cars. However, they are slightly heavier, and have different trucks. The Superliners are about 15 feet and 9 inches tall, slightly higher than the Santa Fe hi-level cars after which they are modeled. Many designs that did not make it into the final design of the Superliner I cars were considered by Louis T Klauder & Associates, the engineering firm. Such designs included: permanently connected cars,

cago's main intercity station. Also, a seventh, Randolph Street Station, is used by Metra Electric and South Shore Line trains. Kevin Keefe wrote in the July 2003 *Trains Magazine* that: "The railroads even had a taxi company—Parmelee—created for the sole purpose of getting La Salle Street passengers over to Central, or Union Station passengers over to North Western."

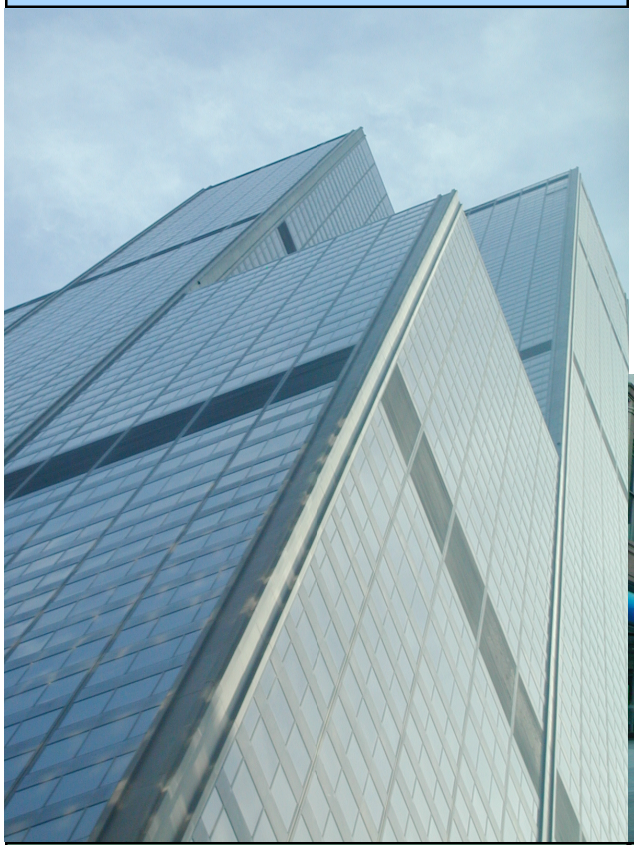
Union Station's planning started, in the first decade of the 20th century, with Daniel Burnham proposing a single station for all the city's railroads. Mark Hemphill and Curt Richards wrote of why it failed in the July, 2003 *Trains Magazine*: "It was expensive, controversial, and required the agreement of every railroad - and therefore it was not adopted." Daniel Burnham did get some of his wish. The Pennsy had built a station in 1881 on the plot of land that was eventually to be used for the Union Station. In 1913, the Chicago Union Station Company was formed to build the Union Station. It was founded primarily by the Pennsylvania Railroad, while the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Milwaukee Road were co-owners. (The Chicago & Alton was a tenant.) Burnham was to design it. The next year, ground was broken, but the station was not opened until 1925, due to delays caused by World War I. Even then, it had only an eight story high building above its waiting hall, not the twenty-two story high structure Burnham

The main entrance to Union Stati(o)n.

rounded end cars, multiple stairways, lower level connections to other cars, and rounded windows on the roofs of all cars. One hundred ninety-five Superliner II cars (coach, diner, lounge, sleeping car, etc.) and two hundred eighty-four Superliner I cars were assembled.

The Chicago Railroad Fair

From 1948 to 1949, the Chicago Railroad Fair was held. It was organized by Major Lenox Lohr on behalf of 38 railroads, and with only six months notice. The Fair, which attracted five and a quarter million visitors, had some interesting quirks. It possessed a working replica of Old Faithful, lighting done by a locomotive head lights company, and a pageant, "Wheels a-Rolling," designed by Edward Hungerford, who died one week before its opening. The Fair was so popular that it was extended for a second season, to be held in the summer of 1949.



The Sears Tower.

had planned.

In 1967, the passenger terminal of the station was destroyed and a skyscraper, known as Marsh & McClennan, was built over the train tracks. The basement of the skyscraper was the "new" passenger concourse, but it was littered with support pillars for the skyscraper above. Luckily, the station building across the street was not destroyed. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the passenger concourse was redone to much acclaim; however, in my eyes, it looks like an airport terminal.

We then meandered over to the Metropolitan Lounge. This is the non-northeast corridor equivalent of the ClubAcela lounge. But the Chicago Metropolitan Lounge did not quite live up to the ClubAcela in Washington: it was stuffy and, later on, packed to the gills. We left our bags there and exited the station at the intersection of Canal and Adams, where we were to meet Evelyn, a friend, for lunch. First, she drove by without noticing us, then a taxi driver heard my dad whistling at her and chased after her. She eventually came around the block and picked us up.

We went to a wonderful Cajun restaurant, named Wishbone. My dad had bean cakes and poached eggs; I had chicken, rice, and beans; and Evelyn had catfish cakes, cheese grits, and poached eggs. After eating our scrumptious lunch, Evelyn drove us to the vicinity of the Randolph Street Station, a sta-

The El passes over a Chicago street.

tion used by both the Metra Electric Line and the South Shore Line. We did not see any Metra Electric or South Shore Line trains, but we did cross the multi-track line. While in the car, we passed under, and saw, a few of CTA's El trains.

The Metra Electric Line has three branches, one to South Chicago, another to Blue Island, and a third to University Park. The South Shore Line goes to South Bend, Indiana, but traverses the Metra Electric Line for a short period of time.

"Towards morning there was a commotion among the passengers. A sudden shock roused all from their slumbers. Many were greatly frightened, but no one was seriously hurt. A severe shaking was the only result of what proved to be a collision with a herd of cattle. The engine and tender had been thrown off the rails. Two oxen were crushed to death... As it was a detention of eight hours... and the loss of breakfast were the only sufferings to be born... Some of the passengers were indisposed to forego their breakfasts without an effort to provide a substitute. There was plenty of beef along side the line and the sage brush could be used for fuel... The sage brush was soon in a blaze, but the meat could not be procured with equal rapidity. Cutting through an ox hide and carving out a steak with a penknife was a task that baffled the passenger who made the attempt..."

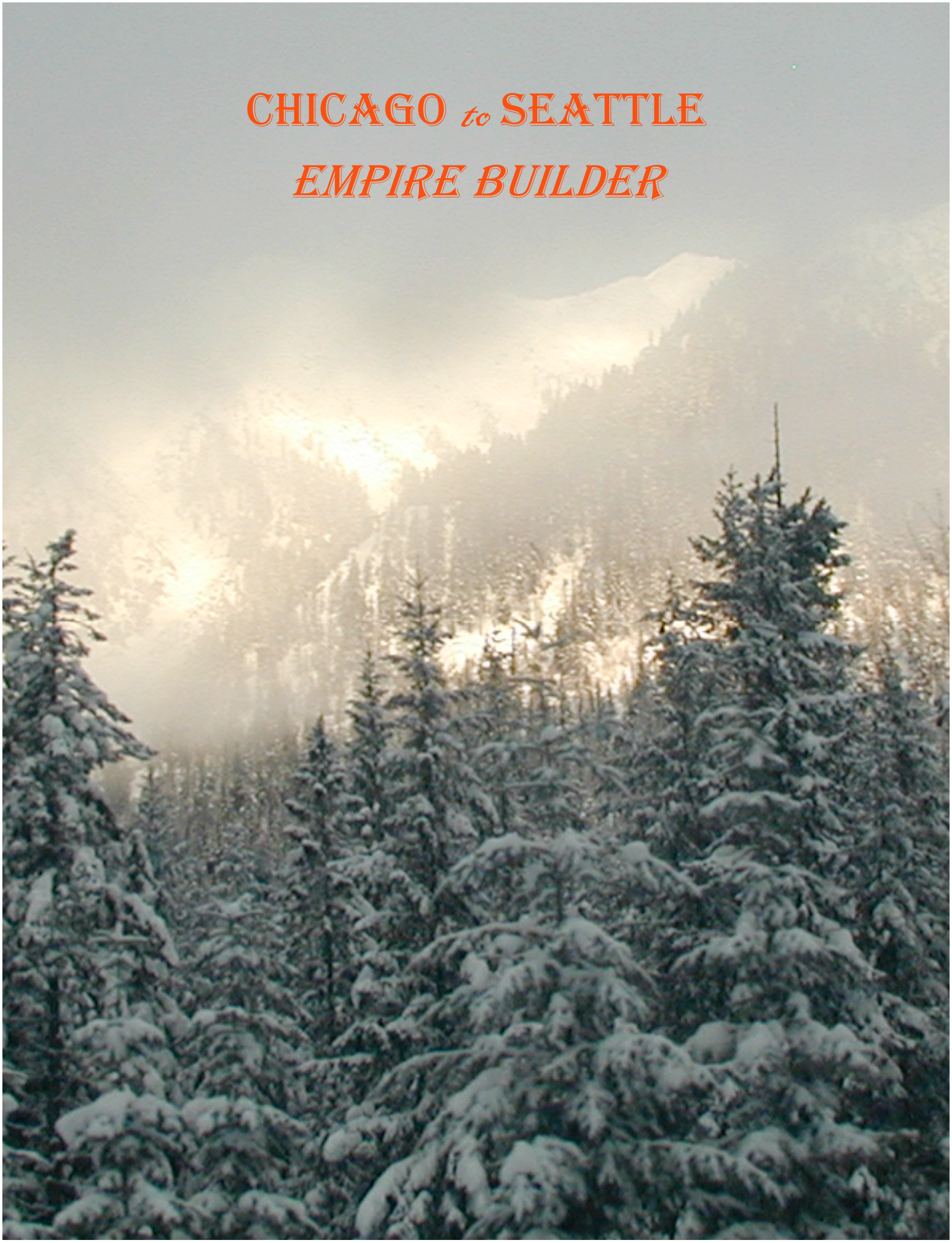
- W.F. Rae, 1870
Westward by Rail

"We left Lancaster on our return to Philadelphia on February 19, 1840. The frosts having broken up and all the snow on the ground melted, the road was in the most miry condition possible and in some places the rails were nearly covered with mud. So much extra caution was necessary in this state of things that we could not proceed at a greater rate than about eight miles an hour and even then we were thrown off the track several times and on each occasion getting the engine and cars on again was a work of considerable delay and difficulty. Added to this the interruptions were perpetual from our overtaking on the same line of rails freight-trains going slower than we were and for which it was necessary to retard our speed until we came to a turn-out. It was quite dark when he [sic] reached Philadelphia and we thought it the most disagreeable journey by railroad we had ever performed, though we were told that we ought to congratulate ourselves on not having been upset when thrown off the track or detained for eight or ten hours before we could get in again, which had been the case of the cars on the two preceding trains, in one of which several passengers were wounded in an upset and in the other they were detained all night upon the road and arrived only at sunrise on the following morning."

- J. S. Buckingham
The Eastern and Western States of America (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

CHICAGO *to* SEATTLE

EMPIRE BUILDER



We did not get out of Evelyn's car because we did not want to miss our next train, the *Empire Builder*. We drove back to Union Station and went back to the Metropolitan Lounge. We waited for a Red Cap to come and take our luggage, and ourselves, to an early boarding of our train, the *Empire Builder*. The Red Cap came in a little motor vehicle and the luggage of the sleeping car passengers, including ours. We walked behind him as he took each passenger's luggage to his/her car, and unintentionally delivered ours to another passenger's car. He retrieved ours later on.

The train was long. One Superliner coach car was to be uncoupled in Minneapolis-St. Paul. A full section, including the Superliner Sightseer Lounge, a Superliner sleeper, and a few Superliner coaches were to be detached at Spokane, Washington for a trip to Portland, Oregon. Our section would terminate in Seattle along with the diner and a couple coaches and sleepers. This arrangement has a long history, dating back to the times of the original *Empire Builder*. That train split at Spokane, with one half continuing over the Great Northern, the road which operated the *Builder*, to Seattle; the other half of the train traveled over the Spokane, Portland, & Seattle to Portland. The original *Builder* operated over the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy from Chicago to the Twin Cities, but when Amtrak took over, the train was rerouted via Milwaukee on the Milwaukee Road.

In December 1905, the *Oriental Limited* was inaugurated by the Great Northern. It covered its St. Paul to Seattle route in 58 hours. The *Oriental Limited* actually served afternoon tea, more in the style of the British

Two of Metra's new locomotives in Union Station.

The Milwaukee Road

Between Chicago and the Twin Cities, Amtrak's *Empire Builder* travels over former Milwaukee Road trackage.

The Milwaukee Road's first ancestor was the Milwaukee & Mississippi, chartered in 1847, which reached the Mississippi at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin in 1857. Simultaneously, the Road's name was changed to Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien. As the Milwaukee & Mississippi was expanding, so was another railway: the La Crosse & Milwaukee, which, in 1858, opened its line from La Crosse, Wisconsin to Milwaukee. The La Crosse & Milwaukee was renamed the Milwaukee & St. Paul five years later. Soon afterwards, the railroad bought the Milwaukee & Western, whose line traveled from Brookfield, Wisconsin to Columbus, Wisconsin. Shortly after, the Milwaukee & Western's line was extended to give more direct access to La Crosse. While the new Milwaukee & St. Paul was shopping, it decided that the Milwaukee & Mississippi looked tasty, and bought it.

In 1866 the Minnesota Central reached Owatonna, Wisconsin from the Twin Cities, and, the same year, the McGregor Western linked McGregor (immediately across the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien) and Cresco, Iowa. Not that much time passed before the McGregor Western swallowed the Minnesota Central, though their lines did not even connect. The Milwaukee & St. Paul ate the McGregor Western quickly, and connected its two lines. Five years later, in 1872, a new route to the Twin Cities was acquired by the Milwaukee & St. Paul, via La Crescent, Minnesota, which is located across the Mississippi from La Crosse. In 1874, the railroad was

renamed the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul (CM&St.P) as its territory expanded to Chicago. This ended the CM&St.P's dependence on the Chicago & North Western for entry into Chicago. In 1880, the Milwaukee Road pioneered the use of electricity on passenger trains west of Chicago.

In 1905, construction started in South Dakota on extending the Milwaukee to the west coast. The reason for the extension was the recent affiliation of the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy to the Great Northern and Northern Pacific. Previously, the Northern Pacific and Great Northern had given some business to the Milwaukee, but this would no longer be the case, with competitor Burlington reaping the benefits of the lucrative western trade. The extension was built by a not-so-separate company called the Chicago, Milwaukee, & Puget Sound. (The company was officially taken over by the Milwaukee Road in 1912.) The Pacific Extension of the Milwaukee Road was completed on May 19, 1909, with a route over Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascades, dropping into Tacoma, and then traveling north to Seattle. Of all the Pacific Northwestern railroad passes, Snoqualmie had the least grades and the lowest elevation, making it especially interesting that it is the only one to have been entirely removed from service. This also constituted the first route directly from Chicago to the Pacific Northwest

On May 28, 1911, the *Olympian* was inaugurated from Chicago to Seattle, with the Columbian operating a reverse timetable. Soon afterward, starting in 1916, 647 route-miles were electrified in Montana, Idaho, and Washington State, using hydro-electric power. The design of the electrified system, the largest ever in the U.S., provided trains going downhill the opportunity to power those going uphill. In 1917, another change was made to the Pacific Extension: the addition of Snoqualmie Tunnel, which, as the longest tunnel in the Milwaukee's system, shortened and improved the route. On February 22, than the Orientals. Four years after its commencement of the *Oriental Limited*, it was extended to Chicago, with a total travel time of 72 hours. In 1924, eight sets of Pullman cars were put into service on the Oriental Limited. The cars were owned and operated by Pullman, a departure from the Great Northern's tradition of operating its own cars.

On the tenth of June, 1929, as a new set of equipment was put into service, the *Oriental Limited* was renamed the *Empire Builder*, in honor of James Hill, the Great Northern's chief founder. Included in the consist were observation-lounges named after some of the creators of the Great Northern. The cars were, unlike most cars, completely indoors, and they had lights on top to illuminate the scenery. The *North Coast Limited* and the *Empire Builder*, supposedly competitors, were sometimes combined between Portland and Spokane and between the Twin Cities and Chicago. The railroads between those two pairs of destinations were owned jointly by the Great Northern and its competitor, the Northern Pacific (which operated the *North Coast Limited*.) The 1924 consist of the *Oriental Limited* was left in service under that name, but the *Oriental Limited* was no longer the pride of the Great Northern as it used to be. It had been replaced by the *Empire Builder*. The 1929 Builder had a barber shop, a radio, stock quotes, and, the Great Northern's unique service, 4 o'clock tea and cakes.

A Metra train yard north of Chicago.

1920, to celebrate (and advertise) the completion of electrification, the Milwaukee Road had a tug-of-war between a 261-ton bipolar electric locomotive and a 278-ton Mallet steam engine in Kent Washington. In the July, 1970 Trains Magazine, William Middleton described the event:

> "The steamer gets a head start, shoving the unresisting bipolar backward down the track. Then, gradually, the electric's engineer notches open the controller, and the forward rush of the Mallet slows, then stops. Drivers spin futilely, smoke and steam billow upward - all to no avail. Almost imperceptibly, and seemingly without effort, the bipolar inches forward, and soon the furiously working Mallet is unceremoniously shoved offstage. Traction has triumphed! Steam is dead!"

In 1925, the Milwaukee was bankrupt. Its stock stood at $4 apiece, down from $200 in 1905. On August 1, 1927, the Milwaukee, still in bankruptcy, re-equipped the *Olympian*. But the Milwaukee Road did not operate the sleepers. On the same day, Pullman had taken control of the operation of the Milwaukee Road's sleepers. A year later, bankruptcy was over, and the railway was renamed the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, & Chicago. Seven years passed, and bankruptcy was knocking on the door again. Also in 1935, the famous *Hiawatha* service was introduced. The streamlined trains, at times traveling up to 100 m.p.h., operated between Chicago, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities, with orange, gray, and maroon steam locomotives pulling them. Built by the Milwaukee Shops to the southwest of Milwaukee, the trains were a success. Hiawatha service quickly spread to other lines. In 1945, the Road exited bankruptcy.

According to the Milwaukee Road (and only the Milwaukee Road), on June 29, 1947, the *Olympian*, now-*Hiawatha*, was streamlined. The only problem was the train was not

In 1930, new sleeping cars were added to the consist, and, a year later, the *Oriental Limited* lost its name. In 1937, new luxury coaches were added to the consist. February 23, 1947 marked a major advancement for the *Empire Builder*. Five new streamlined consists were launched. According to Karl Zimmermann, writing in a *Classic Trains Special Edition*, each set included: "a baggage-mail car, four coaches, a dormitory-lunch counter-lounge, a dining car, five sleepers, and a 2-double-bedroom 1-drawing-room buffet-lounge observation." One of the four coaches was for short-distance passengers, while the other three, with more space, were for long-distance patrons. The train sets, ordered in November, 1943, cost a total of $7 million dollars, and covered their Chicago to Seattle/Portland route in just 45 hours. The 1929 cars were put into service on a reincarnated *Oriental Limited* for the next five years. Parts of the train were decorated with art from the Blackfoot Indians. For the new *Empire Builder* consist, two new, amazingly powerful electric locomotives were added to the GN's fleet of engines stationed in Washington State for the stretch of electric track there.

On June 3, 1951, the *Empire Builder* once again experienced a huge change: the $12 million streamlined *'Mid-Century Empire Builder'* trainset was installed into the routine of the

The *Empire Builder* stops in Minot, North Dakota.

actually a streamliner until 1949, when all the cars were delivered. Until then, the Milwaukee called it a streamliner to compete with the Northern Pacific's *North Coast Limited* and the Great Northern's *Empire Builder*. When the train did become a streamliner, it was an astonishing one. In 1948, the *Twin Cities Hiawathas* (Chicago-Twin Cities) had been equipped with Sky Top observation cars, designed by Brooks Stevens and built by the Milwaukee Shops. The Sky Top cars possessed gorgeous glass walls, roofs, and rears. The 1949 *Olympian Hiawatha* had similar cars, with sleeping compartments, built by Pullman-Standard. Three years later, full length domes were added to the *Olympian Hiawatha*'s consist.

On May 22, 1961, the *Olympian Hiawatha* was removed from service. By 1971, power was turned off on portions of the electrified lines. Within three years, electrification was history for the Milwaukee. Then, in 1977, the courthouse was the headquarters once again, as the Milwaukee plunged into its last bankruptcy. In 1980, the court permitted the abandonment of the Pacific Extension. Six years later, the Milwaukee's tracks were taken over by the Soo Line, which, in turn, was swallowed by the Canadian Pacific.

The Great Northern

The *Empire Builder* travels over the former Great Northern, now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, from Fargo to Seattle. (From St. Paul to Fargo, it operates over the former Northern Pacific, also part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe.) The Great Northern, which also ran an *Empire Builder*, was formed with many other now combined railroads by James Hill. Hill was born near Rockwood, Canada on September 16, 1838. He was blinded in his right eye at a young age and in 1856 moved to St. Paul. When he got to St. Paul, he was slightly too late arriving for the last western hunting party of the season, which he intended to use as a catalyst to per-

Empire Builder. Each train consisted of 15 cars, two baggage-mail-dormitories, four coaches (three long-distance), one lounge-lunch counter, six sleepers, one diner, and one streamlined lounge-observation car. The lounge-lunch counter car, or Ranch Car, was made to look like a log cabin, and served cheaper meals than the diner. The train was constructed by Pullman and the American Car & Foundry Company, with the old 1947 consists (along with a new 6th one) being turned into a new secondary service, the *Western Star*. From May to October 1955, twenty two new domes were added to the *Builder*. The ownership of the cars, like the rest of the train set, was divided among the Great Northern, the Burlington Route, and the Spokane, Portland, & Seattle Railroad. Six of the domes were full-length, another 16 were partial. Embarrassed by the wealth that the train displayed, the Great Northern removed its lounge-observation cars to the *Western Star* and replaced them with the 1947 cars.

In 1968, the Great Northern repainted the train in its Big Sky Blue paint scheme, and by 1970 they were repainted into the green and white of the Burling Northern. When Amtrak took over in 1971, the route was moved to the current Milwaukee Road alignment. Additionally, the Spokane to Seattle segment was switched to Northern Pacific trackage. This change has since been reversed. In 1973, Am-

Our car's lack of hot water being unsuccessfully fixed.

mit him to fulfill his dream of traveling to the Orient. From 1856 to 1866 he worked for a steamboat company and then formed his own company, James J. Hill & Company.

The first train in the state of Minnesota was run on June 28, 1862 by the St. Paul and Pacific, which was originally chartered in 1857 as the Minnesota & Pacific. In 1878, James Hill, along with Norman Kittson, Donald Smith, and George Stephen (the latter two became Lords), bought the St. Paul & Pacific, which, by then, was recovering from bankruptcy. In 1879, the St. Paul & Pacific was, once again, bankrupt, and the St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba, one of Hill's creations, bought it. In 1882 Hill was elected the president of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba. In 1887, the St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba was extended to Great Falls, Montana. Two years later, James Hill organized the Great Northern, which leased and eventually bought the St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba. The Great Northern then built on to Havre, Montana. In 1890, Hill was elected president of the Great Northern.

Ben Bachman described James Hill's ambitions in the November, 1994 *Trains Magazine* by saying "You have to go all the way back to a time when Europeans first convinced themselves that a supposedly limitless treasure trove of riches, ripe for plunder, existed in a mysterious region of the Far East known vaguely as 'the Indies....' Jim Hill pictured it clearly. He had grandiose plans for his fledgling Great Northern Railway and predicted the trade between the West Coast and Asia would one day surpass that between the Atlantic Coast and Europe, which it now has..."

As the Great Northern built on, it had to cross the Rocky Mountains, a daunting task for its chief engineer, John Stevens. In 1889, he discovered Marias Pass, a pass known to Lewis and Clark. The pass was only 5,213 feet high, the lowest pass over the Rockies north of the Sunset Route, which travels from Los Angeles, California to El Paso, Texas. The trak launched its *North Coast Hiawatha*, using the Northern Pacific from the Twin Cities to Seattle, but the train was cut in 1979. In 1981, the *Empire Builder* was restored to its original Spokane-Seattle route, and the train was again split in Spokane for Portland and Seattle service.

Just as this paper went to "press," Amtrak announced plans to retrofit the *Empire Builder* with refurbished Superliner cars and improved onboard services. One overemphasized highlight is the planned addition of old Northern Pacific and Greater Northern specialties to the menu, along with complimentary "homemade" cookies.

We arrived at our Superliner Sleeper, the third car on our train. The first car was for baggage and the second was a Superliner Transition Sleeper, in which the train's staff slept. The Transition Sleeper also provides a connection between the single-level baggage car and the bi-level Superliners. Though our car was fresh from refurbishment at the Beech Grove shops, I was not impressed that it was without a working PA system or hot water. Our sleeping car attendant, Sandi, attempted to persuade one of the Amtrak maintenance workers to fix our PA system and get us hot water. They came and fiddled with our PA system, but it stubbornly refused to work. The maintenance worker then removed our faulty sys-

The scene from the window of the *Empire Builder*, leaving Minot .

pass is named after Maria, a cousin of Lewis. Marias Pass travels around Glacier National Park, which was set up partly because of the Great Northern. Having overcome the challenge of crossing the Rocky Mountains, John Stevens then had to find a way to cross the Cascade Mountains. What he found became known as Stevens Pass. On January 6, 1893, the Great Northern opened its route to the Puget Sound and survived the Panic of 1893, which followed shortly thereafter. The complete route was built without any government land grants because that program had earlier ceased operation, but the importance of the program's nonexistence should not diminish the awesome feat of building a Minneapolis to Seattle railroad with only private funds. Stevens Pass included many switchbacks and, for that reason, was replaced with a 2.63 mile Cascade Tunnel, in 1900. In 1909, the tunnel was electrified, so trains would have a new engine attached at the entrance and taken off at the exit to the tunnel

In 1901, Hill was elected president of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, a competitor to the Great Northern. In 1904, a company that Hill had incorporated in New Jersey, Northern Securities Company, was disbanded by the United States Supreme Court, in a five to four decision, for holding a majority of stock in enough railways to be considered a monopoly.

In 1907, Hill resigned the presidency of the Great Northern. He then assumed the Chairmanship of the board whilst his son, Louis Hill, became president of the company. In 1912, Louis Hill became the chairman of the board. On May 19, 1916, James Hill died.

In 1919, Ralph Budd came to the helm of the Great Northern. In 1927, a merger between the Northern Pacific, the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy, the Spokane, Portland, & Seattle, and the Great Northern was attempted and failed. This was because the Interstate Commerce Commission allowed the 'Great Northern Pacific Railway' to come into

tem and swapped it with the PA system from the Transition Sleeper. It worked, and we had a working PA system for the rest of the trip. They were not anywhere near as successful with regards to the hot water. They told us that it would warm up soon, but no such luck was in store for us. We had to use the showers in the neighboring car. All this time the train was supposed to be moving, but no such drastic action had occurred. Our engine was having problems, apparently a flood of oil, or related troubles.

Prior to our departure there was movement of some Metra trains. I had the opportunity to view the new MP36PH-3S locomotives which are in a somewhat revolutionary paint scheme for Metra. When we eventually did pull out of Union Station, one hour and twenty minutes late, we saw a CTA El train and we passed an expansive Metra rail yard. Our trip, as far as Fox Lake, Illinois, was over the Metra Milwaukee District North Line. I had a few route guides, but not because the train crew provided them. I had printed some off the web, and Amtrak had mailed me one, under the guise of the "Empire Builder Magazine".

As it darkened, we ate dinner with a professor from the University of Minnesota medical school. We talked about mad cow disease, among other topics. The information which we received from him persuaded my dad to eat more steaks, because the odds of

The North Dakota landscape.

existence, but would not allow the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy to be part of the new railway. The company continued in the absence of James Hill, and, ten years after Budd took control, the Cascade Tunnel was extended to a total, and final, length of 7.79 miles. In the 1940s, the Great Northern ordered ninety-six diesels from General Motors' Electro-Motive Corporation. When, after World War II, the *Empire Builder* was equipped with its streamlined train, it was so successful that, by 1951, most of the Great Northern's trains were streamlined. According to *Moody's Railroads, 1951* via *The Routledge Historical Atlas of the American Railroads*, the Great Northern's system consisted of 8,316 miles of track, 1,012 locomotives, 38,315 freight cars, 822 passenger cars, and had a total revenue of $227 million. In 1955, John Budd became the president of the Great Northern. At this time, twenty-two new dome cars were ordered for the *Empire Builder*. By 1957, all of the Great Northern locomotives were diesel. In 1966, a merger of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific was rejected by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Within a year, the Commission changed its mind, and approved the merger. In 1968, a merger was nearly ready, but a two-year Supreme Court Case delayed the combination.

On March 2, 1970, the Great Northern's name was no longer. It merged with the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy, the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, and the Spokane, Portland, & Seattle to form the Burlington Northern. On November 21, 1980, the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad joined the Burlington Northern. Fifteen years later, the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroads merged, making the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe is known for its positive attitude towards Am-

The Pullman Company

In 1831, George Pullman, who would later become a giant in the rail industry, was born in Brocton, New York. Seven years after

him getting mad cow disease seemed to be low. For dinner, I had the holiday special, which consisted of turkey, stuffing, beans, corn, cranberry sauce, and a baked potato. My dad ate beans, corn, and mashed potatoes along side his habitual steak. They served us much more efficiently than the *Capitol Limited*'s crew.

As I read *Uptown, Downtown*, and went to sleep, we were still operating an hour and twenty minutes late. I actually went to sleep!

> "Every convenience known to first class travel in its time was lavished on this splendid flyer [the Oriental Limited] by a management which failed to see eye to eye with the founding father's oft-quoted dictum that passenger traffic was neither useful nor ornamental."
>
> - Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg
> *The Trains We Rode*

As I slept, we traveled through Minnesota, stopping in Minneapolis-St. Paul around midnight. I woke up around Grand Forks, North Dakota. Over our breakfast, we talked to a man from Seattle, who was traveling in coach. I had French toast and bacon, and my dad ate a croissant, quiche, and potatoes. As we traversed the state of North Dakota, we were about three hours late. A blizzard, dumping only three inches of snow, prevented us from discerning the North Dakota plain's landscape,

An oil well near Williston, North Dakota landscape.

his birth, the first sleeping car, the *Chambersburg*, went into operation on the Cumberland Valley Railroad. It was a crude car: bland, mostly empty, with three layers of bunks. The bottom layer was the base of the day-time seat, the second was the backboard, which folded out, and the third could be released from the roof. The wooden bunks were each covered with a thin mat.

Sleeping car design progressed; a few companies came to dominate the scene. The crudeness of the *Chambersburg* was not replicated in all the designs, many of which appear more comfortable than Amtrak's 'Deluxe' Sleepers.

Pullman moved to Chicago, in 1855. He had been working as a mechanic and carpenter, and soon came under his own employment as he contracted to move buildings. In 1858, he started working with Benjamin Field, marketing and supporting sleeping cars. Six years later, Pullman started work on his own car, originally known simply as A, but, later on, called Pioneer. The car, when completed in 1865, was included in Abraham Lincoln's funeral train. Stories tell of the redesigning of platforms and bridges for the unusually wide and tall car to pass by.

Pullman formed the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1867, and within eight years, 700 cars were in service. The Pullman Company continued to gobble up its competitors, with the help of Field and Pullman.

In 1881, the company opened its Pullman, Illinois plant and city, where the company owned all the property, and leased space to its workers. In 1894, as a result of the Panic of 1893, the Pullman Company cut wages 25%, causing a strike. President Grover Cleveland sent troops, and a standoff between labor and management ensued. Violence occurred, annoyed railway workers started a general railway strike, and things spiraled south. Violently and cruelly, the strike was suppressed, and the participating workers were blacklisted.

or, as my dad would put it, it gave us a more realistic image of North Dakota.

During our twenty minute layover in Minot, North Dakota, Sandi, once again, attempted to get our hot water system working. She was, of course, unsuccessful. I walked into the station and picked up some route guides. They were interesting, but, because they were interesting, they could not have been recently produced by Amtrak. Instead, they were generated by the North Dakota Geographic Alliance and Minot State University. The route guide provided by these two organizations was packed with information, so much so that there was more information than time on the trip! The guide had an annoying tendency to quote the *North Dakota Magazine* of 1907, when referring to ghost towns.

I then re-boarded our train, which was covered with a thick layer of ice and draped with icicles. As we exited the station, we crossed over the Gassman Coulee on a beautiful high-level trestle.

As we continued to travel in North Dakota, this time from Stanley to Williston, we ate lunch. I had a wonderful chicken pot pie and my dad had a burger with potato chips. When we arrived in Williston, I saw a Great Northern steam engine and some freight cars alongside huge piles of snow. As we crossed over into Montana, I had the opportunity to see the Mississippi River, which resembled a

The Missouri River.

In 1897, George Pullman died. He was so unpopular from the strike standoff that he was placed in a concrete tomb, to prevent the stealing of his body. Pullman's successor was the son of the late President Abraham Lincoln, Robert Todd Lincoln. Two years after Pullman himself died, the Pullman Company had a complete and final monopoly, after it swallowed its last competition: the Wagner Palace Car Company.

The new century demanded steel cars, and Pullman grudgingly provided them; in 1910, *Carnegie*, the first all-steel car, was produced. In the 1920s, Pullman hit its peak: 9,800 cars in service and a nightly ridership of around 50,000. Pullman-Standard Car & Manufacturing Corporation was formed in 1924 to continue the construction of Pullman sleeping cars and start construction freight cars, while the Pullman Company continued operating them.

Pullman survived the Great Depression only by lying on its plush bed of self-created wealth, and removing some of the feathers. Jobs were cut, and fares decreased, but the company marched on.

By the 1940s, Pullman's luck was decreasing. The U.S. government charged Pullman with breaking the Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts in 1940, and in 1944 the government won the case. Three years after the ruling, the Pullman Company was bought by 57 client railways, leaving Pullman-Standard to construct cars.

On December 31, 1968, the Pullman Company stopped operating trains, proving a great empire had finished crumbling. Pullman—the company that had operated many a sleeping car to small towns, isolated otherwise—had died. Pullman—the company that had given many blacks a chance by hiring them as porters, though they were still abused by whites and forced to follow strict rules—had died. In 1981, Pullman-Standard produced its last car - a Superliner.

large hunk of ice. (My dad was not particularly happy that he missed this.) After that, I sat down and took some notes for this paper.

I picked up a snack of potato chips from the Sightseer Lounge's snack bar and shared it with my dad. We continued to cross a somewhat hilly, but rather boring landscape. We soon pulled into Havre, Montana where we stayed for about twenty minutes. I took the opportunity to look at another Great Northern steam locomotive and to go into the station. It was dark outside by this time, and the train was still covered in a deep coat of ice. The station was surrounded by hills of snow, some higher than buildings. I then re-boarded the train.

For dinner, I had ravioli with corn and my dad had a steak. I went to sleep around Browning, Montana; and because we were so late, I did not get to see Glacier National Park. During the night, we spent a few minutes in Idaho, crossing a state off of my dad's "yet to be in" list. We also crossed Marias Pass which goes over the Rockies. The Pass,named after Lewis's cousin Maria Wood, was discovered in freezing temperatures by John Stevens, on December 11, 1889.

I woke up just after Spokane, Washington, where the train had been split in two, with another section going to Portland, Oregon. We were supposed to leave Spokane at 2:15 a.m., but it was getting light as I awoke.

A snow pile in Havre, Montana

Before we entered the Cascades, my dad and I had breakfast, pancakes for me, and an omelet for my dad. Prior to crossing under Stevens Pass, we stopped at Wenatchee, which is in the middle of the apple growing area of Washington State. We then entered the Cascades, which were beautiful! There was plenty of snow, a few feet deep at the least.

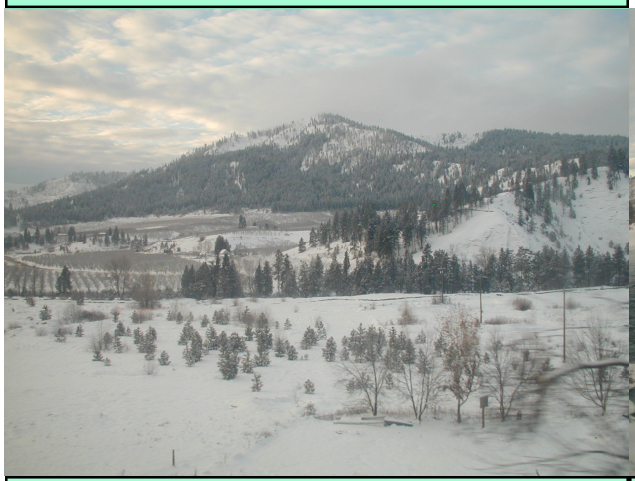
The *Empire Builder* sits in Havre, Montana.

Stevens Pass was named after John Stevens, who persuaded the Great Northern to build over both Marias and Stevens Passes. The pass had actually been discovered by C. E. Linsley in June, 1870 who was scouting a Northern Pacific route west, but it was not used. Stevens then found the Pass again, and

> "Stevens said the inspiration for locating this line came to him one evening, "as if in a dream," although it turned out to be more like a nightmare for nervous locomotive engineers leaning out their cab windows to eye the great gulf of thin air lapping at the ends of ties. Some sort of major disaster was probably inevitable, and it came in March 1910 when a huge slide swept a pair of snowbound trains over a cliff and virtually wiped out the isolated little town of Wellington. Ninety-six people died."
>
> - Ben Bachman
> *Trains Magazine, November 1994*

The Columbia River with the Cascade Mountains in the background.

the Great Northern constructed over it in 1892, when it had eight switchbacks. In 1900, a 2.63 mile long Cascade Tunnel was built over the top of the pass, but this still required 4% grades, snowsheds, and sharp curves. Then, in 1909, four miles of the route were electrified to prevent the suffocation of passengers by steam



The Cascade Mountains.

The Columbia River.

The Puget Sound north of Seattle.

A *Cascades* train in Seattle's King Street Station.

engine smoke.

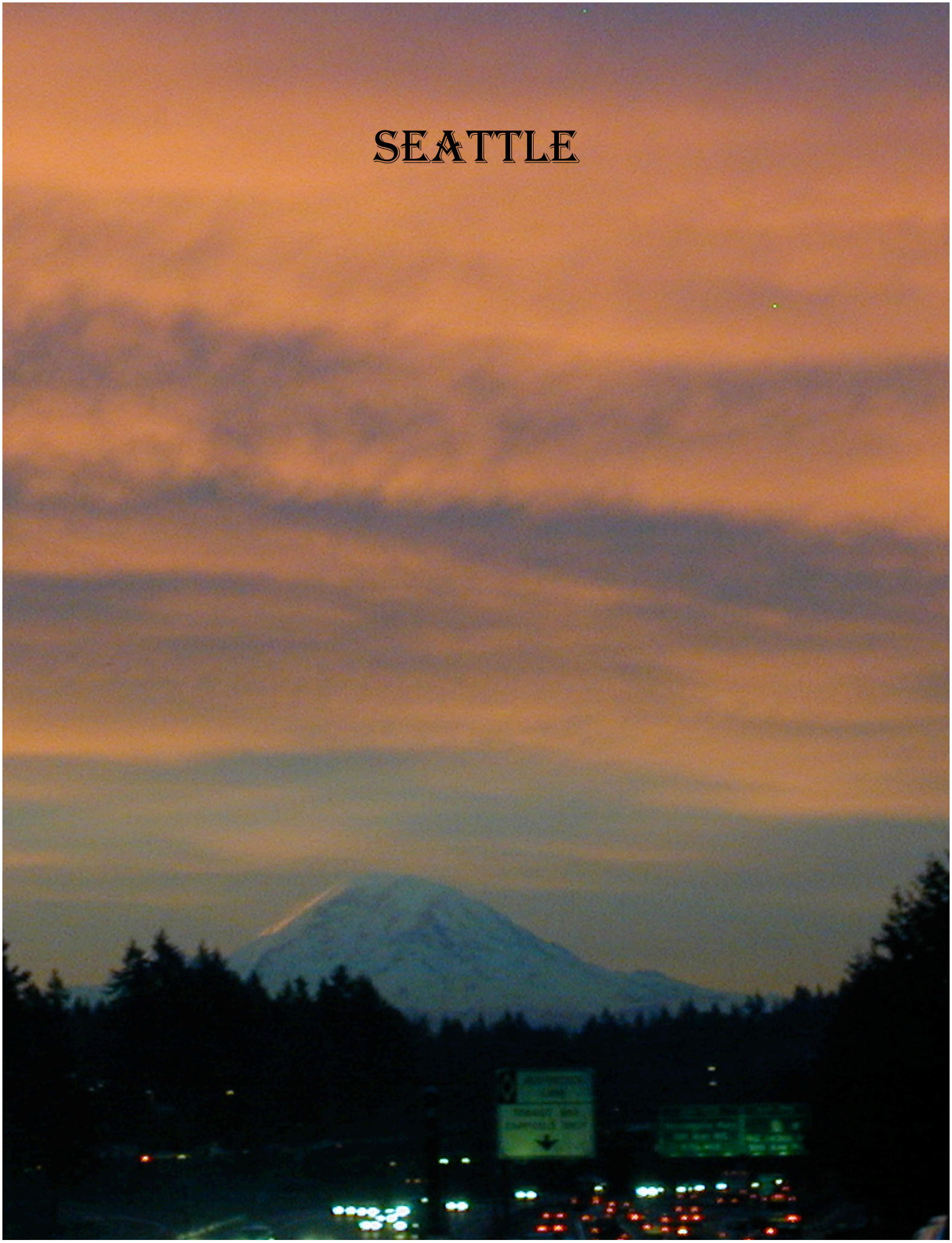
In 1925, a project was undertaken to rebuild the line between Wenatchee and Skykomish, including the construction of a new, 7.79 mile long, Cascade Tunnel opened on January 12, 1929. Additionally, the grade was reduced to 1.6%, and the route was electrified all the way from Skykomish to Wenatchee. The electrification was removed in 1956, after which time diesel locomotives were used.

As we descended we saw a line of magnificent mountains, although we had trouble figuring out just which mountains they were. Once we reached Everett, Washington, I got to see the brand new station built by Sound Transit for their Sounder commuter rail line, which started operating to Everett on December 22, 2003. Sounder used to, and still does, go to Tacoma, Washington, from Seattle. The station, which also houses a bus stop, was built in conjunction with Everett Transit, and opened on February 4, 2002. From outside, the station looked huge and very clean, especially for a station in the United States. As we slowly moved out of the station, the old, dirty AmShack was visible. [An AmShack is a hut that is employed by Amtrak as a station.] This particular AmShack had been put out of business by the larger, more elegant, Everett Station. We then skirted the Puget Sound and gazed at Mount Olympus on a route that is notorious for landslides.

We traveled through Edmunds, Washington and arrived in Seattle, dipping underground to avoid the heart of the city. We pulled into King Street Station, Seattle's main station, just as a *Cascade* train arrived from the south.

"As a rule, the eating-stations are wretchedly supplied. We have thrown away many a noble appetite on tough, tasteless steak and watery soup that had scarcely strength to run down our throats. A well filled lunch-basket is a necessity, a comfort as well as an economy, for the charges at these places are a dollar for anything unless you crowd to the immigrants' refreshment bar, where cooking is by no means studied as a high art."

-Lady Duffus Hardy, 1881
Through Cities and Prairie Lands (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)


SEATTLE

Once we had removed ourselves and our luggage from the train and thanked our car attendant, we entered the station. I then took plenty of pictures of the station and picked up a couple hundred bus timetables. After loafing around the station for a while, we went outside to find Sharon, a former Rolfer of ours, and her son, Jacob, who is also a railfan. They had recently moved from Washington, D.C. to Seattle. We then put our luggage in her car and drove to the South Washington Street George Benson Waterfront Streetcar station and took the next streetcar north to the Broad Street terminus. The line was opened on May 29, 1982 and was only recently named after former Seattle City Councilman George Benson, who was instrumental in the line's construction.

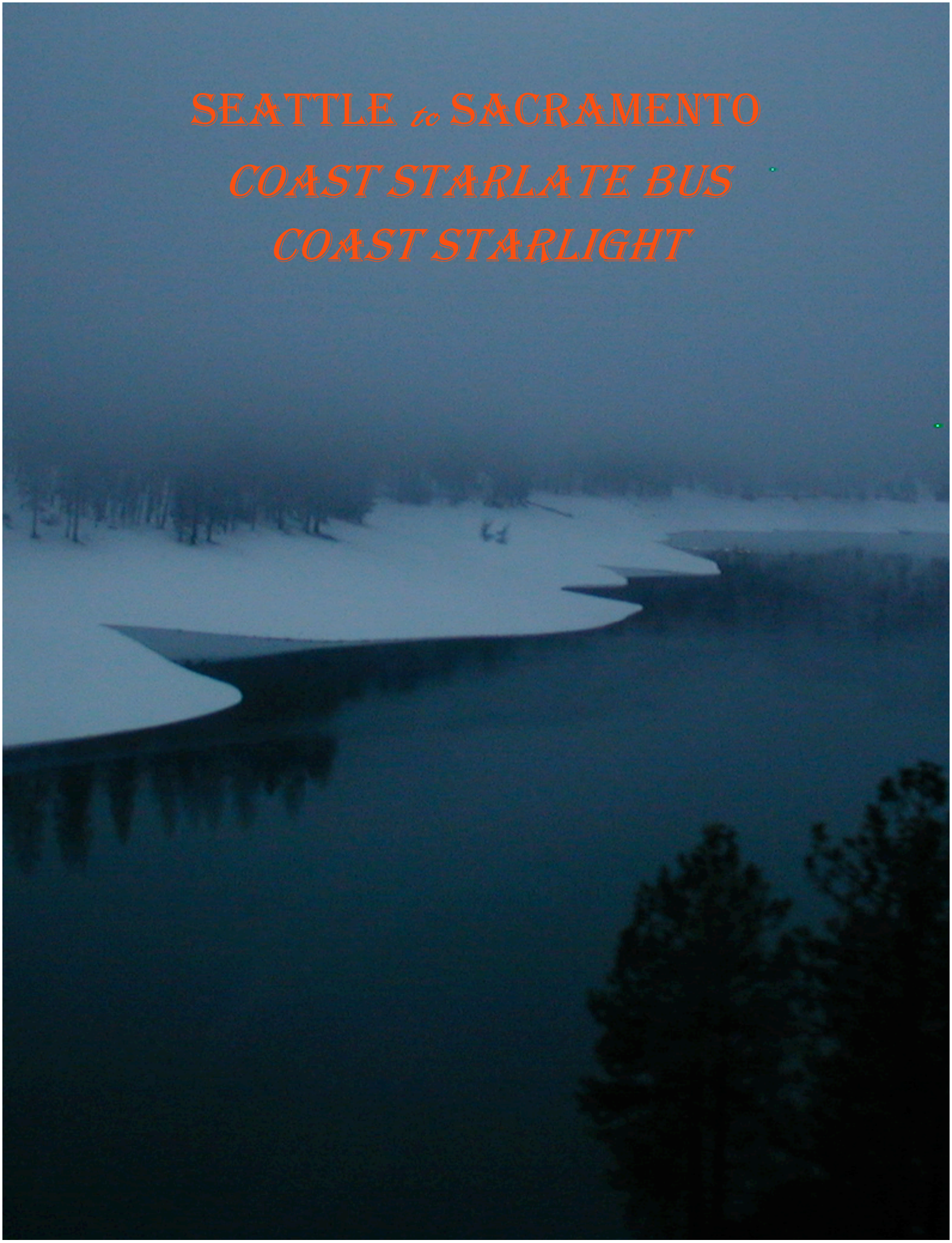
When our train had arrived in the Broad Street station it had gone into the yard and parked. We waited for it to come back out and, when it eventually did, we re-boarded. We stayed aboard through a few stations, and then got off for lunch. The four of us crossed the street and went into a small bakery where I had a sandwich with lettuce, tomato, onion, roast beef, and mustard. My dad had fish and chips from a nearby restaurant. After eating we walked back to Sharon's car, and she drove us up I-5 to her place. During the trip, Jacob was shooting a fake gun at me. This shooting continued for the rest of our visit, with the targets expanding to all living and non-living things.

Once we had traveled for an hour or so, we arrived a Sharon's huge wood cabin. The cabin was draped with Christmas lights and the interior consisted of two floors with plenty of space. Sharon's brother, a Rolfer and artist, was staying with her. After settling down, we had a tremendous dinner of turkey, gravy, potatoes, artichokes, broccoli, green beans, brownies, and whipped cream. As I was checking the train news on the web, my dad suggested that I verify if our next train, the *Coast Starlight*, was late on its northbound run, which could be predicted, for it has rightfully earned the nickname "Coast Starlate." I checked, and it was 12 hours late, not unusual. Amtrak's website refused to mention where the train would be turned to go south to Los Angeles. Rumor had it that the train might be turned as far south as Eugene, Oregon, or Portland. I checked whether we could take an early train to Portland, and it was available, but my dad refused on the grounds that it was too early; 7:30 A.M. out of Seattle. So, we went to sleep.

When we awoke, I checked and our train was 14 plus hours late, and upon calling Amtrak, I was informed that we would be bused to Portland to board the Coast Starlate there. After a breakfast of beans, scones, scrambled eggs, and sausages, we went into Seattle. On the way we got a wonderful view of the Space Needle.

The King Street Station clock tower.

A streetcar on the George Benson Line.


SEATTLE to SACRAMENTO
COAST STARLATE BUS
COAST STARLIGHT

When we arrived at King Street Station, we learned that the train was fifteen, yes, fifteen, hours late. So I meandered around the station for a while, photographing a parked Sounder train and a BNSF train. I also got to look around the newly redone platforms. After waiting for a time in the station, the busses eventually came. They were the same busses that had taken the passengers from Portland, and were therefore late in arriving, causing them to depart about one hour late. Once we had boarded the busses, it was explained to us why Amtrak offers riders who are about to miss their transfers, because they are on late trains, the option of taking a bus to meet their other train. We made up a gigantic amount of time; when we arrived in Portland, we were early!

At Portland Union Station, we met Royce, a friend of my dad's dating back to kindergarten, and his daughter, Courtney. We talked and went into the station. The station was packed. It was unclear where the many lines were leading, but we eventually discovered that none were leading to our target, the Metropolitan Lounge in Portland, so we just walked around the lines into the Lounge. The Lounge was packed too, but had coffee, which my dad happily served to himself. As Royce and my dad were lounging around with our luggage, I went and collected schedules, specifically those of Tri-Met, the local transit agency and operator of the MAX light rail system.

Construction of Portland's Union Station started in 1890 and it was opened on February 14, 1896. Soon, the Southern Pacific, Northern Pacific, and Union Pacific used it. In 1898, the station's symbolic clock tower was built, to which the neon signs "GO BY TRAIN" and "UNION STATION"—which remain today—were added in 1946. During World War I, the Great Northern and Spokane, Portland

The Southern Pacific

On the Portland to Sacramento and Sparks, Nevada to Winnemucca, Nevada segments of our trip, we traveled over the Union Pacific, formerly the Southern Pacific, which grew from the original Central Pacific.

On July 1, 1862, the Pacific Railroad Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, utilizing the Central Pacific Railroad and creating the Union Pacific Railroad. The ability to do this was created in part by the American Civil War, because it provided a slight reprieve from the endless, constituency-based political battle over the routing of a transcontinental line.

Theodore Judah had been trying to sell a transcontinental route for years, and had just, one year earlier, prompted the incorporation — by Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins — of the Central Pacific Railroad. Its intent was to build a transcontinental line west from Sacramento.

Under the Pacific Railroad Act, the Union Pacific was to build from Council Bluffs and the Central Pacific from Sacramento; both were given $60 million in loans and 20 million acres of land. They were to meet wherever they might connect.

On January 8, 1863, ground was broken for the Central Pacific and that year a fragment of intra-California service started. Chinese workers were used to build much of the line, but were originally highly unpopular due to longstanding stereotypes. Their hard work,

A BNSF train passes through King Street Station.

though, provided them with slightly more support, but by no means the complete backing of those living in California.

They were actually illegal to import to California, but they were so badly needed to build the railway that their presence was tolerated. Still, upon arrival, they were given the easiest work: the railroad administration thought them incapable of hard labor. Yet, when they were provided the opportunity to do difficult work, they excelled. Further, they were far more sanitary than the other workers, who were mostly Irish. They were also creative, finding ways to hang from cliffs so as to build a trench through them or digging tunnels through snow to permit their continued work in winter. Doing this, many of them died.

In 1864, the Railroad Act of 1864 was passed, doubling the land grants for the Union Pacific and Central Pacific. The same year the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad was built from San Francisco to Sacramento. In 1868, that railroad was bought by the Central Pacific and named the Southern Pacific.

In the winter of 1866 to 1867, the Central Pacific was still building over the Sierras, battling 44 snowstorms on Donner Pass, with some snow drifts reaching 40 feet. Yet, by 1869, the Central Pacific was racing across Nevada and Utah. It overshot (intentionally, because it got more federal compensation the further it went) the Union Pacific (which was doing the same) by 200 miles.

On May 10, 1869, the transcontinental railway was finally united at Promontory Summit, Utah [a place we visited in the summer of 2004]. The Central Pacific, though, originally refused to cooperate with the Union Pacific, for the purpose of preserving its identity. Because of this, multiple through passenger trains were prevented.

In 1870 the Central Pacific bought the California & Oregon Railroad and the San Joaquin Valley Railroad. The Central Pacific's Southern Pacific reached Bakersfield in 1874; & Seattle were forced, by the government Administration running the railroads, to start using the Union Station. In 1922, all the railways agreed to use the station. From 1927 to 1930, the station was rebuilt. In 1965, the Portland Terminal took ownership of the station from the Northern Pacific Terminal Company, and in 1987 the Portland Development Commission bought the station. In today's station is a restaurant, at which I have eaten, and whose food is stellar [see *West Coast Train Trip*].

We crossed the station tracks, and boarded our sleeping car on the Coast Starlate-already. After saying good-bye to Royce when the train was due to depart, we continued talking until the train left, about an hour late. As the train gradually increased its speed until reaching a sluggish high, I walked (faster than the train) to the Pacific Par0lour Car. The Parlour Cars are the remainders of the Santa Fe's Hi-Level cars and are among the best cars on the train — with a library, truly comfortable seats, a wine bar, and events throughout, such as wine tastings.

As we traversed, at an embarrassing speed, the Union Pacific track in Oregon, I had a dinner of ravioli, with a Chocolate Bundt and Ice Cream for dessert, while my dad devoured yet another steak. Characteristic of Union Pacific, a slow freight train was placed, most likely on purpose, in front of us, causing delays. After Eugene, where I was instructed not

Fields in northern Oregon.

Los Angeles in 1876; and Yuma in 1877. There it was supposed to connect with the Texas & Pacific, but that road had not yet been completed west of Fort Worth, Texas. In 1879, the Southern Pacific purchased the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad.

During the following decade the Southern Pacific and Central Pacific holdings were found to be so utterly complicated that a reorganization was needed. At the end of this, the Central Pacific had disappeared and the Southern Pacific had become the dominant organization.

As this occurred, construction continued: in 1880 the Southern Pacific reached Tucson, in 1881 El Paso, and in 1883 the route to New Orleans was opened. (In 1881, the Texas & Pacific complained of its route east of Yuma being taken by Southern Pacific; it thus earned trackage rights over the latter.) In 1884, the *Sunset Limited* was inaugurated between Los Angeles and New Orleans. Still in operation today, the train is now the longest continually operated named train in the country.

Three years later the *Overland Flyer* was inaugurated between Omaha and Oakland, suggesting some cooperation between the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific. In 1889, its successor, the *Golden Gate Special*, was cut because of infighting among the two operating railroads and Pullman.

In 1889, Edward Harriman started to buy the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific, gaining control of both in 1901. Harriman had heavy investments made into the system's infrastructure, but he could not merge his two railways because of government regulation.

In 1904, the San Francisco to Los Angeles Coast Line (along which the *Coast Starlight* travels) was opened. Four years subsequent, President Theodore Roosevelt took the Union Pacific to court, accusing it of breaking the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in controlling the Southern Pacific. The next year, Harriman died, followed in 1912 by the Roosevelt administration wining its lawsuit and the two to use flash when taking pictures of the train's locomotive, I went to bed.

The *Coast Starlight* is Amtrak's combination of the Southern Pacific's *Lark*, *Daylight Limited*, *Cascade*, and *Shasta Daylight*. The *Lark* was an overnight run from Los Angeles to San Francisco, the *Daylight Limited* also ran from Los Angeles to San Francisco, the *Cascade* operated overnight between Oakland and Portland, and the *Shasta Daylight* served the same endpoints during the day. The portion of the route that we traveled over was that which the *Shasta Daylight* and *Cascade* served. The train runs on a timetable most comparable to that of the *Cascade* and the *Daylight Limited*.

The *Daylight Limited* was streamlined, to much acclaim, in 1937, and the *Cascade* was streamlined in 1950. In 1970, the *Cascade* was reduced to tri-weekly, though the *Coast Starlight* is now daily (when it is on-time).

More recently, the *Coast Starlight* has been much improved as one of Amtrak's premier trains, providing some of the best amenities available on the system. Yet, sadly, many of the amenities that were added during the 1990s have since been cut, leaving a train that is just slightly above the bare-bones level of others. The *Coast Starlight* does still have the Pacific Parlour Car, the Kiddie Car, and the staff is still devoted, but food has been standardized for the entirety of Amtrak. During

The refurbished Salem, Oregon station.

companies being forced to separate. Later an attempt was made to move ownership of the former Central Pacific route to the Union Pacific, but this failed.

The Southern Pacific purchased the El Paso & Southwestern in 1924 and was, two years later, the second largest company, by dollar value, in the country. In 1927, a 1,100 mile long line from Guadalajara, Mexico to Nogales, Arizona was opened and in 1929 the Modoc line, from Fernley, Nevada to Klamath Falls, was opened.

In 1929, as the Great Depression began, the Southern Pacific was not in wonderful shape, with a low return on investments and many outstanding loans. In 1932 the Interstate Commerce Commission permitted the Southern Pacific's to take control of the St. Louis Southwestern; nonetheless, the St. Louis Southwestern went bankrupt in 1935, taking twelve years to exit bankruptcy.

In 1936, the *City of San Francisco* was inaugurated between San Francisco and Chicago by the Southern Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Chicago & North Western. Then, on May 21, 1937, a reequipped Los Angeles to San Francisco *Daylight* was inaugurated. Streamlined and painted in red, orange, black, and white, it is still considered by many to have been "the most beautiful train in the world." The service was very successful, prompting the inauguration of a *Noon Daylight*.

In 1939, a new Los Angeles Passenger Terminal, in art-deco style, was opened. Shortly thereafter, ridership skyrocketed due to World War II, but this, like on other roads, did not last long in the post-war period.

In 1953 the much beloved Los Angeles Pacific Electric (known for its "Red Cars"), a streetcar system owned by Southern Pacific, was sold to a bus company. Four years later, the Southern Pacific was fully dieselized.

In the 1960s, the Southern Pacific attempted to cut **all** of its passenger service, but failed and only was permitted to cut most of it. Service on remaining lines was set up so as

the 1990s, the dining car offered regional specialties, but this did not last through the cost cutting of Amtrak's current and immediately previous presidents, David Gunn and George Warrington, respectfully. Also, the Pacific Parlour Car's library has diminished, and is in need of investment. The Pacific Parlour Car still has its swivel seats and booths, with wine tasting and snacks.

At six a.m., I awoke to find myself (and the train) north of Redding, California! During the night we had skirted the scenic areas of Klamath Lake and Mount Shasta, two of the most beautiful portions of the route, and, by morning, only a short stretch of scenic routing was left. But the Union Pacific managed to assist the winter in stretching that short stretch of track into a long period of time. Apparently the cold spell that hit the northern California area had caused many of the switches to freeze up, forcing our train's crew to flip them manually. We arrived in Redding six hours late, during daylight hours rather than the two twenty-one a.m. scheduled arrival! This delay did mean that we got to see the picturesque Shasta Lake, formed by Shasta Dam, and located just to the east of the Trinity Mountains. For breakfast I shoveled pancakes and bacon into my mouth, while my dad slowly munched on his scrambled eggs, potatoes, and bacon.

Winter weather was apparently not

The *Coast Starlight* stops in northern Oregon.

to **drive away** passengers, **not** attract them.

In the 1970s, the railroad attempted and failed to merge with each of the Seaboard Coast Line, the St. Louis-San Francisco, and the Norfolk & Western. Still, the Southern Pacific's St. Louis Southwestern bought the Rock Island's Chicago to Kansas City route, in 1980. In May, 1980, another merger failed, this time with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, because the Santa Fe was concerned with the state of the Southern Pacific's property.

On September 17, 1983, the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe again announced merger plans and, later that year, the two were merged into a single holding corporation, though only the Santa Fe was allowed voting rights until the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled on the merger. In June, 1986, the Commission ruled against the merger.

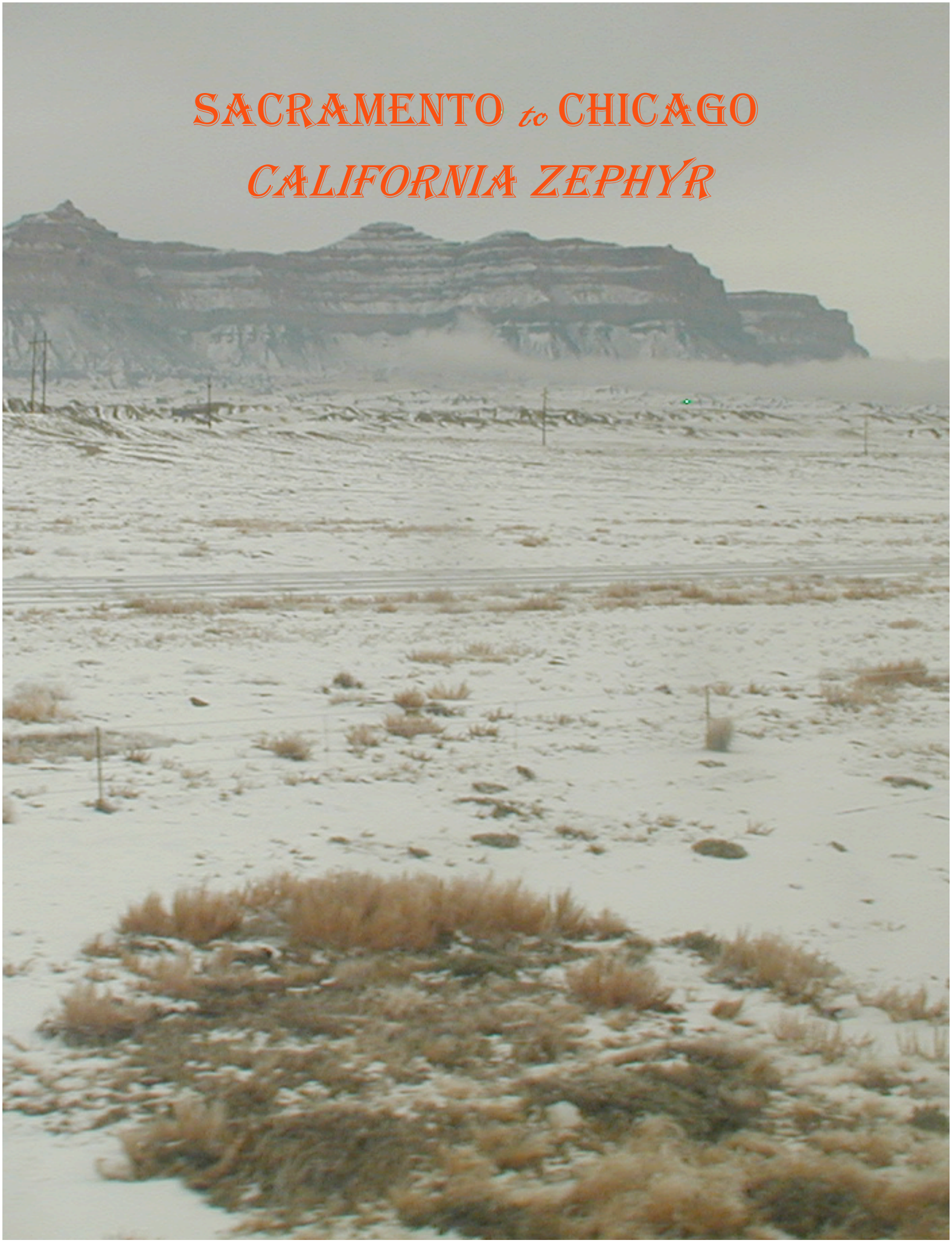
In October, 1988, the joint holding corporation sold the Southern Pacific to Anschutz Corporation's subsidiary Rio Grande Western, which already owned Denver & Rio Grande Western. (This followed on an unsuccessful bidding attempt by Kansas City Southern, which failed by unanimous vote of the Interstate Commerce Commission.) Anschutz named the new subsidiary Southern Pacific. This merger effectively flip-flopped the railroad scene: before, the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific had cooperated to compete with the Burlington, Rio Grande Western, and Western Pacific. Now, the Western Pacific and Union Pacific were in competition with the Southern Pacific and Rio Grande Western.

In 1989, Southern Pacific purchased its first direct line into Chicago, by way of St. Louis, from Chicago, Missouri & Western. Then, in 1995, the Union Pacific purchased the Southern Pacific for $5.4 billion.

enough in the minds of the Union Pacific dispatchers, so a broken rail was diligently prepared for us. This caused us more delays, and it became apparent that something would have to be done about our connection at Sacramento with the eastbound *California Zephyr*. An announcement came over the PA that we would be let off at Roseville where we could transfer to the *California Zephyr*, which stops there. This was apparently due to a second broken rail. It happened that there was not a second broken rail, so the next announcement stated that we would connect with the *California Zephyr* in Sacramento. Then, in yet another announcement, it was made clear that we would be bussed to Roseville from Sacramento, which sounded bad enough.

The Pacific Parlour Car.

Southern Oregon in the evening.


SACRAMENTO to CHICAGO
CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

When we arrived in Sacramento, we saw some Amtrak California trains destined for Bakersfield, San Jose, and Auburn, but then we got down to the more pressing business of figuring out where the busses were. Actually, they were taxis, here to take us to Reno, Nevada! It should be noted that they were parked immediately next to an Amtrak California bus headed for Reno and that nobody in the station knew anything about what to do with the influx of Coast Starlate passengers, or where they should go.

Dome Cars

Dome cars were a crucial part of the *California Zephyr*. They provided a means to see the beautiful scenery that the train traveled through. What follows is a brief history of that sort of car.

Dome cars, which became a major part of western, and in some cases eastern, railroading, have a cloudy history. Like many other things, more than one person invented them, more than one of the inventors was successful, and most were forgotten. What is regarded (by some) as the first (known) dome car was built in 1902, by the Canadian Pacific. This had two separate cupola sections in one car. The car could be roughly based on the much more luxurious design patented in 1891 by T.J. McBride, a Canadian, but which was never built as planned. In 1906, Canadian Pacific built three more of the dome cars, with a glass roof between the two cupolas. All were taken out of service in 1909. These, of course, were predated by the caboose cupola, invented in 1863, for which T.B. Watson claims credit.

Then, in July, 1944, the more widely acknowledged history of the dome car began. Cyrus Osborn, the General Manager of the Electro-Motive Division (a locomotive building subsidiary) of General Motors, was riding in the cab of a freight train over the Denver & Rio Grande Western. Here, two stories diverge. Osborn has reported both, at different times. One story has it that the beauty of the route dazzled him, and he thought that people would pay $500 to get the perspective of the *engineer* on the route. The other has him riding on a portion of the route in a *caboose* (after having ridden in the cab) and thinking that

I had planned to ride the Sacramento light rail, opened in March, 1987 with some branches added since, and go to the highly reputed California State Railroad Museum, but due to our lateness, this was clearly impossible. So, we boarded the taxis, driven by 'substitutes' for the 'regulars.' We departed Sacramento, got gas, and headed toward Donner Summit, 7,227 feet high, on I-80. It turns out that both Amtrak hired taxis and Amtrak trains go over Donner Pass at the same time, just the former go faster. We crossed the pass in a snow storm, tailgating the taxi in front of us, forcing 'substitute' to be replaced by 'inept driver.'

Everything but the road was covered in deep snow and the scenery was stunning. Most of the way to the Summit we were surrounded by trees, but for a short while, at the very top, we broke above the treeline.

In the winter of 1846-1847, the Donner Party, consisting of 87 people, resorted to cannibalism when it got trapped in what was latter named Donner Pass. By the time they reached their destination, the west coast, only

Snow on trees on Donner Summit.

riders would pay $500 dollars for a ride in a cupola-like structure. When he got to his hotel that evening, he made a rough design for the dome car and started shopping it around at General Motors.

The idea went through a great deal of design and was then touted to the railroads. Only the Burlington was enthusiastic, but their enthusiasm was great. By June 1945, an *Ak-Sar-Ben Zephyr* car had been rebuilt with a dome, known as the *Silver Dome*. The *Silver Dome* was by no means the best dome constructible. It had flat windows on the dome, instead of curved ones, due to WWII restrictions. It also did not have a lowered center for the first floor, causing the clearance on the lower level to be compromised. This was due to the fact that it was a rebuilt car, not a factory produced dome. *Silver Dome* entered service in July, 1945 on the *Twin Zephyrs* (Chicago to St. Paul/Minneapolis).

Soon, the Burlington ordered forty more domes from Budd, and the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors teamed up with Pullman-Standard to create the *Train of Tomorrow*. The *Train of Tomorrow*, delivered and toured in 1947, consisted of four domes: a coach, a diner, an observation-lounge, and a sleeper. Similar to *Silver Dome*, and to all of Pullman-Standard's domes, the cars did not have rounded windows. In 1950, Union Pacific bought the train.

The Burlington domes were put into service on December 19, 1947 as part of a completely new *Twin Cities Zephyr*. These domes, the first in scheduled daily service, did have curved windows. From then on, domes proliferated. Today, only one or two domes survive in Amtrak operation, but many Sightseer Lounges, their Superliner successors, traverse the country.

The Denver & Rio Grande Western

Between Salt Lake City and Denver, we traveled over trackage that was formerly owned by Denver and Rio Grande Railway (or 47 were alive. As it happens, a second Donner Party nearly materialized when, a few days after our taxi trip, a westbound *California Zephyr* derailed. Luckily they had food, and made it safely to Emeryville, California. Earlier, in 1952, the *City of San Francisco* was hit by a snow slide and got stuck on Donner Pass for a few days, but crew and riders were all saved.

When the railroad started building over the Pass in the 1860s, progress was very slow. Forty foot snow drifts and dozens of snow storms per year slowed track laying; but what construction went on was heroic: Chinese builders worked in passages burrowed under the snow and dug the Summit Tunnel under Donner Summit (it did take 13 months, though). And, the workers hung from the cliffs of "Cape Horn" to cut space for a single train track. Snowsheds had to be built over the line during 1867 and 1868; otherwise it would have been inoperable for months each year. In the event that snow falls on Donner Pass, which it does with great frequency, for Donner Pass receives the most snow of any North American rail pass, Union Pacific has a snow removal headquarters in nearby Truckee, California.

When we arrived in Sparks Railyard, just outside of Reno and our actual target, we could not find the 'train station.' While I am replacing words, 'train station' is a good candi-

The Sierra Nevadas with the railroad tracks in the foreground.

Rio Grande or D&RG) and part of the way from Sparks, Nevada to Salt Lake City we traveled over what once was the Western Pacific, a one time dependant of the Rio Grande. Chartered in 1870 by Civil War General William Jackson Palmer, the Rio Grande's goal was to build a narrow gauge railway from Denver through the Royal Gorge to El Paso, Texas. Very few of the Rio Grande's goals are part of today's railroad.

But the Rio Grande started as every railroad did, looking for money: with both private money and municipal bonds, the railroad was able to open to Colorado Springs on January 1, 1872. On June 19 of the same year, the line was extended to a company city just *outside* of Pueblo, Colorado. This angered many citizens of Pueblo, who had voted for the issuance of bonds to support the Rio Grande; and, in revenge, the city soon voted to issue bonds to help the Kansas Pacific Railway and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe reach Pueblo.

Canon City, Colorado was reached on July 6, 1874 after Canon City issued bonds for the Railway. The same year, the Rio Grande suffered a net loss as many shippers complained of its exorbitantly high rates. This all led to the Rio Grande experiencing serious financial turbulence during the late 1870s.

About the time that the Rio Grande reached Pueblo, a decision was made that proceeding along the Royal Gorge route was less desirable than building south through Raton Pass. Thus, the Railway built south toward Trinidad, again stopping at a company town (El Moro) rather than the city proper.

In 1878, the Santa Fe and Rio Grande entered into a mad race for Raton Pass. The Santa Fe construction crews arrived at the Pass only hours before Rio Grande crews did, but the Santa Fe was nonetheless able to get an injunction to prevent the Rio Grande from intervening in its construction. (The injunction was necessitated by some short standoffs between armed construction gangs.)

The Santa Fe then made a dash for the date. It would be more appropriate to say 'yard tower with a two year old schedule posted on the wall for the passengers that are not welcome.'

It happens that the Sparks 'train station' is located in the middle of Union Pacific's Reno yard. Amtrak is not tolerated for more than a couple minutes in the city of Reno because the trains cross more than a few roads, snarling the downtown traffic. But Amtrak has of late become less welcome in Sparks, too, because, according to Curtis Katz in the August 2005 *Railfan and Railroad*, Union Pacific was not pleased when a couple passengers "ran heedlessly in front of an oncoming switch engine," although nobody was killed.

Since then, passengers have not been encouraged to take a smoke break at Sparks. But before that accident, Curtis Katz says that "despite our [the staff's] admonitions, passengers eager to try their luck pulling slots would make a dash for the Nugget. If they were traveling westbound and were truly lucky, they might just have time to flag a taxi and reboard the train at Reno... At one point, years ago, the owner of the Nugget offered to alleviate this problem by bringing track and train right into the hotel lobby..."

Regardless, Amtrak uses Sparks as a place to refuel. It happens that the *California Zephyr* of December 31, 2003 did not need to refuel. A fellow railfan waiting to board the

Casinos are visible in the distance at the Sparks station.

Royal Gorge in an attempt to thoroughly isolate the Rio Grande. Again, they outdid the D&RG, but this time with only minutes to spare. The Rio Grande appealed to the courts, and the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the D&RG since it, and not the Santa Fe, had planned to use the Royal Gorge routing.

What ensued was not the peace and order one might envision. Rather, the two railroads went to a blood-free war with one another, each having forts with guards armed to the teeth. Court cases flew back and forth between the companies.

Then, in a somewhat surprising turn of events, the Rio Grande's bondholders had the Road leased to the Santa Fe for three years. This was over the protests of the Rio Grande's President, General Palmer, who refused to withdraw the D&RG's legal charges against the Santa Fe and who fought the (temporary) takeover vehemently and successfully. President Thomas Nickerson of the Santa Fe responded: "I did not think that after making peace we should still have war." [Quote by way of *The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad*, Robert Athearn.]

The Santa Fe, upon gaining possession of the railroad (something that took much effort to wrestle from General Palmer), immediately raised rates and started to play numerous tricks on the rental scheme that had been arranged. The D&RG's management, in addition to procuring a large arsenal of weaponry, started petitioning any court they could set foot in to get their railroad back. On June 10, 1879, a Colorado state court ruled as the Rio Grande desired, and the next day police up and down the Rio Grande line forced the Santa Fe to comply. (A particularly interesting standoff, one with no fatalities, occurred at the Rio Grande's Pueblo roundhouse, which had been filled with pro-Santa Fe forces.)

Twelve days later, a U.S. Circuit Court overturned the state court's ruling, handing the Rio Grande back to the Santa Fe. Then, in late July, the Circuit Court backtracked, taktrain heard on his scanner that the conductor of the *California Zephyr* desired to highball the station! Luckily, a Union Pacific dispatcher in Sparks heard the statement and corrected the problem, averting yet another disaster.

The train pulled to a stop in Sparks with an Amtrak P-42 and a Union Pacific engine leading. For a change, we had good luck and our sleeping car attendant opened his door at Sparks, lathough he did not know that we were boarding, he believed that if we had any intention of boarding, we would have already tdone so in Sacramento. We boarded, and our attendant explained to us that Union Pacific prefers the *California Zephyr* to not even open its doors in Sparks, unless a passenger is to board. We departed Sparks as our electricity intermittently went on.

For dinner I had turkey, gravy, stuffing, rice, broccoli, corn, cheesecake, ice cream, and strawberry sauce, which did not even begin to make up for my missed lunch! My dad had, believe it or not, non-beef (turkey) tenderloins, baked potato, corn, broccoli, a hideous sauce, and a Chocolate Bundt with ice cream.

After eating and a short visit to the Sightseer Lounge, we went to bed. I woke up before Salt Lake City, which we were due to arrive in at 3:35 A.M., and I did not wake up before six. We stayed in Salt Lake City for a while, and eventually left. The Salt Lake City depot was an embarrassingly small excuse for

A Union Pacific engine leads the *California Zephyr*.

ing the Rio Grande from the Santa Fe and giving it to a receiver. As 1879 came to a close, Jay Gould started to buy Rio Grande stock, and then attempted to use his leverage (but not control) to take revenge on the Santa Fe, a railroad that some of his other properties were in fierce competition with. (This revenge consisted primarily of planning (but not building) a line, parallel to the Santa Fe's, from Pueblo to St. Louis. This would also be partly in response to the Santa Fe's threat to construct a route from Pueblo to Denver.)

In March 1880 both railroads decided to cut their losses and negotiate. The product was the "Treaty of Boston," a compromise dictating that neither the Santa Fe nor the Rio Grande should enter into the other's territory and also that the Rio Grande should not reach Santa Fe for ten years. The Rio Grande, to be released from both receivership and its lease to the Santa Fe, was to focus upon building west, not south. Santa Fe was not reached by the Rio Grande until 1895.

The Rio Grande then got to work building its system. Leadville was reached by way of the Royal Gorge in 1880; Chama (New Mexico), Durango, Espanola (New Mexico), and Gunnison in 1881; and Silverton in 1882. With all this construction, a sufficient base was prepared to build on to Salt Lake City. This was done primarily through the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway, formed from the Sevier Valley Railroad and the Salt Lake and Park City Railway. The Rio Grande leased the Rio Grande Western for 30 years.

On March 30, 1883, the Rio Grande and Rio Grande Western lines met just outside of Green River, Utah. The Rio Grande had already arranged for through traffic to be carried by the Central Pacific. But all the construction had cost more than the Rio Grande had to spend, and another financial crisis befell it.

Regardless, the D&RG continued to build, laying tracks into Ogden illegally, leading to the Union Pacific attaching a locomotive to the front of a train and pulling it off the tracks. Eventually, the Rio Grande was able to reach Ogden, but only by paying the Union Pacific $1.5 million.

Ogden is a city of such great stature, but given that only one passenger train serve Salt Lake City, it is nearly excusable. Salt Lake City plays host to one of this country's more successful light-rail systems, opened in December 1999, the same year that the city's "temporary" Amshack was constructed (St. Louis's temporary Amshack stood for roughly 30 years).

Between Winnemucca, Nevada and Wells, Nevada, the *California Zephyr* traveled over the Union Pacific. Before the Union Pacific took over Southern Pacific and Western Pacific, this segment of track used to be two single tracks, one for Southern Pacific and the other for Western Pacific. The two railroads agreed that both should be able to use each other's tracks, making the line effectively double track. Southwest of Winnemucca, we traveled on the Southern Pacific tracks (now Union Pacific), and east of Wells, we traveled over the ex-Western Pacific tracks into Salt Lake City. Amtrak's *California Zephyr* had originally used the Southern Pacific route from Wells to Ogden, Utah, and then south to Salt Lake City, but that route travels over the center of the Great Salt Lake, and in 1986 it was flooded. The tracks were re-opened the same year (and are heavily and expensively prevented from sinking), but Amtrak continued using the Western Pacific route.

After being treated to quite a spectacle from a cold water geyser, we arrived in Green

The Salt Lake City Mormon Tabernacle.

tive to the tracks and ripping them up. Yet crisis was seemingly unavoidable, and on August 9, 1883, just after being reelected, General Palmer resigned the Rio Grande's presidency. Fredrick Lovejoy of Philadelphia (his foreignness was not happily accepted by many Coloradans) replaced him at the D&RG, but Palmer remained the President of the Rio Grande Western, leading to a great deal of friction.

At the April 7, 1884 Rio Grande election, Lovejoy triumphed in a fight for the presidency against Palmer's former General Manager, David C. Dodge. Dodge, along with many other of Palmer's followers, had already been fired by Lovejoy.

Following attempts by Lovejoy to fire the managers of the Rio Grande Western, the latter obtained an injunction against the Rio Grande interfering in the Western's management. The friction had reached such a point that, in 1884, General Palmer completely quit the Denver & Rio Grande's Board (but still remained President of the Rio Grande Western).

The blizzard of legal action continued throughout June and July of 1884. The D&RGW brought suit against the D&RG demanding lease payments. Then, the D&RG's request to terminate its lease of the D&RGW was rejected in court. Further, the D&RGW requested a receiver for the D&RG. This so infuriated the D&RG that it ripped up the tracks connecting it with the D&RGW.

After the D&RG defaulted on its July (1884) bond payments, a receivership was ordered, with W. S. Jackson, a former Treasurer of the D&RG, as the receiver. Soon, the D&RGW joined the D&RG in receivership, with W. H. Bancroft as its receiver.

In mid-1886, the Denver and Rio Grande Railway was auctioned to its stock and bondholders, who reorganized it into the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Simultaneously, the D&RG's lease of the D&RGW, also out of receivership, was dissolved. Within a

River around noon. My dad and I made our way over to the diner to have lunch. My dad had chicken, Swiss cheese, and bacon in a sandwich, while I devoured a chicken pot pie.

All this time we were stopping and starting and stopping and starting, attempting to leave Green River, and our electricity was doing more stopping than starting. At that rate, making it to Grand Junction, Colorado by the end of 2020 would have been an accomplishment. The Assistant Conductor announced, over the PA, that we would have to go without Head End Power until we reached Denver, Colorado, because our Amtrak P-42 was having troubles, and could provide neither Head End Power nor pull the train, adding a good deal of literally dead weight to the consist. Now, it turns out that crossing the Continental Divide at over 9,000 feet with a lengthy train being pulled by a single engine doesn't work! Luckily, this was discovered early on during the attempt. We did not make it up the first hill outside of Green River; we were forced to roll back into the small town. Just before entering the town, we crossed the Green River for the second time.

I find it appropriate to quote extensively from Eva Hoffman's *A Guidebook to Amtrak's California Zephyr* insofar as it refers to Green River, because the *California Zephyr* increased the population of the town by about two-thirds percent during its lengthy stay.

The Utah landscape.

year, W. S. Jackson was replaced by David Moffat as the D&RG's President.

On November 1, 1887, the Rio Grande finished a last minute extension to Aspen, beating the competing Colorado Midland Railroad by only months. The Santa Fe joined with the Colorado Midland in violating the D&RG's territory. In this case, the Santa Fe built a line parallel to the Rio Grande's from Pueblo to Denver, thus breaking the "Treaty of Boston."

The Rio Grande and Rio Grande Western began to fear that eastern lines would join into the competitive frenzy, and therefore began to lay standard gauge tracks along its Denver to Salt Lake City main line. This allowed connecting lines to send cars straight through along the D&RG. [This could also have allowed the Rio Grande Western to team up with a railroad other than the D&RG, supposing it got frustrated with that Road.]

In 1889, the Rio Grande built from Glenwood Springs to Rifle and then proceeded, in cooperation with the Colorado Midland, on to Grand Junction, thus completing an alternative Salida to Grand Junction route. The Santa Fe soon purchased the Colorado Midland, angering the Rio Grande.

In 1891, under Moffat's direction, the Rio Grande commenced study of a more efficient Denver to Salt Lake City route. This plan, unpopular with a profit-centric Board, combined with a canceled dividend caused Moffat's resignation in August of that year. He was replaced by Edward Jeffrey of Chicago.

Jeffrey's conservative management style led to the railroad's weathering the Panic of 1893 without much trouble, but left the railroad in embarrassing physical shape and led to frequent accidents.

In 1900, Jay Gould's son, George Gould, started to buy the Denver and Rio Grande through his Missouri Pacific Railroad. He soon became the Chairman of the Rio

"Green River, a stop for the train, was settled in 1878 as a stage stop. Originally known as Blake, Green River was located at the most accessible crossing point of the Green River, a fact known by the Indians and traders along the Spanish Trail. It had a general store, a bank and a ferry service. When the railroad came through in 1883, Green River became a shipping point for livestock and mining equipment. It was a wild and crazy town because it was located on the outlaw trail between Robbers Roost and Brown's Park.

"Green River's history is a story of booms and busts. It had a boom when the railroad construction crews came; but it busted when the railroad moved their operations and maintenance crews to Helper in the 1890s. The population of Green River dropped in half. An oil boom in 1901 bought a flurry of prospectors but no production. A fruit growing operation started in 1906 went bust when the trees died due to harsh winters. The uranium boom of 1950 brought only temporary stimulus. The Utah Launch Complex to the south of town was operational between 1964 and 1974 - another boom - and the

Utah's landscape.

Grande's Board. Meanwhile, the Rio Grande started to purchase the Rio Grande Western. The latter did not occur without the customary trouble: negotiations between the two Rio Grandes broke down over the Western's price, leading to discussion that the D&RG might even build its own line into Salt Lake City. Nonetheless, the D&RGW was successfully purchased the next year.

In 1902 and 1903 two enterprises started that were to have a major effect upon the Rio Grande. First, David Moffat started to finance the construction of the new Denver to Salt Lake City "airline" (a straight railroad) he had dreamed of and, second, George Gould forced the Rio Grande to finance his plans for a new line from Salt Lake City to Oakland.

Moffat's standard gauge creation, technically the Denver, Northwestern & Pacific Railway but widely known as the Moffat Road, started building west from Denver over the Continental Divide at Rollins Pass. The Pass required 4% grades and was frequently closed due to snow blockages. Moffat managed to build as far as Steamboat Springs, but there he ran out of money, having already spent $14 million. The Union Pacific and Rio Grande had been successful in dissuading potential supporters from backing the line.

Moffat died on March 18, 1911 and the railroad shortly went into bankruptcy, where it was reorganized into the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad. William Evans (son of a former Colorado Governor) and David Dodge (the former D&RG General Manager) attempted to salvage Moffat's creation but only were able to build the line as far as Craig, Colorado. They did, however, manage to prepare for and win a battle for government funding of a tunnel under Rollins Pass.

Meanwhile, Gould's creation, the Western Pacific Railway Company, was incorporated on March 6, 1903. (Gould refused to publicly associate himself with the Western Pacific until 1905, fearing that the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific would not take

population reached its all time high of 2000. Now the town thrives on its location on the I-70/US6 intersection. Its proximity to the river has led to a thriving recreational boating attraction. The area is also famous for its melons.

"The railroad bridge over the river was built in 1931. The town of Green River, population 937, is about two blocks away from the 'station' on the north side of the train. There are more vacant buildings in downtown Green River than occupied ones."

The original *California Zephyr* route guide, Vista-Dome Views, published in 1949, describes the city of Green River too, just slightly more positively:

"At this point, the lowest on the railway route between Denver and Salt Lake City, the California Zephyr crosses the historical Green River. Here, in the early days, was located the trading post of the notorious Wild Bunch. Zane Grey's 'Robber's Roost' is a thrilling tale of this vicinity. Today Green River is the center of a rapidly developing dry-farming area."

In 1994, Amtrak's route guide described Green River:

Utah's landscape.

kindly to his plans to build a route that would compete with theirs.) When the Western Pacific connected Oakland to Salt Lake City, by way of Feather River Canyon, on November 10, 1911, it had managed to put the Rio Grande in a very precarious financial situation that would continue for almost 10 years.

In 1911, the Rio Grande stopped paying what had been a reliable dividend, primarily to help with financing the Western Pacific. The next year, Benjamin Bush, the anti-Gould President of the Missouri Pacific, became President of the Rio Grande, signifying a major defeat for George Gould. Bush became President of the Western Pacific in 1913, at which point the Missouri Pacific, Rio Grande, and Western Pacific were all joined into a single "operating unit." Bush, on behalf of the Rio Grande, soon issued $25 million dollars worth of bonds for rebuilding the railroad and supporting the Western Pacific.

1915 began with a crisis over Western Pacific bonds that ended up with the Western Pacific in court and a disagreement between the Rio Grande and the Western Pacific bankers over how to pay for the Western Pacific. The year ended with Benjamin Bush being ousted in favor of a Gould choice, Henry Mudge.

In 1918, some of the financial disagreements in court regarding the Western Pacific were resolved against the Rio Grande, which was sent into receivership. The D&RG was greatly assisted by the United States Railroad Administration during World War I, which provided it with rent for the usage of its tracks. (Meanwhile, the Colorado Midland went belly-up as the Moffat Road also received federal assistance.)

The receivership ended with the Denver and Rio Grande *Western* Railroad Company of Delaware buying the Rio Grande, disappointing both stockholders, who were paid nothing, and Coloradans, who were upset by the foreign influence.

The Rio Grande Western's vacation

> "At 4,075 feet this is the lowest altitude en route from Salt Lake City to Denver. The town is known for its cantaloupes and watermelons. The mountains to the right are Mt. Marvine, 11,600 feet, and Thousand Lake Mountain, 11,306 feet. This is also prime "jackalope" country. These hare-like, antlered creatures are legendary for their size and proliferation."

Even an undated route guide by Amtrak (that was published after 1994) described Green River: "This desolate region of Utah is called the nation's atomic warehouse because it is rich in uranium. It is also the gateway to Canyon lands and Moab, the Arches National Park, Manti-La Sal National Forest and Dead Horse Point. The eroding points on the left are the Book Cliffs." Now, though, the Amtrak route guide says nothing of any location between Grand Junction and Salt Lake City.

According to the October 1, 1961 Rio Grande timetable, only the combined *Royal Gorge* (Denver-Royal Gorge Route-Salt Lake City) and *Prospector* (Denver-Moffat Tunnel Route-Salt Lake City) stopped in Green River, though by the time of the *Rio Grande Zephyr*'s (Denver-Salt Lake City) discontinuance, Green River was a station.

While we waited, the electricity came back on, and we were twice given the opportu-

Utah's landscape.

from court control did not last long, and in mid-1922 it was back in receivership. This time, though, the court ruled that the railroad's condition would be dealt with first, and interest payments (to the bondholders who had requested the receivership) would not be paid until the railroad was in acceptable physical order.

The Interstate Commerce Commission proposed two unpopular reorganization plans for the Rio Grande Western. The first, which was defeated, handed the road over to the Santa Fe. The second, protested by many Coloradans, gave the Missouri Pacific and the Wester Pacific each 50% ownership. The latter was implemented on in late 1924.

Meanwhile, Colorado politics had slowly ground out money for a tunnel under Rollins Pass as part of a flood relief package for Pueblo. This lifted Pueblo's earlier opposition, created by its desire to prevent Denver from getting a direct route to the west. Denver paid for the 6.21 mile "Moffat Tunnel" that, when completed in 1927, chopped hours off of train trips. Plans immediately surfaced for completing the Moffat Road to Salt Lake City and building a cutoff from Dotsero (Dotzero on the Colorado River) to Orestod (Dotsero backwards) to connect with the Rio Grande.

The Dotsero Cutoff was highly controversial and hard to fund (it was constructed on funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation), but after many shenanigans by both the Moffat Road and the Rio Grande, it was completed on June 16, 1934. Appropriately, the Rio Grande President was late in arriving at the festivities, as was the Governor, additionally the Moffat Road's President refused to participate. Around that time the D&RGW was working to purchase the Moffat Road.

In 1935, the Rio Grande, by then known as the Dangerous & Rapidly Growing Worse, entered what would be its longest and last bankruptcy. Wilson McCarthy and Henry Swan, the Road's trustees, entered into a

nity to get off. There were about two or three inches of snow on the ground, just enough to make it look white. The station looked deserted, with a large (for that size town), block-letter sign reading "Green River," on green metal! Sadly, I was told I could not go up to get a picture of the engine. I spent most of the time talking with people in the lounge, including the railfan, who was in coach. We were told that the rescue engine would come on train #5, the westbound Zephyr, but, by the time it came, we had waited nearly seven hours! It took about half an hour to couple on the new Union Pacific engine.

If our seven hour stay in Green River sounds impressive, in 1979, the *Sunset Limited* suffered from on-time performance of zero percent, for some months. This actually led Amtrak to take the Southern Pacific Railroad, the railway over which the *Sunset Limited* operated, to court. The Southern Pacific improved its service (for a while), and stopped giving freight trains priority over the *Sunset Limited*. In the end, no ruling was handed down. (Union Pacific, Southern Pacific's successor, recently restarted the late train tradition...)

In the March, 1989 *Passenger Train Journal*, Mike Schafer provided an interview with Zephyrette Beulah Bauman. (A Zephyrette read off the route's history and facts about it, along with generally helping the passengers on the original *California Zephyr*.) She described a

More of Utah's odd landscape.

spending binge to put its lines in good shape. One of their more interesting acts was an unsuccessful attempt at launching a Rio Grande airline. But they were also obliged to abandon routes, including the much labored-for line to Santa Fe.

After two Supreme Court cases and a long fight over who should control the railroad, the Rio Grande exited bankruptcy on April 11, 1947. It was placed under the control of a Board almost entirely made up of Coloradans and Utahans, with McCarthy, a Utah resident, as the Road's President.

During the 1950s the Rio Grande was successful in two attempts to get through traffic carried by the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific. During the next decade, all the Road's narrow gauge operations, except the Silverton line, were closed. Then, in 1985, Philip Anschutz purchased the D&RGW, and in 1988 he added the Southern Pacific to his holdings.

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad

In 1849, the Aurora Branch Railroad, the first ancestor of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, opened for service on the twelve miles between Aurora, Illinois and Turner Junction, Illinois. The railroad was built to connect with the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad, described earlier in the Chicago chapter. Three years after service began, the railroad was renamed the Chicago & Aurora, though it did not own trackage into Chicago. Soon, the railroad would reach Mendota, Illinois, connecting with the Illinois Central. In 1854, the Chicago & Aurora reached Galesburg, Illinois, and the next year the railroad was renamed the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, as it reached the great Mississippi River. In 1864 the CB&Q made what might be considered one of its most important achievements: it built a short, less than twenty mile long line into Chicago.

From then on the railroad built at a frantic pace: the Mississippi was spanned in two places in 1868, Kansas City and Council Bluffs were connected the next year, followed

time when she was stuck in Feather River Canyon for twenty four hours, which, again, dwarfed our experience in Green River.

As we started our trip over the Rockies, which unluckily would be overnight, I had a dinner of turkey, gravy, stuffing, rice, broccoli, corn, the Chocolate Bundt, ice cream, and chocolate sauce. My dad went back to his normal New York Strip steak. On the dark trip from Green River to Grand Junction, I pressured the conductor into selling one grandmother and her two grandchildren a sleeping room, which oddly enough, was only to cost them about fifty dollars! The conductor forgot to charge them, and they got free meals because they were in a sleeper. They were traveling to somewhere in western Nebraska, and, in the end, they probably made about a hundred dollars!

The *California Zephyr*, in its original incarnation, was the great pride of its operators: the Western Pacific, the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy, and the Denver and Rio Grande Western.

The Western Pacific and Rio Grande had worked together on passenger trains as early as 1915. Yet a service between Denver and the west coast over those two roads was not practical until the 1934 completion of the Dotsero Cutoff (see sidebar on Denver & Rio Grande Western), which reduced running times markedly. After the opening of the Dot-

Ice on Green River's trees.

by Lincoln and Omaha; then came Denver in 1882, the Twin Cities in 1886, St. Louis in 1894, and Huntley, Montana (where a connection with the Northern Pacific was attained) in 1894.

Soon, a new chapter in the Burlington's life would begin: 98% ownership by the Great Northern and Northern Pacific. This started in 1901, with both owning half of the company, which was permitted to keep its own persona. In 1908, the CB&Q made another great accomplishment, with a weird twist: it reached of the Gulf of Mexico through acquisition of the Colorado & Southern and Fort Worth & Denver City. Reaching Galveston was accomplished by the Burlington-Rock Island Railroad, owned by both the Fort Worth & Denver City and the Rock Island's subsidiary, the Chicago, Rock Island & Gulf. Not only was the line jointly owned, but it was also jointly operated — every five years, operation was handed over to the other railroad.

In 1927, Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) was introduced on some of the railroad, which, to this day, is still—in this railroad illiterate country—considered a modern idea. On January 1, 1932, the Depression was on, the Burlington's worst year ever had just begun, and Ralph Budd, an experienced railroad executive, was brought on board as president. During Budd's second year on the job, he made a major contribution to railroading in the United States: he requested that a train already on order from the Edward G. Budd (distant relation) Manufacturing Company (Budd Company) be delivered with new, small diesel engines. The train was to be called *Zephyr*, for Zephyrus, the Greek god of the West Wind.

On April 7, 1934, the *Zephyr*'s construction was finished, and the Budd Company had a ceremonial pull-out, in which the original three-car Zephyr was pulled by ten men and a boy in a bull-dog costume. All to show that the train was lightweight! The train, which sero Cutoff, the three *California Zephyr* railroads started to provide through freight service.

Then, in 1937, they started discussing the introduction of a through passenger service. These negotiations came to fruition on June 10, 1939, when the *Exposition Flyer* was inaugurated between Chicago and San Francisco. It was intended to be a temporary service for the Golden Gate International Exposition, but it lasted far longer.

In 1940, the Western Pacific, Rio Grande, and Burlington decided to reequip the *Flyer* with lightweight cars, but their plans were dashed by the commencement of United States involvement in World War II. The Western Pacific had even gone so far as to order four stainless steel coaches in 1941, but this order was quickly cancelled.

Planning continued during the war, and on October 15, 1945 an agreement on how to fund the construction and operation of what would be known as the *California Zephyr* was announced. Each railroad would cover a percentage of the costs for the train equal to their percentage of the *Zephyr*'s route. Yet revenue would be distributed proportional to the shortest route between a railroad's endpoints; by this rule the Western Pacific was "cheated" out of much revenue, since the Southern Pacific ran a far shorter route.

Progress was made on the *California Zephyr* plans and, on March 31, 1946, a through

The Green River.

only seated 72 persons, consisted of a power car, in which the engine and a mail section resided, followed by a baggage-buffet car, and literally rounded off by a coach car with a primitive observation lounge. The only problem: the competition beat it. The Union Pacific's M-10000 streamliner, the *City of Salina*, was delivered first.

May 26, 1934 was an historic day for the *Zephyr*. The train made a record braking 77.61 mph, sunrise to sunset non-stop Denver to Chicago run. The *Zephyr* carried a donkey, sent by the Rocky Mountain Post, along with railroad executives. The trip did have its troubles. The night before the trip, a traction motor armature bearing broke, and one had to be flown in by plane, **from the Union Pacific**, arriving at 12:30 a.m. on the day of the trip. Then it had to be installed. But, the train made it out by 5:05 a.m., and was scheduled to take 14 hours, beating by 12 hours the fastest previously scheduled trip on that route. As the trip progressed, the list of problems grew: a starter cable for the engine broke. This would not have been so bad, but the engineer, to prevent any damage, slowed the train down. The train could not be restarted, and it coasted for awhile at 15 m.p.h., before Roy Baer, Electro-Motive assistant chief engineer put the wires together with his bare hands. Though this did get the train started again, it severely burned Baer. Then they were off to Chicago, which was reached at 7:10 p.m.; 1015.4 miles added to the odometer in only 13 hours, 4 minutes, and 58 seconds.

On June 16, 1934, the train opened the Dotsero Cutoff, and on November 11, the *Zephyr* started revenue service between Kansas City and Lincoln. Ridership quickly increased 136% and the maintenance costs decreased from 65 cents a mile to 35 cents. On April 15, 1935, the *Twin Cities Zephyrs*, nearly identical to the original, went into service between the Twin Cities and Chicago. On the second anniversary of the *Zephyr* beginning revenue service, the original *Zephyr* was renamed the *Pio-*

car on the *Exposition Flyer* was inaugurated to New York. Between Chicago and New York, the service alternated between the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central. This service survived well into the *California Zephyr*'s operation.

The designing of the *California Zephyr* advanced to the point that in 1947 the final, stainless steel, streamlined consist was agreed upon by the three host railroads. There were to be six trains, eleven cars each, owned in a fashion similar to the aforementioned division of expenses: twenty-four cars owned by the Western Pacific, fifteen by the Rio Grande, twenty-seven by the Burlington, and one for the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Pennsylvania's car would be alternated with the other railroad's sleepers on the through service to New York.

Each train would consist of three Vista-Dome coaches, four sleepers, one baggage car, one diner, one Vista-Dome buffet-lounge, and one Vista-Dome lounge observation. This made a total of five dome cars per train. All cars were purchased from the Budd Company.

Starting in March 1948, the *California Zephyr*'s cars started to arrive and some were put into use on the *Exposition Flyer*. Once all the cars were delivered, they toured the west before being put into service on March 20, 1949. It was among the first trains to be

The *California Zephyr*'s locomotives.

neer Zephyr. On December 18, 1936, the *Twin Cities Zephyrs* were replaced with new seven-car trains; one was named the 'Train of the Gods,' with its cars named after Greek gods, the other was named the 'Train of the Goddesses,' with its cars named after Greek goddesses.

On November 8, 1938 another great train entered service: the *Denver Zephyr*. This was the first *Zephyr* to have Pullmans, and it was also the first to not be completely articulated. The train ran on an overnight Denver-Chicago slot, with two twelve car trainsets. During the following years, two other major changes were made to the Zephyr design: trains were no longer articulated and no longer had their famous shovel-nosed power car. The last *Zephyr*, and the last fully new passenger train prior to Amtrak, was put into service as the *Denver Zephyr* on October 28, 1956. This was remarkable, especially given the state of passenger rail in this country at that time. The train, which was themed after Colorado, sent four cars through to Colorado Springs, Colorado, over the Denver & Rio Grande Western.

The original *Zephyr*, 9900, was retired to the Chicago Museum of Science & Industry in 1960. The *Zephyr* stood outside the museum for years, next to a submarine and other rail vehicles. On July 16, 1998, after a thorough clean up, the *Pioneer Zephyr* was re-exhibited in the Museum of Science and Industry.

Back to Burlington history. In 1949, Ralph Budd, the champion of the *Zephyrs*, retired. He was replaced by a follower of his, Harry Murphy, who was nearly as pro-passenger as Budd, though some services were cut under his administration. The Burlington introduced bi-level cars on its suburban Chicago commuter service in 1950, and two years later the Centennial Cutoff opened between Brookfield, Missouri and Kansas City, to shorten the Chicago-Kansas City route by 22 miles.

In 1964, the Burlington had its most scheduled to pass scenery during the day. (The *Exposition Flyer* had previously claimed to do this, though it completely missed Feather River Canyon on its eastbound trip.) The train passed through Feather River Canyon the day it left Oakland (it departed from an Oakland pier; a ferry service connected it to San Francisco) and crossed the Rocky Mountains the next day. It arrived in Chicago the third day.

In 1954, the film *Cinerama Holiday* was photographed on the *CZ*; for this, a special train was operated.

In the late 1950s, the railroads acknowledged that the *Zephyr* was aging with their "New Look for the *California Zephyr*" program. As part of this, they redecorated the coach and Pullman interiors and provided for the production of hot foods in the buffet car. The buffet cars were also redone to appear like Cable Cars. Much more was planned, but little else was actually done.

Through service over the Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central was discontinued in 1957 after the Pennsylvania pulled out and the New York Central refused to operate the service daily. Further, the Pennsylvania would not allow the New York Central, Burlington, Rio Grande, or Western Pacific to buy its one sleeping car, with which the service could be provided.

As the 1960s progressed, the *California Zephyr*'s service started to decline. The dining

Green River in the evening.

riders since 1948, but oddly enough, what followed for the passenger department would be cuts, not improvements. In January of the next year, Harry Murphy attempted to cut one of the two Chicago-Twin Cities' roundtrips, but was unsuccessful due to internal opposition and a study showing that the total savings would only be $13,000. On September 30 of that year, Murphy retired. His successor, Louis Menk, intended to totally destroy the *Zephyrs*. He had previously devastated the passenger services at the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad, his former employer. He hired William Carpenter to help him do the same at the Burlington. Carpenter's assignment was to prove to the Interstate Commerce Commission that the trains should be cut. The only problem was that Carpenter found that the passenger trains the Burlington operated brought in a net profit of $4.5 million, though some of them lost money. He tried to stretch the numbers, but they didn't appear to be stretchy enough. Carpenter suggested cutting service to Minneapolis, but that didn't work because the Burlington had to carry the bigbosses' top trains, the *Empire Builder* and the *North Coast Limited*. Three trains made over a million dollars in 1964, while the largest loser (the *Empire Builder*) lost only $412,237.

On October 1, 1966, the attack was over. Louis Menk left for the Northern Pacific, because he wanted to be higher up in the soon-to-be-formed Burlington Northern. Though Menk did cut a few trains, his success was not widespread. Menk's successor was William Quinn, from the Milwaukee Road, who did not continue Menk's train-off campaign with quite the same vengeance. Menk came back in 1970, when the Burlington Northern was formed from the Burlington, Northern Pacific, and Great Northern. Prior to his re-arrival, Quinn extinguished the *Texas*, *California* and *Sam Houston Zephyrs* and nearly did the same to the *Kansas City Zephyr*, the *Nebraska Zephyr*, the *Ak-sar-ben Zephyr* (backwards for Neb-ras-ka), and the *Zephyr-Rocket*.

car still had high-quality food with linen and fresh flowers, but the consist started to fluctuate by season, a symptom of the trains increasing tourist ridership, instead of its old clientele of businesspeople. Further, "foreign" train cars were sometimes placed in the consist, rendering useless the train's public address system and destroying the train's streamlined appearance.

In 1965, the Western Pacific started to show signs that it wished to discontinue the *CZ*, but the Burlington persuaded it not to file with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). Afterwards, the Burlington and Rio Grande worked to satisfy the Western Pacific's financial needs: a coach surcharge of $2.50 was implemented, all of which went to the Western Pacific; all sleepers were priced for double occupancy; and railroad worker passes were not accepted during the peak summer season.

The next year, the Western Pacific filed with the ICC to discontinue the *California Zephyr*. Nineteen sixty-six was also the first year that the *CZ* had failed to make a profit. The WP complained about that and the probable need to purchase new equipment in the near future. Both, it said, were draining its finances. Regardless, the Rio Grande and Burlington continued to support the train's continued operation, although the latter's support for passenger service in general was waning.

The *Zephyr* at Grand Junction.

Food Service

When railroads were still establishing themselves, and for a time afterwards, they were mainly concerned with passengers' money and not their comfort. Food was considered to fall under comfort, and thus, for many years, food service was as reliably bad as a derailment was predictable on a mid-1800s railroad trip. Regardless, a passenger could always purchase a meal from a station vendor; though they were known for their inedible products. Sometimes, passengers would bring lunch boxes or the crew would open a bar at one end of a car.

From 1832 to 1838, the Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown acquired a few cars with snack bars; this was the first recorded instance of institutionalized food, available to the public, on trains. In the 1840s, the unpopular news butcher started boarding trains and selling goods, foods, and books. James Porterfield writes that some news butchers "started their rounds with salted peanuts to build later sales of soft drinks and ice cream." Alfred Bunn wrote of them in his *Old England and New England* (1853), saying that: "The moment the cars start a string of filthy lads stream in offering for sale sweetmeats, apples, books and other important wares, and they are succeeded by travelers who, if they find no other accommodations, stand up in the middle of cars and spit away." [Quote by way of *The Railroad Passenger Car*, August Mencken.]

The first recorded occurrence of a full meal served on a train was on November 3, 1842, when B&O executives were treated to a buffet.

In the mid-1850s, station restaurants began to appear, and passengers were given up to twenty minutes to eat as their train waited outside. These restaurants, sometimes operated by railroaders' wives, proved slightly more popular than the earlier mechanisms for serving food. Some food was fresh caught, but other times it could be badly cooked and grumpily served. Such eating houses were

On February 13, 1967, after months of delays, the ICC ruled that the WP should continue operating the *CZ* for at least a year, while simultaneously looking at ways to improve the train's financial performance. On January 17, 1968, the Western Pacific again asked permission to shut down its portion of the train. Again, this was denied. The ICC complained that the Western Pacific had not done enough to save the train. After the ruling, fares were increased, as was advertising, but ridership continued to drop. On-time performance was abysmal, and the equipment slowly fell apart.

Then, on May 12, 1969, the Rio Grande requested that it be allowed to discontinue its portion of the train. Coloradans screamed, but the Western Pacific followed suit in July with its third request to discontinue the train. Meanwhile, the Southern Pacific was filing to bring down to tri-weekly its San Francisco to Ogden *City of San Francisco*. In a complex ruling, the ICC decided that the *California Zephyr* could, indeed, be killed and the last run of the train was completed on March 22, 1970, over the protests of many.

The hodgepodge of service that replaced the *CZ* was described by David Morgan in the July, 1970 *Trains Magazine*:

> "Famous for its passenger piecemealism, the Interstate Commerce Commission has outdone itself with the *California Zephyr*. Briefly,

The Denver Ski Train.

theoretically stationed so as to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner at reasonable intervals, but this did not work when trains were running hours late. Even without a late train, in some states not enough towns existed to stop the train with appropriate frequency, leading to a scheduled noon lunch followed by a two in-the-afternoon dinner.

Some railroads contracted out eating houses. One such eating house chain that was successful was that of Fred Harvey, an English immigrant who worked his way up the restaurant business's totem pole. He opened his Harvey Houses in over 3,000 Santa Fe Railroad stations, producing wonderful food, attempting to ensure the customers' satisfaction, and paying some of his workers generously (chefs, for example). ("Harvey Girls" were employed by Harvey, whose wife oversaw them, to be waitresses in the restaurants.) Most eating houses died out as the railroads added dining cars because of the lost time (and thus lost money to the competition) spent in stations as passengers ate. Some eating houses still stand today, but not as the only way to eat on a transcontinental journey.

During the United States' Civil War, food was prepared onboard hospital trains for soldiers, marking the first time meals were systematically produced on trains. In 1862, the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad started operating "dining cars" in which food prepared off the trains was served.

In 1867, real dining cars came into being with the Pullman "Hotel Cars," the first being named *President*. These cars served a large menu of foods that were cooked on the train. Sleeping booths were also put into the same car. The cars could be used for lengthy transcontinental trips and were sold or contracted in the same fashion as other Pullman cars were. One year later, Pullman introduced the first full dining car, called the *Delmonico* after the famous New York restaurant of the same name. These cars were much more economical than the expensive Hotel Cars be-

Western Pacific was allowed to drop its Salt Lake City-San Francisco leg of the *CZ*. But Rio Grande, which also wanted out, was told to operate its Denver-Salt Lake City part of the run triweekly. A *CZ* to Utah made no sense, not even to the ICC, so D&RGW and Southern Pacific (which simultaneously was allowed to reduce the frequency of its Ogden-San Francisco leg of the *City of San Francisco* to triweekly) were told to effect an Ogden connection, thus preserving the Chicago-California schedule. Meantime, Burlington Northern asked and received permission to drop its Chicago-Denver segment of the CZ, substituting instead a triweekly extension of trains 11 and 12, the Chicago-Omaha *Nebraska Zephyr*, to Denver - there to connect with the D&RGW train. D&RGW wound up adding 36.9 miles' worth of passenger service by extending its *CZ* from Salt Lake City to Ogden to connect with SP over previously freight-only trackage...

"This mishmash was bound to produce a terrible timetable . . . and it did. First, there are no through cars [except between Chicago and Salt Lake City/Ogden]. Second, the

The Denver Ski Train.

cause of a far lower staff to patron ratio, since the entire train was being served with one car. For the passengers, these larger cars also offered more in the way of selection.

The change to dining cars by the railroads was by no means a unanimously happy one. By the end of 19th century, most major railroads had started offering dining car service because not only did they speed up the ride but they attracted more passengers. However, they were (and still are) expensive.

An example of the resistance by large railroads to the use of dining cars is provided by the Union Pacific, the Santa Fe, and the Burlington. These three railroads signed an agreement in 1881 to not initiate dining car service between the Missouri River and Denver without six months notice to the other two railroads. In 1884, the Burlington pulled out of the agreement, followed by the Union Pacific in 1886. The agreement thus crippled, all the railroads had the freedom to do as they liked. Still, the Union Pacific, in particular, fought hard against diners.

In 1887, the Northern Pacific, far north of the Union Pacific but still serving the endpoints of Chicago and the West Coast, started offering diner service. This forced the Union Pacific to do the same in 1889. The notice from the Union Pacific that it intended to do the same thing was of course received by horrified Rock Island and Burlington executives, one of whom wrote to the Union Pacific that: "Experience has shown that dining cars cost much more than they come to, when all competing lines use them, and up to the present time we have succeeded in keeping them east of the [Missouri] river. Is there no way of stopping this proposed departure?" [Quote by way of *Dining By Rail*, James Porterfield.] Their attempt to dissuade Union Pacific failed; and, in a short while, diners had spread to their railroads, too.

These railroads, having huge numbers of dining cars by the early 1900s, had to operate large commissary departments. In the

> across-the-platform train changers in Ogden occur at 10:15 p.m. westbound and 7 a.m. eastbound, hardly conducive to retiring early or sleeping late. Third, intermediate scheduling includes such handicaps as a 1-hour layover in Omaha eastbound, a 6:30 a.m. departure from Denver west (and an 11 p.m. arrival in Denver from the west). Running time is so-so. The rescheduled service departs Chicago at 11:59 a.m. Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and arrives in San Francisco at 3:45 p.m. Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Eastbound it departs San Francisco at 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, Mondays, and Thursdays, and arrives [in] Chicago at 8:40 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays (or in time to miss eastern and southern connections)."

On May 1, 1971, Amtrak published its first timetable, which displayed a *California Zephyr* operating from Chicago to Oakland over the Burlington Northern, Rio Grande, and Southern Pacific. But, just before the service was to start, the Rio Grande decided not to join Amtrak and the *CZ* was forced to be rerouted between Denver and Salt Lake City, through Wyoming on the Union Pacific. Over the next few years, the train's name, confused by its unlikely route, became the *City of San*

Denver Union Station: Travel *by* Train.

stores operated by these departments, mixes were prepared, items were baked, meat was cut to serving size, and linen was processed, all to be delivered to dining cars. The railroads had the benefit that they could ship the food to these stores on their own. On their trains, railroads used surprise inspectors and traveling chefs to make sure that food preparation and delivery was perfect, though some crews devised plans to inform others of approaching inspectors. In 1916, Southern Pacific used 131,797 napkins and 39,098 tablecloths in its dining cars and, in 1922, 3,226 pounds of potatoes and 2,148 pounds of beef were served daily west of El Paso, Texas on the same railroad. [*Dinner is Served*, Jim Loveland.]

In 1902, Pullman left the dining car operating business on the grounds that they were losing money but continued building them for others to operate. During World War I, rations prevented the serving of full meals, but diners attempted to adapt by using substitutes for ingredients. The dining car crews were also strained because many of their members fought in the war.

The next crisis for the dining car operators came in 1929 with the beginning of the Great Depression. Naturally, ridership on trains plummeted, and those that still rode did not spend as much money while on trains. This, in general, was a time of cutting back for the railroads after having exploded through the Roaring Twenties. Trains were cut and dining service was, too. The railroads attempted to reduce costs in diners by offering cheaper meals. In the mid-1930s as the financial troubles lightened slightly, rail ridership and passenger spending started to improve. The 1940s brought World War II, leading to a huge spike in rail ridership. But it also led to the use of trains by the military and the slow draining of employees for the war effort.

After the war, the railroads tried to rebound, but not quickly enough; and, thus, ridership loss took a toll on diners and rail-

Francisco and then finally the *San Francisco Zephyr*.

Meanwhile, the Rio Grande was continuing to operate its portion of the old *CZ*, which had become known as the *Rio Grande Zephyr*. The train operated three times a week and connected with the *San Francisco Zephyr* before its departure from either Salt Lake City or Denver. (It did not connect at the end of each trip, as the route through Wyoming was much quicker.)

The *Rio Grande Zephyr* was given high priority over freight trains, making it more reliable. It continued to use some of the old *California Zephyr* cars: each train had a Vista-Dome coach, a coach, a Vista-Dome Lounge, and a dining car. The remainder of the *CZ* cars had been inherited by Amtrak, which used some and sold others to the Auto-Train, the Mexican Federal railways, and to other purchasers.

On April 24, 1983, Amtrak officially rerouted its *San Francisco Zephyr* over the Rio Grande and adopted the name *California Zephyr* for the train. But because of a mudslide two weeks earlier on the Rio Grande line, the service did not actually commence until July 17, 1983. The reason the Rio Grande had finally surrendered to Amtrak was that the old *California Zephyr* cars would soon need to be replaced, and the Rio Grande did not wish to make the investment.

The windows are washed in Denver.

roads generally. James Porterfield wrote in his book, *Dining by Rail*, that: "Other 'reforms' included making dinner plates smaller so the shrinking portions looked larger, and replacing the resplendent white uniforms of cooks and waiters with green coats which, it was pointed out, could be sorted more easily to launder, and which certainly didn't have to be washed as frequently."

But railroads in the early 1950s with streamlined trains and luxury service were by no means displeasing to the rider. David P. Morgan, in the January 1952 issue of *Trains Magazine*, described the job of selecting a dinner on a New York Central System diner by writing: "You open the menu and there is the difficult matter of selection. You're hungry, of course; and tonight any one of the main entrees would fill the bill. The T-bone is good on this road but you had steak last night at home. Chicken pie — say, that sounds good; but just a minute. Haven't had seafood in weeks, and this lobster á la Newburg looks delicious." Morgan goes on to say, "You chew on a stalk of iced celery and contemplate the large plate before you. And the side dishes, the platter of hot rolls, the pot of steaming coffee. As you lift your fork the train is moving: no jolt, no jar, just a sort of fluid motion... The lobster is very good, and the coffee is hot and rich. The man across the table laments the tribulations of buying toys for his kids and you find yourself sharing his pleasant apprehension of the Yuletide season... You idly wonder about this 85-foot car, this streamlined restaurant running through the night at 70 miles an hour. How in the devil does this chef turn out a meal like you've just had, with only a handful of square feet of working space? Heaven knows Marg seems to have enough trouble in the kitchen at home—and that seems bigger to you than all of this diner. And she doesn't have eight or so waiters underfoot or a hundred people to feed or a five-entree menu."

Between 1950 and 1971, trains were cut

Back on our trip, I found Grand Junction to be a boring Amtrak station next to an old, beautiful station, built of yellow brick in 1906, that was in disrepair. In the Amtrak station there was a gift shop, but I did not buy anything. I got some pictures of the engines, and ascended to the upper level of our car to go to sleep. During the night, we missed wonderful scenery, though some of it has been ruined by highways. I stirred just before arriving in Denver, and my dad and I could see the city's lights in the distance. What we couldn't see was the Rocky Mountains that we had just crossed.

We went through the rather odd configuration of Denver Union Station, which forced us to back in. I quickly departed the train to collect schedules, look around the beautiful station, annoy the police officer collecting tickets, and buy a light rail ticket. I first went into the station, which was gigantic and had a display of old timetables, though it was lacking the current light rail schedule. I then rushed back to the train by way of the underground passageway, which was lined by gate signs labeled with the names of old trains that had once served the station. On my way up the ramp to our train, I was stopped by the police officer, who demanded I give him my ticket, which my dad had. I persuaded him that I should be let on the train, and I didn't see him again. When I got to the train, some of

Nebraska.

and diners along with them, many railroads having only a few services remaining by the time of Amtrak's inception. Amtrak, with what little money it had, tried its best, and, at the beginning of its troubled reign over passenger rail, lowered dining car prices. In the early 1980s, Congress declared that there was to be no dining car deficit run by Amtrak. Car staffs were cut dramatically; linen table cloths and napkins, china, metal utensils, flowers, and fresh food all moved into the past. Their replacements were none other than degrading tray food. In November, 1988, china, linen, and glassware were reintroduced to the *Coast Starlight*. By April, 1991, Amtrak President Graham Claytor had reintroduced fresh food. Through Amtrak's turbulent history, menus have ranged from a single, system-wide menu stating the specifics of each dish to menus that have merely stated such things as "fish," "steak," or "chicken."

the windows were being washed by hand, something that was done by machine for the old *California Zephyr*. Then it was done in both Salt Lake City and Denver, so the scenery between those cities and west of Salt Lake City could be viewed by the passengers.

The train was parked next to the Ski Train, which is in Rio Grande's paint scheme.

Before the train left, I quickly ran over to the light rail station, bought a ticket, took a picture, and rushed back. The train left track three, which it had originally arrived on, and moved to track one, where the windows were cleaned (again) and the train was "watered," like a plant. We left the station fourteen hours and twenty minutes late! We traveled across the prairies of Nebraska, and arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska in time for dinner. For lunch my dad had eaten a burger with bacon and cheese, while I had my customary chicken pot pie. For dinner I had turkey with a rosemary sauce, mashed potatoes, and corn, while my dad, predictably, had a steak.

When we arrived in Omaha, the Amtrak station was an embarrassment. It was similar to the one in Salt Lake City, concrete and small. The station was further ashamed by the nearby Burlington station, now out of use, but certainly imposing in its abandonment. The old station was crumbling, but it was in better condition than the walkway over the tracks and the passageways around the station.

Omaha ended up being the temporary eastern end of the Union Pacific line. Council Bluffs, Iowa was designated as the eastern terminus in the 1862 federal legislation for the creation of a transcontinental railroad, but the Missouri River had to be crossed, and that cost too much money and time to do while the race towards a meeting place was on. So, Union Pacific

Cows graze on Nebraska's fields.

The *Zephyr* stops in Omaha.

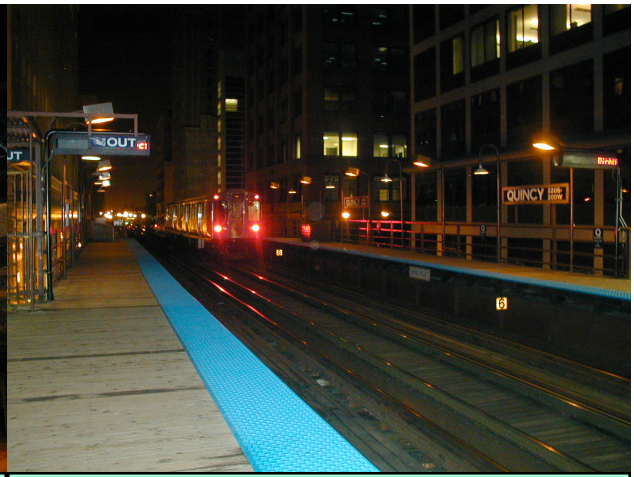
began constructing from Omaha, and did not even build a bridge over the Missouri until March of 1872, three years after the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Actually, before the bridge was built, some Council Bluffs-Omaha service was operated: during the winter, when tracks could be laid over the frozen Missouri. By the time the bridge opened in 1872, the Chicago & North Western, Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy, and the Rock Island had all made it to Council Bluffs, and when the bridge was opened, they refused to use it. The Milwaukee Road, Illinois Central, and Chicago Great Western all followed suit, building to Council Bluffs. In 1866, Union Pacific opened the first of what would be many passenger depots in Omaha.

Not until November 13, 1887 did the first through passenger train operate across the Missouri at the Union Pacific crossing in Omaha. In 1889, the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy and the Union Pacific announced plans for a Union Station, but a rivalry grew between the two and the Union Pacific was left to build the 'Union' Station alone, though it did get to share it with smaller railroads, but not the construction cost. The Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy opened its station, just across a bridge from Union Station, on June 1, 1898. Union Station opened on December 1, 1899.

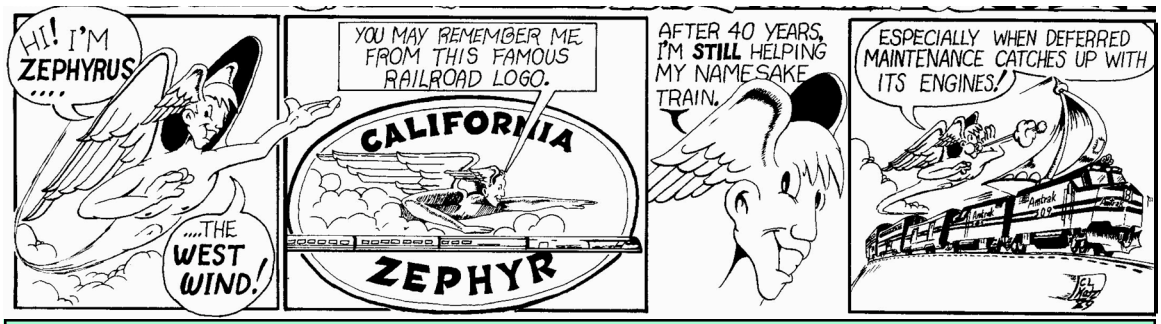
The classical Greek architecture of the Burlington Station was destroyed when it was reconstructed into a blander, bolder structure. The reconstruction occurred because the original layout of the station forced passengers to cross the train tracks to get to the platforms further from the station. This was an operational nightmare, which did not stay within the confines of the Burlington Station, but also afflicted Union Station. For this reason, the Burlington Station was rebuilt, with the now decrepit walkway over the tracks, which also linked it to a *new* Union Station. The second, art-deco, Union Station, which possessed much more interesting architecture than its predecessor, was opened January 15, 1931. On July 18, 1933, the engine of the Ak-Sar-Ben (Neb-Ras-Ka) Limited, operated by the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy, exploded outside of the Burlington Station. Three were killed.

The Burlington Station was renovated yet another time in the 1940s. As the 1950s and 1960s passed, trains were cut, railroads departed, and the future of Omaha railroading looked dim. Indeed, it was. On May 2, 1971, one day after Amtrak began service, Union Station closed, though it now houses the Western Heritage Museum. Three years later, on February 1, 1974, the Burlington Station closed. Amtrak had not maintained the station, and it did not intend to do so, so it moved into a nearby 'temporary' station. On July 26, 1984, Amtrak eventually ended its residence in the 'temporary' station, moving to a new station nearby. The new, ugly station

Decrepit Omaha Union Station.



A CTA train leaves Quincy.



Curt Katz on the *California Zephyr*. (*Passenger Train Journal*, March 1989, pg. 14)

is still Amtrak's Omaha residence.

After Omaha, my dad and I retired to bed, until we were stirred by a wakeup call at three forty-five a.m. to get off at Chicago, though we did not arrive for another forty-five minutes. We meandered around the station, which was full of passengers from our train and their Amtrak shepherds, though, technically, it was closed. We ended up leaving for the first el train of the day, though we only made the second; my dad had booked a new Southwest Airlines flight out of Midway when it became apparent that we would miss our original one. We took the 5:22 a.m. Orange Line el to Midway from the Quincy station, which was almost entirely made of wood.

We got our boarding pass and quickly went through security, and we had the opportunity to have (a rather bad) breakfast. I had eggs, and so did my dad. We waited for our plane, from which, after our 9:35 a.m. departure, I saw Harpers Ferry, again. We arrived in Baltimore Washington International Airport at about twenty minutes past noon, and took the light rail to Penn Station, where my mom picked us up.

"The space between the upper and lower berth [of the sleeping car] does not allow of the occupant of the bed sitting up; the double windows are kept shut that he may not be smothered in dust and ashes and the night is passed in the most luxurious misery. The man who slept in the berth next to mine snored frightfully; in fact, night was made hideous by the unmusical sounds issuing from all parts of the car. The horrors of that first night in a Pullman car are indelibly impressed on my mind. The atmosphere ran a close heat with that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. On my asking the porter why he kept a fire burning all night he said he had to sit up and it would never do for him to catch a cold."

-J. W. Boddamm-Whetham, 1874
Western Wanderings (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

"No want can arise in the traveler's mind that there is not some one in the train ready to administer to. Every town you pass pelts you with its daily papers. If you stop for ten minutes at a central station a quack is sure to come into the car and inform everyone that the Dead Shot Worm Candy is now selling at twenty-five cents the packet, that Vestris's Bloom, the finest cosmetic in the known world, is to be had for a half dollar the quarter pound, or that Knickerbocker's Corn Exterminator makes life's path easy at a dime the ounce packet. Presently you fall asleep and awaken covered with a heavy snow of handbills about Harper's reprints and Peterson's unscrupulous robberies from English authors. Anon, a huge fellow with enormous apples, two cents each, peaches in their season, hickory nuts, pecans or maple sugar cakes. To them succeed sellers of ivory combs, parched corn and packets of mixed sweetmeats."

-Walter Thornbury, 1873
Criss-Cross Journeys (by way of August Mencken's *The Railroad Passenger Car*)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

B&O	Baltimore & Ohio
C&O	Chesapeake & Ohio
BN	Burlington Northern
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe
DN&PR	Denver, Northwestern & Pacific
D&RG	Denver & Rio Grande
D&RGW	Denver & Rio Grande Western
D&SLR	Denver & Salt Lake
GN	Great Northern
HEP	Head-End Power
MARC	Maryland Rail Commuter
Moffat Road	Denver, Northwestern & Pacific and Denver & Salt Lake
NP	Northern Pacific
Pennsy	Pennsylvania Railroad
PRR	Pennsylvania Railroad
Rio Grande	Denver & Rio Grande
Rio Grande Western	Denver & Rio Grande Western

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The Old West: The Pioneers

Rand McNally Cosmopolitan World Atlas

http://www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/news/thisweekarch/tw020603_streetcar.htm

Many thanks to Steve Wilson, my dad and a diligent editor, Norma Kriger, my mother, also an editor, but more picky, Susan Shlapack, my English tutor and another editor, Scott Feinberg, my cousin and a film expert, John Howell, a railfan, and Edward Cohen, a fellow transit activist. Also, thanks to my former Latin teacher, Mr. Williamson, for unknowingly helping with the bibliography.

Last Call for dinner—
Rise from your seat.
Sink back gracefully—
Then repeat.
Start for the diner—
Right and left sway,
Meet fat lady in the
Narrow way.
One step forward,
Then two steps back—
Shove her in the wash room,
All clear track.
Train starts to lurching—
Down on all fours.
See funny names on the
Vestibule doors.
Meet hungry fellow—
He says "Hey!
Going to the dining car?
T'other way!"
Reverse your engines.
Feeling pretty sore.
See the silly people—you
Saw before.
Trip over baby—
Land on your ear.
Smell chops a-burning—
Diner's near.
Dodge past a waiter—
Train takes a loop—
Put steadying hand in
Someone's soup.
Sit next to lady
Whose husband has gone—
Order an oyster cocktail—
Party's on!

- Faifax D. Downey, February 1920
Dining Car Forward, *The Milwaukee Employees' Magazine* (by way of *Dining by Rail*)