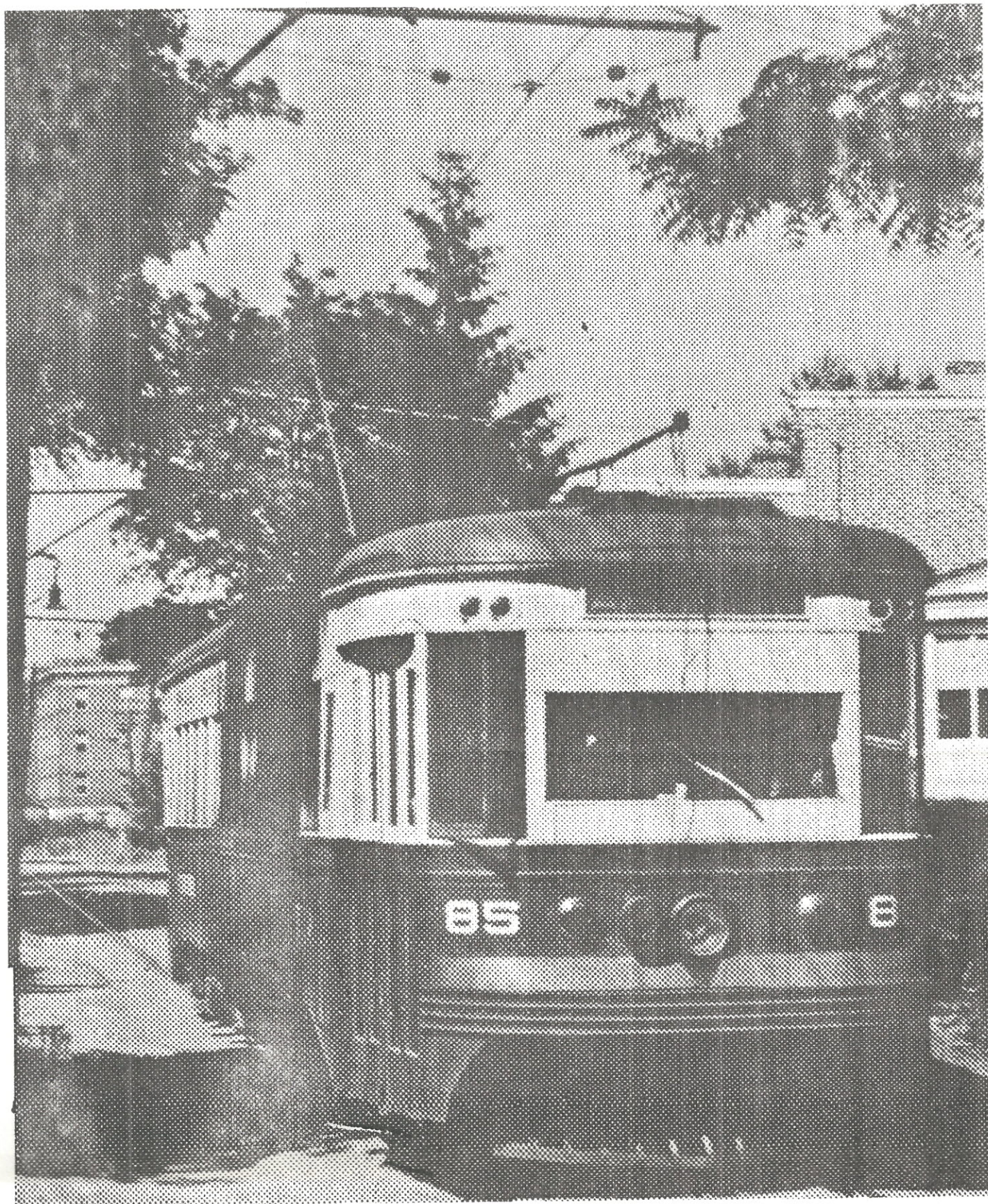


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SPECIAL REPORT: THE VANISHING BREED

Two recent letters from readers Charles Masterton and E. Everett Edwards have prompted me to do a bit of research on the subject of what is happening to the railroad passenger equipment that has become surplus following the recent rash of train discontinuances, and what (if anything) is being done to maintain what is left. Mr. Edwards' letter also raised questions as to the rising costs and inflexible productivity of keeping such equipment and service (i.e. labor) in line with fares and yet somehow retain patronage.

The *California Zephyr* was probably the best patronized truly long-haul passenger train left in the United States. When CZ service was inaugurated in 1949 the consist included matching, stainless steel baggage cars (1), dome coaches (3), dining car, dome buffet (1), section sleeper (1), all-room sleepers (3) and sleeper-dome-observation lounge (1). A bedroom-compartment car was added to each of the six sets in 1952, and the all-section car and New York-San Francisco car were removed first. As costs rose and off-season patronage declined the train was reduced by one roomette-bedroom car and one dome coach (although a flat-top coach to Grand Junction or Salt Lake City was added for a few years). In later years, the 7-car consist was the usual including Monday-Thursday mid-week departures. With labor costs spiralling and fares rising in smaller increments so as not to scare away too many (family-fare bargains were adjusted upward, hurting CZ patronage especially), plus the 5,000 miles per week beating that the same cars were taking for over twenty years (something in the neighborhood of 5,000,000 miles of rough roadbed per car over the life of the train), and the refusal of unions to allow reductions in crew assignments, and, finally, little short-haul use (especially on WP) a gloomy picture was painted for the future of the trains. WP would be first to go because its overall financial position was the worst (and, though it be sad, freight does come first under such circumstances).

Maintenance of the aging equipment became a specialized art not conducive to needed efficiency in the overhead cost ledger, and there are increasingly

fewer craftsmen able to do this type of work. In addition (and this applies to all railroads), aging equipment and repair facilities plus relatively non-productive maintenance workers make for deferred maintenance to save money. Return on investment for new equipment simply does not exist (except in 'metro' corridors), and stockholders will not sit still for such outlays. MetroLiners and high-capacity commuter cars are one liability investors must accept, but low-occupancy coaches, diners and sleepers they do not and would not buy.

Less than 100 cars have been built expressly for long-haul service in the last 13 years, and facilities for maintenance of the aging fleets are becoming less and less able to do the work. To save money, workers are furloughed in car cleaning and repairing, and there is no real financial impetus toward alleviating the situation.

So what happens to the surplus equipment? In 1966, just prior to the beginning of the discontinuance of the remaining long-haul trains, there were nearly 6,900 cars on U.S. roads' rosters; by 1970 that figure was down to less than 4,300, a reduction of 2600 cars (including 1,500 coaches). CN purchased 50 or so sleepers, diners and lounges, and SCL, GTW, MILW and IC bought sleepers and coaches from other U.S. roads, but this was also a net reduction, since it replaced older equipment. So, obviously, much of the equipment was scrapped, though some has gone into commuter service.

(The following listing of equipment is based on data from the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment, published by the Railway Equipment & Publication Co., 424 W. 33 St., New York 10001, (\$6 per annual issue, and R. J. Wayner's Car Names and Consists, published in 1963. The large 1970 ATSF listing does not reflect the sale of 50 cars for commuter service; PC's increase in meal and lounge cars in 1970 reflects the introduction of buffet coaches. SP's roster shows a large surplus of equipment needs above the skeleton schedule it presently maintains. In all cases where known commuter cars were not included; note that 500 of the 1970 sleepers are on the rosters of just four railroads.

RAILROAD	COACHES		MEAL-LOUNGE		PARLOR SLEEPER		RAILROAD	COACHES		MEAL-LOUNGE		PARLOR SLEEPER	
	'66	'70	'66	'70	'66	'70		'66	'70	'66	'70	'66	'70
ATSF	419	211	159	91	154	84	KCS	30	*10	10	*7	20	6
A&WP/WRA/GARR	27	3	2		2		MONON	7					
B&O	82	29	30	11	56	10	L&N	88	40	26	8	28	10
CoFGA	28	20	3	2		1	MP	73	22	18	6	38	
C&O	73	43	17	12	45	12	N&W	96	67	26	14	39	17
C&E I	16	*3	4		6		NP	85	61	26	20	46	33
C&NW	34	32	17	17	2		#PC	1249	859	164	173	491	214
ICB&Q	127	73	35	15	70	54	RF&P	49	39	1	1	14	10
CMSTP&P	112	80	24	19	43	18	SL-SF	19		5		4	
CRI&P	68	34	21	13	30	3	SCL	296	196	70	72	105	98
D&H	21	10	4	3			SRS	179	117	31	24	51	49
2D&RGW	26	17	12	5	13	11	SOO	21				3	
EL	91	74	13	*7	20	*6	SP&S	16	15	2	2	7	7
FEC	4		2		19		SP	189	153	80	51	108	43
GTW	24	39	4	6			T&P	41	5	7	2	17	
GN	128	102	42	36	59	37	UP	253	154	104	72	151	103
GM&O	46	29	10	4	19	7	WP	9	*9	4	*4	11	*11
IC	150	136	37	26	44	30							
TOTALS								4166	2682	1010	723	1693	868

NOTES: 1 - INCLUDES C&S, FW&D; 2 - NARROW GAUGE EQUIPMENT NOT INCLUDED; # - PC 1966 TOTALS ARE COMBINATION OF NH-NYC-PRR; COACH LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE COMMUTER CARS; MEAL/LOUNGE LIST INCLUDES COMBINATION CARS SUCH AS CAFE-COACHES, AND CAFE-PARLOR CARS, BUT NOT LOUNGE-SLEEPER COMBINATION CARS.

(Prepared by Robert I. Oliphant)

NEWSFRONT

RAILWAY REPORT



TWO OF THESE 5000 HORSEPOWER AC 25,000 VOLT ELECTRIC RECTIFIER LOCOMOTIVES HAVE BEEN BUILT BY GENERAL ELECTRIC FOR AUTOMATED SERVICE ON THE MUSKINGUM ELECTRIC RAILROAD, A 15-MILE OHIO COAL CARRIER; NO OPERATING PERSONNEL ARE REQUIRED. EXPECTED LIFE OF THE LOCOMOTIVES IS DOUBLE THAT OF A COMPARABLE DIESEL UNIT. AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER IS OWNER OF THE NEW ROAD.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has granted a Milwaukee Road request for a reopening of the Rosk Island merger case, insofar as it would allow the road to become a part of UP/RI, SP/RI or any other wedding decided on for the financially-ailing "Rock".

That Penn Central Boston-Providence petition is set for June 21, and calls for complete discontinuance of trains 506-514-515-523-546-550-552-553-554-555-556-559-560-563-564-564-567 and weekend discontinuance of runs 500-508-529-533-561; the proposal would reduce the local runs to weekday-only commutation service to Boston. Meanwhile, the ICC has decided to investigate PC's attempts to remove the weekend-only Danbury, Conn.-Pittsfield, Mass. rail service (weekday operation except on Friday nights is via bus); trains 136-137-142-147 must run until at least September 25 pending the customary investigation.

The state of New Jersey has begun refurbishing the 10 Budd RDC cars that ply Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines routes to Atlantic City and Cape May; the \$650,000 project is part of the state's continuing program to upgrade its commuter operations....C&NW has received permission to abandon its 9-mile Deadwood, S.D. branch.... The U.S. government is now opposing the railroads' 6% freight rate boost now set for June 2; the carriers' original proposal failed to show what last November's 6% increase will do for 1970 earnings, among other questionable data....GM&O finally joins our train-off list with #5-6, the Midnight Special, Chicago-St. Louis; the train is set for July 7 discontinuance.

If you are of the firm belief that the long-haul passenger train is dead, but are also afraid of falling, then contact "Fly Without Fear", 307 E. 44th St., New York 10017 about a psychotherapeutic program designed to allow you to travel again some time. It appears that even the doctors are out to kill off the remains.

CN TurboTrain schedules have been announced, but the date of their implementation has not. Departures from Montreal and Toronto will be at 6:45 AM and 3:10 PM; running time will be 4:05.

METROPOLITAN REPORT

As these words are written, passage is expected on a compromise subsidy bill giving the Chicago Transit Authority \$10,000,000 from the state's general fund. Under the terms of the bill, the sum would have to be matched by an equal amount from the city and/or county, and the Authority would not be permitted to raise the 40¢ base fare, nor apply any of the grant toward bond retirement. A companion measure to permit the city to tax parking lot revenue is also expected to be passed; this will give the CTA an additional \$10,000,000 each year. CTA Chairman George DeMent expressed disappointment at the compromise legislation, contending the Authority needed at least \$40,000,000 to avoid bankruptcy.

The original transit subsidy bill for Illinois called for additional funds to be apportioned out to other public and private systems in the state; this provision has been characterized now as "unneeded", and it was stricken from the measure, despite the fact that Illinois local carriers are dying each year. One such firm, the Bee Line of Danville, operates its last local service within that city and suburban runs to Tilton and Batestown this weekend; we have, however, learned that service southward to Georgetown will continue. This route was the initial operation of the Bee Line after abandonment of Illinois Terminal interurban electric service there in the 1930's; the service became the nucleus of the American Transit Corporation chain of properties that is now a part of the Chromalloy conglomerate. The Bee Line took over city service from NCL's Danville City Lines some years ago.

A campaign to cut traffic on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, which initially involved 12,000 automobiles, has resulted in only eight new car pools....Despite some vacillation on the part of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Commission, it appears that minibuses will eventually operate in downtown Minneapolis. DOT aid has been obtained to purchase 16, which will operate on one north-south and two east-west routes....The Long Island Railroad, continually trying to cheer up its commuters (who, admittedly, have little to be cheerful about) is now trying fashion shows each morning on selected Manhattan-bound trains. If the pictures that have been printed in most U.S. newspapers are any indication, interest in the new diversion has been lackluster at best....Two IRT cars will be experimentally air-conditioned in 1971 to determine if the smaller rolling stock can be successfully so equipped. The TA now has 610 A/C cars in operation on the BMT and IND, and 240 more are on order....North Western commuters begin paying 6% more June 1; customary operating losses are cited as the reason for the new, Illinois Commerce Commission-approved hike.

A new proposal that the San Francisco cable car network be shrunk from three lines to two was dismissed with the sort of quiet contempt that San Franciscans reserve for earthquakes. Instead, the city has authorized a costly track overhaul program that will keep the open-sided cars running for another twenty years. The cable car system, long a Bay Area landmark, loses the city come \$3,000,000 a year, but no one has calculated the dollar loss from tourism if it were to be abandoned. The latest proposal called for the abandonment of the California Street route, operated with longer double-ended cars.

THE COVER

This week's cover features one of the famed Brill cars of the former Red Arrow trolley division, pictured on the now-abandoned Ardmore line. The use of the photograph was suggested by the fact that the Red Arrow Division of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority has just completed renovation of a 57-year old stone station at Bowling Green on the Media trolley line. The big, attractive old station is the first of eighteen similar structures, all built about a half-century ago, to be restored to its original elegance under an improvement program begun by SEPTA. Stations along the Norristown high-speed line (the third-rail division) will also be similarly improved.

The Bowling Green station, on Providence Road in Media, dates back to the opening of the Media trolley line in 1913. It has gotten a completely new roof and rail gutters, extensive new woodwork, new paint, new signs, new window sashes and new lighting. Flowers, shrubbery and benches will be added, and the parking lot will be expanded and paved. Decades of vandalism and neglect had reduced this station and others to a shabby appearance; the rehabilitation program will take several years to complete.

BUS BRIEFS

Jack Rabbit Lines has acquired 5 GMC PD-4501 "Super Scenicruiser" coaches from Greyhound; the number of these dual-level coaches now operating from carriers other than the 'Hound is increasing....A new suburban/interurban bus depot has opened in Joliet in what was formerly a White Hen Pantry about a mile from downtown. West Suburban (service to Chicago), Greyhound, Trailways, Peoria-Rockford and other carriers use the new facility.

AIR/LINES

National Airlines is back in the air after a strike that began January 31....BOAC has received its first Boeing 747, but the plane will go right into storage in a massive new hangar at Heathrow in London because pilots have refused to fly it until they get a pay increase. And, even when the wage issue is settled, there will be a three month delay in getting the 747 in the air because BOAC pilots have not been taught how to fly it. The airline estimated that the big bird could be earning some \$40,800 per day in fares....The same airline has announced that it would buy two anti-hijacking devices for use at Heathrow. The devices detect heavy metal devices such as concealed weapons when passengers walk through an electronic beam on boarding.

MARITIME MEMO

The Newport to Jamestown (R.I.) ferry, retired from service in 1969, is being refitted for duty. Its crew members, however, will be recreation leaders and its passengers will be several hundred teenagers involved in a wide range of leisure time activities....Midnight buffets and deck luncheons, informal or gala, have been streamlined out of the operational pattern of Cunard's Queen Elizabeth 2. Other evidences of opulence have also disappeared; stewards now wear bright red mess jackets instead of the traditional "soup and fish".