

# Turntable Times

Volume XXX

Number 12

December 1998



# Turntable Times

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**Volume XXX December 1998 Number 12**

Editor ..... Kenney Kirkman  
Mixed Freight ..... Robin Shavers  
Small Rails ..... Dave Meashey  
Splinters ..... Bill Arnold  
Publisher ..... Richard D. Shell  
Publisher ..... Kenneth L. Miller

**All materials should be sent directly to**

**Editor Kenney Kirkman**

**590 Murphy Road**

**Collinsville, VA 24078-2128**

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## Cards and Flowers

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If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, lost a loved one or has a new birth in the family, please contact Elizabeth Leedy. Elizabeth is responsible for Chapter cards and flowers and can be reached at 389-5274.

## Meeting Notice

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The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, January 21, 1999 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke.

## Cover Photo

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Just a part of the work-a-day world on January 8, 1940 as No. 127 blasts past a switchman seeking some warmth in the shanty at Shaffers Crossing. You can be sure that passengers riding behind the powerful K2a on train No. 1 are warm and comfortable as it heads westward. Norfolk and Western photo.

## Cards and Flowers

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## Deadline for Turntable Times

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The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Friday, December 18th, 1998. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

## Mixed Freight - December

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by Mr. Robin Shavers

The railfan community continues to monitor the numerous information sources for the proposed operational DAY ONE when NS and CSX actually take operational control of their respective portions of Conrail. For a while it looked as if Valentine's Day might be the day. Reports now point to April 1st or May 1st as POSSIBLE DAY ONES. For the record, it was on April 1st, 1976 that Conrail began its operation of 6 bankrupt railroads. On the passenger side, Amtrak commenced operations on May 1st, 1971.

While on the subject on NS and CSX actually taking operational control of Conrail, I recently learned something very important about the freight cars that are sporting NYC or PRR reporting marks. As most of you know, cars that are going to CSX are receiving NYC reporting marks and those to NS, PRR. Most of us have assumed the cars will become the outright property of NS or CSX. Not exactly. Two wholly owned subsidiaries of Conrail have been formed. One is known as Pennsylvania Lines LLC and the other New York Central Lines LLC. These subsidiaries will lease the Conrail cars to NS and CSXT.

Along with the acquisition of locomotives, routes and customers, NS and CSX also gain new shortline connections. Norfolk Southern currently connects with 135 shortlines. It's 58% share of Conrail will add about 100 shortline and regional railroad connections.

Several months ago, Norfolk Southern completed what I refer to as The Crewe - Burkeville Signal System Upgrade Project. The signals used are very similar to those I've seen on Union Pacific. The N&W style signals have been

replaced with double and triple head fixtures which offer a wide variety of signal aspects. The new signals, most of them, have been relocated to different positions from that of previous signals. Railfanwise, the new signal project is a real asset in terms of visibility to see the signal aspect displayed. For motorists, both Burkeville grade crossings got the works, including gates. The same holds true for the first grade crossing east of Crewe Yard.

## **Small Rails - December**

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers held their November meeting at The Rail Yard hobby store. We had to cancel our participation in the show at the Salem Civic Center due to some family emergencies and other obligations. We discussed plans for our Christmas dinner and the potential of a place to set the modules up for several months. The Christmas meal will be on our next regular meeting night, Tuesday, December 1st. The temporary home arrangements are still tentative.

Our ranks are low right now because we do not have a place to work on the layout. We could use a few good members. If you enjoy HO scale model railroading, give us a try. The next regular business meeting should be January 5th at The Rail Yard. Dues are \$5.00 per month right now - to give the club some money for layout improvements when a permanent home is found - but it doesn't cost anything to visit a meeting. We look forward to seeing you.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators met Sunday, October 25th at the home of Bill and Nancy Hughes in Roanoke. The members present planned some club activities for the coming year. The club will hold an operating day at the Greenbrier Nursery on Saturday, December 5th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We will have a miniature plant clinic in April, 1999, also at the Greenbrier Nursery. And during our "winter hibernation period" (the no meeting months from January through March) club members will be kitbashing a Bachmann boxcar for a model

contest in Spring of 1999.

November's meeting was Sunday, November 15th at the home of Steve and Tammy King in Rocky Mount. Steve's 7/8 inch scale Forney was in steam and put in a fine performance on his now completed loop. Club members also admired Steve's new scratch built armstrong turntable and train shed. I had converted Lionel 0-6-0T to run off a 12-volt lantern battery, so that little locomotive also got to pull its small train around Steve's garden railway.

## **The Train Under the Tree**

by Dave Meashey

Our family has lived in Roanoke for 21 years, and each Christmas I tried to keep the tradition of a train under our Christmas tree. It's a tradition that I fondly remember from my own early childhood, and probably the reason I became such a avid lover of trains of all scales and sizes. The displays varied quite a bit in scale and complexity. The earliest trains were American Flyer S gauge. Some of the trains had been mine since I was ten years old.

The American Flyers were soon followed by some Lionel 027 sets that I bought for my daughters. They were bottom of the line sets, two of Lionel's "Workin' on the railroad" Logging Empire sets. The four-wheeled locomotive and cars were easy for young children to put back on the tracks. I added some manual switches and some bobber cabooses. I was hoping to kindle an interest in trains within my daughters' imaginations. That never happened, but at least both of them have an appreciation for trains.

Then the large scale came along. First it was short, two axle European stock. When North American equipment became available, it took over. The mooing cattle car really startled our cats one year when they bumped it while playing under the tree.

Last year we moved the tree to the family room. The only train that would fit under it was a vintage Lionel "Happy Huff n' Puff" plastic "child powered" train. I had bought that train for Julie when she was a toddler.

This year the tradition moves to a new generation. Julie has her first professional job, after earning her master's degree in May. She also has her own apartment in Winston-Salem. Her Lionel Logging Empire is ready to go to her new home and take its place under her Christmas tree.

## **Conrail Passenger Equipment Disposition**

NORFOLK SOUTHERN WILL INHERIT THE FOLLOWING PIECES, SOME OF WHICH ORIGINALLY CAME FROM NS PREDECESSORS

\* Locomotive No. 4020 — An E8, built in 1951 by EMD for the Pennsylvania Railroad and numbered PRR 5809. Transferred to Penn Central in 1968 and renumbered PC 4309. Amtrak acquired the unit in 1974 and renumbered it 325, later 496. In 1976, Amtrak removed the steam generators and installed head-end power sets. Conrail purchased the locomotive from Amtrak in 1984 and renumbered it CR 4020. (Currently assigned to Norfolk Southern).

\* Office car No. 1 — Built in 1927 by Pullman. In 1948, it was acquired by the Southern Railway and converted to a dinette/coach. Its original number was SOU 3102. It was converted to an office car in 1964 and renumbered SOU 10. In 1970, it was renumbered SOU 3. Acquired by Conrail in 1982 and renumbered CR 1. Now, it along with Cars 4 and 5 below, will return "home."

\* Office Car 4 — Built in 1927 by Pullman. In 1951, it was acquired by the Southern Railway and converted to an office car named the "Tennessean." In 1953, it was numbered SOU 4. Acquired by Conrail in 1983 and renumbered CR 4.

\* Office Car 5 — Built by Pullman in 1911 for the Norfolk and Western. Named the "Pocahontas." Norfolk Southern numbered it NS 7 and retained the name. Conrail purchased the car in 1988 and renamed it the "Boston," giving it number CR 100. Renumbered CR 5 in 1994.

\* Dome Coach No. 55 — Built in 1955 by Budd for the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe and numbered ATSF 552. It was purchased by Auto-

Train in 1971 and renumbered 554. Western Rail Services bought the car in 1982 and changed the number back to 552. The car was sold to a short line in 1986. Conrail purchased the car in 1988 and renumbered it CR 55.

\* Coach No. 27 — Built in 1947 for Budd for the New York Central, and numbered NYC 2949. Transferred to Penn Central in 1968 and renumbered PC 2949. Acquired by Amtrak in 1974 and renumbered AMTK 5667. Acquired by Conrail and renumbered CR 27.

CSX TAKES TITLE TO THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT, SOME OF WHICH OPERATED ORIGINALLY ON THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD AND NEW YORK CENTRAL

\* Locomotive No. 4021 — An E8, built in 1952 by EMD for the Pennsylvania Railroad and numbered PRR 5711. Transferred to Penn Central in 1968 and renumbered PC 4311. Amtrak acquired the unit in 1974 and renumbered in AMTRK 317, later 499. Amtrak removed the steam generators and installed head-end power sets. Conrail purchased the locomotive from Amtrak in 1984 and renumbered it CR 4021.

\* Locomotive No. 4022 — An E8 built in 1951 by EMD for the Erie Railroad and numbered 833. With the 1960 merger of the Erie and Lackawanna Railroad companies, it was renumbered E-L 833. The unit was conveyed to Conrail in 1976 and renumbered CR 4022. In 1979, the locomotive received a major overhaul in Altoona. The gear ratio of 4022 allows for a top speed of 90 MPH.

\* Observation Car No. 10 — Built in 1922 by Pullman for the New York Central for use as a rear-end observation car. Originally named the "Queen Elizabeth." Later, renamed the "Hudson River," it served the Empire State Express in the early 1930's. The large rear platform was constructed to accommodate President Franklin D. Roosevelt's wheelchair. In 1942, it was renamed the "Kalamazoo River" and served the Twilight Limited. In 1947 it was renamed "Victoria Park" and stored for stand-by service. In 1952, it was placed in company service as an inspection car and numbered NYC 30. It was part of the funeral train for slain presidential candidate Robert F.

Kennedy. Transferred to Penn Central in 1968 and renumbered PC 30. Briefly renumbered CR 76 before becoming CR 10 in 1977.

\* Sleeper No. 11 — Built in 1954 by Pullman for the Erie Railroad as a five double-bedroom/10 sleeper car. Named the “Spirit of Youngstown.” Conveyed to Conrail on April 1, 1976 and numbered CR 11.

\* Sleeper No. 8 — Built in 1923 by Pullman as a tourist car. Acquired by the Southern Railway and converted to a coach in 1954 and numbered SOU 1041. Acquired by Conrail in 1983 and renumbered CR 24. Converted to an eight-bedroom sleeper in 1984 and renumbered CR 8.

\* Conference Car No. 12 — Built in 1951 by Budd for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a parlor car, numbered PRR

7138. Transferred to Penn Central in 1968 and renumbered PC 7138. In 1980, it was converted to a meeting room/board room car and renumbered CR 12.

\* Theater Car No. 9 — Built in 1954 by Pullman for the Canadian National as a dinette car and numbered CN 428. Conveyed to VIA in 1974 and renumbered VIA 428. Acquired by Conrail in 1982 and renumbered CR 23. In 1985, it was converted to a track inspection car and renumbered CR 9.

(Source: Conrail Technical Society, Ron Mele/Southeast Rail Mailing List via Railfan & Railroad Website, via Potomac Rail News, November, 1998, and via Mr. Robin R. Shavers).

## **Richmond-Petersburg Local Passenger Service**

by Wally Johnson

(Turntable Times Editor’s Note: The following article with the above title and author is from the March, 1997 “Highball”, newsletter of the Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS.)

In 1895 the Atlantic Coast Line built a bypass around Petersburg to the west between Dunlop and BX interlocking, north of Collier. Through freight trains and some passenger trains used the bypass without stopping at Petersburg

at this time.

By 1925 only two of the ACL mainline passenger trains from Richmond to the South continued to operate via the railroad’s line through downtown Petersburg. Trains on the ACL’s downtown line threaded their way past the small Pocahontas engine terminal, stopped at N&W’s Appomattox Street Station, and proceeded up the stiff “gas house hill” and along Washington Street, for a stop at ACL’s Washington Street Station before continuing south.

All regular through trains were removed from downtown Petersburg by 1942 when the North Petersburg station was built on the bypass route at Ettrick.

To serve Petersburg, a number of ACL local passenger trains using ACL crews, equipment, and locomotives, were operated from Byrd Street Station in Richmond (Broad Street Station after January, 1919) to N&W’s Appomattox Station in downtown Petersburg. These local trains also provided a connecting service for N&W east-west mainline trains. The 27.4-mile local train service was an interesting operation, which by the early 1940’s used 400-series Pacifics and later 1500-series and perhaps 1600 and 1700-series Pacifics along with three Coast Line heavyweight passenger cars, 1014, 1015, and 1016. Employees referred to these trains as “The Short Run,” and indeed, small local tickets were printed as A.C.L. - The Short Run.

During World War II years ACL (as well as SAL and RF&P) was extremely short of motive power and leased engines from other roads when available. One of these engines was an Erie Railroad light Pacific No. 2902, which interestingly was used on the Petersburg local for many months.

In the early 1940’s three round-trips ran each day as trains numbers 28, 23, 24, 25, 26, & 27 (in daily order), the latter terminating at Petersburg at 11:30 p.m., and laying over for a 7:10 a.m. departure the next morning. Some of these trains forwarded through Washington-Norfolk coaches to and from the RF&P to and from N&W trains 3 & 4, The Pocahontas, as well as the



# From the ARCHIVES

by Ken Miller

This will be an occasional column included in the Turntable Times featuring some items from our Archive facility, hopefully that will be of interest to everyone. Comments and questions will be gladly taken at the post office box. Contributions and materials will be gladly accepted.

Negative Number 7803.

One first inspection, this photo is almost a mystery. Where was it taken and what was shown here?

It would difficult for most folks to remember this scene since it has changed dramatically in the 1930s. This view looks west from the 10th Street Bridge in Roanoke in the mid 1920s. The westbound freight train is passing what was then the West Roanoke Upper Roundhouse located near 14th Street. This 20 stall roundhouse and the West Roanoke Lower Roundhouse (out of sight to the left of the picture) handled motive power for the Norfolk and Shenandoah Divisions until early 1932.

So what happened in 1932? With the slight downturn in traffic, it was determined that the newer (1920) Shaffers Crossing facility (the tall stack in the middle top of the photo) could handle the servicing needs of all three divisions.

The two lower roundhouses would be torn down as well as the attendant servicing facilities. Notice the wooden coal wharf in the middle of the photo as well as the ash pits immediately to the left of it. The yard would be widened out to increase the capacity for freight handling that would shortly reach never expected proportions in just a few years.

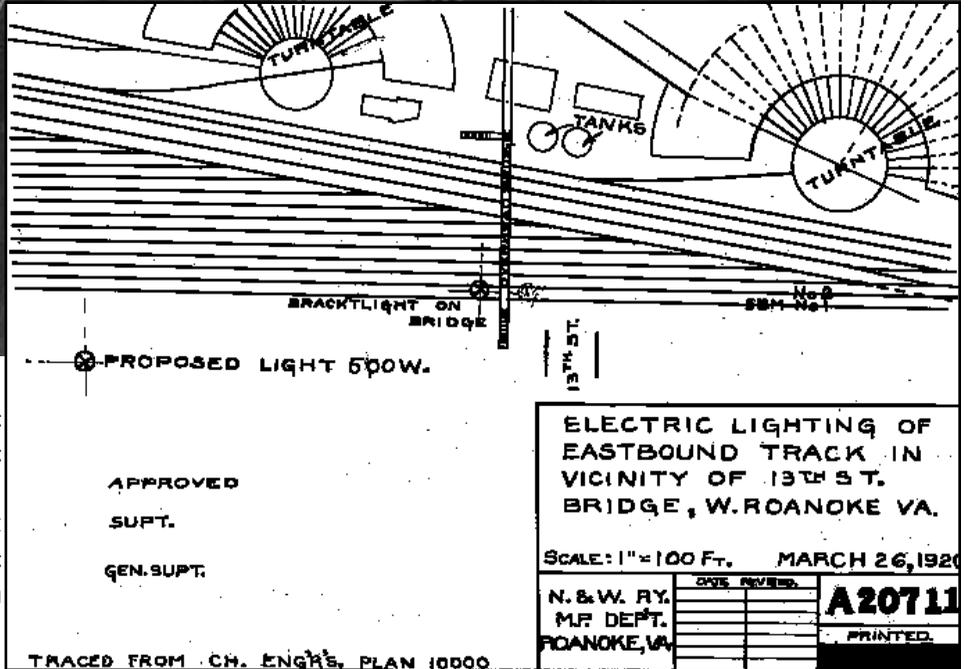
The lower roundhouse had 21 stalls and originally was built with a 60 foot turntable, in 1913 it was completely modernized with 23 stalls



and a 100 foot turntable to handle the new Mallet type locomotives. It had been built in 1889.

The upper house was built in 1905 with a 75 foot turntable and would handle the smaller passenger and freight power until early 1932.

The drawing from 1920 gives us an idea of the trackage here. The top of the drawing is the Shenandoah Avenue side, sadly not shown



however.

It would not be many years until the surge in military and war related traffic would have the yards in this area expanded.

Richmond-Roanoke and Richmond-Bristol sleepers to and from N&W trains 15 and 16.

Curiously, the Seaboard did not promote or suggest connections via taxi from its downtown Petersburg station to the N&W nor did the

Coast Line mention transfering between stations of its mainline northbound runs to the east-west N&W service. The Petersburg local trains were entirely RF&P-N&W connections or Richmond passengers who wish to re N&W west connections.

In addition to the Short Run service, the ACL and joint operation through seenger service

Richmond to Norfolk via Petersburg with a pair of trains utilizing N&W engines, cars and employees. The Norfolk service dated back to Byrd Street Station days before Broad Street Station's existence. It was eventually cut back to one daily round trip. The Richmond-Norfolk

trains were unofficially called "The Cannon Ball" by employees, and in later years the name became officially listed in N&W timetables for the through trains which ran as ACL numbers 29 & 90 and N&W numbers 91 & 99.

re handful of N&W engines used in Richmond-Norfolk service had to be equipped with Coast Line train control to operate the Petersburg-Richmond segment. Engines used in this service were the old J 600s 4-4-2s later exchanged for 501, 504, and 5 stream-4-8-2's. Changes made on the line when N&W inaugurated its new The Cannon Ball on April

# Norfolk AND Western RAILWAY



"The Pocahontas" near Bedford, Virginia



PRECISION TRANSPORTATION

## Time Tables

APRIL 30, 1939—No. 2

### Condensed Through Schedules

#### NORFOLK—RICHMOND—WASHINGTON—PHILADELPHIA—NEW YORK

No. 29		No. 91		No. 22		No. 90	
AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
9 10	47 45	1 30	1 30	Lv. NORFOLK (Ter. Sta.), N. & W. ...	Ar. RICHMOND	10 30	4 30
9 44	8 15	2 04	2 04	" SUFFOLK .....	" " ..	10 30	3 55
10 27	7 45	2 38	2 38	" WAKEFIELD .....	" " ..	10 30	3 20
10 58	8 53	3 12	3 12	" WARELY .....	" " ..	9 21	4 12
11 33	9 29	3 46	3 46	Ar. PETERSBURG .....	" " ..	8 55	2 45
11 20	9 20	3 58	3 58	Ar. RICHMOND .....	A. C. L. ..	8 55	2 45
12 04	10 00	4 30	4 30	Lv. RICHMOND .....	N. & W. ...	8 55	2 45
12 40	10 40	5 04	5 04	Ar. WASHINGTON .....	F. & P. ...	8 55	1 55
1 00	11 00	5 38	5 38	Lv. WASHINGTON .....	P. F. & P. ...	8 55	1 55
1 40	11 40	6 12	6 12	Ar. BALTIMORE .....	" " ..	8 55	1 55
2 00	12 00	6 46	6 46	Lv. BALTIMORE .....	" " ..	8 55	1 55
2 40	12 40	7 20	7 20	Ar. PHILADELPHIA .....	" " ..	8 55	1 55
3 00	1 00	7 54	7 54	Ar. NEW YORK (F. R. R. Sta.) ..	" " ..	8 55	1 55
3 45	1 20	8 28	8 28				
4 15	1 45	9 02	9 02				
4 30	2 00	9 36	9 36				
5 00	2 30	10 10	10 10				
5 30	3 00	10 44	10 44				
6 00	3 30	11 18	11 18				
6 30	4 00	11 52	11 52				
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daily order) in addition to the Cannon Ball. Interestingly, the timetable even carded two N&W engine-led passenger trains passing each other on the ACL main line each night near Centralia.

It was necessary for the N&W engines to be provided with Coast Line train control devices. Initially Pacifics 558, 562, and 563 held down this service, while streamlined 4-8-2s 121, 122, or 123 headed the Cannon Ball on runs to Norfolk. Cars on the post-April, 1946, Short Runs were usually two or three N&W coaches with baggage and mail cars of heavy Christmas mail, even a Coast Line caboose was added to the rear at times! The one exception to the passenger car consists was the use for many months of a well-painted ACL baggage car with the standard, twin, full length horizontal white stripes.

All this additional service provided connections with N&W trains 3 and 4, The Pocahontas, 15 and 16, The Cavalier, locals 23 and 24, and 25 and 26, The Powhatan Arrow. Three of the round trips had flag stops at Chester and Centralia.

Technically, the connection from N&W's 24 to Richmond was via the Cannon Ball #20, rather than one of the Short Runs. Running time for the 27.4-mile run was variously 45 or 50 minutes northbound, while the Cannon Ball took 35 minutes southbound and 40 minutes northbound.

Locomotive changes occurred over the years. The Pacifics were removed from the Short Run, and eventually the last two remaining N&W Pacifics on the entire system, 563 and 578 were used on the Bluefield-Norton runs. The old faithful 563, of course, was the sole survivor from the Richmond-Petersburg service. The 563 had also spent many uneventful years steaming inside the small roundhouse or on nearby ready tracks at the small Petersburg N&W engine terminal beside the U.S. 1 bridge and across from the N&W station. It was a "protector" engine for the N&W in case of main line engine failures and perhaps for work train service. The N&W and C&O had been noted for the stationing of "protector" engines at various engine terminals, even small ones.



August Thieme Photo

Pacific No. 563 awaits departure at Richmond's Broad Street Station.

After the departure of the Pacifics, locomotives 121, 122, and 123 handled the connection trains as well as the Cannon Ball. In the latter days of steam, others such as the 124 and 137 came on the scene, presumably by the expedient of exchanging tenders with other locomotives which had tenders already equipped with ACL train control pick-up devices.

In the 1950's Short Run trains were gradually eliminated. By discontinuing connections to N&W mainline locals Nos. 7 & 8 (which had

replaced Nos. 23 and 24), and by juggling schedules, the Short Run trains were cut back to four round trips by early 1952. By December, 1957, the service had dwindled down to a single afternoon round trip connecting with N&W's 3 & 4, with the engine and cars laying overnight at Richmond. Also, the Cannon Ball's decades-long Richmond arrival scheduled at 10:00 or 10:05 p.m. from Norfolk was moved back to 11:07 p.m., and its traditional departure from Richmond at 8:30 a.m. became 4:35 a.m. On

Norfolk and Western Photo

Second Class J, number 605 is shown here at Roanoke after application of Automatic Train Control equipment in November 1925. The pick-up shoe is highlighted in white just behind the lead truck of the tender as well as the conduit for the wiring of the ATC.



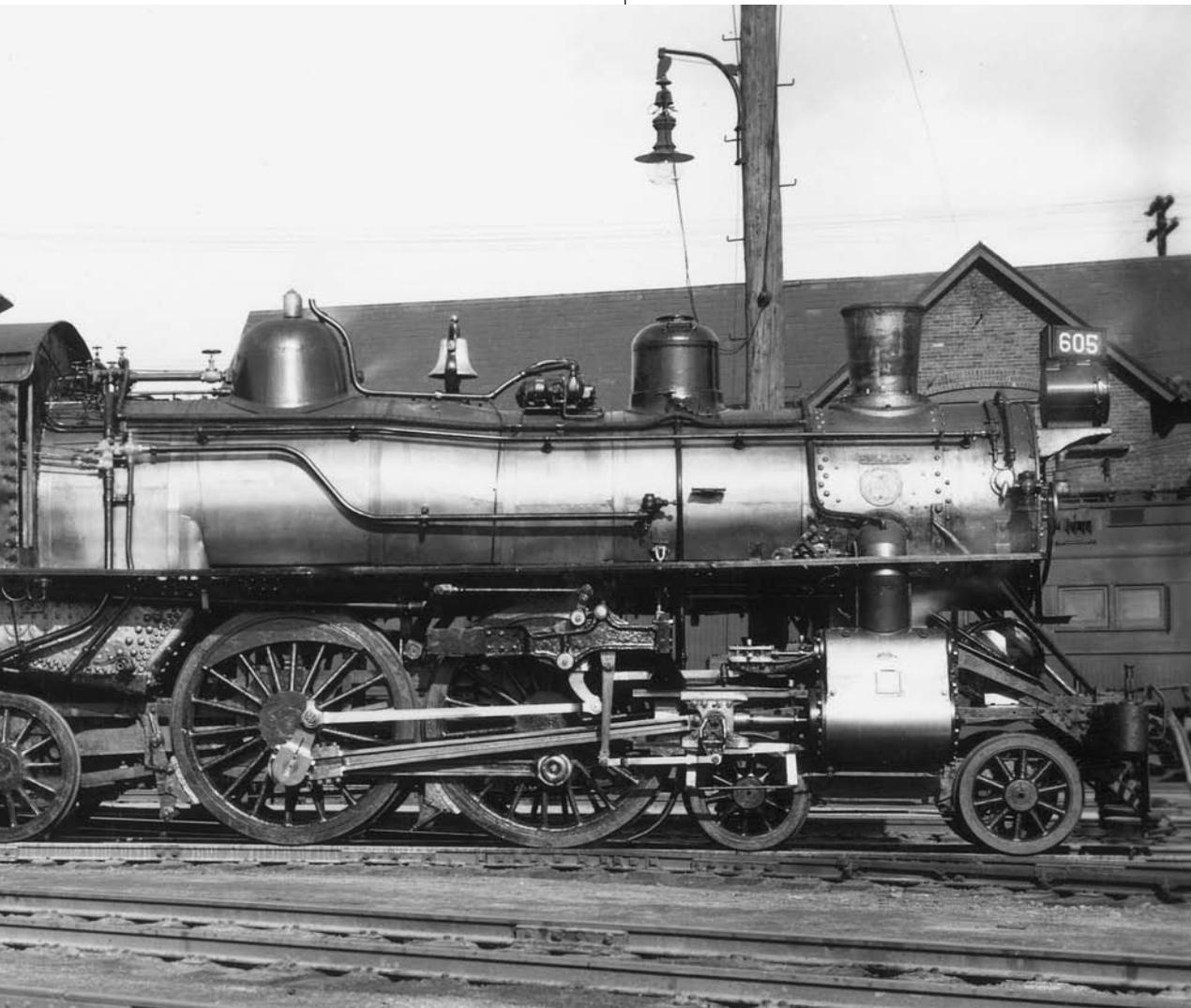
January 1, 1958, the Broad Street Station north-bound arrival time was changed to 1:05 a.m., but departure remained at 4:35 a.m., thus creating a much abbreviated Richmond turnaround.

By 1960 the last Short Runs, numbers 27 & 32, were eliminated, and Petersburg connections with N&W 3 & 4 were listed in the timetable by ACL main line trains 375 and 376 at the North Petersburg Station. Transfer to Appomattox Station was to be "made by taxi upon payment of taxi fare," certainly not user-friendly service!

Thus one lone N&W engine made a brief daily visit to Richmond with the Cannon Ball in contrast to the many years of overnight layovers by an N&W steam engine at RF&P's Acca engine terminal.

N&W Short Run steam engines never went to Acca engine terminal under normal circumstances, but they did receive water at Broad Street Station via a hose connected to the coach-watering hydrant.

Diesels took over for the N&W 4-8-2s on the



Cannon Ball around 1959. In 1964 the train was arriving at Broad Street Station at 12:25 a.m., and leaving at 3:15 a.m., not needless to say, conducive to the travel needs of the Richmond-Norfolk market. In early 1967 the Cannon Balls were discontinued, thus ending all N&W service into Richmond.

## Happy Holidays!

From the Turntable Times Staff best wishes for this holiday season. We purposely delayed this issue to avoid the mail crunch of the holiday season. Watch for the January issue shortly.

## Meeting Cancellation Policy

Since it's that time of year, as a reminder we have the following policy regarding inclement weather.

The meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are met: Roanoke City schools are closed on the day of or for the day after the meeting, or Virginia Western

night classes are cancelled for the night of a meeting.

## Mechanical Update

A brief update on the mechanical department operations. After almost six weeks, our Alco T6 arrived a Bealington, West Virginia. Both NS and CSX must have used their new 'snail' power to move this locomotive with this kind of service.

Coaches 1827 and 537 arrived back from Spencer in late November while the 512 returned from Georgia just before Christmas.

Our mechanical crew has been occupied working on replacing wall panels in 1827 from many years of water damage. As usual they are serving double duty as carpenters and floor department in the Archive Facility. The old heavy wooden floor is now completely covered in a new heavy floor and tiled in a grey pattern. The floor goes a long way to comfort and cleanliness in the facility and is a much needed step. More on these projects in the next issue.

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**Editor, Turntable Times**  
**Roanoke Chapter NRHS**  
**P.O. Box 13222**  
**Roanoke, VA 24032-1322**

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