

BY DAVID P. MORGAN

Illustrated for TRAINS by Philip R. Hastings

Between them, a hotshot

The Mohawk that refused to

THERE is something about a map that brings out the beast in a railroad. Indeed, it amounts to an inexplicable lapse in an otherwise conscientious and painstaking business. A railroad will bend over backwards to refund your unused ticket to the last penny — and often on a check so impressive in its countersignatures and watermarked paper that one almost feels obliged to frame it instead of cash it. Again, a railroad will employ regiments of draftsmen working at acres of drawing tables to figure out bridge stress or driving wheel counterbalance or size of drain gutter. Accuracy is the watchword and excuses are taboo.

Except in maps — timetable maps. I think there must be rules of some sort, because the wholesale rearrangement of physical plant and nature is too universal an art to be happenstance. The standard technique is to erase all other lines except the most friendly connections; expand all states served by the company so that they occupy approximately 80 per cent of the land area of the U. S.; rub out mountains and other natural barriers; and — most important — draw all main lines with a ruler. One wonders if John Barriger first conceived of low-grade and tangent “super railroads” by casually thumbing through the pages of an old *Official Guide*. Shades of Poole Brothers!

Oh, yes, one other word of warn-

ing to the novice: Never judge a railroad line's importance by its thickness on the map. For example, Pennsylvania's 112.7-mile line between Columbus and Sandusky, O., is about spider-web size in the company's public folder, and the outlander envisions an H10 Consol wheezing through the weeds with a local freight perhaps thrice weekly.

No such thing! Although freight-service only, Pennsy's line is a heavy-duty tonnage funnel for coal (north) and iron ore (south) between a major interchange point and Lake Erie, so much so that mile-long trains are the rule and motive power demands are figured in multiples of approximately 100,000 pounds tractive effort per engine. Moreover, the operation remains traditionally steam.

All of which serves to explain why Phil Hastings and I neglected the implication of Pennsy's timetable and camped a while at the west end of Grogan Yard, Columbus — there to watch the railroad's biggest get a grip on coal bound for “the dock.” Now, “biggest” on Pennsy's roster of steam power means the J1, a 2-10-4 of more than ordinary reputation and performance. It's chic to remark, “Oh, that's the engine Pennsy borrowed the blueprints from C&O for,” but there's a bit more to the story than that. Essentially, the J1 dates back to 1925 and the A1 2-8-4 that Will Woodard put together on the erection floor

of Lima. Except in weight, the engines are more sisters than not; they share tandem rods, vast grate area, long stroke, a booster, a feedwater heater, comparatively high drivers — all the items that Woodard said spelled the difference between power and Super-Power.

WORLD WAR II caught Pennsy without such an engine on the property and, worse yet, without the time and means to develop one at Altoona. Electrification and depression had caused a surplus of steam power until Mars pushed carloadings out of sight — and then it was too late for the railroad's customary custom designing. The War Production Board's ban on new patterns forced the road to shop around, the choice being Chesapeake & Ohio's T-1 Texas.

C&O, did I say? Well, yes and no. Allowing for a bit more weight on drivers, the specifications of both 2-10-4's check out, often to the inch; under their boiler jacketing they were twins. And there the similarity stopped on dead center. War or no war, the 125 J1's rolled out of Altoona looking like nothing that C&O ever had on its property. As opposed to the T-1, the Pennsy engine carried her headlight high and mounted a keystone number plate on the smokebox. Just that front end, with its drop-coupler, solid pilot was enough, but Pennsy also placed sandbox and

hoghead and a worn but game 4-8-2 forget

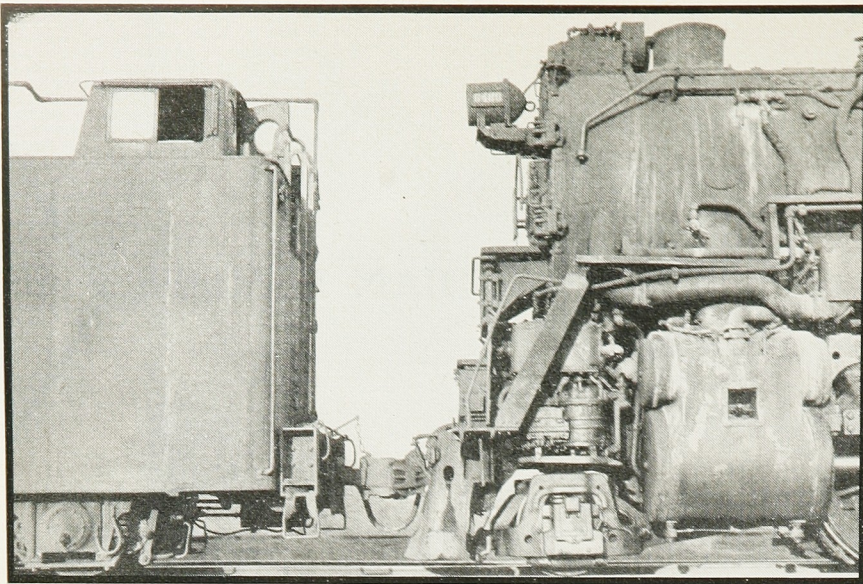
what year it is and pretend dead freight is the 20th Century Limited

abdicate, and other tales



PENNSY J1's WALKING LAKE-BOUND COAL OUT OF GROGAN YARD, COLUMBUS

A rakish styling note of Loewy-like influence.



DOUBLEHEADING PENNSY J1 2-10-4's

Out of chaos to fluidity.

steam dome under one huge housing, added a typically PRR long-and-low 16-wheel tank, and replaced the normal C&O cab with a semistreamlined affair of almost Raymond Loewy influence.

That cab. I remember that during the war while riding a passenger train into Indianapolis I glimpsed, between a couple of box cars, a cab with a semicircular window casing. It was like nothing any road had ever placed on a freight engine, a sort of

rakish styling note such as Mr. Loewy might have used to dandify a K4 for a prewar coach streamliner's debut. I was still wondering whether to write it off as an illusion when the news broke that such a cab was a trademark of 125 J1 2-10-4's, the first wholesale addition to the road's steam roster since 1930. Fine locomotives they were, too; big brutes that suddenly dated Pennsy's worn and weary ranks of 2-10-2's, engines that quite possibly meant the difference between



AN IMPATIENT NEW YORK CENTRAL ENGINEER

Could have commanded a Super G.

fluidity and chaos in steam territory throughout those war-burdened 1940's.

To see them moving coal out of Columbus was like putting pages back on the calendar. As far as Lewis Center, O., a dozen miles or so, the standard 125-car coal drag demands a J1 plus; and once my esthetic flashback was tempered as a gunning GP7 road-switcher helped a 2-10-4 upgrade. But the normal routine was to assist in kind.

The coal that Pennsylvania moves up to Sandusky is interchange or off-line coal, mostly from C&O, L&N, N&W, and Virginian. Watching the J1's lug it out of Grogan Yard reminded me of two opinions that I'd heard while researching material for TRAINS. Once down on Louisville & Nashville an operating man had solemnly remarked that L&N cars roll easier than C&O hoppers. Take two otherwise identical 120-car trains of coal, he said, and an engine can start the L&N one with less effort. I nodded and made a mental note. A few months later I was watching a Chesapeake & Ohio track gang re-lay rail when, one after another, diesels rolled two trains of empties back toward the mines. "Ever notice," a C&O track supervisor said to me, "how those L&N cars rattle while ours roll quiet." So you take your choice: less sound or less inertia.

On Pennsy, of course, the stacks of two wide-open, earth-shaking, slogging and straining J1's made it difficult to run a fair test on the comparison as the black hoppers of Chessie followed the red ones of L&N up to Sandusky and the holds of the lake boats.

Now to New York Central and a story for the books.

You can place any label you want on this tale: The Feminine Engine That Wasn't or The Ambition of Every Boy or How To Confuse a Dispatcher. My own choice is The Mohawk That Refused To Abdicate.

It all took place on a hot September 1955 day in central Ohio. Dropping in on the junction town of Galion, where Central mains from Indianapolis and Cincinnati converge into one for Cleveland, we came upon 4-8-2 No. 3005 just easing to a halt near the coal chute. One of 25 dual-purpose Mohawks delivered by Alco late in 1940, the L-3a had spent a good part of her life in passenger service. In fact, Phil had placed her on film in 1948 while she was working the *New England Wolverine* through Worcester, Mass.

An L-3a looks like a passenger engine. After all, from the drop-coupler pilot back to the third pair of disc

drivers she smacks of Hudson design in a blueprint that resists straight lines and luxuriates in smooth contours and subtle, feminine curves. No wonder Central publicists threw the word "Mountain" out of their dictionary. Aside from the fact that The Water Level Route never let you forget it, an L-3a is the last locomotive on earth anyone would think of as a mountain engine. She is grace and speed, an aristocrat of multiple-track main lines and water troughs that would look as out of place on Tennessee Pass as a K4 in Miami.

But this was 1955 and the 3005 had fallen upon evil times. She was dirty; cylinder and steam dome covers were missing; and the booster had long since been sacrificed for simplicity of maintenance. Tied to her tender was dead freight: empties, gons of scrap iron, bad-order cars patched up for a trip to the shops or the cutting torch.

The bright one in this bad dream was the engineer. Hastings termed him "an alert and brawny man whose goggles and rakish mustache suggested a flair for making cinders fly." No one could argue that. Gregarious, informative, seasoned, he was the type who could have commanded a Super G Constellation or a *Queen Mary* with equal authority; in a cab he was the man all small boys imagine they will someday resemble on the right-hand seatbox.

He said that in Galion they would pick up tonnage ("on this road we take everything the engine'll pull") so I asked what speed we could expect him to be making up the pike.

"Sixty."

"With this train?" I hastily figured the extra would be about 100 cars between tank and caboose out of Galion.

"Oh, yes, we'll ride once we get out of here."

A Mohawk making a mile a minute on dead freight? I muttered something about excessive optimism to Phil, and we left Galion with the 3005 taking slack just to spot her tank for water.

Sixty. Humbug!

FINDING nothing else in steam at Galion, we moved 12.7 miles nearer Cleveland—to a junction at Shelby, O., where Central's double-track main crosses Baltimore & Ohio's Willard-Newark branch at grade.

A chat with the operator in the gray, peak-roofed interlocking plant tower served to confirm my notion of the progress Extra 3005 East would make. While getting out of Galion shortly



B&O's LOCAL CROSSES CENTRAL AT SHELBY, O.

Modified U.S.R.A. and bell-ringing.

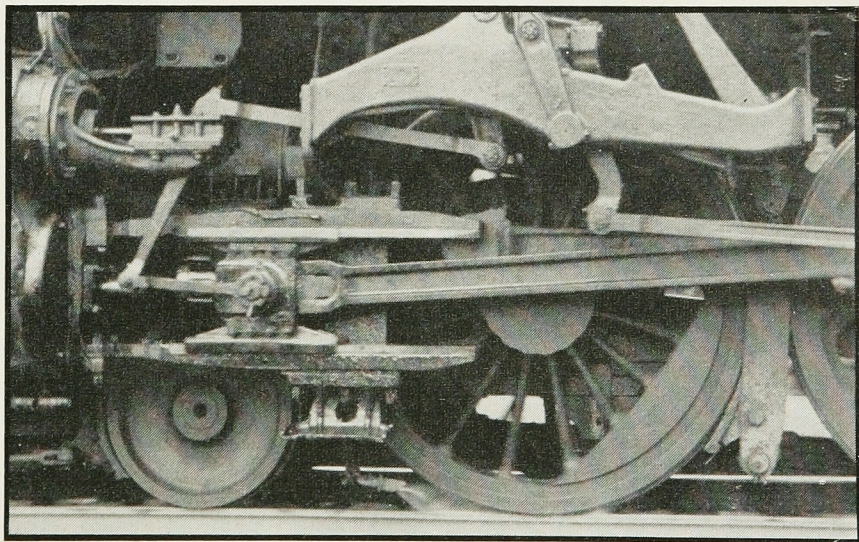
after noon he'd pulled a drawbar, and judging by the clipped talk of the DS rasping out of the speaker in the tower, all hell had broken loose.

By coming apart on the eastbound main, Extra 3005 East had converted the Central main into a single-track railroad, a disruption complicated by the fact that there were four passenger trains in the vicinity. The DS moved the Cleveland-bound trains over on the westbound main to run them around the extra and against the current of traffic. Even the agent at Shelby got into the act as he tried to ascertain on which platform to assemble passengers, mail and express for what train.

Grief all this may have been for the railroad, but the misfortune of a Mohawk on her last legs had turned it into a very satisfying day for the train watchers. A happy note in the proceedings was Baltimore & Ohio 2-8-2 No. 4594, which was working a ped-

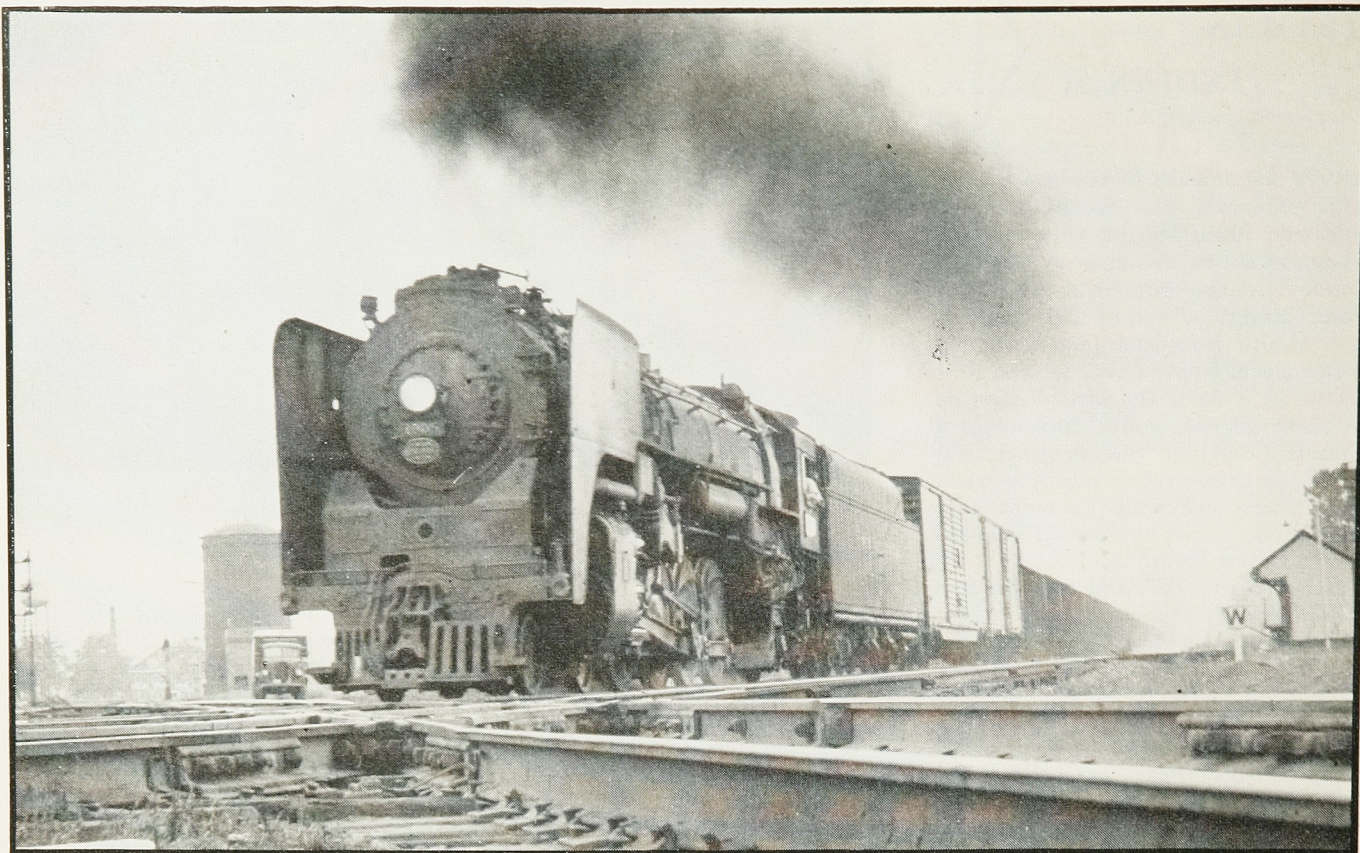
dler known locally as the Mansfield Turn. She was a light U.S.R.A. Mike, modified in appearance by a high-mounted headlight and an extension on the cab to accommodate the head brakeman. She fussed about at a nearby military base, ventured near the busy NYC diamond a couple of times, finally found a chance to get across between trains—and eventually did so with a great deal of whistle blowing and bell ringing.

Central itself continued to occupy the center of the stage at Shelby, of course. A Hudson rolled in on the 12 cars of the *Cleveland-Cincinnati Special* and managed to spin her drivers departing, despite a generous supply of sand. The result was not only something to hear but an opportunity to inspect the heavy motion work which Central favored on its steam power. Gentle and cultured in over-all appearance its engines may have been, but examine that Alliga-



SLIPPING DRIVERS OF HUDSON No. 5247

Examine that Alligator crosshead.



EXTRA 3005 EAST MAKING 60 MILES PER HOUR THROUGH SHELBY, O.
All the implications of the Book of Revelations.

tor crosshead again with its adjoining main and side rods and Baker gear. Tough and ponderous steel, so much so that a Pennsy K4 is fitted with tensile by comparison. Interesting.

A pair of E8's wheeled west (see cover), then two GP7's clattered across the diamond on an express train.

THEN . . . well, right smack in the middle of all this to be exact, tension — intangible, unseen, quite real — began to build in the tower. The dispatcher had temporarily lost track of Extra 3005 East and was attempting to pin down his location and whether or not he had his train in one piece.

The conversation, as relayed to us by the operator, gave no direct hint of what was to come. As a result neither Hastings nor I noticed a faint smudge of smoke building in the horizon to the west. A distant whistling was adjudged to be yet another first-class schedule, and we were scanning the timecard to identify it when another, nearer blast propelled us to trackside on the double.

Why, it's the extra! Can't be — he might just have — *it is and he's rolling!*

Rolling is mild language for what he was doing. Extra 3005 East, now no less than 98 cars between tank and

STEAM IN INDIAN SUMMER

caboose, was bearing down on Shelby with all the implications of destiny of the Book of Revelations, gaining momentum with each revolution of those four pairs of 69-inch drivers, making the legal mile a minute with ease and perhaps a notch or two better. The elephant-eared aristocrat of an Alco rammed across the diamond with smoke going high, the Baker up near center, and the crew enjoying the breeze. Out of her dusty wake came

her train — rattling, rocking, rolling, riding to Cleveland at such a pace that, as Hastings recalls it, "one felt called upon to wonder at what moment the whole shebang would take either to the air or to the adjacent countryside."

The wooden hack bringing up the markers shot off into the distance. Left in the sudden quiet were two rather shaken train-watchers, one startled operator, and the voice of a dispatcher who, with noticeable alarm, had (1) discovered the pace Extra 3005 East was making and (2) was attempting to stop him so that slower but more legitimate occupants of the eastbound main — passenger trains — could overtake the dead freight they had been supposed to run around.

Wonderful! Too often steam departs from us in the form of a fan trip that suffers an engine breakdown . . . or in a line of dead power nursed to the junkers by a Geep . . . or as a local freight locomotive, wheezing out of town without ceremony or drama. How much better to wind it up like the 3005, taking a quiet Ohio town apart, pinning its ears back, performing like Alco said her 4410 cylinder horsepower should perform.

So study again the photograph on this page. It is everything that it implies.

NEXT MONTH

STEAM has fared best in the flatlands . . . notably well in Ohio. In October TRAINS our steam searchers find Baltimore & Ohio 4-8-2's doubleheading out of Willard, O., and a 2-10-2 on the hump. Not to mention a farewell look at a Central Niagara and a session at twilight with Nickel Plate Berkshires at Bellevue. In October TRAINS!