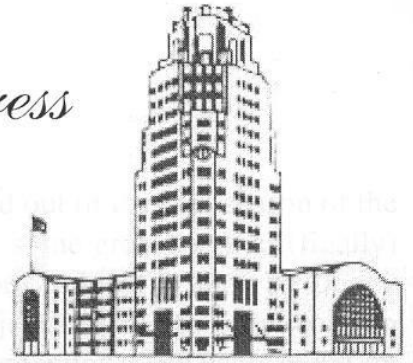


## Empire State Express



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PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

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The meeting of the Chapter for June has been cancelled because of continued State and local bans on group gatherings, as well as our meeting location indefinitely closed due to the ongoing Corona virus pandemic.

**ALL DOWN ..... NO MEETING**



About a 45 minute intercity-train ride west of London's, Paddington Station is the railway museum at Didcot. Located in an authentic former Great Western Railway engine and maintenance terminal, it is a fine collection of authentic British railroading, including this sign, surely appropriate for our current times. Let us hope and pray that soon we can once again have some normalcy to our lives and that the 'ALL DOWN, STOP DEAD' of the Corona virus pandemic will end. *Photo by John C. Dahl, Didcot, Oxfordshire, England, August 25, 2018.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I'm sure that all of you would agree with me that this "lockdown" thing is getting old. Now that the days are reaching their maximum length of daylight and outdoor temperatures are reaching comfortable levels, we all want to be outside. We all want life to be "normal" again.

With the "situation" still in place we will lose our third monthly meeting in a row. Losing the chance to have our June meeting for at Central Terminal is a real bummer. As of right now, we have asked Tony Schill to present his program in September. With the "new normal" still being developed, we will wait and see what that will look like.

A few of us have begun going to the Station on Saturdays to work. We anticipate that it can be open at some time, maybe for July? The lawn still has to be mowed and some cleaning done.

Some progress has been made. Steve and Dennis got the green lawnmower up and running. We started out replacing the incandescent bulbs at the Station with the "new" fluorescent replacement bulbs. Since then we have been replacing the fluorescent bulbs with LED bulbs. As of mid-May, Greg has finished replacing all the bulbs in the Station with LEDs. This should bear fruit over the long haul in our electrical costs.

Thanks to Bruce Becker and Anton Schwarzmüller for keeping us supplied with things to watch on our computer screens while we wait out the lockdown.

To get to the videos online, please go to the Chapter's home page on FaceBook and follow the links from there.

Greg and Bob have been working on the 2021 Chapter Calendar so that it will be ready for September.

Movie film digitization is also continuing, with two batches in progress at this writing.

There are still a lot of uncertainties as we go to press. I'm thinking that we will have to send out a newsletter, perhaps sometime in mid- July or the beginning of August. Bruce Becker does a great job of keeping the Facebook page up to date for those of you who follow that.

Until then, I'll see you when we can meet again. In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy.

*Jim Ball*

# THE PROSPERITY SPECIAL

Tony Schill



For pretty much all of 1920 and the first half of 1921 the economy of the United States was mired in a mild recession. Though the slump in business activity was very modest indeed when compared to the Great Depression that would come less than a decade in the future, it was still significant enough to concern many Americans. So it was widely seen as a sign of confidence for better times ahead when the Southern Pacific placed an order with the Baldwin Locomotive Works for no less than fifty heavy 2-10-2's for delivery in early 1922.

Under the Whyte system of locomotive classification, a 2-10-2 is normally referred to as a "Santa Fe". Not too surprisingly, that name was considered totally inappropriate by the Southern Pacific. So, these locomotives were simply referred to as "2-10-2" or "Decks", short for "Decapods" (at the time the Espee did not have any 2-10-0's, which of course were called Decapods)

The Class F-4 2-10-2's were massive locomotives, designed for heavy freight service on the mountain grades of the SP's western lines. The F-4 class was considered as technologically advanced, and the engines as built were oil-fired, with feedwater heater, superheater, booster engine on the trailing truck, and high-capacity Vanderbilt tender. The Southern Pacific did not immediately need the locomotives as they were completed at the Baldwin plant at

Eddystone, near Philadelphia. As the number of parked brand new finished locomotives increased, the legendary Samuel Vauclain, president of Baldwin, hit upon a unique way to promote the Southern Pacific, the railroad industry in general, and of course Baldwin itself. His idea was to assemble as many engines as practicable in a single train for movement from Eddystone to Los Angeles. The name of the train would be the Prosperity Special.

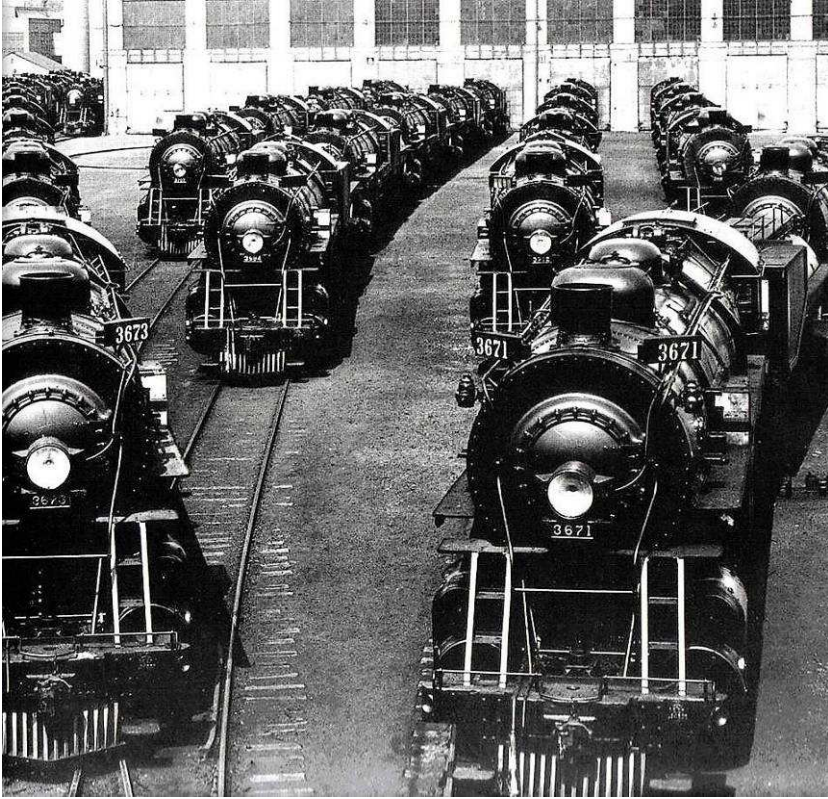
The Pennsylvania Railroad, over which the train would move from Eddystone to St. Louis, enthusiastically endorsed Vauclain's plan. The Espee was somewhat cautious at first, but soon agreed as well. The planned route was PRR to St. Louis, Cotton Belt to Corsicana, TX, and SP to Los Angeles. The train moved only in daylight, and plenty of time was built into the schedule for numerous public relations stops along the way.

Ultimately it was decided to limit the number of cold (not under steam) locomotives in the train to twenty. A minimum of two working locomotives were provided by the host railroad, with additional helpers as needed (for example, between Altoona and Gallitzin, on the grade around Horseshoe Curve, the PRR assigned six of its own locomotives). Each locomotive carried large signs proclaiming that this unique train was the Prosperity Special.

The train got underway from Eddystone with much fanfare on May 22, 1922. Each of the 20 locomotives had an assigned SP engineer, whose duties were to watch for any trouble on the engine and to oil around as needed at any stops. The train's journey was marked by many public events, complete with laudatory speeches and plenty of band music, and of course many opportunities to closely inspect the train



The entire journey to the Pacific Coast took almost six weeks. Upon arrival at Los Angeles at least some of the locomotives were shined up for a gala public event. Then the locomotives left the public spotlight and went to do the work for which they were designed. Over the next 30+ years they would be converted to coal burners (and then, in WWII, back to oil) and the boosters were removed.



The big 2-10-2's served the railroad well, especially during the crush of traffic during the war years. But as successful as they were, they could not withstand the wave of dieselization in the post-war years. Retirements of the F4 class began in 1951 and all were gone by 1958.

None were saved.

ABOVE AND BELOW: At the Baldwin Works



**Santa Fe Type Locomotives built for the Southern Pacific Lines**  
Equipped with Superheaters, Feed-Water Heaters and Boosters



Cylinders 29½ x 32 ins.  
Drivers, diam. 63½ ins.

**THE BALDWIN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**  
Philadelphia

*Compliments of L. W. Stockwell*  
Weight on drivers 306,000 lbs.  
Weight total engine 398,000 lbs.



Locomotive 3687 of the Prosperity Special seen at Los Angeles, CA





## Night Mail

By WH Auden

This is the night mail crossing the Border,  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,  
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:  
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder  
Shoveling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily as she passes  
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,  
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;  
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,  
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

Dawn freshens, Her climb is done.  
Down towards Glasgow she descends,  
Towards the steam tugs yelping down a glade of cranes  
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces  
Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.  
All Scotland waits for her:

## Night Mail – continued

In dark glens, beside pale-green lochs  
Men long for news.

Letters of thanks, letters from banks,  
Letters of joy from girl and boy,  
Receipted bills and invitations  
To inspect new stock or to visit relations,  
And applications for situations,  
And timid lovers' declarations,  
And gossip, gossip from all the nations,  
News circumstantial, news financial,  
Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,  
Letters with faces scrawled on the margin,  
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,  
Letters to Scotland from the South of France,  
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands  
Written on paper of every hue,  
The pink, the violet, the white and the blue,  
The chatty, the catty, the boring, the adoring,  
The cold and official and the heart's outpouring,  
Clever, stupid, short and long,  
The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep,  
Dreaming of terrifying monsters  
Or of friendly tea beside the band in Cranston's or Crawford's:

Asleep in working Glasgow, asleep in well-set Edinburgh,  
Asleep in granite Aberdeen,  
They continue their dreams,  
But shall wake soon and hope for letters,  
And none will hear the postman's knock  
Without a quickening of the heart,  
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?

*Published in 1936, this tribute to the UK's Night Mail train became an instant classic and a motion picture of the same name featuring the train is a classic of the art of cinematography. We have been fortunate to have that film several years ago on 'movie night' specials at the Chapter.*



## RAILROAD RELICS

The Ramapo Ajax Company made railway hardware, in particular switch stands that control moving the points in a track switch. Located in Hillburn, NY along the Erie Railroad, it was for decades an important maker of these once common devices. Now with automation of most mainline track switches the example shown here patented in 1906 has become a true Railroad Relic. Savor these things where and while you still can occasionally find them. JCD photo, October 5, 2019

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAKE SHORE RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATION IN NORTH EAST, PA.

In the spring of 1965 the New York Central Railroad announced plans to demolish its former passenger depot in North East. The last regularly scheduled NYC passenger train stopped at North East on November 25, 1960; in the years following, the building's prime purpose was to house the local freight agent. With the consolidation of the North East freight agency with that of Westfield, New York and the relocation of the remaining North East agency work to the former interlocking tower located approximately a thousand feet west of the depot, the station building was surplus. Upon learning of the railroad's plans for the then 64-year-old depot, the Lake Shore Chapter negotiated with the NYC, acquiring the structure and surrounding property in August 1965. The building as acquired basically was in good condition, but considerable effort was expended into improving the facility. Cleaning and painting were obvious necessities, and other major projects included a virtually complete rewiring, replacement of the failed steam heating system with gas hot air furnaces, revised plumbing, complete rebuilding of the rest room and the addition of a kitchen. – *submitted by Jon Rothenmeyer*



*North East, PA October 13, 2019 Photo by John C. Dahl*

*The Lake Shore & Michigan Southern had been leased to the New York Central & Hudson River RR since 1873 and would be fully merged in the New York Central Lines in the 1914 reorganization of the company. Although NYC was even in the 1870's one of the largest of railroads, individual heritage attributes die hard, and like other parts of the system the standard building types varied. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, LS&MS constructed several new passenger stations to its design seen here: cut stone foundations, beautiful brick masonry, wide overhanging roofs supported by massive brackets. The hipped roofs were originally slate.*



*Electrically lighted, steam heated, with indoor restroom facilities, they were the latest in modernity. Interiors were beautifully furnished in oak wainscoting and beadboard paneling that even today are marvels of craftsmanship. Built for the passenger trade, there are still a number of survivors of this style of station in Ohio. Here are a few more photos of the North East museum's collection of magnificent railroad artifacts. It makes a great place to visit on a day trip and the front row seat to railroad action on the former Water Level Route which passes this station can be at times quite exciting. All photos: October 5, 2019 John C Dahl*



## CHAPTER CALENDAR

JUNE MEETING IS CANCELLED

PLEASE CHECK THE CHAPTER WEBSITE FOR LATEST INFORMATION

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