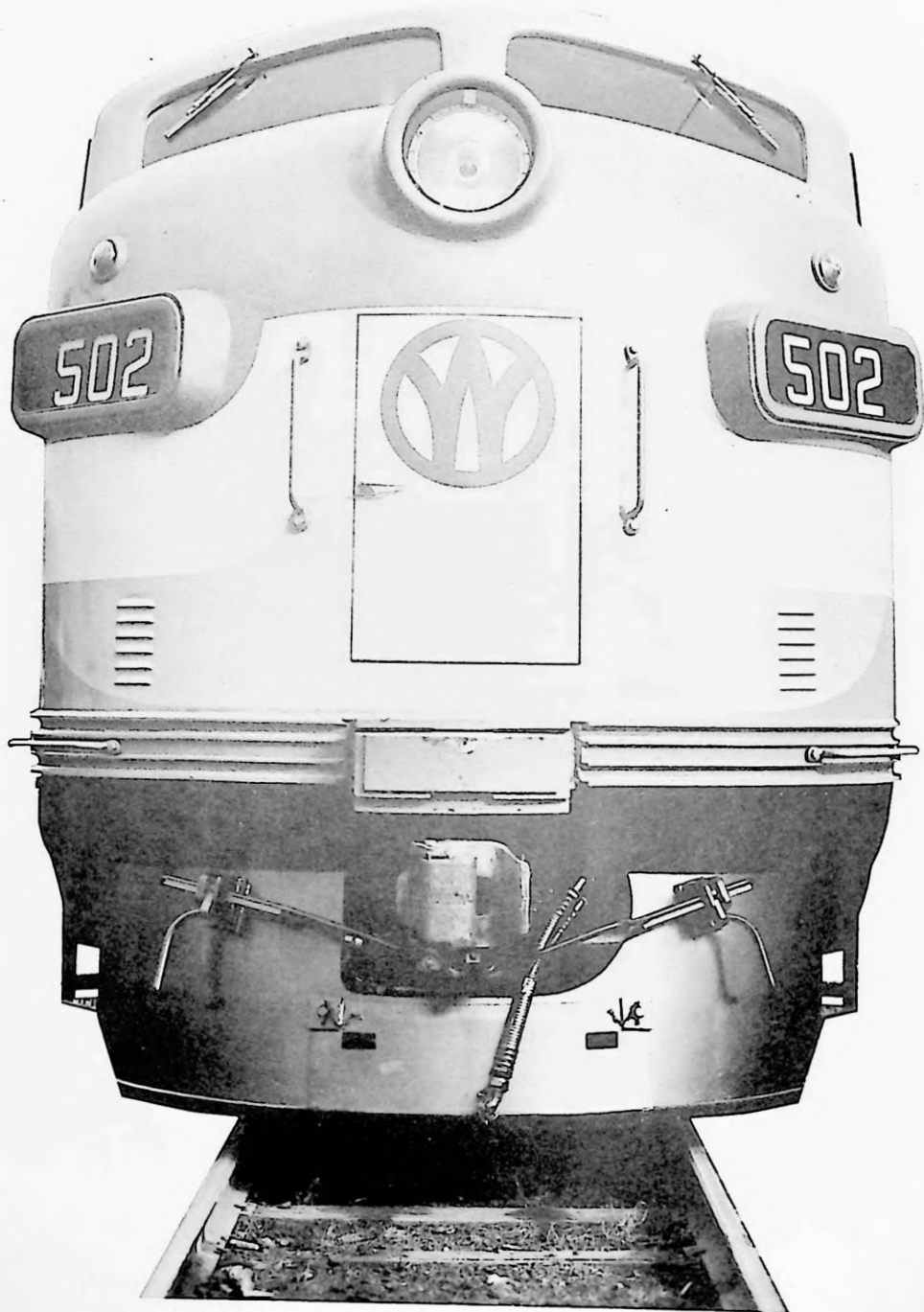




# OBSERVER

September 1969



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ONTARIO & WESTERN OBSERVER

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September, 1969

Volume 1, No. 1

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Editorial Comment ----- Is the O&W Dead?

Since March 29, 1957, there has been a void in the lives of many of us created by the cessation and subsequent abandonment of the New York, Ontario, and Western Railway. This was the death of an old and good friend to us and it seemed total and final. But was it?

F-3 503 went west, exchanged her familiar O&W colors for Western Pacific's silver and orange, and went into service hauling the crack California Zephyr. The fine business car Warwick went north to be preserved on the Arcade and Attica. NYC and EL purchased and operate sections of former O&W main and branch lines, and, in the case of NYC, switch engines as well. Stations and right-of-way are much in evidence at many places.

No, death was not total nor final. Man and nature cannot quickly and totally obliterate an institution which served so long and so well. Let us go on with the work of recording and informing, a work started when the first wet plate was exposed on an NY&OM engine, when the first right-of-way blueprint was drawn. A work continued by DeForest Diver, Robert Harding, Jack Farrell, William F. Helmer and a host of others. They believed the O&W was worth knowing and have passed much of what they know and saw to us. It is up to us to continue this tradition, to add to and inform others of this heritage.

Is the O&W dead? Individually and as an organization, we in great measure hold the answer.

# 100 YEARS --- 100 MILES

WAYNE M. DANIELS

## 1969 ALSO MARKS THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORTHERN DIVISION

Every enterprise---every human undertaking has some achievement that marks its passage from concept to accomplished fact. Rarely does this come when a total project is completed, in fact, completion of undertakings is often accompanied by a feeling of anticlimax. The great labor is finished, the deed is done, and one can remember that, somewhere in the process of accomplishment, there was a time and a place when the exertion was greatest, and the dream of the highest order. So it was with the New York & Oswego Midland Railroad, a century ago.

The dream was not outrageous. Basically, all that was wanted was an 'air line' railroad from New York City to the Great Lakes. But there was more than one dream, by more than one dreamer. The boosters from Sullivan, Delaware and Chenango Counties knew well what towns the road had to serve, and incidentally what route it had to take. The Oswego contingent knew what point had to be the Lake Ontario terminus. By 1865 they had worked it out to the point where Articles of Association were filled with the State of New York.

The necessary steps proceeded. The State passed a special Town Bonding Act to assist fund raising on a community basis. The enterprise incorporated as New York & Oswego, Midland Railroad Company, and the route through New York State had its first

complete survey.

By 1868 sufficient funds were raised to start construction, and contracts for the entire main line were awarded in June and September, with ground breaking in several places.

But the year was to be 1869, bright with promise and full of accomplishment. The railroad proceeded in segments. McNary, Clafflin & Co. of Cleveland, Ohio, were building the main line from Oswego south to Oneida. Cephas Barker of Oneida and Jarvis Lord of Rochester were occupied with constructing the segment immediately to the south from Oneida to Norwich.

These two mainline segments were favored by nature, and by the Midland engineers. Severe cuts and fills were at a minimum, and no major engineering works were required. Construction feats like the Lyon Brook Bridge and the Shawangunk Tunnel at Bloomingburg were in the domain of contractors to the south. The most severe grade in the north occurred between Oneida and Randallsville, with the summit at Eaton. In later days it was rated with a ruling equivalent grade of 1.58% in either direction. In all, it was far from being the most difficult construction task to face the Midland.

Better than ice cream, cold beer, and the Fourth of July, was April 24, 1869, when wood

burning Engine No. 1 rolled into Oneida. Her name flashed out her purpose in gold leaf Oswego, for she was to power the work train of the section above Oneida. She was a fine, all purpose 4-4-0, suitable for freight or passenger service with 60" drivers. Like most products of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works, she had the appearance of a hybrid between the designs of Mason and Rogers.

By June the tracks extended for six miles through Oneida. The temporary tracks down the center of Madison and Scononda Streets that delivered No. 1 had been left in. The Sullivan, No. 5 also joined the Midland from the New York Central by this means. Nos. 2, 3, and 4, were sent to other places on the Midland.

Building materials were pouring into the northern two segments, via the Chenango Canal, and possibly also the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg connection at Oswego and the New York Central connection at Oneida. Fifty-six pounds to the yard rail, hemlock ties, and heavy construction tools were shuttled by No. 1 with Thomas Wheaton at the throttle, and No. 5 with Edward McNiff.

The progress of the Oneida-Oswego segments was rapid. By the summer about half was complete, and the first passenger train rolled over Midland tracks from Oneida to West Monroe, carrying migrant hop pickers. No. 4, the Delaware, had been delivered at Constantia, the next depot south of West Monroe, via canal boat, and she had the honor of heading that first passenger train, with Engineer Edwin Williams and Conductor James R. Purdy.

There was method to the seemingly patchwork system of construction and supply delivery. Ob-

viously, you can build a railroad faster in two directions than in one, so if you divide the whole road into segments, and each segment into sections you can save time and problems. This concept is completely dependent on a source of supply for each section, and a source of motive power. In both cases, the Midland was able to achieve these by means of some plain and fancy planning.

And so, with the help of geography and an excellent supply network, sections above Oneida were rapidly connecting. It occurred so quickly and simultaneously that the completion of Messrs. Barker and Lord's Oneida-Norwich segment apparently went unnoticed. Possibly Midland President, Dewitt C. Littlejohn and associates were saving their publicity blasts for something more dramatic to the public mind. In mid-September, No. 8, a new arrival, piloted the President and a host of dignitaries on an inspection tour from Oneida to West Monroe, and return, repeating the hops pickers excursion, but in Chamber of Commerce style.

The summer's end of 1869 became the time for the great publicity push. It was no longer necessary to write inspiring prose about the magnificence and prosperity to be realized by the prospective New York & Oswego Midland Railroad. Now the focus switched to the thrill and beauty of riding this genuine, bonafide, brand new, flesh, wood, and steel railroad, (-and by the way, bu railroad bonds before they're gone-) as the press continuously pointed out. The Midland wasn't the first to be touted by the press in this manner, and it wouldn't be the last. Newspapers knew how their bread got buttered, and besides, they felt that such endeavors were a legitimate and necessary

service.

It was now possible for the citizenry to ride the Midland, and the late summer bustled with excursion trains of every excuse. The fares received were not nearly as important as the human experience and the sense of good will and success that was engendered. On October 12, the last rail was laid between Norwich and Fulton. A mere 12.4 miles remained to be linked and the Railroad would have through track into Oswego.

The air was electric. Officials, trainmen, laborers, newspapermen, and the people along the right of way knew what was coming and they could barely contain the excitement. The morning of November 25 saw the line from Norwich to Oswego complete, and the first engine to traverse the two northernmost segments making steam at Oswego. It was to power the first full length inspection trip. President Littlejohn and Superintendent Addison Day rode with other personages aboard the new maroon coaches, appropriately marked, paneled, and decorated as the 4-4-0 chuffed south. All along the way crowds had clustered at depots, to wave and applaud, and to be answered by the engine's whistle. The trip was interrupted by a collapsed fill at Pratts, but a work train put it right by 3 P.M. and the train moved on towards Morrisville, stopping to pick up a brass band that had been walking to meet them.

When the train reached Norwich, a feast was awaiting the official passengers, coupled with a grand evenings' celebration and punctuated by cannon fire.

Passenger service was begun quickly with No. 2 regularly assigned to the Norwich-Oswego run. The New York & Oswego Mid-

land was a 99.9 mile going concern. Her course was to be anything but smooth, but there were good days as well. In the years and decades to come the men associated with the Norwich-Oswego segments would remember that great year, 1869, and what it had meant to them—hope and accomplishment, purpose and achievement. They had labored together and brought a baby a-borning. They would not leave her an orphan.

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Our membership is steadily growing and it seems a sure thing that we will hit the 150 mark in the near future. 150 members would give us enough money to put out 4 magazines. It would also allow us to print more photos and add more pages. You, the individual member, can get us to that 150 mark. Show the magazine to people you think would make good members and have an interest in the O&W. Have them contact the magazine or send us their address and we'll send them an application.



Member Fred Beck of Milford, Pa. is a former O&W conductor with 41 years experience of the road. He now works for the Erie out of Port Jervis. Mr. Beck is chairman of the annual O&W employees' picnic which is held at Hancock, N.Y. each year. This year's was held on September 6th and he kindly invited several members of the Society to attend. We'll report on it in the next issue. Mr. Beck was one of the first ten members of the Society and also the first O&W man to join.

# COAL, GRADES, AND PUSHERS

## A BRIEF LOOK AT THE

## SCRANTON DIVISION

Extending some 55 miles north from Scranton, the NYO&W's Scranton Division joined the main line at Cadosia. Completed in 1890, this line was actually 3 shorter lines that were merged together to form the Ontario, Carbondale, and Scranton. The original purpose of this line was to give the O&W access to the anthracite coal fields of the Lackawanna Valley and the lucrative traffic that it would generate. To give an idea of how great this traffic was, the figures for 1932 show that coal tonnage originated on the O&W amounted to 5,741,341 tons for a revenue of \$5,844,963. This was 80% of the revenues for that year. The railroad followed a policy of lending money to coal operators to develop and improve their properties for greater output, taking in return mortgages on the properties and improvements and contracts to handle the entire production of the mines. The money loaned by the railroad would be repaid with interest at 6%. A few of the mining companies served by the O&W were the Scranton Coal Co., Elk Hill Coal Co., and Penn Anthracite Co.

From Mayfield Yard, nearly 14 miles north of Scranton, the road dispatched coal, general merchandise, and reefer trains north to the main line. Mayfield was the major marshalling point for the loaded hoppers brought in by mine runs from the surrounding hills. Here, too, in later years the transfer

runs containing "hot" cars of beef and other high priority merchandise from the Lehigh Valley and DL&W went into symbol freight trains. The earlier yard here had a 7 stall roundhouse and the standard engine facilities at the site now occupied by the car repair shop. Between 1910 and 1915, the engine facilities were moved to the south end of the yard. The roundhouse here originally had 10 stalls, 80' in length. Three more longer stalls were added to the south wall at a later date. The turntable was 90' long. A storeroom, machine shop, blacksmith shop, locker room and Fairbanks-Morse coaling dock were located near by. With the exception of the coaling dock, these facilities still stand and may be seen today along with diesel fuel storage tanks added later.

The yard itself was 26 tracks wide and lay between the Lackawanna River and Route U.S. 6. There were also car repair facilities, wye track, yard office and, at one time, a passenger station.

A smaller yard facility also existed to the north called Carbondale Yard. This facility was located in what is now the present town of Simpson.

In 1910 and 11, two major projects were completed on the division. The first was the extension of the Capouse branch to Sibley Jct., where it connected

with the Austin Branch of the Lehigh Valley. Although it was a major interchange point, it would gain added importance in later years when the O&W switched from a coal road to a bridge route. Originally the branch was built to serve coal breakers and it was one of several such branches constructed. 1911 saw the completion of double track from Carbondale north to the main line and from Mayfield Yard south to Olyphant.

Lines that interchanged with the O&W on this division were Lackawanna at Cayuga Jct. and Keyser Valley Yard, Lehigh Valley at Sibley Jct., Jersey Central in Scranton, Delaware and Hudson, at Jermy Transfer and Carbondale and the Erie's Jefferson Division at several points.

The Scranton Division also had the highest point on the entire O&W. This was at Poyntelle, Pa. where the elevation was 2078' above mean sea level. The grades leading up to this point required the road to use pusher engines to get the train up and over. Pushers out of Cadonia assisted Scranton bound trains, although the southbound grade did not start until they reached the end of the Delaware River bridge. Northbound trains got their helper at Mayfield. There were two wyes at Poyntelle where pushers could turn and run back to their respective origins. It was on the grades leading to Poyntelle that Class X 2-10-2 type locomotives spent much of their time. From Mayfield Yard to Poyntelle, the distance is 23.3 miles and the difference in elevation is approximately 1078'. The ruling grade northbound is 1.95%. Southbound, the distance from Cadonia to Poyntelle is 16.3 miles and the difference in elevation is almost the same as the northbound figures, 1089 feet. Since the southbound grade must reach the

Poyntelle elevation in some 6 miles less, the grade for southbound traffic was somewhat heavier. R.M.

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The Scranton Division article on this page refers to the direction from Scranton to Cadonia as being northbound. Actually the reverse is true. When the article was being written, the editor used geographic direction. However, a check of employees' timetables indicates that a train bound from Cadonia to Scranton is NORTHbound!

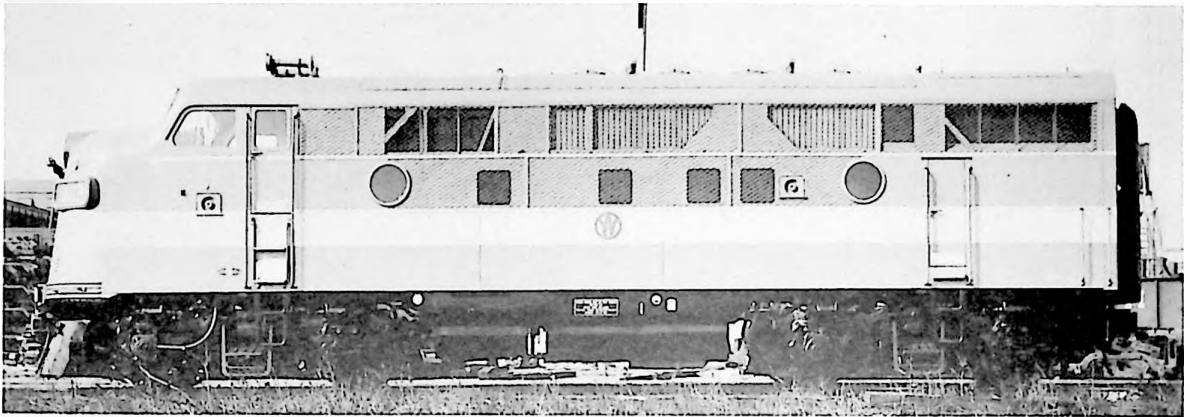
If you realize that a train going over the mainline from Weehawken to Oswego is northbound (geographically Northwest), then the Scranton Division business makes a little sense. If that same train had headed down the Scranton Division at Cadonia, he would still be considered northbound because that was his original direction leaving Weehawken.



Membership cards will be issued in 1970. We don't have the money for them at this time and most of our time has been spent in organizing and learning how to produce the magazine. When we get two issues under our belt, we should be ready to tackle the printing of the cards.



Those of you who received the original founding letter from the Society might have noted an error it contained. Jack Farrell reminded us that the O&W was always a railWAY and never a railroad. We knew this but slipped anyway.



## ROAD DIESEL UNITS



The following roster was researched and submitted by Mr. J. Rosenfeld of Dumont, N.J. The next issue will contain a roster of the GE and EMD switching engines. Note that FT unit 601

was the only engine in the 600 series. This was the so-called guinea pig engine. She was used as a test ground for Esso Oil Co. research. Various types of fuels and lubricants were tried.

NYO&W NUMBER	BUILDER'S NUMBER	CONSTRUCTION DATE
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A	B
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### 2700 h.p. FT A&B Drawbar Coupled

601	3139	3141	May, 1945
801	3123	3131	"
802	3124	3132	"
803	3125	3133	"
804	3126	3134	"
805	3127	3135	"
806	3128	3136	"
807	3129	3137	"
808	3130	3138	"

### 1500 h.p. F-3 Units

501	3146	January, 1948
502	3147	February, 1948
503	3148	March, 1948

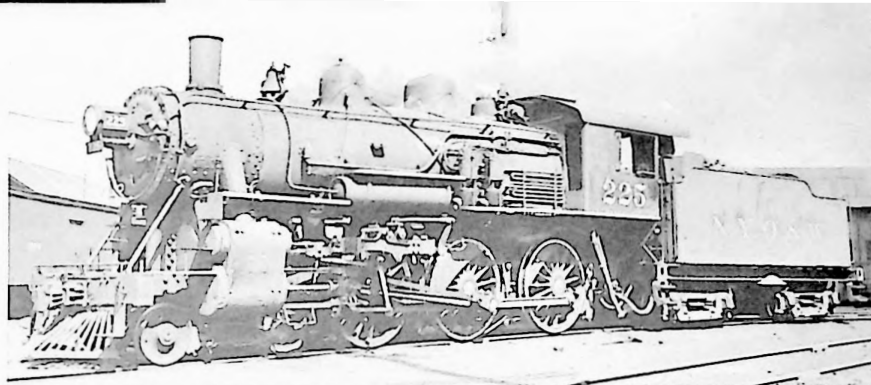
### 3000 h.p. F-3 A&B Not Drawbar Coupled

821	3142	3144	March, 1948
822	3143	3145	"

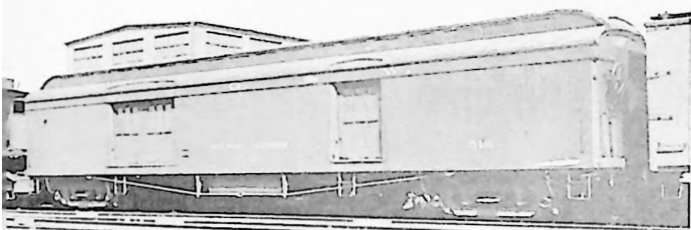




# PHOTOS



The 225 displays a groomed appearance at Middletown in 1938. These class E engines were built by Brooks in 1911. John P. Scharle photo



In 1950, baggage car 518 was in work train service. Note B&O lettering. A. E. Owen photo



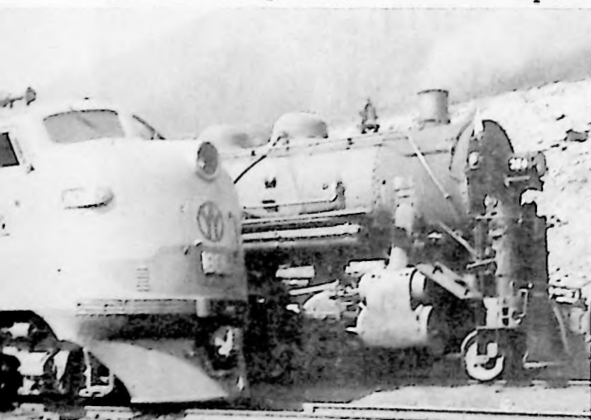
The Fellsburgh station now houses the local police dept. Too few of the depots did as well. Milt Pulis photo



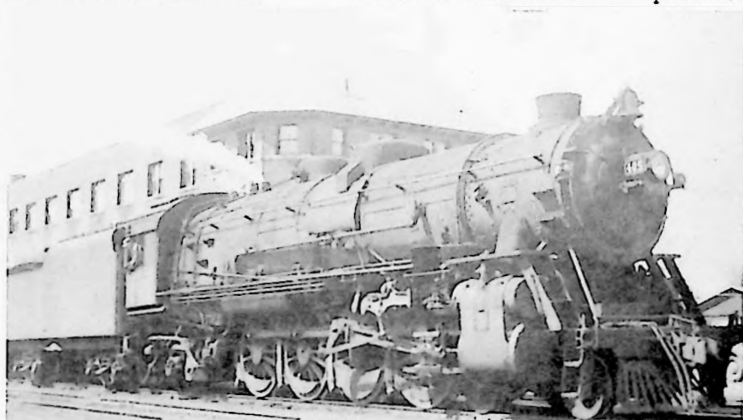
Yard and road diesels pause at Mayfield Yard. Werv Cohen photo



O&W used metal flags to indicate extras as shown by unit 821. Also visible are two air hoses and speed recorder cable. Don P. Wallworth photo



Recent arrival 908 and veteran 321 await call to service at Cadonia.



Probably the best known of all O&W steamers was the 405. Here she has a 1947 fan trip coupled to her tank. Herb Thyre two photos

## ROSTER NOTES

None of the O&W A units had multiple unit jumper receptacles on the front. This limited the FTs to an A-B-B-A lash up. There is an exception however; the FTs and F-3s could and did lash up on occasion and although I did not see it, it is possible that an F-3 B unit (821B or 822B) could have been lashed between 2 AB sets of FTs. This would have created an A-B-B-B-A set and it would have been the largest multiple unit engine possible.

None of the diesels had steam boilers and quite understandably. Obviously, the many summer excursion trains didn't need heat and the only year round trains were numbers 1 and 2. Heat for them was ingeniously supplied by heater cars HT-1 and HT-2, which were fabricated in Middletown shops to match the car body contour of the F units.

All B units carried the same number of their A unit mate, except that a suffix letter B was added. The numbers were carried on the sides of all units at the far lower rear corner in 3 inch high letters. The FT A units also carried their numbers proudly on their front end in two places. They were in yellow letters under the headlight and on metal plates attached to the nose door. The metal plate numbers were chrome silver and had white reflectors set into them for ease of visibility at night.

Units 501, 502, and 503 were intended for and originally used in passenger service. They were equipped with air signal lines and the Middletown shop force installed footboards on both front and rear to aid in switching operations. At times the 800s and 820s also took turns on passenger runs. Certain of these units had air signal lines also. R.M.

## UNIT DISPOSITION

The FTs (except 806 and 807) were sold to equipment dealer, Harold Gottfried. He stored them in the Erie's Croxton Yard in Secaucus where they remained until 1965. An interesting note here is that when these units arrived at Croxton, they were much better cared for than units from almost any neighboring road you would care to name. Although bankrupt and broke, there was a pride in the Ontario and Western that is totally lacking in railroading today.

While the units were stored there, various rumors circulated as to who was interested in buying them. No moves were made until November, 1965, when the NYC bought them for trade-in value. By this time, 9 years of weather had taken their toll and the engines were in sad condition. The NYC traded them in for GP-40s and as of December, 1968, some of the FT units were still in the EMD Yard at La-Grange.

Engines 806 and 807 were purchased by National Metal and Steel Co. They were then resold to the B&O. 806 A&B became B&O 4412 and 5412 respectively. The 807 became 4413 and 5413. They, too, are now out of service and are believed to have gone back to EMD as trade-ins.

The 500s fared the best of all O&W road diesels. They were sold to equipment dealer Hyman Michaels who in turn sold them to the Sacramento Northern. 501, 502, and 503 became 301, 302, and 303 respectively. The 303 was leased to the Western Pacific where it is now 801D. As far as is known, these units are still in service and information on them is expected shortly.

821 and 822 did not go very far.

The Erie purchased them for freight service and renumbered the 821 A&B to 714A and 714C. The 822 became 714D and 714B. According to the old Erie numbering scheme for cab units, A and D suffixes denote A units while B and C suffixes denote B units. After the E-L merger in 1960, this is how they were renumbered:

714A-7141  
714B-7142  
714C-7143  
714D-7144

Here again these O&W veterans have been retired and returned to EMD. R.M.

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Credit Jeff Otto with finding and contributing the diesel engine tonnage rating chart. During the recent clean up of O&W materials at Orangeburg, N.Y., Jeff got some fine O&W memorabilia which he is kindly sharing with us.

Jeff also managed to clear up the mystery of the box like apparatus on the roof of the FT B units. It seems as if this was some sort of a hot air recovery system applied at Middletown and not LaGrange. If anyone working on a model of the FT units needs the dimensions, we'll be glad to supply them if you send us an SAE.



Our first woman member is Mrs. Russell Van Winkle of Pennsylvania. We don't know how she heard of us, but we bid her a warm welcome. While a student, Mrs. Van Winkle worked in the Middletown Station Restaurant as a part time waitress.



Circle November 21st on your calendar, save up five dollars, and prepare to see some of the finest O&W movies and pictures in existence. O&WTHS member Jack Farrell will present a fine evening of entertainment and commentary at the 3rd Annual Ontario & Western Chapter N.R.H.S. dinner. Chapter President John Chryn has cordially extended a welcome to all Society members.

In addition to the show, you will enjoy a roast beef dinner and have an opportunity to meet other Society members. The location for this affair is the Club 211 on Route 211 about a mile or so from the center of Middletown.

Tickets are now available at \$5.00 apiece from banquet chairman Sy Robinson at P.O. Box 713, Middletown, N.Y. 10940. Make checks payable to the O&W Chapter, N.R.H.S.

This event merits the support of all Society members, since it is a rare opportunity to see movies of the O&W in steam. We hope to meet many of you personally that we now know only through correspondence.

Seating, we understand, might be limited. Therefore, you are encouraged to send in for your ticket at the earliest convenience.



Special thanks are due to Jack Farrell and Glenn Van Winkle for their generous donations to help the Society get underway. With that kind of faith, we're bound to succeed.

SUPPLEMENTAL ENGINE RATINGS  
DIESEL ENGINES - Gross Tons - Actual

NORTHBOUND	5400 HP	2700 HP	1350 HP	1000HP (Switch)
Weehawken to Cornwall	6050	3025	1513	
Cornwall to Campbell Hall	3900	1950	975	
Campbell Hall to Middletown	6050	3025	1513	
Middletown to Liv. Manor	4260	2130	1065	
Cadosia to Mayfield Yard	3500	1750	875	500
Capouse Junction to Sibley	3000	1500	750	
Cadosia to Walton	4000	2000	1000	560
Walton to Sidney	4000	2000	1000	560
Sidney to Norwich	4080	2040	1020	580
Norwich to Pecksport	6000	3000	1500	
Randallsville to Eaton	4900	2450	1225	
Wilburs to Oneida	12500	6250	3125	
Oneida to Fulton	11200	5600	2800	
Fulton to Oswego	10308	5154	2577	
Pecksport to Utica	12800	6400	3200	

SOUTHBOUND	5400 HP	2700 HP	1350 HP	1000HP (Switch)
Oswego to Fulton	6940	3470	1735	
Fulton to Oneida	8590	4295	2148	
Oneida to Pecksport	4928	2464	1232	
Whites Corner to Eaton	5034	2517	1258	
Pecksport to Norwich	7350	3675	1838	
Norwich to Sidney	3864	1932	966	560
Sidney to Walton	4094	2047	1024	580
Walton to Cadosia	4470	2235	1118	620
Utica (Canal) to Pecksport	4702	2351	1176	
Rome to Clinton	5142	2571	1286	
Scranton to Mayfield Yard	5620	2810	1405	
DL&W Pittston Jct. to Taylor	5620	2810	1405	
" Taylor to Cayuga Jct.	5216	2608	1304	
Mayfield Yd. to Forest City	4520	2260	1130	630
Forest City to Poyntelle	6350	3175	1588	860
Poyntelle to Cadosia				
Cadosia to Livingston Manor	10310	5155	2578	
Livingston Manor to Liberty	5490	2745	1372	740
Liberty to Summitville				
Summitville to Middletown	6050	3025	1515	830
Middletown to Camp. Hall				
Campbell Hall to Cornwall	10584	5292	2646	
Cornwall to Weehawken	10174	5087	2543	

It is of the utmost importance that the diesel engines are not overloaded, and all concerned must be very careful in figuring the tonnage for these engines to know that their figures are absolutely correct.

F. HAWK  
General Superintendent

4/19/45

## MAIL STOP

Members are encouraged to write to the magazine whenever and as often as they wish. Here, too, certain courtesies must be met. Constructive and well-intended criticism of the magazine is welcome. Letters critical of people other than the magazine staff will be printed at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to revise this policy since we don't know what the volume of mail will be.



Manville Wakefield informs us that his new history based on the O&W in Sullivan and eastern Delaware Counties is nearing its publication date. A descriptive brochure, now in preparation, of the contents in detail will be mailed sometime before Christmas. Those desiring a brochure are requested to mail their name and address to:

Manville B. Wakefield  
Wakefair Press  
Grahamsville, N.Y.

Anticipated publication date is Spring, 1970.



Sometimes it is necessary to really dig for a point of technical information. This recently occurred when we wanted to see what the original O&W Observer looked like. Fortunately, member Marv Cohen has a fine collection of memorabilia and he very kindly spent a Sunday afternoon showing us through it. We found that like most company magazines, the Observer reported upon employees' activities and various industries along the line. We would like to be historically accurate and follow its layout but since our major

## TRANSFER RUN

Transfer Run is provided as a service to members who have O&W materials or information to sell, trade, or loan. Likewise, it is designed to give an opportunity to those members seeking material and information to ask for it.

Please note that space is limited and that notices placed here are at the discretion of the editor. Fairness to all members shall and will be considered before running any ad. Misuse or attempted misuse shall be considered grounds for suspending a member and forfeiture of dues. The limit for this column is 30 words.

The insertion below should serve as an example:

INFO. WANTED: Name of model and mfg. of any O&W hand lanterns. Also last patent date and type of O&W markings.  
Wayne Daniels, 279 Maywood Ave., Maywood, N.J. 07607.

Wayne is doing research on O&W hand lanterns for a future issue. A postcard with the above information would be adequate.



concern is historical and technical in scope, it may not always be possible. At any rate, this is an area that requires further consideration.

See you in Middletown

**NOVEMBER 21st**

See page 11.