

The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

Quarterly

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Jeff Brouws on Railroad Photography



The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Quarterly

Spring 2008 Volume 28, Number 2

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Front Cover: Still Life: Southern Pacific-PFE reefer wheel and journal box, Roseville, California, 1965, Richard Steinheimer; courtesy Shirley Burman.

Rear Cover: Sense of Space: Double-headed National Railways of Mexico freight train near Chalco, Mexico, 1961, Jim Shaughnessy; courtesy Jim Shaughnessy



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The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

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From the Editor

One of the goals of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society is to foster research and writing on a wide variety of topics related to railroad history. Another goal of the Society is to promote and recognize excellence in railroad photography, and a key vehicle for this is the annual Fred R. and Jane A. Stindt Photography Award. Many of us, though, find it difficult to research and write about railroad photography because, like critiquing a work of art, it's hard to find the words to describe how you react emotionally and intellectually to it, as well as trying to determine what messages and themes the artist was trying to convey when they did the work.

In his piece beginning on page 8, Jeff Brouws brings together intellectual rigor around evaluating railroad photography with a selection of fine images to give us an in-depth look at the meaning of railroad photography, along with some ideas on how we might pursue it ourselves in new and different ways. We are very pleased to present Jeff's article, and also thank the photographers who provided images.

The Railroad History Awards for 2008 were announced at the Society's annual meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in late May, which is earlier than normal. The winners are noted on page 30, and complete award citations will be included in the upcoming Fall-Winter issue of *Railroad History*.

Highlights in this issue's "The Telegrapher's Report" include an informative review of the finances of the Society by Parker Lamb, a report on January's work in the Society's Sacramento archives earlier this year, along with notes on the passing of several notable figures in our community this year. Also, please note the announcement of next year's annual meeting at the top of page six.

The work of our regular columnists, Steamdome and John Gruber, along with reports from various Society chapters, round out this issue.



Railroad Landscape as Social Space: Milwaukee Road conductor, Avery, Idaho, 1973, Jeff Brouws. Courtesy, Jeff Brouws.

The Telegrapher's Report



2007 Financial Summary

by J. Parker Lamb, President

In the previous issue of the *Quarterly*, I alluded briefly to our annual operating budget. I note that we had experienced annual deficits of around \$10 K for the past few years, primarily due to the inflationary trends of business operations.

To give you a closer look at how this deficit arises, I could present a page-long list of figures for income and expense, and let you decipher things. However, it seems to me that the situation will be easier to comprehend if we deal only with four clusters of income and expense. To further enhance your understanding, I have used the simple block diagrams show here.

On the income side, it is important to notice that, while dues income is fixed by our membership level, we have an opportunity to improve the levels of gifts and publication sales.

On the expense side, the significant costs associated with Railroad History have been widely known since the buildup in overall quality some five years ago with the Friends program. However, remember that both the sales

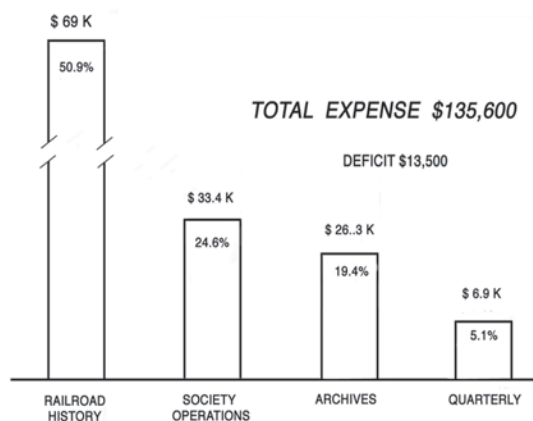
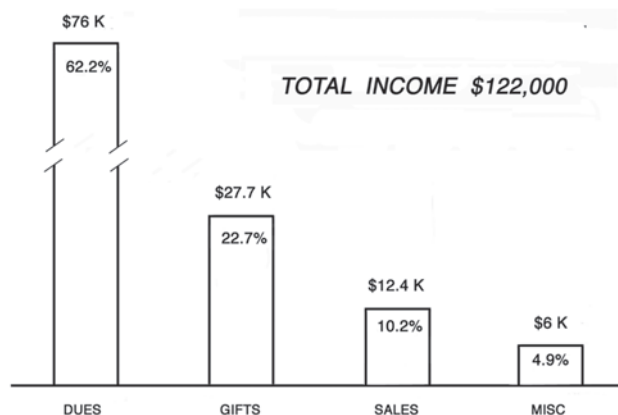
and gift income can be promoted as partial offsets to this cost.

The box labeled Society Operations includes not only administrative costs (such as membership records and due collection) but also our awards program, which provides the society with significant external recognition as the nation's "evaluator of excellence."

For 2007, there was a \$10 K increase in operations related to the member survey. We also note that expenses associated with the Archives program, discussed elsewhere in this issue, have not been able to provide much sales income (from researchers) to offset these costs.

In summary, while the annual operating shortfall has been a reality in recent years, the overall financial health of the society is good, since our reserve funds are easily capable of covering this type of need. However, since we prefer that this use of reserves be an occasional event, we expect the anticipated dues increase for 2009 to mitigate any deficits for a number of years.

R&LHS FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2007



Second Annual Archive Work Session Held in Sacramento

The recent Archive Work Session held in Sacramento, CA was considered a success by our archivist and the four R&LHS members who attended the session. Due to space limitations, R&LHS archival resources not presently located at the California State Railroad Museum are held in four storage units elsewhere in the city. The Archive Oversight Committee (AOC) was formed in 2007 to take action to reduce these storage costs, as well as to initiate a discussion with CSRM regarding their ability to store all of our material in the future.

Four members of the committee (see photo) were in Sacramento to assist our Archivist. During three days of intense review, we were able to look “inside every box” to determine the specific contents. With this detailed inventory, we will now be able to determine if R&LHS should keep them for future reference material, or transfer them to other historical societies.

Specific tasks performed during the work session included: (1) Decided which of the four storage units would be the first to be emptied and thereby reduce total rental

fees over \$1800; (2) Consolidated material within the other storage units; (3) Developed detailed listing of contents for each storage box. This list will be used by the AOC to review items for possible deaccession. As information, the AOC will also review our long range collection policy with respect to the accession and deaccession of archival material; (4) Cataloged boxes of unknown material donated recently to the Society; (5) Identified the material that had been previously approved by the R&LHS Board for deaccession. AOC members isolated these items to assist Jacki in making arrangements to transfer this material to various historical groups or collectors; (6) Cataloged more than 478 books (about one-third of our collection) by author/title for future review to determine which will be retained.

The AOC is also planning for our Third Annual Archive Work Session in 2009. Future announcements will be seen in the *R&LHS Quarterly*. Should you have any questions, please contact Archivist Jacki Pryor at the following email address: jackip@osbaccess.com.



R&LHS Board Members who attended the Archive Work Session in Sacramento earlier this year - (l-r), Archivist Jacki Pryor, Bob Holzweiss, Bill Howes, Jim Smith and David Pfeiffer. Photo courtesy of Jim Smith

Society's 2009 Annual Meeting To Be Held In Portland, Maine

June 18 - June 21, 2009

The 2009 annual meeting of the Railway & Locomotive Society will be held in Portland, Maine from June 18 to June 21. Board member Jerry Angier reports that planning is well under way, and members will be able to make reservations beginning in January 2009. Members should

plan to arrive in Portland on Thursday, June 18, ready for a full two days of events along with the Sunday breakfast meeting.

More details will be provided in the *Quarterly*, as well as on the Society's website, as they develop. Stay tuned!

Veteran Society Members Stagner, Kindig and Hart Passed Away This Year

Long-time Railway & Locomotive Historical Society members Lloyd Stagner, Richard H. Kindig, and George M. Hart passed away this year. Lloyd Stagner died on January 18, 2008 in Newton, Kansas at the age of 84. Richard H. Kindig died on April 7, 2008 in Denver, Colorado, at the

age of 92.. George M. Hart died on April 17, 2008 at the age of 89.

Complete memorials for each of these gentlemen are found in *Railroad History* 198 (Spring-Summer 2008) on pages 112-115.

Former Santa Fe Chairman John S. Reed Passes Away

Former Santa Fe Industries Chairman & Chief Executive Officer John S. Reed died on March 16, 2008 in Lake Forest, Illinois at the age of 90. A complete memorial is included in *Railroad History* 198 (Spring-Summer 2008) on pages 111 - 112. Mr. Reed's memorial service was held on Saturday, April 5 at the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Forest. Jim Giblin, a veteran of the railroad and the trucking business, as well as an accomplished transportation writer, spent a portion of his career with the Santa Fe, and attended Mr. Reed's memorial service. After the service, Jim sent the following letter to David Lester, Editor of the *Quarterly*. At the end of the letter, he references

David:

At last year's Lexington Group event, over lunch as I recall, you and Pete asked me why I decided to get back into the railroad business in 1999, and accept an offer from Santa Fe Railway. As I put it at the time, when someone calls you up and asks you, in effect, if you would like to help save an American legend it's difficult to say no. You seemed somewhat skeptical about my response at the time but perhaps this story will help explain my earlier answer.

There really is something mystical, magical and quite remarkable about the Santa Fe. And here's the absolutely perfect, ultimate example of what can only be described as a metaphysical experience.

On Saturday afternoon, April 5, 2008, I had the opportunity to attend the memorial service for Mr. Reed, at the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest. It was an absolutely beautiful sunny afternoon, the best of the year so far. The event was billed as a "Celebration of the Life of John Shedd Reed". Notable attendees included Rob Krebs and Larry Cena, both former Santa Fe Railway CEO's, as well as Don McInnes (my former boss) and V. P. Law Jeff Moreland. My good friend Paul Nowicki, now of BNSF, was also in attendance.

It was a wonderful hour-long celebration of a truly remarkable life. But the finest moment was the last one, when Mr. John

*"the good Doctor", and he is referring to Dr. Pete Patton, who was a professor of transportation at the University of Tennessee for many years, and who passed away several years ago. Dr. Patton was a rail enthusiast and accomplished writer, and wrote a column in *Passenger Train Journal* for many years entitled "From the Dome". Dr. Patton and Jim developed a friendship that lasted until Dr. Patton's death. Jim's letter includes a tip of his hat to Dr. Patton, but is focused primarily on John Reed, the Santa Fe, the mystique of railroading, and the memory of those who have contributed so much to the industry that we hold dear.*

Shedd Reed proved that even in death he was still the classiest president of the classiest railroad in American history. After Reverend Christine Chakoian finished the Charge and Benediction, for the Postlude organist Jill Hunt began to play, what else but, "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe." I'm sure Johnny Mercer and Harry Warren never intended this song to be played on a church organ, but I doubt that it ever sounded better or in a more appropriate setting.

I know you are a big fan of the Southern Railway, and I think I understand the appeal of Graham Claytor, the steam program and the Southern Crescent. But I'm not sure that mere words can describe what happened that Saturday afternoon in Lake Forest. During those few minutes listening to Messrs. Mercer and Warren's tune something cosmic happened. The Super Chief, the Warbonnet, mile-a-minute intermodal trains, Fred Harvey, Mimbreno China, it was all there. We experienced The Mystique first hand, and I thought how truly fortunate I was to have been a small part of it. And how I would not have traded anything not to have been a part of it.

I suspect our dear departed friend the good Doctor would have understood.

Jim Giblin

The Evolution of Railroad Photography

by David C. Lester

There are very few, if any, railroad and railroad history enthusiasts who do not consider rail photography a significant aspect of their enjoyment of railroading. Whether it's a professor writing a book on an obscure topic associated with railroad history, or the enthusiast who is at trackside each weekend, photography is a key part of our avocation. As Tony Reeve and Dan Cupper pointed out in their award-winning article on the legacy of Lucius Beebe, "the railfan's need to look at, as well as read about, railroads seems to remain unsated." ["Mixed Legacy", *Railroad History*, Fall-Winter 2005, pp. 28-39].

The evolution of railroad photography from its origin as a tool of railroad enthusiasts to facilitate the enjoyment of their hobby, to a form of expression that continues to gain recognition among the fine art community, is cause for celebration. It also speaks to the universal appeal of railroading and the celebration of America's industrial heritage.

Jeff Brouws is one of America's leading thinkers about railroad photography, and is an accomplished writer and photographer, whose accomplishments are outlined in John Gruber's notes on Jeff below. I first met Jeff at the 2006 "Conversations" conference of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art, where he presented a program that was based on the ideas in the article found in this issue of the *Quarterly* on pages 8-20. After Jeff's presentation, one conference attendee told me that he had "never heard such a detailed analysis of railroad photography, and didn't realize that there was that much to think about."

As John Gruber points out below, Jeff's interest in photography is not limited to railroading, but also encompasses other American landscapes, as evidenced by his recent book *Approaching Nowhere - Photographs by Jeff Brouws* [W.W. Norton & Company, 2006]. The book is a study of cultural geography, and the life cycles of urban and rural landscapes, and Jeff's excellent photographs are accompanied by two absorbing essays, one by Jeff, and the other by William L. Fox. Jeff's work, both within and outside of railroading, helps one appreciate the depth of photographic expression.



Jeff Brouws

Photo courtesy of Wendy Brouws

A Word on Jeff Brouws

by John Gruber, President
Center for Railroad Photography & Art

Jeff Brouws' reputation as a fine-art photographer provides an unusual perspective for his comments about creativity in railroad photography. His photographic books focusing on the cultural landscape of America offer excellent models for placing trains in the landscape, an especially innovative way to look at the railroad in a non-equipment like context. He is the co-author of *A Passion for Trains: The Railroad Photography of Richard Steinheimer*; *Starlight On The Rails* (with Ed Delters), *Railroading West* (with Ronald C. Hill); and a monograph of Jim Shaughnessy's work, *The Call of Trains*, due from W. W. Norton in November 2008.

His books such as *Readymades: A Catalog of American Artifacts* and *Approaching Nowhere*—which both examine the evolving cultural landscapes of America—have established his national reputation. Brouws' work can be found in museum collections across the United States.

He is also visionary although he might shy away from that description. Two *Trains* magazine "Turntable" columns from January, 1985, and January 1988, entitled "Imitation or Imagination" and "Remember the Railroader" respectively, encouraged new directions in railroad photography, recognizing the need to shift away from the prevailing three-quarter-wedge aesthetic that had long dominated the hobby toward a fresher viewpoint, to image making that emphasized the human side of railroading. For the Center, he has been instrumental in bringing new perspectives to its annual photography symposium, as well as influencing and helping to organize general conference programming and panel discussions over these past three years. —John Gruber

On Railroad Photography and Cultural Geography

by Jeff Brouws

The following is a close approximation of a talk given at the Center for Railroad Photography and Art's annual conference held at Lake Forest College in March 2006. The lecture consisted of 150 images and lasted 50 minutes. The first part comprised work done by some of the great railfan photographers we all know and love; the second-half consisted of non-rail photographers (mostly fine-art photographers) who use the railroad environment to explore historical, societal, environmental, anthropological or archeological ideas. These latter images mostly featured no trains or locomotives, but highlighted different aspects of the railroad landscape, what John Stilgoe has termed the "Metropolitan Corridor"—that slice of territory all train tracks traverse in urban and rural areas. I've provided

URL's for David Plowden, Simpson Kalisher, Michael Mathers, Margaret Morton, Mark Ruwedel, Joel Sternfeld, and Edward Burtynsky in this text so you can search their websites for visuals if you desire. By the way, the six attributes I've ascribed to Richard Steinheimer, Jim Shaughnessy and Phillip Hastings I'm suggesting were part of their photography in a subconscious way; they did these things naturally, without much (if any) forethought. Nevertheless, I think it's fair to analyze a photographer's pictures after-the-fact and categorize them in such a fashion.

I firmly believe talking about your imagery improves your photography: case-in-point is the existence of on-line chat rooms, and conferences like this one that are part of the contemporary railfan experience in America.

Introduction

Railroad photography has been an important part of the railfan experience in the United States for the past 80 years. While little in-print debate or intellectualizing over this topic has occurred, it's not from a lack of intelligence or insight within the community—a few hours spent reading the on-line forum, ObsCar, will confirm many railfans reflect on their work (and the work of others) thoughtfully. Previously we've viewed rail-enthusiasts photography as an aspect of the hobby we have fun with, that we relax with: why burden it with anything more? Railroad photography has reached a certain maturity level, however, and it's now fitting to talk about it in broader terms—different terms that relate more to its history, aesthetics and content then to whether or not one uses digital or film, or prefers wide angle lenses to telephoto ones.

Without a doubt the photographic path—from Lucius Beebe to Ted Benson, Fred Jukes to Joel Jensen—has been a long arc of creativity and passionate endeavor. Visual breakthroughs seen previously, and those published recently, have often been breathtaking. But, what if we went a little deeper with our conversation? What if we donned the mantle of railfan-as-visual anthropologist, or railfan-as-roving industrial archeologist, or thought of ourselves as contemporary social observers who recontextualized the railroad and its impact on our lives? Reframing how we regard railroad photography could encourage artistic growth, or enlarge the possibilities for different visual interpretations of the railroad landscape.

I know from personal experience as a photographer

after a certain level of mastery is achieved and our styles "mature into predictability"—one either settles for a sameness in the pictures one makes or remains vigilantly restless, always pushing the envelope toward a new way of seeing. Or alternatively, by getting past the picture's surface and delving into its content, one uses photography to explore topics of social or historical significance. My own cure was this: I gave up taking train pictures in 1986 because I felt they were derivative. I sensed another kind of railroad photograph to make but didn't know what it looked like, so I turned to other subject matter like the American highway. I also began to study the history of American photography, non-railroad photography, sensing that steeping one's self in other kinds of images might open something up creatively. I began looking at the work of Simpson Kalisher and David Plowden, and the Farm Security Administration photographers like Walker Evans, John Vachon, Marion Post Wolcott and Jack Delano. In the last few years I've updated this inquiry by also paying attention to contemporary fine-art photographers who sometimes work within the railroad environment but are not solely railroad photographers like Edward Burtynsky, Margaret Morton, Mark Ruwedel and Joel Sternfeld.

All these image-makers were (are) photographers who occasionally made (make) photographs with trains in them—their images were quite different from a Steinheimer or Hastings—but how so? Could photographers with diverse backgrounds and intentions, shooting the same subject matter, make radically different pictures?



Narrative Possibilities: Western Pacific's California Zephyr, Fremont, California 1970, Richard Steinheimer; courtesy Shirley Burman.

It seemed possible. So I started entertaining the notion: would we as railroad/railfan photographers take a different kind of picture if we thought of ourselves as photographers first and railfans second? Personally, I think we would and the names I mentioned above confirm that indeed there are different approaches that could prove valuable to us. Tangentially, it's also important to note: when you realize everything in the railroad landscape is potential subject matter, it's liberating and opens up pictorial possibility. Clearly, the photographers mentioned above who are not part of the established railfan fraternity have a fresh take on our favorite subject and are worthy of examination.

I've been thinking about railroad photography a long time. Back in 1985 I wrote a piece for a *Trains* "Turntable" entitled "Imagination or Imitation", questioning the lack of creativity within railroad photography: that in fact we seemed to be merely recycling the ideas of our most prominent predecessors: Steinheimer, Hastings, Shaughnessy. While there was nothing wrong with this, I asked what would happen if we somehow trusted our intuition and imagination more. The article was written in response to a

picture I had sent to David Morgan a few years earlier that he had rejected "as being too far-out for us Dairylanders" which I found to be an amusing response (see *Starlight On The Rails*, Abrams, 2000, p. 33). Ironically, this type of picture—which Morgan rejected in 1983—has become commonplace within the railfan photo community over the last twenty years. Movement, lights, and after-sunset shots: mood over substance. Similarly, I wrote a later "Turntable" piece entitled "Remember the Railroader" in 1988, once again suggesting we railfan photographers ought to pay more attention to photographing railroaders, a dying breed. And there, too, this interest has come to pass as we've seen with the publication of Kalmbach's *Faces of Railroading*, the Center for Railroad Photography and Art's touring *Railroad Workers* exhibit, and with the work of younger railfan photographers who have lionized the railroad worker in their image-making of late.

So being somewhat of a clairvoyant I'm going to posit a new idea: within the next ten years railroad photography will evolve and expand toward the field of cultural geography, i.e., railroad photographers will begin to embrace the larger socioeconomic, sociopolitical, historical or

land-use issues that comprise and intersect with the railroad environment, and explore those ideas photographically (a recent presentation at CRRP&A's 2008 conference by Scott Lothes revealed that this talented younger photographer is thinking along these lines; perhaps he will be a principal mover-and-shaker in fomenting this new direction). This shift will occur out of a desire to find fresh visual material within the railroad environment as conventional photographic possibilities diminish. Security considerations will continue to worsen around all railroad facilities making access even more difficult. The railroad industry will continue merging toward a monoculture, with every locomotive being similar in paint scheme and style, belonging (eventually) to the one or two remaining Class-1 railroads left roaming the country's steel network. Further attrition will occur among the ranks of railroaders as management strives to eliminate all human beings on board moving trains. In short, railroad photographers will find that subjects they've traditionally gravitated toward—the trains, the locomotives, the personnel—are no longer there, or don't represent the visual possibilities they once did.

These eventualities may be a good thing because it will force us to photographically investigate other aspects that concern the railroad. Perhaps a broader sense of history, geography, or a desire to plumb social or environmental conditions—with the railroad in mind—might enter our

work. There are photographers out there that are engaging the railroad in just such a fashion these days, some with environmental and social concerns, others from an archeological or anthropological perspective. As alluded to above: Canadian fine-art photographer Ed Burtynsky addressed the collision between technology (railroads) and nature with his "Rail Cuts" series in the 1990s—images that examined the physical scarring of the landscape by the railroad right-of-way. Margaret Morton, a professor of photography at Cooper-Union and a dedicated documentarian, recorded the plight of several of New York City's homeless residing in an abandoned Amtrak tunnel on Manhattan's west side. Her book *The Tunnel* (Yale University Press, 1995) chronicles this societal situation with empathy and artfulness. Joel Stenfeld's book of photographs *Walking The High Line* (Steidl / Pace-MacGill, 2002) examines in a detached documentary style the crumbling remnants of the New York Central's elevated freight line that ran from 35th street in Manhattan down to the meat-packing districts of Chelsea—this prior to it being resuscitated as an urban pedestrian walkway in 2009. Mark Ruwedel's *Westward the Course of Empire* examines the abandoned rights-of-way of railroads in the deserts of California and Nevada. His black and white imagery resembles the glass plate negatives made by Timothy O'Sullivan or A.J. Russell, harkening back to photography's earliest days and its engagement with the austere geography of the West.



Decisive Moment: Stockton, Terminal & Eastern engine house and railroader, Stockton, California 1970, Richard Steinheimer; courtesy Shirley Burman.

Before I get into the heart of this article, I want to clarify a few points since I'm going to be talking about different kinds of photography, and I don't want any misunderstanding. First off, I'm not making any art-value distinction between photojournalism, reportage, social documentary or fine-art photography traditions. I think we railfans should embrace the notion that all rail photography—whether practiced with a photojournalistic or aesthetic intention—can be considered art.

These different traditions each have something to offer us. For instance, I respect the narrative, story-telling possibilities of photojournalism; but sometimes the straight document, like a 3/4 wedge, has a beautiful directness

about it that I enjoy too, as in this Otto Perry image made on the Union Pacific (below). I also love what fine-art photographic traditions give us—an appreciation for beauty, for the aesthetic, for the conceptual, for human expression as seen through an intellectual framework rather than a story-telling one. These traditions often co-mingle with each other. It's also important to note that photographers working within these various traditions have different working methods—which can be instructive. So when I use these phrases today—railfan or railroad photography, photojournalism or fine-art photography—I'm not suggesting any hierarchy of importance: the names simply give us a terminology to make distinctions.



Three-Quarter Aesthetic Defined: Union Pacific, date unknown, Otto Perry, Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western Collection.

Railroad Photography: A Brief History and Evolution of its Aesthetics

So, first off, I thought it'd be good to give you a little early history, right after World War II, show you some familiar work done by several rail photographers we esteem, talk about their contributions to the genre, and all this just to contrast their image-making process with the later material done by several fine-art photographers I'm going to show you, who use the railroad environment as a backdrop for ideas in making their own work, but approach the subject in very different ways and with very different

visual strategies.

The leading aesthetic trend for rail photography in the 30s and 40s was the 3/4 wedge shot as promoted by Lucius Beebe. In Beebe's description of the perfect action picture he advised photographer's to eliminate any distracting elements in the background or foreground; his was a narrow viewpoint unconcerned with placing the train in a broader sociological or environmental context. His viewpoint changed later, as the aesthetic evolved around him and he

embraced it. In his defense, however, it should be noted that the 3/4 shot based on the technology of the day—the cumbersome Graflex D—took finesse, skill and good timing; it wasn't as easily rendered as most 2nd generation photographers with 35mm cameras have derisively assumed.

Rail photographers of the 3/4 school were concerned with one thing: documentation, not interpretation, emotional content or aesthetics. There were few interested in other aspects of the railroad environment or the cultural landscape that formed a backdrop and stage for the passing trains. Nor were they interested in the act of photography per se—there wasn't much sophisticated camera work happening—the pictures were always in the service of the subject depicted. These are important distinctions—and suggest why Steinheimer, Hastings, Hale, Shaughnessy, Middleton and others broke with established traditions.

Another major factor that helped the shift away from the 3/4 tradition was David P. Morgan, the influential editor of *Trains* magazine beginning in 1952. We can't underestimate the importance of the synergistic relationship between editors who select pictures and photographers who take them. You'll recall that Hastings and Morgan forged a powerful journalistic team in the mid-1950s, tracking down the last remnants of steam in the US and Canada with their many articles published during that time. Morgan's sensibilities (with help over the years from in-house art directors and designers like Gil Reid and Ted Rose) enlarged the possibilities for railroad photography in this country. Morgan was an artist and a realist—who wanted to see an evocative depiction of railroading. He was open to new ideas: his vision encompassed the entire railroad scene from shop hand to side-rod to Sherman Hill—the pictures could be made at anytime, day or night. Many post-war generation photographers like Steinheimer and Hastings were the recipients of Morgan's and *Trains* enthusiastic backing because they were looking for new forms of expression too, and Morgan recognized this. Many well-known second-generation photographers—from John Gruber to Ted Benson—with their gritty brand of photojournalism, also shared Morgan's support.

What kind of attributes were Steinheimer, Shaughnessy and Hastings and others able to bring to their photography that made their work so different from Beebe's and the 3/4 school? And where did they get their ideas? These photographers were sub-consciously if not consciously affected by the visual culture developing across all aspects of American life. The 1930s and 40s saw the beginning proliferation of the big photo magazines. The field of photojournalism was in its infancy; television would soon be on the scene. Movies and the cinema were a popular pastime. All these stimuli influenced photographers' visual choices, as well as what they saw within the railfan press and in seminal

Beebe books from the late 30s and 40s. After a little thought I've boiled it down to six attributes.

I. Decisive Moments

The first thing these photographers keyed into was the "decisive moment." French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson first coined this term sometime in the 1940s. What it means is the photographer, with precision and poise, fired the shutter and caught the action in a photograph at its peak. Not an easy thing to do in any situation, especially with an event-driven hobby like rail photography, where unpredictable light or random-moving freight trains are the norm. These photographers, with routine success, could anticipate when a train going by, or a railroader walking through a scene, was compositionally perfect. Sometimes this agility was boldly shown—other times it was almost invisible as in Steinheimer's shot of a lone worker walking to the Stockton Terminal & Eastern's engine house on a foggy morning in 1970 (see page 10). This skill-set came from knowledge, preparation and patience, and established these photographers as masters with the natural ability to be in the right place at the right time—all done without motor drives and usually captured on one or two frames of film. Even second-generation photographers got in the act too, like Mel Patrick's night photo taken at Niles, Michigan (see page 19).

II. Viewer Participation

A close cousin to the "decisive moment" is participatory image making, where it feels like the viewer and photographer's experience merge. Viewer involvement, again, would become a recognizable component of both Steinheimer, Hale, Hastings's or Shaughnessy's work—you felt as though you were inside the experience with them, drawn into the act of creation itself. Steinheimer often utilized what he called a "kamikaze" approach—a "do-or-die" attitude in making an all-out effort in getting this type of picture. The viewer, seeing a photo made in this mode, might feel a hot, high plains wind while standing on the running board of a Big Boy. Or perhaps feel the stiff winter chill of the Bitterroots on a freight train climbing St. Joe Pass; or be riding inside Shaughnessy's car pacing a speeding locomotive along the UP on Route 30 (see page 17).

III. Sense of Place

The third element—capturing a "sense of place" in an image—was essentially a by-product of the photographers' inquisitive photographic habits. By including round-



Sense of Place: Northern Pacific 0-6-0 #1110 switching cars, Chehalis, Washington, 1965, Richard Steinheimer; courtesy Shirley Burman.

houses, depots, townscapes—or elements like signage or automobiles that anchor a picture in time—they inevitably made records of now vanished or transformed places. Their photographs contextualized the railroad, in a way a tightly framed 3/4 shot, where the train is edited from its surroundings, never completely could. These photographers also started paying attention to the railroads interior life, as found in an operator's bay or a locomotive shop. They also found things of interest outside on freight platforms or in nearby train yards—the total railroad scene was an evocative backdrop for their photographs.

IV. Sense of Space

The fourth attribute is what I call sense of space. Here photographers situated the train within a broad expanse of

landscape. This technique I believe was an homage to 19th century photographers like Timothy O'Sullivan, AJ Russell, Alfred Hart, William Rau and William Henry Jackson who also used this technique when photographing trains, which had been a motif appropriated from 17th-century Dutch landscape painting where man's work is sublimated to the grandeurs of nature. It's been well documented that Russell, Hart, Rau and Jackson were all painters before they became photographers, and all four gentleman studied with Alfred Bierstadt or Thomas Moran, both who were painters from the Hudson River School. Modern railroad photographers, such as Richard Steinheimer and Jim Shaughnessy, enamored with the western (or eastern) landscape like their predecessors, emulated this technique. Second-generation photographers also got into the act like Mel Patrick, Mark Hemphill and Dale Sanders, who made

this type of photograph part of their signature styles in the 1980s and 90s.

V. Emotionalism + Sense of Loss = Narrative Possibilities

The fifth element was the emotional quality these photographers got into their work. Dick Steinheimer once said that he had been “a railfan scarred by the 50s.” So these lensman keyed into something emotional, which found its way into their work too (see page 9). These photographers also became acquainted with the concept of loss as they documented things that were on the verge of disappearing from the railroad scene: the lapse of passenger service, the demise of steam, and the changeover from first-to second-generation diesels. While it saddened many of them to see these transformations, these transformations nonetheless created narrative possibilities in their photographs. This narrative tradition also stemmed from the fact that many railroad photographers had professional training as photojournalists, so telling stories with photographs was second nature to them.

VI. Still life & Formalism

Lastly, a final attribute of their work was the still life and an attention to formal issues. These are photographs isolated by the artist from the everyday geometry of the railroad world. These types of photographs were ubiquitous within the subject-rich railroading environment of the 50s (and still are to a degree) and were regularly made by Steinheimer, Hastings, Shaughnessy and others as part of their ongoing visual dialogue with the industry. They had an attentive eye for detail, recognized simple beauty when seen, and utilized an understated formalism when necessary. Steinheimer’s freight car wheel and journal box, as seen on the cover of the November, 1965 issue of *Trains*, is a classic example of this type of image (see cover).

A Few More Ideas

Now I want to shift direction a bit and offer insight by two members of the fine-art photographic community. Photo-historian Michael Lesy has said: “A photograph is a thing which needs to be ‘unpacked.’ There’s the manifest content, then a half-dozen layered contents.” Another way to say what Lesy is saying here is that a photograph can be “read” in a lot of different ways. Maybe that’s an academic exercise, but depending upon your orientation, a photograph can have multiple meanings and I think it’s instructive and interesting to think along these lines.

A student once asked the street photographer Garry

Winogrand what makes a picture successful. His reply: “A balance between aesthetics (form) and information (content).” Winogrand felt an image succeeded when these two elements were co-equal—one did not dominate the other. In a photograph if you go too far with information it becomes reportage, or merely a document; too far with aesthetics and the picture becomes an exercise in formalism.

I also wanted to run some ideas by you that have been practiced by several photographers you’re familiar with such as Plowden and Kalisher, and then discuss some contemporary practitioners that may be new to you. Based on my own experience as a photographer, I know if you overlay ideas onto your work, maybe think of yourself as a visual anthropologist, industrial archeologist or sociologist with a camera—playing with these ideas can transform how you think about your work. If you’re bored with your present direction or feel that your work is stagnating, integrating ideas into the mix can reinvigorate your photographic practice and renew enthusiasm for your subject matter.

Fine-art photographers have been blending ideas with visuals for a long time, and that’s why it’s important to keep abreast of what’s happening in the world of fine-art photography. Art is a balance. A good photograph to me is graphically compelling but also carries a message or idea: the photographer is trying to communicate with his audience. One such photographer who I think has mastered the blending of form and content is David Plowden.

The Railroad Scene As Cultural Landscape

David Plowden: Vanishing Point

<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~bhs2u/david-p/dp-urban.html>

David Plowden’s photography shares some of the same qualities and attributes outlined above when I was discussing the work of Steinheimer, Shaughnessy and Hastings, but it is singularly distinctive in the sense that after 1964, when Plowden claims to have made his last locomotive picture, he went on to photographically embrace the cultural landscape of the railroad in broader fashion than any of his contemporaries. This meant that he also brought a different style and intention to his work; he became an avid chronicler of the American scene with trains and the railroad environment, just one of many subjects he covered.

Plowden has compiled a visual record of our times, his five decades of photographic explorations have taken him all over America and given him endless subject matter to

place before his lenses: small towns, grain elevators, steel mills, steam locomotives, train stations, and rural and industrial landscapes. As a self-proclaimed “archeologist with a camera” he’s captured most of this prior to the wrecking ball’s arrival.

Within his railroad photographs Plowden assembles still life narratives, documents capturing a sense of place, sometimes infused with the feel of melancholy or loss. He strives to get at the essence of things. Many images show a profound respect for America’s architectural past and evoke a collective memory. These qualities resonate with railroad photographers who lately have begun to understand their photos are more than just “train pictures.” From a slightly different perspective those same images can have historic merit, make social commentary, convey a certain emotionalism, and even be considered works of art. This is why I quoted Lesy about a photograph’s content needing to be unpacked. When you realize photographs have that multi-dimensional component, things open up for you.

Plowden also practices a diffused style of railroad photography; by this I mean he de-emphasizes the trains and locomotives and includes more of the surrounding industrial/urban/rural environment. His inclusiveness mirrors his desire to depict the relationship between the railroad and the environment it inhabits.

Plowden’s photography is also about distanced observation and contemplation, often attached to the idea of time passing. Plowden’s work is not about a decisive moment, but a prolonged one. Plowden also tries to create an intentional work of beauty, with that strong underpinning of formal concerns while simultaneously documenting important icons of American culture. The texture and feel of our nations’ geography and history (as embedded in architectural forms) also figures into Plowden’s work.

The Railroad Landscape As Social Space

Now let’s focus on looking at the railroad landscape through the eyes of a cultural geographer through the consideration of ideas, which you can follow by reviewing images through the various URL’s. First off, the attention paid lately to the human aspects of the railroad landscape, most notably Kalmbach’s book *Faces of Railroad* and then the Center for Railroad Photography and Art’s exhibition entitled *Many Hands: Representations of Railroad Workers* —has been wonderful to see. These types of publications and exhibitions open our eyes to the railroad landscape as social space, a place where people and human activity interact with technology and industry. There’s been a longstanding tradition of photographers

focusing on this aspect of the railroad environment—like Steinheimer, Shaughnessy and Hastings who made trainmen active elements in their compositions. Later second and third generation railroad photographers like Mike Valentine, Ted Benson, John Gruber, Blair Kooistra, Greg McDonell, Martin Burwash, or Joel Jensen have also adopted a personalized photographic approach to the railroad worker-as-hero, carrying on this important legacy.

But there were other non-railfan photographers who explored the railroad as social space too—concentrating on the workers as well as other people within that space—and I’d like to share their less familiar work with you.

Simpson Kalisher: The Railroad Men

http://www.simpsonkalisher.com/railroad/railroad_01.html

Simpson Kalisher began this series as part of an assignment for a men’s magazine in 1960. The Erie Railroad was having a birthday and thought that some type of photo story might be appropriate. Kalisher did the assignment, and so liked the subject matter, that he continued for a year or two photographing other railroad venues in New York, Pennsylvania and Indiana. This body of work eventually became the book *The Railroad Men* published in 1961.

This was a total immersion experience for the photographer: he lived for several months off and on in the bunk car (with the crews) at a freight yard, taking photographs and recording bull sessions in-between shifts when he could. The point is: he keyed in on the men within the railroad landscape and wasn’t necessarily intrigued with the locomotives or trains; they formed a backdrop to the men he foregrounded in his photographs. His tendencies as a humanist—and as a person curious about the railroaders way of life—was the basis for this project and book.

Kalisher, by the way, was also a part of the famous New York School of Photography in the 1940s and 50s, a group well known for their street photography. He brought that aesthetic to bear on this project.

He traveled light; everything was accomplished with a 35mm Leica and two lenses. The spontaneity of his photographs and the deep space he gets into his compositions is truly compelling. There’s a dignity to the work too; it’s very powerful. I also like the social realism of these images: they’re so authentic. Between the taped narrative that formed the text of the book and the pictures, Simpson didn’t flinch. He caught the reality of the railroad men: the drinking, fighting, and harsh work conditions, not to mention the physicality of the job—all without nostalgic or sentimental overlay, or without sanitizing the realities of railroad work. What’s so powerful about the work for me, too, is its ability to convey essence without being obvious.



Railroad Landscape as Social Space: Hobo catching out near Boone Island, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1970, Michael Mathers: courtesy, Michael Mathers.

Michael Mathers: *Riding The Rails*

http://www.michaelmathers.com/gallery/view_photo.php?set_albumName=books&id=books_01

Another favorite book of mine is by Michael Mathers, one he produced in 1973 called *Riding the Rails*, which introduces us to another aspect of the social spaces of railroading: the world of hoboing and freight-hopping. Mathers rode freight trains around the United States for about 5 years starting in 1964 while a student. Again, this was an immersion experience: not mere joy riding, he adopted and lived the tramp lifestyle while also making an important photographic document of a waning aspect of railroading's cultural history. As a side note, Ted Rose used some of Mathers photographs as source material for his paintings. It's easy to see why Ted gravitated to these scenes: they were probably reminiscent of his own youthful freight-train riding experiences, which deeply informed his painting later on, in terms of how he looked at the entirety of the railroad landscape. Again, I admire the honesty and spontaneity of Mather's photography; it shares many of the qualities of Kalisher's work. He's giving us an unobtrusive straight-ahead visual report from the field. The photography in this book pays homage to tramping's

historical relationship to American notions of wanderlust, the illusion of freedom-in-movement, and also describes the migratory patterns and the social hierarchy of the hobo life, as well as its traditions in literature and folklore.

Margaret Morton: *The Tunnel*

http://www.fragiledwelling.org/artist/the_tunnel.html

The next work I want to show is pretty far a-field from straight railfan or railroad photography. However, we can learn a lot by thinking about the railroad environment in ways new to us; whole worlds exist beside and near the tracks that don't center on just trains. That world forms what the cultural geographer John Stilgoe has termed the "Metropolitan Corridor." Cultural geographers like Stilgoe observe landscapes deeply and think about them in terms of economics, politics, and racial or social issues. For them all landscapes comprise the "material culture" of our society, what our society has created by making certain decisions that affect human beings: people act upon the landscape and the landscape acts upon them. The railroad environment is ripe for this type of visual investigation.

Margaret Morton is a professor of photography at Cooper Union in New York City. Her book is a project on the



Viewer Participation: Union Pacific freight train piloted by 4-8-4 #800, eastern Nebraska, 1955, Jim Shaughnessy; courtesy Jim Shaughnessy

homeless in Manhattan. The “Tunnel” was one of the oldest surviving homeless communities in New York City that stretched for two and a half miles underground on the Upper West Side. Hidden from public view in an abandoned railroad freight tunnel, this habitation existed for sixteen years before Amtrak crews renewing track for passenger service between Penn Station and Albany discovered it. The earliest tunnel residents lived alongside the tracks in cinderblock structures originally built as storage facilities. More recent tunnel dwellers built plywood shanties or perched themselves on narrow ledges. Shafts of light angling through air vents represent points of entry into the tunnel: dwellings and residents cluster around these areas.

For any photographer who loves railroads but also has a penchant for social documentary photography, maybe Morton’s project will resonate with you. My point is that we don’t just have to think of ourselves as only railroad photographers when shooting in these environments, but our interest in railroads might lead us to just such a place. If it does, take advantage of it. Rather than inspiring pity, Morton’s work leaves you marveling at the indomitable spirit of these human beings, rebuilding their lives in the dark, beneath millions of New Yorkers’ indifferent feet.

This work also offers up valuable insight to our understanding of contemporary urban settings and it does indirectly relate to the railroad environment. Her photographs allow viewers to think about these neglected social spaces, while at the same time appreciating their relationships to broader political, economic, and social factors. Like stated above: this work is pretty far a-field for a railroad photog-

rapher, but then again is it? There must be countless social dramas playing out along the nations rail lines. Perhaps there are stories and photographs to mine there.

The Railroad Landscape As Contemporary Ruin

If you’re a photographer with an archeological bent, many environments you find yourself in can offer interesting opportunities because everything in life is always moving toward obsolescence, decay, entropy or ruin, and the railroad environment is no exception.

The journalist cum culture geographer Grady Clay coined an acronym that I find amusing and informative—TOADS—temporary, obsolete, abandoned, derelict sites. As a railroad photographer if you don the mantle of visual archaeologist, I think this, too, can open whole fields of possibility for photography. I’d like to introduce you to a few fine-art photographers who are exploring the railroad environment with these ideas in mind.

Mark Ruwedel: *Westward The Course of Empire*

http://www.bulgergallery.com/dynamic/fr_artist.asp?ArtistID=10&Body=Westward%20the%20Course%20of%20Empire

The first is Mark Ruwedel. However, before discussing Mark’s work, I want to mention that, while I am as enthusiastic as the next fellow about dramatic and spectacular photography, I also like the unremarkable photograph, the quiet image, and the mundane: pictures most people might call dull or uninteresting. I relish photographs

that are informed by ideas, which grow on you over time once you understand their intent; this is the kind of image Ruwedel makes. This aesthetic emerged from a photographic school that developed in American photography in the mid-1970s that was called the New Topographics. Photographers like Lewis Baltz or Robert Adams appropriated the look of 19th-century landscape photography by employing a cool, detached, uneventful approach to their work. Their photos were not concerned with the spectacular—what's been called the *National Geographic* style of photography—or traditional notions of beauty. They were making comment about man's encroachment on, and despoilment of, the landscapes of the West. In their own way they were paying homage to the likes of A.J. Russell, Timothy O'Sullivan, Carleton Watkins, et. al., but in a contemporary way. Mark Ruwedel is considered part of this movement. He teaches photography at Cal State Long Beach in California. David Myrick's seminal two-volume set *The Railroads of Nevada* inspired this body of work. Ruwedel's images are an excellent example of the intersection between photographic practice and intellectual and historical inquiry. To my mind his images are beautiful and quietly dramatic. Ruwedel's railroad photographs are titled by the original name of the railroad line. Collectively, these titles form a litany of place names, many of which have disappeared. They also sometimes evoke the failure of the enterprise: the Tonopah and Tidewater, for example, never got to any tidewaters, the Carson and Colorado Railroad never reached the Colorado River.

I also want to take a minute to talk briefly about how fine-art photographers go about their work. First off, many have given up on the idea of the masterpiece—the great, spectacular singular image. Choosing instead to work in series, producing maybe 20-30 images that are all a variation on a theme. In this regard the whole becomes more important than the individual pieces; the series in its entirety becomes the work of art. This is an idea that came out of pop art in the 1960s, and this type of serial imagery is practiced by such artists as Hilla and Bernd Becher, the German husband and wife team who have made a lifelong career out of photographing industrial archeology. Ruwedel, like the Bechers, creates typologies with his railroad cuts and abandoned rights-of-way.

I admire the way Ruwedel's work blends geography, land-use issues, history, and memory: his photographs depict a ruin etched into the earth, a physical record of industry's interaction with the landscape. I think there are scores of opportunities out there for railroad photographers to engage the TOADS of the railroad landscape. Moreover, if you take on a project like this you'll never be hassled by a security guard, over-zealous policeman or

homeland security officer; you don't normally encounter these people in the middle of nowhere. Ruwedel has been working on this railroad theme for almost twenty years and really doesn't see an end to it.

Joel Sternfeld: A Walk Along the High Line

<http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/3/highline.php>

For those who might not be familiar with Manhattan, the NYC had an elevated rail line that went down the west side of the island to serve the meat packing district in lower Chelsea. This line was abandoned in the 1970s or 80s and—as often happens in urban environments—nature reasserts itself and starts reclaiming the landscape. I've walked under this elevated line for the last ten years, and never thought much about it. Nevertheless, if you're looking for it like a railroad archeologist, I think there are many examples of moldering railroad infrastructure out there.

As it turns out a couple of fellows had the idea of re-using the High Line as an urban pedestrian walkway as this area of Manhattan has become a bustling art gallery district over the last decade. This idea grew into a save The High Line organization. Plans have been drawn and approved, financing has become available, and this project will become a reality sometime in 2009. Joel Sternfeld, having caught wind of the eminent changes, took his 8 x 10 Deardorf up onto the elevated and made a series of contemplative images a few years back.

Again, I think most people might not think these photographs are of great interest. They're certainly not "blockbusters" in the traditional sense, but I appreciate their layered content as historical documents, as quiet photographs that capture a sense of place, as art objects for their minimal and restrained use of color, and if you have an opportunity to see them hanging in a gallery setting you'd be knocked-out by their crisp detail. Sternfeld's prints are usually 30 x 40 inches in size.

The point I keep trying to make today is that if railroad photographers embrace a different type of aesthetic, instead of being overly concerned with the dramatic, the spectacular—what a lot of photographers call "keepers"—another world of photography opens for you, and is as satisfying as making those other kinds of images. And again I'm not saying at all that you should stop making railfan photographs, but merely making the case that there is a broad world of photographic possibilities out there that I don't think we as railfan photographers push ourselves to explore often enough.



Decisive Moment: Amtrak #363, The St. Claire, makes a station stop, Niles, Michigan, 1972, Mel Patrick, courtesy Mel Patrick.

The Railroad Landscape As Site of Environmental Consequence

Ed Burtynsky: *Railcuts* (from *Manufactured Landscapes*) <http://www.edwardburtynsky.com/>

Burtynsky's longstanding series called *Manufactured Landscapes*, deals with how industry has impacted and dominated nature. His photographs of railcuts showing rail lines carved in the mountainside are one aspect of this series.

In the 19th century there were two diverging viewpoints about the effect of railroads on North American culture. Authors like Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson decried the defilement of nature by industry; others regarded the railroad as a technological advancement and scientific achievement that was complimentary to nature.

Burtynsky's photographs may be commenting on both these facets. The photographs hit us on a lot of different levels: first off they're incredibly beautiful to look at, with their subtle color palette and finely wrought detail. We can appreciate their minimalism and restraint. They also play

with our notion of scale: there are no reference points really—we could be looking at a model railroad. Secondly: they pose political questions: is the railroad a benefit or hindrance? Is that roadbed carved through the mountain scape despoiling the environment, or is that rail line necessary and vital to the economic benefit of a nation? Burtynsky remains neutral on these points and allows the viewers to come to their own conclusions.

Conclusion

I wonder as railfan photographers if there aren't other photographic projects we might attempt that would address the environmental impact that railroads have on society. For that matter, as railroad photographers, are we myopic about railroads? Do we have rose-colored glasses on when we think about them? We admire them, but would we be willing to document them photographically in a negative way (for instance talk about the relationship between coal (strip) mining and railroading?) Are there negative human and environmental consequences to railroading? Asking yourself these questions might take your railroad photography into new areas.

So in conclusion: what I've tried to convey in this piece is that our railroad photography can be more multi-dimensional than I think we give it credit for. It seems to me as railfan photographers that if we embraced the field of cultural geography and incorporated it into our photography, this intersection of disciplines that question social, political or economic issues would help keep your work vital, and on the edge of new inquiry. Thinking about your work in new ways, creates different possibilities for photographs; adopting new methodologies, as I've discussed with these last few photographers' work—like working in series or developing typologies like Ruwedel's or Burtynsky's railroad cuts—can push you toward new directions too. Last-

ly, I do think it's important for any photographer working in any field to know the history of photography as a way to enhance and inform their work. It's great that we all know who Ansel Adams is, but it would do us well to know about the other Adams too—Robert Adams—as well as be familiar with work that runs the gamut from Lee Friedlander to William Eggleston to Stephen Shore. We ought to know the whole canon of American photography. As railfan photographers we have to realize we are not an isolated subset of image-makers, we are part of a long-standing photographic tradition and history, and would do well to think of ourselves in that context. If we do, our photography will only get better, deeper and more meaningful.

*Jeff Brouws is a fine-art photographer whose work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Fogg Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He is the author of **A Passion for Trains: The Railroad Photography of Richard Steinheimer** and the forthcoming (Fall 2008) **The Call of Trains: Railroad Photographs** by Jim Shaughnessy, both published by W.W. Norton. He lives in Stanfordville, New York.*

Exploring the Past with Steamdome

Henri Giffard and the Injector

The injector was invented in 1858 by a Frenchman who was a railway man, but was also infatuated with aerial balloons. This small device proved remarkably efficient in feeding boilers with feed water. It replaced the troublesome feed water pump by about 1890. William Sellers & Co., of Philadelphia was the exclusive American agent for Giffard's invention for several years but other makers broke into the field. Soon, Nathan, Hancock and Rue were making injectors for the American market. This article includes illustrations of some of these devices, and we include the portrait at right, along with an obituary of Giffard from the French magazine *La Nature* as reprinted in the *Scientific American*.



Henri Giffard

Henri Giffard was one of those privileged men whose works honor not only their country but entire science. The light of such an intelligence may be extinguished, but the rays that it has emitted will endure forever. The name of Giffard will never be forgotten.

Born at Paris on the 8th of January, 1825, the celebrated engineer pursued his studies at Bourbon College, and from his earliest youth developed in his brain a genius for mechanics. He has often told us that in 1839 and 1840, when he was only fourteen or fifteen years of age, he found a way of escaping from school in order to go see the first locomotives pass on the railway from Paris to Saint Ger-

main. Two years afterward he entered as an employee the shops of the same railway; but his ambition was to drive a locomotive for himself. He succeeded therein, and had the pleasure of taking the first trains of the railroad over the rails with as great speed as he could.

Henry Giffard was only eighteen years old when he began to devote himself to aerial navigation. It was not long ere he made some ascents in a balloon, and it was by joining practice with theory that he was led to realize his great experiment of 1852.

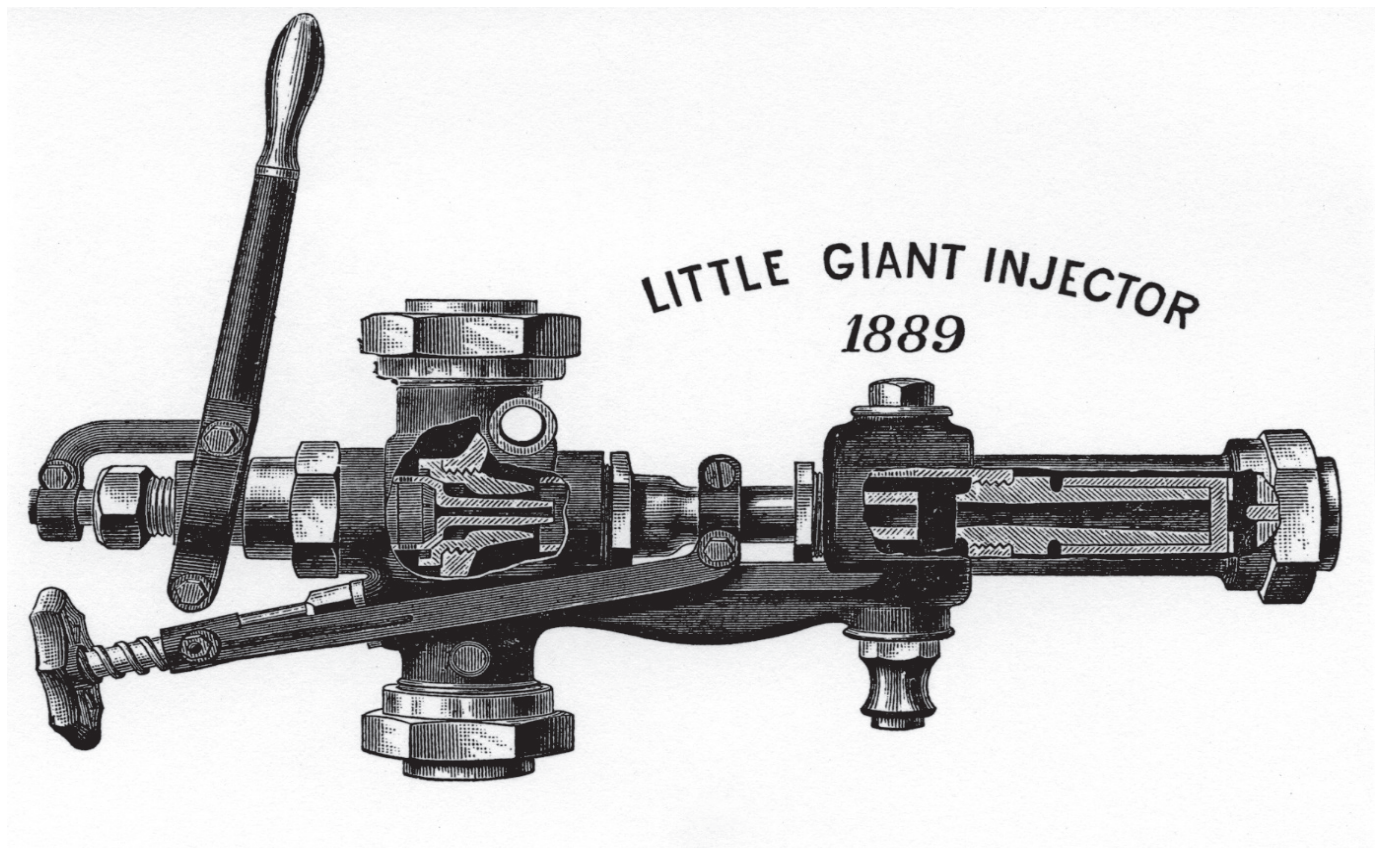
This experiment was one of the most memorable in the scientific history of our epoch. The young engineer, amid

a host of material difficulties, had constructed an elongated balloon 44 meters in length by 12 meters in diameter. This aerial vessel, which cubed 2,500 meters, was provided with a screw propeller, actuated by a 3-horse power steam engine. Giffard rose alone into the air, proudly seated on the tender of his engine, and was followed in space by the applause of the spectators. He succeeded in perceptibly turning aside from the line of the wind, and demonstrated that an oblong balloon, the only kind that can be steered with advantage, offers perfect stability, and obeys with great precision the action of the rudder. The road for aerial navigation by oblong balloons was thus marked out. In 1855, the bold mechanic renewed this experiment in another and not less remarkable balloon. But the wind, at the time, was too high to allow of a successful result to the experiment.

Attempts of this nature were very expensive and brought no return. Giffard then gave up balloons for the

moment in order to construct a new style of fast-speed steam vessels, and to finally invent the *injector*, which made his fortune. Giffard became a millionaire over and over again, but never ceased to be the modest and simple worker such as he was.

In Henri Giffard, the man was not less remarkable than the engineer. He was slender and nervous, supple, agile and very dexterous of hand. He was capable of doing anything himself, and we remember one day having surprised him in the act of taking the stuffing out of an arm chair in his parlor in order to remove therefrom a spring that he needed for an experiment; and another time we observed him making a photometer out of two pencils fixed in the cover of an almanac. He informed himself in regard to everything he desired to do through experimentation. He wrote out with minute care the results of all his researches, of all his labors, and has left innumerable manuscripts in which will be found a wealth of scientific facts.



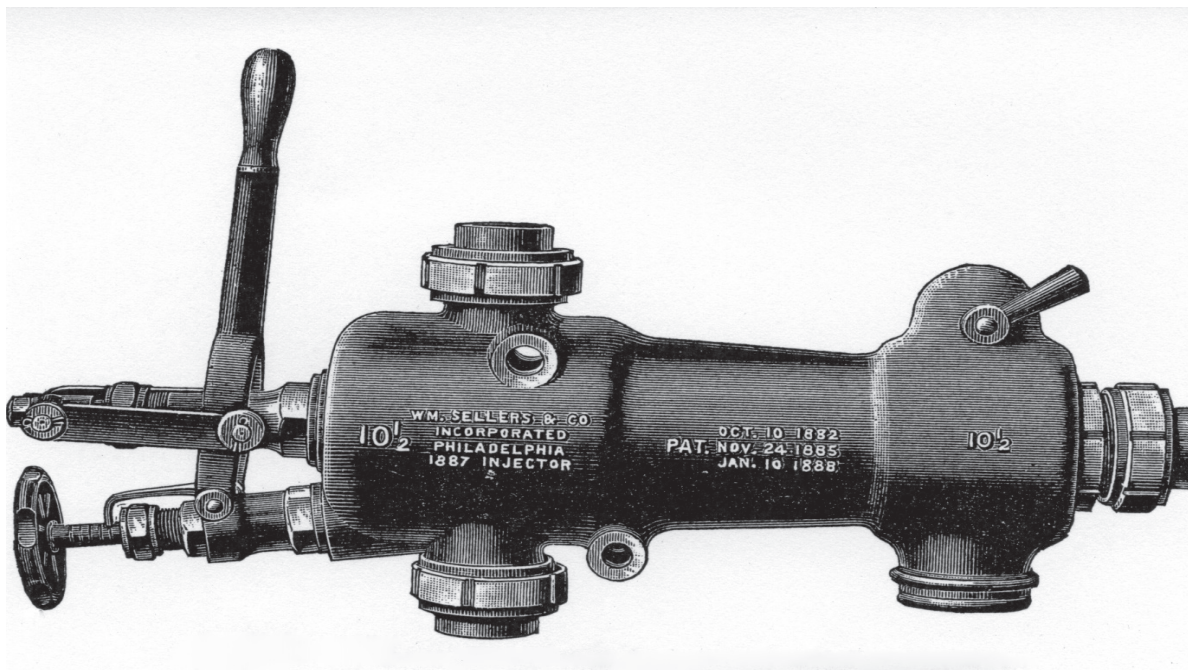
His physiognomy was charming, and his clear, limpid, full of loyalty and frankness, shone with uncommon luster. He was a fine conversationalist, was witty, and had a mind stored with incomparable technical erudition. He was reserved, and disliked the vulgarities and frivolities of the world, and so passed at times in the eyes of strangers as being cold and severe of address. Those who thus judged of him, did not know him; for he had a warm heart, an inexhaustible generosity, and an exquisite

delicacy. He disdained honors, and loved work above everything. An enemy to manifestations of an apparent wealth, he took pleasure in the practice of a simple and industrious life; but, when it became a question of constructing machines, the millionaire made his appearance. He has been seen to expend 30,000 francs to construct a suspended car or a gas apparatus, and several hundred thousand to construct a captive balloon. When it became necessary to aid a friend or do an act of charity, he took

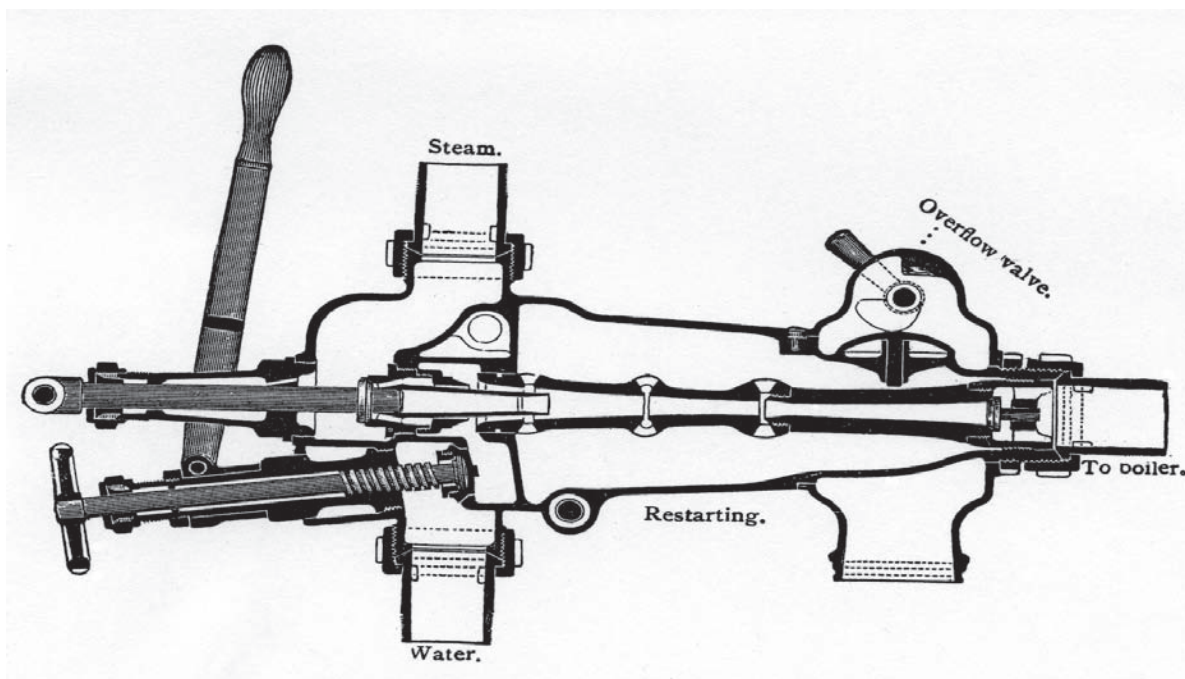
the gold from his coffers by the handful. He was a Me-
caenas to all aeronauts, and the benefactor of all those whom
he knew. He gave incomes to his unfortunate friends, and
owned near Paris a house to which tenants were admitted
only on condition of being poor and of never paying their
rent. Giffard hid himself to do good, and the good acts in
which his life abounds he performed in secret.

The man whom we weep is of those whom we never

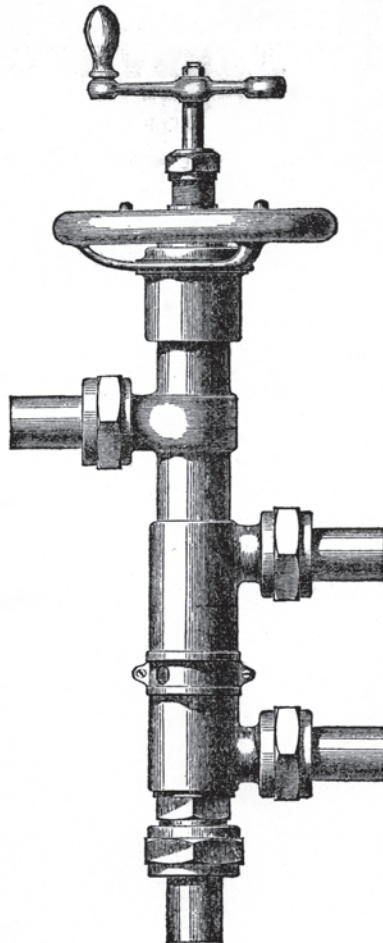
forget. Whatever be the distance that separates the master
from his disciples, let us promise him to make every effort
to walk in his tracks to continue his good work. May his
blessed name protect us! If there come hours of lassitude
or weakness, let us remember than we shall only have to
visit his tomb to draw strength therefrom. - *Gaston Tis-
sandier, in La Nature.*



William Sellers & Company's Restarting Injector
Perspective View



William Sellers & Company's Restarting Injector
Sectional View



LANE & BODLEY,
IRON FOUNDERS,
—AND—
Engine Builders,

MANUFACTURERS OF
CIRCULAR SAW MILLS,

With Simultaneous and Independent

Wrought-Iron Head Blocks,

—AND—
WOOD-WORKING MACHINERY.

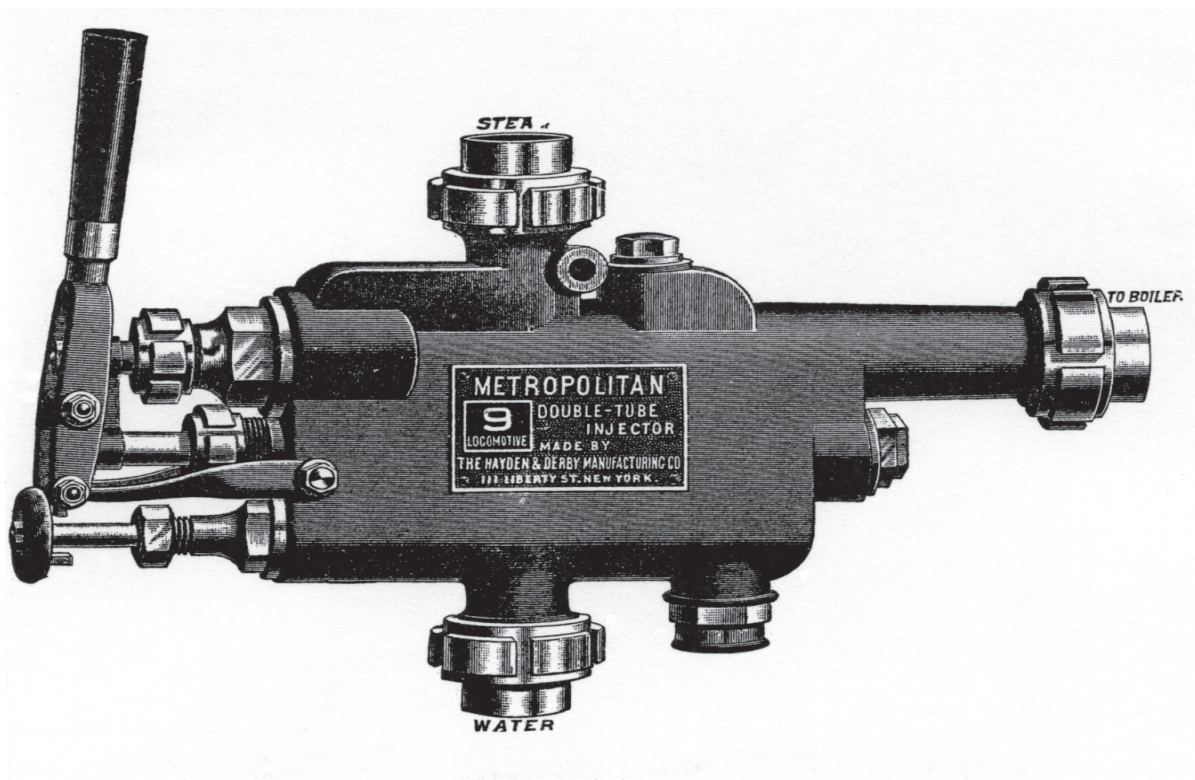
WESTERN AGENTS FOR THE

GIFFARD INJECTOR,

FOR FEEDING STEAM BOILERS.

—AND—
**WROUGHT IRON
PIPE AND FITTINGS,
STEAM HEATING APPARATUS,
STEAM TANKS**

—AND—
Rendering Apparatus,
**CORNER JOHN & WATER STREETS,
CINCINNATI, O.**



Metropolitan Double-Tube Locomotive Injector

Visual Interpretations

by John Gruber

Identify Photos with Photos

Photographs themselves are a handy and sometimes overlooked tool for identifying the locations and contexts of single photographs and even groups of photographs. Often, when photographs are first published, the subject—an event, for example—is of primary importance. As the photographs grow in importance over the years for reasons other than the events, more information helps place them in context with other work of the era and contributes to their understanding and their significance.

The famous views Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940) made in the Pennsylvania Railroad powerhouses in the New York City area are examples. When they were published in the *Survey*, Graphic Edition, in 1921, they spoke of the majesty of work and included elegant but vague references to location. “Just as stage coach and stable gave way to locomotive and roundhouse, so these are passing before power plant and electrically driven train,” the opening page caption said.

The fact that academic writers and researchers place more attention on Hine’s earlier and better known photographs of children working in factories and tend to place low priority on railroad related issues compounds the problem. Railroad topics just are not very respectable in the mainstream visual culture and historical research communities.

It helps to have help from an expert. We turned to William D. Middleton, author of *Manhattan Gateway: New York’s Pennsylvania Station* and, more recently, an editor of the *Encyclopedia of North American Railroads*, to confirm the location of two Hine photos. And also helpfully, the Pennsylvania Railroad carefully recorded its construction projects. We will take you through the process for these two pictures, step by step. You can devise other approaches for your favorite photographs, especially relying on contemporary publications and journals—and also personal communications with experts in the fields in question. Isolating a region of the country is essential.

For Hine’s *Powerhouse Mechanic*, Middleton suggested the *Transactions of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers* for 1910, which devoted an issue to the building of Pennsylvania Station in New York City. A small photo shows hydraulic elevator pumps—the pump in Hine’s photo—located in the Service Power Plant (still standing on the south side of 31st Street between Eighth and Seventh Avenues). The text describes pumps of three different sizes, saying: “These sizes were selected after a study of the operating conditions during the busy-hour schedule, the maximum estimated quantity of water required at such time being 2,000 gal. per min.”

The Center for Railroad Photography & Art first identified this location in *It’s Work*, a review of its “Representatives of Railroad Work” program and exhibitions published in 2006.

The George Eastman House, which holds many of Hine’s negatives including several similar poses of the *Powerhouse Mechanic*, offers a powerful analysis of the photograph by David Wooters, the archivist of its photo collection, on its Internet site, <http://podcast.eastman-house.org/lewis-h-hines-powerhouse-mechanic/>.

For the *Mechanic* in his *Shrine*, Middleton suggested a photograph from his *Gateway* book of steam turbine-generator sets at the Long Island City Powerhouse in Queens. Look at the background and walls in the photograph from the album “New York Tunnel Extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad” in the Hagley Museum and Library with photos by De W. C. Ward, a New York photographer. They match the background and walls in the “Shrine” picture.

Other sources augment the photographic comparisons. The New York Art Directors Club in 1924 awarded Hine a medal for advertising photography for *Powerhouse Mechanic*. It was entered in the competition by Ivy Lee, public relations consultant for the Pennsylvania Railroad. The American Brass Co. entered the *Mechanic* in *His Shrine*; both were published in the art directors yearbook.

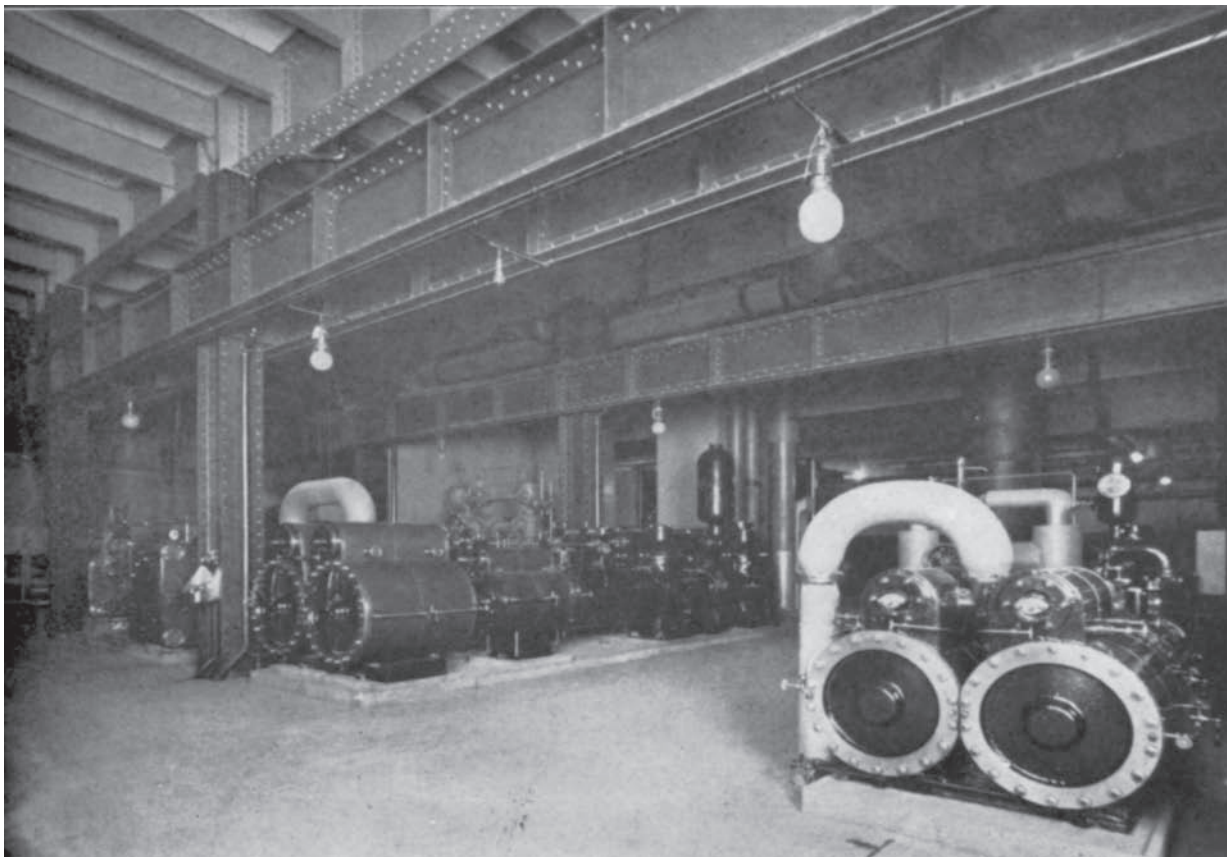
So don’t despair. There are always ways to identify and place photographs in their rightful surroundings.

But why do the railroad views receive such poor treatment in the academic market? Is it because railroad resources are elusive, tending to be intertwined with mechanical details? Although Hine created an extensive body of industrial photography about railroads between 1921 and his death in 1940, historians generally concentrate on other aspects of his later career. Much can be learned about Hine from a close examination of these images, but researchers don’t go there.

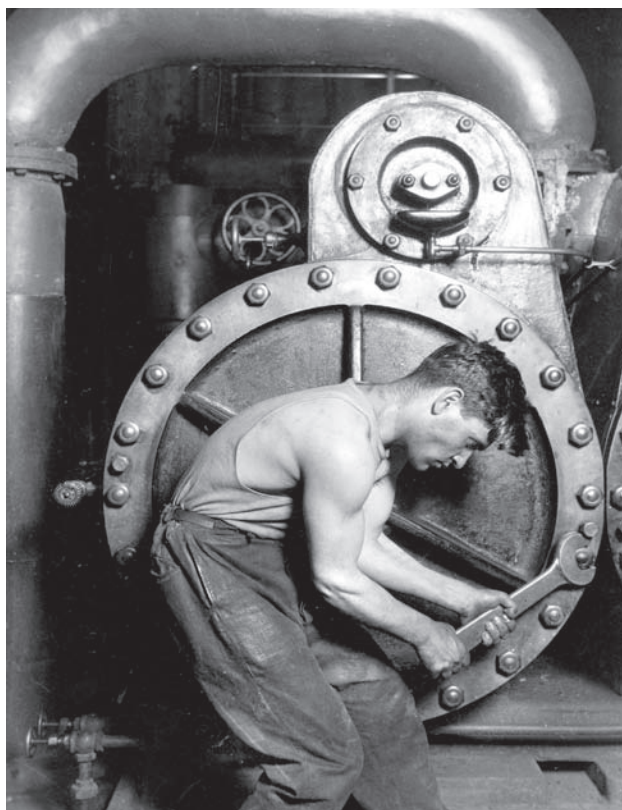
Hine’s views of building the Empire State Building certainly are important, but why, for example, does his work for Western Electric get so much more attention than his railroad work. “In 1923, when Hine began working for Western Electric, corporate managers, especially in the communications industries had a highly sophisticated understanding of the ideological power of photographic representation,” writes Elspeth H. Brown in *The Corporate Eye*, published in 2005 (p. 137). She devotes several pages to the Western Electric News, but only mentions in passing the PRR’s internal communications and the powerhouse views. Other books take a similar approach.

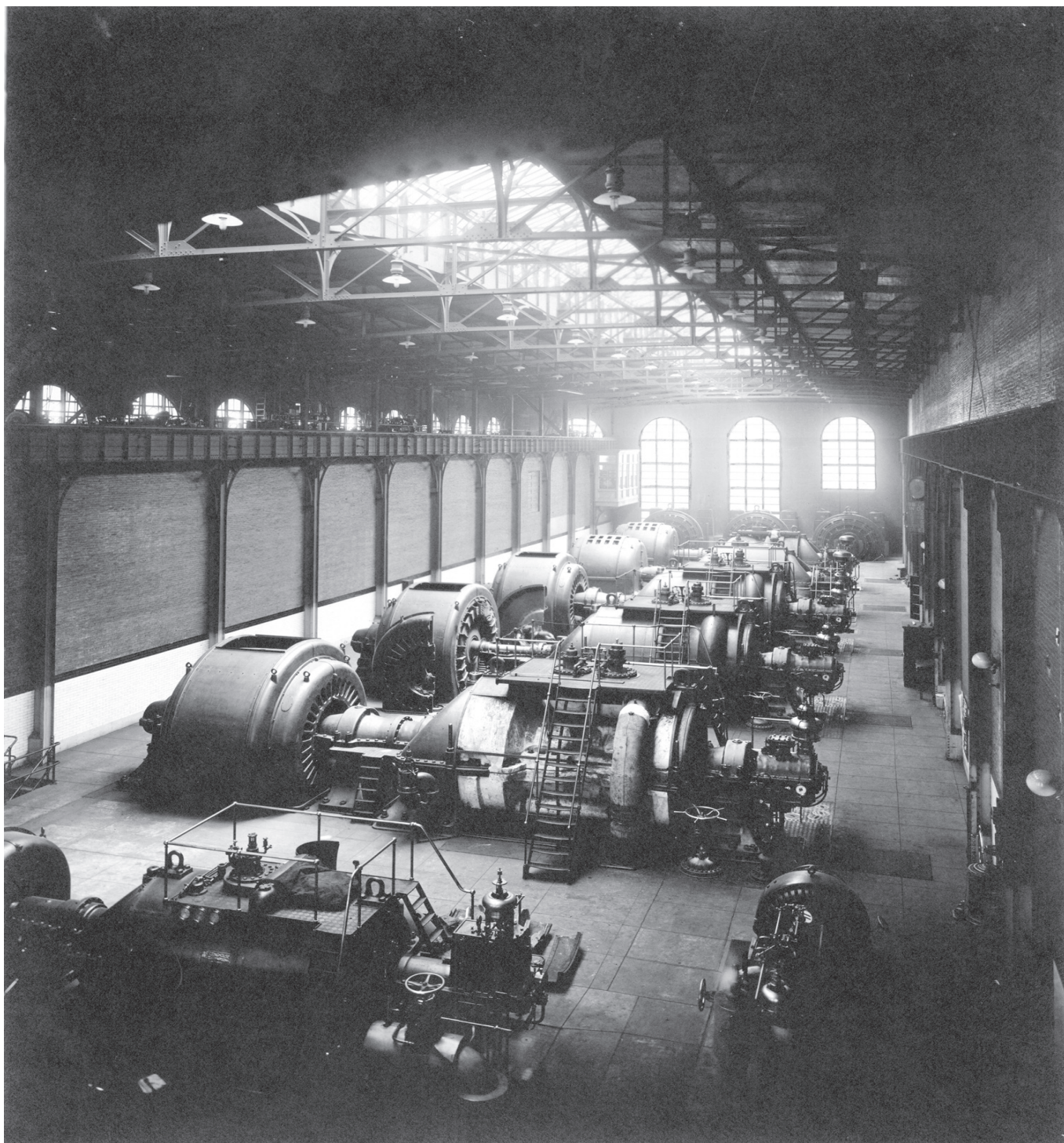
Lewis Wickes Hine was a significant and respected photographer, yet the scope of his work—especially the railroad work—is just now beginning to be understood as something more than iconic. Documenting locations, as

we have done here, is a first step.

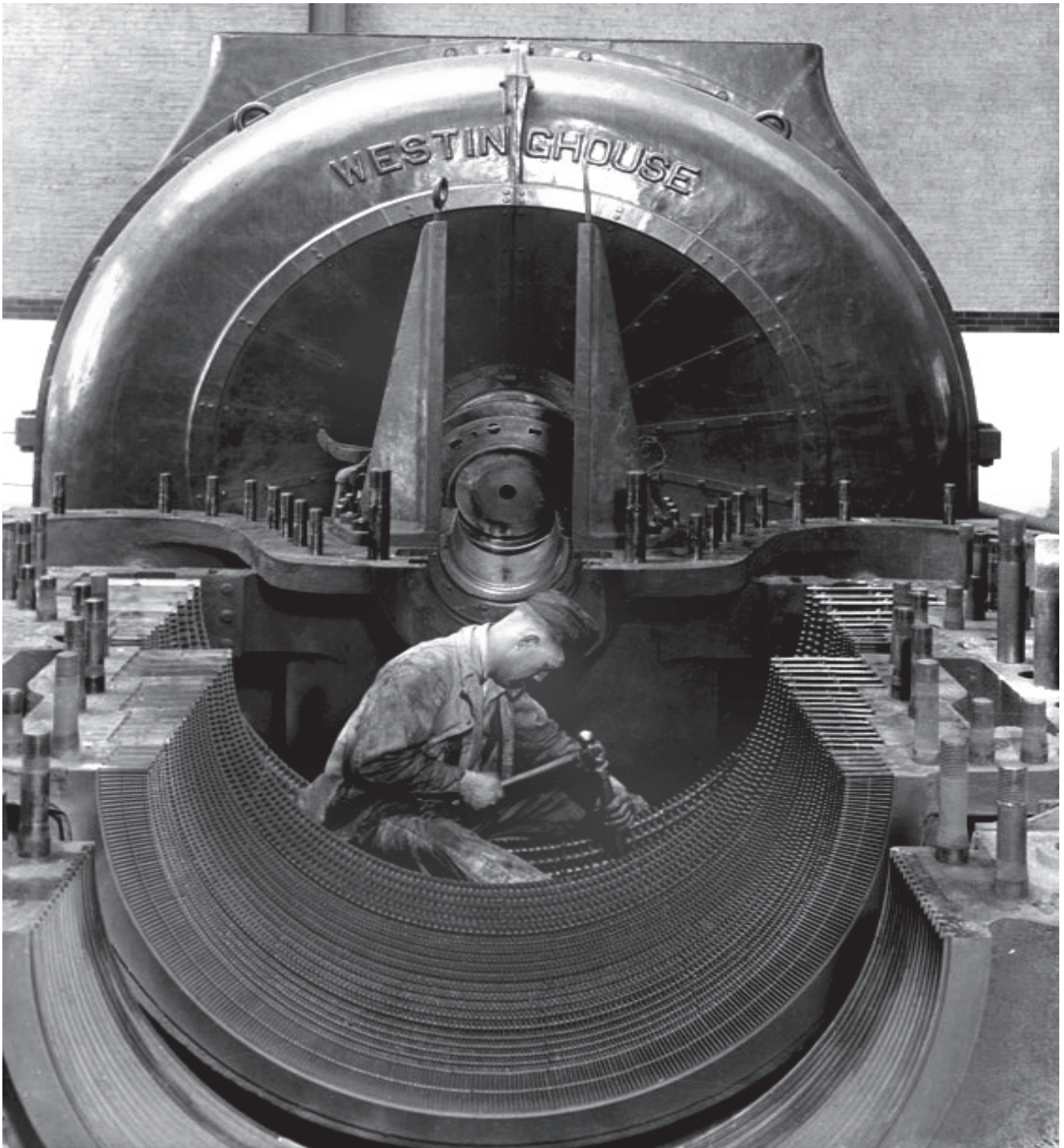


The photo, *Hydraulic Elevator Pumps*, from the ASME *Transactions* helped identify the location of Lewis W. Hine's famous photograph, *Powerhouse Mechanic*. ASME *Transactions* and National Archives.





The background and walls in the Turbine Room at the Long Island City Powerhouse match the background and walls in Lewis Hine's *Mechanic in his Shrine* picture (next page), confirming its location. In addition, printed publications identify the manufacturer as Westinghouse. Hagley Museum and Library and National Archives



Chapter Reports

NEW YORK CHICAGO GOLDEN SPIKE LACKAWANNA PACIFIC COAST
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SOUTHWEST SOUTHEAST

New York Chapter Enjoys Fellowship & Videos

The New York Chapter's April meeting centered around the video Rio Grande Steam Freights, which is Chapter Chairman Charles Smith's favorite video of the Rio Grande narrow gauge operation. Filmed in October 1992, it features five days of multiple engine freight trains. Trips over the Cumbres & Toltec from both Chama and Antonito were featured. This was the most action the line had seen since the Rio Grande discontinued regular service in 1968.

The May meeting's video was one that was originally prepared for public television, showing the growth and development of the Pennsylvania Railroad from the days of President J. Edgar Thomson (third president) to the mid-20th century. The construction of Horseshoe Curve, and the many contributions of the PRR to the technology of railroading were nicely presented in this video.

The video for the June meeting was Baltimore Light

Rail, with the focus on the operation of the line, which opened from Camden Yards to Timonium (over the former Pennsylvania/Northern Central) in 1992, along with many scenes from the construction of the line – track construction, erection of catenary, delivery of the first car, and test operation.

The New York Chapter meets in the Williamson Library at Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Williamson is at the southeast corner of the building, first floor (above the concourse), and is reached by the elevator bank at the northeast corner. Because of increased security in the terminal, members and guests must assemble at the Track 23 gate between 7:15pm and 7:40pm, and be escorted to Williamson as a group. If that window is missed, members and guests can call 917-209-8157 to arrange for admittance.

Southern California Chapter Visits Barstow Yard

On Saturday, May 24th, the Southern California Chapter enjoyed a trip to the restored Harvey House at the Barstow depot, along with the Western American Railroad Museum, which is also located in the depot. The trip also included time to observe action in BNSF's Barstow Yard, which was followed by a visit to the BNSF-UP junction at Daggett. Participants met at the San Bernardino Amtrak (Santa Fe) station at 10:30am to board a bus for a journey along Historic Route 66 from Victorville to Barstow.

The April program was presented by Clayton Tinkham, who showed slides from his time as a signal maintainer helper for Santa Fe, along with his railroad photographs from Europe and Australia. Chairman Loren Martens reported on local railroad activities, and John

McCourt provided information on the Chapter's spring excursion to Barstow.

The May program was presented by noted rail photographer, and former Chapter chairman, Stan Kistler. His program was entitled "Fifty Years of Chasing the Santa Fe With A Camera."

The Chapter also reports that it is selling surplus items from its collection on eBay. Board member John Mastrobuoni has been listing timetables, maps and books. Since he started selling chapter items, over \$600 has been added to the chapter treasury. Items can be found for sale by j.a.mastro, and John usually lists items starting on a Sunday.

Southwest Chapter Participates in Annual Railroad Days

The former Santa Fe depot in Las Cruces, Texas is now a railroad museum, and the Chapter helped celebrate their first Annual Railroad Days on Saturday, April 26, 2008. Chapter members Carolyn Buchanon, Heide Green, Prince McKenzie and Gene Green were invited as reenactors, and the Chapter set up tables in the north end of the depot. Christine Gonzales, the first female locomotive engineer on the Santa Fe, and a third generation railroader, was also on hand. Ms. Gonzales's first job as an engineer was dumping ore cars at the Hurley smelter.

Outside, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe had a locomotive open for visitors, which proved to be very popular, with a continuous stream of visitors to the locomotive throughout the day. Inside the depot, were seven model railroad layouts on display. Three were HO – one that children could operate, one permanently installed in the museum, and a modular layout on the upper floor. In addition to these, there were portable layouts in Z, N, O and G scales. The G-scale layout was provided by Sandy and Charlie Zlatkovich.

A Rail Runner locomotive and two cars were down from Albuquerque. [Ed. Note: Rail Runner is a commuter rail operation that serves Albuquerque.] The passenger cars were open for visitors to tour, and representatives of

both Rail Runner and Operation Lifesaver were on hand outside the passenger cars to answer visitors' questions. Many visitors expressed interest in seeing Rail Runner service between Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

Southeast Chapter Rides the SAM Shortline, Ponders Fate of ACL 1504

On March 15, 2008, ten members and friends of the Southeast Chapter boarded the SAM Shortline excursion train from Cordele, Georgia to Archery, Georgia and back on former Seaboard Air Line trackage. The all day adventure departed the depot in downtown Cordele at 9:30 in the morning. The first order of business was for the train to cross the railroad junction in Cordele, which features diamond crossings with CSX's Fitzgerald Subdivision and the NS mainline between Macon and Jacksonville. The route of the trip is along very rural Georgia farmland. Passenger's observed peanut farms, pecan trees, and a cattle ranch. The rails traverse the trestle and fill over Lake Blackshear, providing riders a water's edge view. The car attendant opened a vestibule window, allowing folks to take photos and video train-side while the train was crossing the lake, with boaters in view. SAM is the abbreviation for the former Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railroad. The morning of the trip was not the best for photography, as a much-needed rain fell until early afternoon. Sunshine then emerged through patchy clouds accompanied by strong winds from the southwest. Tornadoes were spawned near Atlanta by the storm earlier that day. The high winds blew down a pine tree across the tracks, causing a short delay, as described later in this article.

A stop in Americus afforded passengers an opportunity to eat lunch in the classic Windsor Hotel, built in 1892. The buffet featured baked chicken, roast beef and hot vegetables. A small hobby store in downtown Americus was a welcome discovery for some. The train traveled about thirty miles per hour, but slowed for bridges and trestles. Between Plains and Americus on the return trip, the excursion was delayed by a pine tree with a 16" diameter base, which had fallen across the tracks. The train came to a stop short of the tree. After some engineer and conductor discussion about the lack of a chain saw aboard the train, a plan was made. The locomotive eased forward and pushed the tree aside. After ten minutes of delay due to the bad weather Mother Nature threw at the railroad, the trip resumed without further incident. The train ar-

rived back in Cordele about fifteen minutes late, owing to the pine tree. For information about the SAM Shortline Excursion Train, call 877-GA-RAILS or visit www.sams-shortline.com.

Atlantic Coast Line 1504, a 4-6-2 steam locomotive, is back in the news recently associated with the activity that will transform the present Prime Osborn Convention Center, formerly the Jacksonville Union Terminal complex, into the planned Jacksonville Transportation Center. This multi-million dollar project is planned to include the return of Amtrak to the facility, as well as bringing a multi-modal approach by including the other forms of transportation currently in service in the area. Local R&LHS Chapter members are split on the prospect of whether or not the 1504 should be restored for static display or returned to service. Local NRHS chapter members have come out on record in favor of full restoration and return to excursion service. There are varied opinions on which railroads might offer access to their lines for excursion service, but all believe that the 1504 should at least be cosmetically restored and a shelter constructed to minimize further deterioration of this magnificent locomotive. The project is being undertaken in conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation.

ACL 1504 was built in 1919 by the American Locomotive Company, Richmond Works, for the United States Railway Administration to haul troops during WWI, but was not completed until the war ended. The locomotive is a "Light Pacific", 4-6-2, Class P-5-A, and could easily exceed 70mph. During its time of service, it was the pride of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, hauling premier passenger trains in and out of Florida. It was in service on the ACL for over thirty years. In 1960, the engine was placed on display in front of the new Atlantic Coast Line building, now CSX, in Jacksonville. There it remained until 1986, when CSX presented it to the Prime Osborn Center as a symbol of the city's railroad heritage. The engine was completely refurbished in 1989 by Great Atlantic Boiler Services of Jacksonville, but the current detailed condition of the locomotive is not known.

THE WEST THE RAILROADS MADE

Carlos A. Schwantes and James P. Ronda



New from Washington

The West the Railroads Made

Carlos A. Schwantes
and James P. Ronda

Railroads were second only to the federal government in shaping the West, and nowhere was that shaping more visible than on the Great Plains and in large parts of the Pacific Northwest. Filled with contemporary accounts, illustrations, and photographs, *The West the Railroads Made* offers a fresh look at what the iron road created.

Published with the Washington State Historical Society and the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library at the St. Louis Mercantile Library - University of Missouri

2008. 240 pages, 200 illustrations, 135 in color
\$39.95 cloth



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Late News - The Railroad History Awards for 2008

The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's Railroad History Awards for 2008 were announced at the Society's annual meeting in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Gerald M. Best Senior Achievement Award was presented to two individuals, **William W. Kratville** and **Arthur L. Lloyd**.

The George M. and Constance W. Hilton Book Award was presented to **Don Hofsommer**, for his *The Tootin Louie - A History of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005)

The David P. Morgan Article Award was given to **Fred B. Wrixon**, for his "FDR's Wartime Train Travels" in *Classic Trains Special Edition No. 6*, pp. 20-30. (Kalmach Publishing Company, 2008)

The Fred R. and Jane A. Stindt Photography Award was presented to **James A. Brown**.

Complete award citations will be included in the Fall-Winter 2008-2009 issue of Railroad History. Regarding the book award, another book by this year's winner, Don Hofsommer, *Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland* (Indiana University Press, 2005), was also nominated for the 2008 award. Awards Committee Chair, Mark Entrop, noted that this is the first time in recent memory that two books by the same author, yet published by two different presses, have been nominated for the award in the same year.

Marketplace

WANTED: Photos of Pullman sleeping cars assigned to the *Texas Special*, heavyweight or lightweight, or of the train itself any time period. Operational details of the *Texas Special* also sought, including financials. Need photos of MKT lightweight sleeping cars. Larry Thomas, P.O. Box 1688, St. Louis, MO 63188-1688, 314-535-3101 any evening.

WANTED: Photos of PRR 8614 AS24m and 9250 ES10. H. Buckley, 4801 Eaton Place, Alexandria, VA 22310.

FOR SALE: *A Catalog of Coaling Stations in the United States*. By William F. Rapp. A listing of over 800 coaling stations plus photos of types. Price \$12.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling. (No credit cards, please). W.F. Rapp, 87 South Main St., Pittsford, NY 14534

FOR SALE: Have a sizeable collection of steam photos to trade. Write for list. Alan T. Tattersall, 9482 Joloru Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32210.

FOR SALE: The Alaska Railroad by Bernadine Prince, 1964. Two Volumes, first one is autographed. Total pages 1,092. Price is \$1000. Please contact Norval M. Kane, 3140 W. 79th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99502-4406.

WANTED: Full size (1.5" scale) elevation and section drawings for D&RGW's L-131, 132 2-8-8-2's. Gary Bonine, 624 Moondale Drive, El Paso, TX 79912. 915-585-9056, gbonine1@sbcglobal.net.

CALL TO ACTION! Thousands of rail cars, including both new and historic fallen flags, have been vandalized with graffiti over the past decade. Help stop this crime. Report any suspicious trespassing to the railroad or local police. NS 800-453-2350, CSX 800-232-0144, UP 888-877-7267, BNSF 800-832-5452, CN 800-465-9239, CP 800-716-9132, KCS 877-527-9464.

WANTED: Steam, Electric and Diesel locomotive builder's and number plates for my personal collection. I am interested in one to a collection. I have some plates to trade or will purchase outright. I am especially looking for early diesel plates from ALCO-GE-IR, Alco DL-109 and PA locomotives, F-M Trainmasters, Baldwin cab units, PRR Altoona T-1, and a Lima from a VGN 2-6-6-6. Please contact me and let me know what you have. Ron Muldowney, 52 Dunkard Church Rd., Stockton, N.J. 08559-1405 - 609-397-0293 - steamfan@patmedia.net.

FOR SALE - *The Philadelphia and Erie Railway* by Rosenberger. Long out of print, it is available again in limited quantity. The original 1975 printing, 748 pages, hardcover with dust jacket. Mint condition. Anyone interested in this company, the P & E Division of the PRR, or Pennsylvania railroad history in general will be interested in this well researched reference work. Price has been reduced to \$20 and that price includes postage. Dan Allen, PO Box 917, Marlton, NJ 08053-0917.



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