

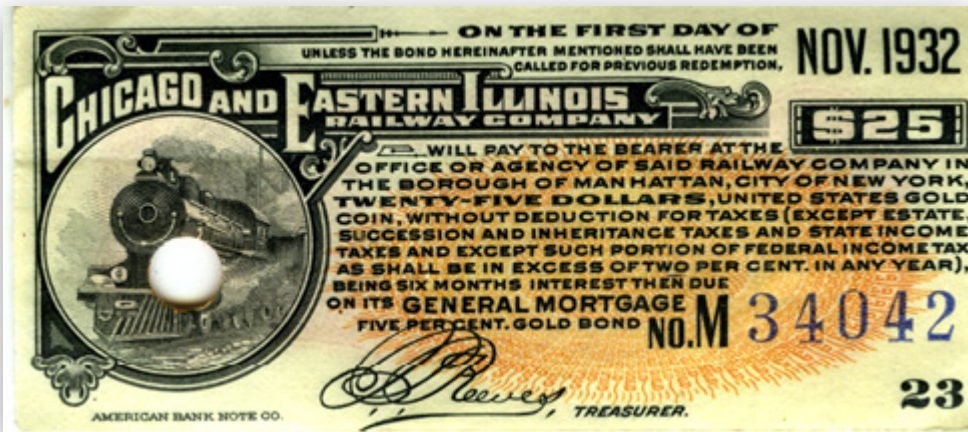
# Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad

*by Elbert Simon and Mike Schafer*

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The Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad linked Chicago with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in Evansville, Ind., and several southwestward-bound carriers at St. Louis. Passenger-wise, C&EI's most important role was connecting the Windy City with numerous off-line destinations in America's South and Southeast.



Taken from Chicago's Roosevelt Road overpass, this undated photo (we guess circa 1960) is also sans general information, but late-afternoon sun at Dearborn Station and the long train consist confirms that this is Chicago & Eastern Illinois' combined Humming Bird/Georgian awaiting its 3:45pm departure to Danville, Ill., and Terre Haute and Evansville, Ind. At Evansville, the train will be handed over to Louisville & Nashville which will combine it with the St. Louis section. At Nashville, a major shuffling of cars will take place as the Cincinnati section joins the party from which will emerge the Humming Bird bound for New Orleans and the Georgian for Atlanta. Tom Gascoigne collection; timetable and early C&EI ticket, Mike Schafer collection; matchbook cover, Richard Schroeder collection

C&EI's on-line passenger service involved the ultra-competitive Chicago–St. Louis market, the 287-mile Chicago–Evansville corridor, and the “Little Egypt” area of southern Illinois—so named because of the similarity of this river region (the two most voluminous rivers in North America, the Mississippi and the Ohio, join at the southernmost tip of Illinois) to that of the fertile Nile River region in northern Egypt.



# C&EI

Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad

## The **BOULEVARD** of **STEEL**

ROUTE OF

*The* **DIXIE LIMITED**  
**DIXIE FLYER**  
**DIXIE MAIL**  
**DIXIELAND**  
**DIXIANA**  
**DIXIE FLAGLER**  
(STREAMLINER)

**CHICAGO - EVANSVILLE**

NASHVILLE - ATLANTA - BIRMINGHAM  
ALL FLORIDA - GULF COAST

**SAFETY FIRST-**  
*friendliness too!*

**DECEMBER 17, 1941**

# TIME TABLES

C&EI's earliest predecessor railroad, Evansville & Illinois, began building northward from the Ohio River city of Evansville in 1851, reaching Vincennes, Ind., in 1853 and Terre Haute, Ind., in 1854. Later, E&I was reorganized as Evansville & Terre Haute.



Today, Danville, Ill. —population 30,000-plus—might best be known as the hometown of actors Gene Hackman and Dick Van Dyke, but it was also considered C&EI’s hometown in some respects and still is a heavy-duty railroad city. It was a hub for the railroad and location of its principal shops. This 1885 timetable shows a time when the railroad’s slogan was “The Danville Route.” Richard Schroeder collection

In 1869, Evansville, Terre Haute & Chicago was formed, building north from Terre Haute and reaching Danville, Ill., in 1871. Meanwhile, Chicago, Danville & Vincennes—chartered in 1865—was building south from Dolton, Ill. to Chicago in 1870. In 1870, the Chicago, Danville & Vincennes was merged with the Evansville, Terre Haute & Chicago to form the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad.

Pittsburgh, Chicago & St. Louis (a.k.a. the “Panhandle”), bringing CD&V trains to the Panhandle’s Chicago station near Clinton and Kinzie. [ class="CharOverride-16">To put this into perspective for PTJ class="CharOverride-16"> readers who ride or have ridden Amtrak and/or Metra trains north out of Chicago Union Station, the partially tunneled, 90-degree curve to the west once away from the station platforms marks this location.—ed.]

In 1873, CD&V defaulted and in 1877 was sold at foreclosure as the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad. Meanwhile, in early 1875, CD&V had opened its own line into Chicago—constructed under the Chicago & Southern name—leaving CD&V’s existing line at Thornton, Ill., south of Dolton. This new route brought trains to 26th Street in Chicago via Blue Island, Ill. (another future Chicago suburb), completing their trek to downtown Chicago over PRR’s Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago main line.

Since this somewhat circuitous route still required some operation over another railroad, CD&V desired its own Chicago terminal. Accordingly, its C&S route via Blue Island was sold to Grand Trunk Western, and the Chicago & Western Indiana Railroad was formed to build a more direct route north from Dolton. After delays caused by litigation with several intersecting railroads, C&WI opened a Chicago terminal at 14th Street near today’s South State Street in November 1880. In turn, this terminal was superseded in 1885 by the iconic Dearborn Station, located about six blocks north at the foot of Dearborn Street at Polk Street. This station was (and still is, repurposed as an office building) located about four blocks south of that which in time would become Chicago’s Loop District, defined by the Union Elevated Railway (today, the Chicago Transit Authority’s Loop elevated).

southern Illinois. Marion was reached in 1896 and the Mississippi River, at Thebes, Ill., and Joppa, Ill., on the Ohio River in 1900. The unusual complexity of C&EI's growth (and some retrenchment) and evolution from 1900 forth until the sale of the railroad's Evansville leg to L&N in 1969 and its merger with Missouri Pacific in 1976 need not be covered here in detail other than to note the railroad's reach to St. Louis. This occurred shortly after C&EI came under control of the St. Louis-San Francisco early in the 20th century. To connect with the "Frisco" at St. Louis Gateway, C&EI acquired trackage rights on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway (a.k.a., the Big Four, a subsidiary of New York Central System) from Pana, Ill., to East St. Louis, Ill. This arrangement went into effect in 1904.

## **Early passenger service**

By the time of Dearborn Station's opening in 1885, through service had been established between Chicago and Nashville over Louisville & Nashville south of Evansville. In cooperation with the latter-day St. Louis-Southwestern—the Cotton Belt—through cars were operated for a time between Chicago and Texas via Danville, Salem, Marion, and Thebes where cars were floated across the Mississippi on a train ferry until the new Thebes Bridge opened in 1905.

"All Aboard," C. & E. I. R. R. Station, Chicago Heights, Ill.—4



A southbound train pauses at Chicago Heights—a Chicago suburb—circa 1910 in this colorized postcard scene photographed near the location of today's Lincoln Highway/U.S. Route 30 underpass in Chicago Heights. C&EI historical society





Terre Haute Union Station, 1910. This important crossroads afforded C&EI travelers a connection directly with east-west NYC and PRR trains. C&EI historical society

At about that same time, C&EI, now under the control of both Frisco and Rock Island, briefly rerouted its Chicago passenger service into the latter's La Salle Street Station via a connection with the Rock Island at 79th Street when that C&WI/CRI&P intersection was all at grade level. In 1913, once again independent, C&EI returned to Dearborn Station.

The third leg of C&EI's passenger network linked Chicago with St. Louis, competing directly with Wabash, Illinois Central, and Chicago & Alton (later Alton Railroad, then Gulf, Mobile & Ohio until 1972).



An undated midday aerial view of the Danville station looking northwest shows two steam-powered trains there at the same time. The southbound train is thus likely local train number 1 while the northbound train would be 92, the Dixie Limited. photo and postcard, C&EI historical society



Like the Thebes trains initially, St. Louis trains left the Evansville line at Danville south of Watseka, Ill. After a cutoff opened between Woodland Junction, south of Watseka, and Villa Grove, most trains bound for St. Louis and southern Illinois points used this cutoff to bypass Danville, a fairly large city with a congested railway grid.

Dearborn Station was owned by Chicago & Western Indiana, itself owned by Erie, Wabash, Grand Trunk Western, Monon, and C&EI; accordingly, C&WI switched the station and maintained engine and car-servicing facilities just south of 47th Street on Chicago's south side. Easily the most glamorous trains

C&WI's main line south out of Dearborn was the crux of one of the most complex railway junctions in Chicago, if not the upper Midwest. At 21st Street interlocking, C&WI's five-track main line curved due south across the double-track PRR main line and the joint double-track Santa Fe-Illinois Central main line; Santa Fe split from IC at this point to join the C&WI main line.

Except for Santa Fe, the railroads of Dearborn had south suburban stops, all but GTW at C&WI's "Little Englewood" 63rd Street station, several blocks west of the better-known NYC-PRR-NKP-CRI&P Englewood station. GTW had its own stop at Chicago Lawn.

Now, the definitive state of C&EI's principal passenger service in the 20th century was in place. As with other railroads that provided comprehensive passenger service, C&EI strove to improve the quality of its service and equipment until it became obvious in the late 1950s that the nation's rail passenger network as a whole was headed for a drastic change.

## C&EI long-distance service

MID-WINTER TRAIN DE LUXE

# DIXIE LIMITED

IN SERVICE, JANUARY 10—APRIL 8, 1916

## Chicago-Florida

11.30 a. m.	Lv Chicago	C. & E. I.	Ar	5.55 p. m.
7.30 p. m.	Lv Evansville	L. & N.	Ar	9.28 a. m.
12.10 a. m.	Lv Nashville	N. C. & St. L.	Ar	4.50 a. m.
4.37 a. m.	Lv Chattanooga	"	Ar	12.18 a. m.
8.45 a. m.	Lv Atlanta	C. of Ga.	Ar	8.03 p. m.
11.50 a. m.	Lv Macon	G. S. & F.	Ar	5.08 p. m.
3.05 p. m.	Lv Tifton	A. C. L.	Ar	2.00 p. m.
7.30 p. m.	Ar Jacksonville	"	Lv	9.35 a. m.

The only one-night-on-the-road-train to Florida.  
 Compartment-Observation Car, Drawing-Room Sleepers, Coaches and Baggage Car.  
 Dining Car—serving all meals.

FAMOUS ALL-STEEL

# DIXIE FLYER

IN SERVICE YEAR 'ROUND

Lv Chicago, 10.25 p. m. Ar Jacksonville 7.50 a. m. (2d day)

During the winter season, the Dixie Route offers double daily service to

A 1916 promotional folder touts the Dixie Limited and the Dixie Flyer; the latter would still be running 50 years later. Richard Schroeder collection

Though nothing on C&EI itself could qualify as long-distance service—the railroad’s longest run was 378 miles—C&EI played a key role as a partner in “Dixie Route” services to the South and Southeast. That route to Florida continued beyond Evansville over L&N to Nashville; thence Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis (merged into L&N in 1957) to Atlanta. Beyond Atlanta, several different routes—Central of Georgia; Atlanta, Birmingham & Coast; and/or Atlantic Coast Line—were used to Jacksonville, the gateway to Florida. Trains, or at least through cars, going beyond Jacksonville were routed on Florida East Coast and/or Atlantic Coast Line.

The Dixie Route competed with South/Southeast services over three other principal routes out of Chicago, including Illinois Central, Pennsylvania, and New York Central. Although there were always secondary trains on each route, a premier service was usually operated in the winter season. As on East Coast routes between New York and Florida, the epitome of high-class Florida service out of Chicago was an all-Pullman limited whose passage was marked by an open-platform observation.



A postcard from the 1920s shows the interior of a diner-lounge designed and outfitted by C&EI shops in Danville. C&EI historical society

The 1920s were the golden era. C&EI had an abundance of coaches—though the newest dated from 1912—but needed additional diners to equip the growing service to Florida (and to a limited extent St. Louis) and purchased a half dozen diners from Pullman along with several coach-baggage cars.

The economic downturn of the Great Depression beginning in 1929 took some time to impact travel but its effects were inevitable and brutal. For example, the flagship Dixieland was reduced to tri-weekly status during the worst of the Depression.

C&EI was a pioneer in the application of air-conditioning. During the Depression, Pullman kept its workforce busy applying air-conditioning to its


“Recreation cars” were a major attraction on Florida trains in the mid-1930s though pretty much gone by World War II. The Dixieland, for example used three Burlington-series lounge cars as recreation cars for a number of seasons. Rebuilt Clover-series Pullman sleepers introduced bedrooms to the Dixie Route, as they were rebuilt with five bedrooms and eight sections.

As on many Florida trains, the flagship cars were the Glen-series sleepers providing six compartments and three drawing rooms; other cars were named for composers, artists, and such. These cars were reassigned to other routes in the summer.









A system map from a 1940s public timetable shows how C&EI fit into the Midwest–South/Southeast market. The distorted width of Illinois helped make C&EI appear as though it dominated the state more than it did. Note that C&EI’s principal competitors out of Chicago to the south—IC and PRR—are not shown. Mike Schafer collection

The modern era may be thought of as beginning with the 1940–41 winter season. The competitive Chicago–Florida route—now anchored at the Chicago end by C&EI, IC, and PRR—elected to cooperate in an unprecedented manner. Although the Pullman flagships were still very much around in their heavyweight glory, the vibe was now lined with dramatic improvements being introduced to coach passengers.

In 1939 Florida East Coast had acquired a seven-car Budd-built coach streamliner—christened as the Henry M. Flagler—similar to the new New York–Florida Champions FEC and ACL together had acquired to compete with Seaboard’s also-new-in-1939 all-coach Silver Meteor. Each of these trains was seven cars: baggage-dorm-coach, four coaches, diner, and tavern-observation. Seven lightweight cars was the presumed limit for Electro-Motive’s E4/E6 locomotives running single.

For a year, the FEC equipment operated as the Jacksonville–Miami Henry M. Flagler (a tribute to the man credited with turning Florida into a vacation paradise), but results were not acceptable. Instead, it was reassigned to a jointly operated Chicago–Miami run, the Dixie Flagler, departing Chicago and Miami every third day, usually behind steam. C&EI, L&N/NC&StL,

The second set of operating partners in the triumvirate was IC-CofG-ACL-FEC. The new diesel-powered train on this run was the sleek, vibrant orange-and-green City of Miami, built by Pullman-Standard and powered by a single Electro-Motive E-unit.

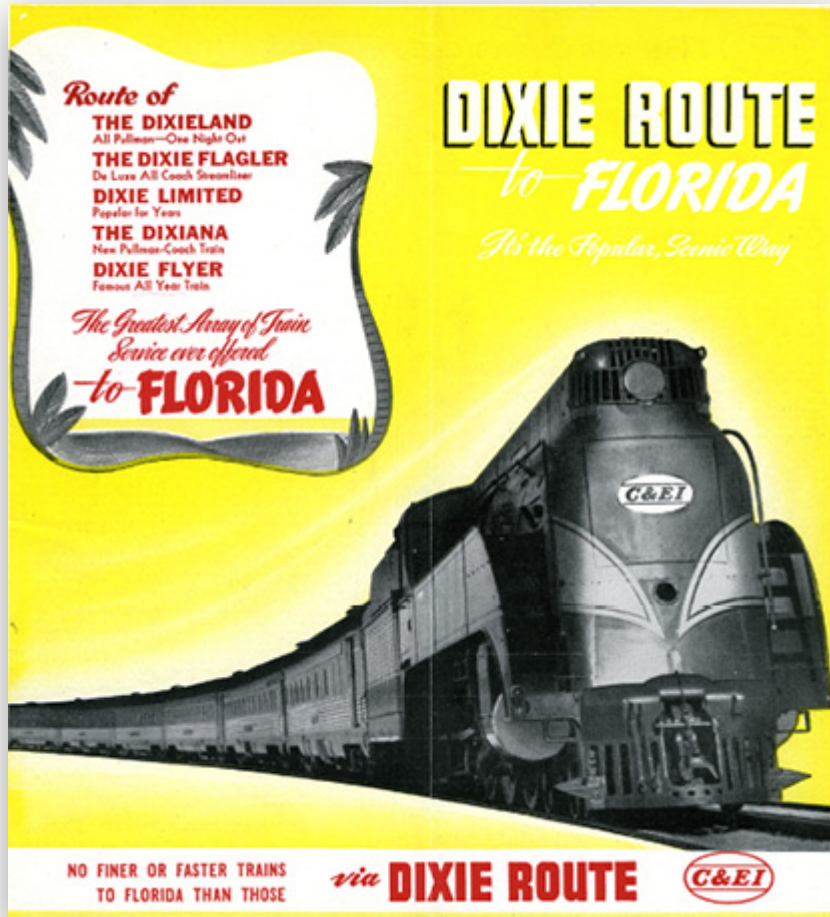
The PRR-L&N-AB&C/ACL-FEC train was built by the Budd Company for Pennsy. To the chagrin of Budd, the manufacturer's signature stainless-steel fluted-side cars were painted Tuscan red and, like the Dixie Flagler north of Jacksonville, were powered by a streamlined Pacific over each railroad.

C&EI refurbished one of its earlier 4-6-2 Pacific types, number 1008, with shrouding in a distinctive design. The 1008 was a Class K-2 4-6-2 built in 1911 by Baldwin; C&EI's six newest (and largest) Pacifics were K-3-class numbers 1018–1023 built by Lima in 1923 and used on the big Florida trains.



C&EI Pacific (4-6-2) number 1020 is hustling southbound out of Chicago at 79th Street with an 11-car Dixie Limited on June 14, 1940. The locomotive

that a second section of the Dixie Limited is following. Robert F. Collins,  
white river production archives



Less than a year old, the new Dixie Flagler behind streamlined steam locomotive 1008 wheels past C&WI's coach yard at 51st Street on August 14, 1941. This is the same locomotive that appears on the promotional folder at left even though the noses appear different. Shortly after the launch of the train in 1940, the locomotive smashed into a truck, requiring yet another new nose job, which is that shown in the 1941 photo. Rick Schroeder collection



Big plans for the 1941–42 winter season were overruled by outside events. There remained three trains on each route, each operating every third day on a coordinated schedule. The Dixie Flagler was joined by the all-Pullman Dixieland and coach-sleeper train Dixiana. Pearl Harbor occurred on the eve of the new schedule, so the Dixiana only made four round trips before it was suspended. The Dixieland, now with coaches added, operated in the 1942–43 winter season, but then no extra seasonal train was fielded until 1946–47 per government decree.

From May 1949 forth, there would no longer be a Dixieland as originally conceived, and specially painted standard Pullmans were added to each route's coach streamliner. Roomettes in rebuilt Elm-series cars were finally available on these trains.

This was the pattern until the 1954–55 winter season when new lightweight sleepers and coaches arrived. Now re-christened as the New Dixieland, two

before the beginning of the 1957–58 winter season. Many of its sleepers went to the South Wind.

Two trains introduced by L&N in 1946 would have a significant effect on C&EI in 1948 and 1951 respectively. Introduced with new equipment, L&N's Georgian was an Atlanta–St. Louis all-coach streamliner while the new Humming Bird served the Cincinnati–New Orleans run on a day-and-overnight schedule. Each of the four trainsets for these two new trains included four coaches, a coach-smoker, tavern-lounge, and diner, pulled by a single E7. These trains were examples of a comparatively rare American Car & Foundry (ACF) construction in fluted aluminum, shared by 20 New York Central combines and Wabash's new St. Louis–Kansas City streamliner City of Kansas City.

As initially operated—as a daytime run—the Georgian did not meet L&N's expectations, thus in 1948 it was decided that it would work better as an Atlanta–Chicago/St. Louis overnight train with the Chicago and St. Louis sections separating at Evansville—and vice versa southbound. C&EI handled the Chicago section north of Evansville. Pullman supplied sleepers for the revised Georgian, repainting several standard sleepers to match the new dark blue Georgian cars. A similar move established a Chicago leg for the Humming Bird north of Nashville in August 1951, with through sleepers from New Orleans and Montgomery, Ala., as well as through coaches. North of Nashville, C&EI provided a diner, lounge, and parlor-observation that had been built in 1946 for Whippoorwill service (see section on C&EI regional trains).

In response to becoming a partner in extended Georgian and Humming Bird

New Dixieland service but eventually all of these cars could be found in Humming Bird and Georgian service.

Most of the standard Pullmans still in service on L&N and connecting trains were replaced by 29 new P-S 6 section–4 double bedroom–6 roomette Pine-series cars in 1953. C&EI's share was four cars:

900/ Slash Pine

901/ Pitch Pine

902/ Loblolly Pine

903/ Pond Pine

The new Dixieland received nine new sleepers in 1954 that were purchased by the five participating lines. Most of them were named in the Florida series including C&EI's Florida Flowers and Florida Lakes. These cars had a 4 section–4 roomette–5 bedroom–1 compartment arrangement. These cars were supplemented by a sleeper and sleeper-lounge in winter seasons. The last standard Pullmans were retired from the Chicago–Evansville line in May 1958.

The sharp recession of 1957–58 as well as the similar schedule of the Chicago legs of the Georgian and Humming Bird resulted in their being combined in January 1958. This move reduced the number of diners and lounges (and crews to staff them) needed to protect the operation of these two trains, whose riderships were falling anyway.

Author Simon first visited Chicago in August 1962 and observed a combined Humming Bird/Georgian consist. There were five sleepers, two for Atlanta and

usually PRR, interlined with a New York–Nashville line to save the need for one car).

The diner and lounge ran through to Atlanta and usually were L&N cars on one set and C&EI on the other. The C&EI diner usually was the 506-Potawatomie Inn, originally mail-baggage-lunch-counter grill 602-Sparhawk Inn (built for C&EI's Meadowlark) until rebuilt in 1952. The lounge was 703-Woodland, rebuilt in 1952 from a 1948 "family coach" built originally for C&O.



Dixie Route Florida service on August 18, 1957: C&EI train Second 2, the second section of the New Dixieland, is at Princeton, Ind. Head-end cars appear to outnumber passenger-carrying cars. James EuDaly

Nickel Plate 10-6 sleepers were prevalent after the reduction in that railroad's

however, only two sleeper lines remained: an L&N 10-6 sleeper for Montgomery and a former Dixieland sleeper for Atlanta.

By early 1968, it was all over, leaving only the Danville–Chicago Danville Flyer (sidebar). This would survive until the end of service on the eve of Amtrak.

## **C&EI regional service**

C&EI made a valiant effort to provide regional service with its own trains, mostly serving within the state of Illinois; between Chicago and St. Louis, Little Egypt, and of course Evansville.

C&EI's Chicago–St. Louis service was always hampered by the lack of large intermediate cities. PTJ readers who have ridden the numerous Amtrak Texas Eagle reroutes on Union Pacific's ex-C&EI route between Chicago and St. Louis can vouch for this. In the C&EI era, the route rarely exceeded two trains each way.

The daytime La Salle was air-conditioned in the summer of 1932 as part of an agreement between each of the four competing railroads (Alton, IC, WAB, and C&EI) to air-condition one of their round trips. Pullman itself air-conditioned parlor-observation cars Rosamond and Winifred.

The La Salle was rechristened as the Century of Progress to capitalize on the 1933 Chicago World's Fair and, after the fair, was renamed The Zipper on account of its overall fast schedule—66 mph average speed—between Chicago and St. Louis. There was an advantage in not having to negotiate larger cities; e.g., in Springfield, the state capital, Alton trains had significant stretches of street-running while IC trains had to access their depot through



C&EI's night train was first called the Dearborn, then the Spirit of Progress, and finally the cleverly named Silent Knight, thanks again to there being no noisy stops or switching in larger cities. Pullman attempted to keep the train competitive by assigning first a bedroom cafe-lounge and then one of several modernized cars that included several bedrooms.

After the war, between August 1947 and April 1949, Chicago–St. Louis service was reduced to a single daytime round trip. For much of this time the train was known as the Cardinal (the Illinois state bird) and was operated with one set of equipment, turning each day in St. Louis. Meanwhile, the Silent Knight name was shifted to an overnight, dual-destination Chicago–Danville–Evansville/Thebes service.

By World War II the run from Chicago to the remote Little Egypt area of southern Illinois was unremarkable with an overnight train covering 378 miles in nearly 12 hours—an average of about 38 mph. The nameless train had limited stops between Chicago and Villa Grove, then nearly all stops the remainder of the way to Marion and Thebes. A sleeper was provided.

Daytime service from Chicago to Little Egypt was accomplished through the Chicago–St. Louis daytime Zipper and a connecting train called the Egyptian Zipper originating in Danville and connecting to the Zipper (which bypassed Danville via the Glover cutoff) at Villa Grove. Both trains shared the CHI–STL main line between Villa Grove and Findlay, where the Egyptian Zipper took off on its own route to Salem, Marion, and Cypress. The motor trains did not survive the war and were sold off.

In 1937, two early gas-powered streamlined railcars, numbers 245-Salem and 252-Mt. Vernon, were acquired from ACF to protect Danville–Cypress

Eventually they were replaced by steam-powered trains again, and the pair served in other miscellaneous services but were gone by the start of World War II. Some reports state that, for a time, the railcars operated into Chicago.

C&EI re-addressed Chicago–Little Egypt service in October 1946 with a new four-car diesel-powered “semi-local” streamliner, the Meadowlark, built by Pullman-Standard. Pulled by one of C&EI’s three new Electro-Motive E7 passenger diesels, the train comprised a mail-baggage-lunch counter grill and three coaches, all christened with names associated with Illinois history and geography:

Baggage-mail lunch counter-grill 602-Sparkhawk Inn

Coach 464-Hubbard Trail

Coach 465-Egyptian Trail

Coach 466-Horseshoe Trail

It operated between Cypress and Chicago (345 miles) on what is sometimes known as a “shoppers’ schedule,” with a late morning arrival in downtown Chicago—then (and still) a popular destination for shoppers and tourists—and a late afternoon departure back south. The northbound Meadowlark left Cypress before dawn and arrived back at Cypress after midnight. (Why Cypress, population less than 300? Because it was a division/crew-change point for C&EI and had a nearby wye track for turning trains. Schedules actually catered to Marion and Salem, both of them significant commercial areas of southern Illinois).

Conventional equipment on the Meadowlark survived until January 1956

when it was revised as a Cypress–Danville run where it met the Humming Bird/Georgian.

The 1946 delivery of the Meadowlark cars was part of an 11-car order, with the remaining seven cars destined for a new streamliner for the Chicago–Evansville corridor—a streamliner for which C&EI had high hopes, the Whippoorwill. Painted in a simple but striking blue-and-orange livery (with slightly different lettering styles than the Meadowlark equipment), this train initially operated on a shoppers’ schedule: early morning out of Evansville to Chicago, arriving in the noon hour, and late afternoon back, allowing for about five hours’ time for shopping or sightseeing in Chicago.

The consist was four coaches; a mail-baggage, coach, diner, and a parlor observation car.

Baggage-mail coach 304-Turkey Run

Coach 460-Vigo Trail

Coach 461-Vincennes Trail

Coach 462-Vanderburg Trail

Coach 463-Vermilion Trail

Diner 505-Shakamak Inn

Observation parlor 702-Chicagoland

These cars for the Whippoor will and Meadowlark were among the first to be released from P-S following the close of World War II.

Whippoorwill, making it a morning Chicago departure to Evansville, sandwiched between the seasonal Dixieland and the Dixie Flagler on days when those two trains were operating, and a late evening arrival back in Chicago just ahead of the Dixie Flagler. The results again were disappointing and the Whippoorwill was discontinued in November 1949 and its cars distributed to other services, including Dixie Route trains. For example, the Humming Bird gained the parlor-observation car Chicagoland for a time.

C&EI had a monopoly on the Chicago–Evansville passenger corridor. Other single-carrier routes linking those two anchor cities included NYC and IC, but their routes did not hit Terre Haute—an important connection point for NYC and PRR east-west trains. In 1948, there were ten schedules in each direction north of Woodland Junction/Watseka, though not all were daily while the Dixieland was seasonal. Trains devoted only to Chicago–Evansville service included one nearly all-stops local in each direction and the Whippoorwill; the rest were Dixie Route trains.

At the onset of the 1960s, C&EI still hosted five trains in each direction: Humming Bird, Georgian, Dixie Flyer, Meadowlark, and a nameless Chicago–Evansville local, train 1 southbound and 92 northbound. By this time, the Bird and the Georgian were almost always combined except during heavy travel periods or when one of the northbound trains was running exceptionally late into Nashville where the Bird and the Georgian normally were combined.

By the end of 1965, the Chicago end of the Dixie Flyer was gone as were the Chicago–Evansville nameless locals. But in their place was a new name train, introduced without fanfare, the Danville Flyer (sidebar). The Humming Bird and the Georgian marched on as combined forces in the deteriorating U.S. rail

Humming Bird altogether, but the train was given a stay of execution by a federal judge. When the judge lifted the order on January 9, 1969, L&N terminated the southbound Humming Bird en route at Birmingham, forcing passengers to use alternate transportation beyond to New Orleans. The event made news across the country.

## Epilogue

C&EI was split up by Missouri Pacific and L&N by the time of Amtrak's start-up in 1971. Today, CSX and Union Pacific jointly operate the Chicago–Woodland Junction main line where UP branches off to St. Louis and southern Illinois. CSX owns the line to Evansville as well as most of what was the L&N throughout the Southeast. For a time in the 1970s, Amtrak operated its Chicago–Florida Floridian on a semi-permanent basis over L&N's C&EI Chicago–Evansville main line. More recently, Amtrak's class="CharOverride-16">Texas Eagle periodically has detoured over UP's ex-C&EI main line between Chicago and St. Louis while upgrades on UP/Amtrak's Chicago–Springfield–St. Louis route were under way.

But, memories and historical records remain and we can once again imagine we are watching the Georgian/Humming Bird arrive in the sun of a Chicago morning.

*The authors would like to thank Dave Randall for helping to explain some details about C&EI's standard cars, and Richard Schroeder and other members of the C&EI Historical Society for their assistance in proofreading the article.*

*For those who wish to read a more thorough treatment of C&EI's passenger*



The C&EI depot at Marion, Ill., one of the larger cities C&EI served in the “Little Egypt” region. both postcards, C&EI historical society



C&EI's terminal at Evansville on 8th Street was used by L&N-C&EI through trains which also stopped at L&N's Fulton Avenue depot (later known as Union Depot). In 1934 L&N threatened to interchange its through passenger trains with NYC instead to avoid making two stops on the trek through Evansville. C&EI relented and closed its depot on July 14, 1935, moving to the L&N station. The C&EI station was used in 1905 through the 1930s and served as a depot for the



L&N's Georgian received a Chicago leg in 1948. Here on April 30, 1957, the southbound Georgian cruises out of the far south suburbs of Chicago behind an A-B-A set of Electro-Motive F-units. With only a limited number of the 1947 lightweight cars built for the Atlanta–St. Louis Georgian available to protect extended Georgian routes, train consists usually were bolstered with heavyweight equipment from Pullman, C&EI, and/or L&N as is the case here. Richard Schroeder collection; georgian folder, Mike Schafer collection



Always a hefty train, the combined Humming Bird/Georgian usually loaded on the two westernmost tracks at Dearborn, which were reserved for particularly long departing trains such as the combined Super Chief/El Capitan. On this July 1965 late afternoon, back-to-back FP7s built in 1949 will take the combined trains 93 (Georgian) and 93-5 (Humming Bird) south as far as Evansville. Mail and express helped the complex operations of these trains last as long as they did. Mike Schafer





Beginning in the mid-1960s, Louisville & Nashville power began working through to Chicago on some Humming Bird/Georgian runs while C&EI power worked south of Evansville. By this time, the northbound combined train was routinely late into Chicago. In this 1966 scene, three L&N E-units lead a three-hour-late northbound “Bird” into Chicago’s 21st Street Junction where it will curve eastward to cross the PRR main line (at left in photo) toward Dearborn. Mike Schafer



This 1965 photo of the outbound Humming Bird/Georgian at the

bedroom-1 compartment sleeper. Next car forward is L&N 10-6 sleeper Kentucky River sporting PRR livery and serving as the Chicago–Montgomery 10-6 sleeper; next, a 1953 C&EI Budd coach; a former C&O/PM Pullman-Standard coach; an ACF Humming Bird /Georgian coach; C&EI P-S diner 506-Potawatomi Inn; an unidentified car that may be a lounge; another 1953 C&EI Budd coach; and, against the head-end cars, another Georgian/Humming Bird coach.  
jim neubauer, Kevin EuDaly collection



Electro-Motive E7 number 1100 leads the Whippoorwill past Cory Tower, Danville, approaching Danville station in 1948. Mail-baggage-lunch-grill car 602 was always at the head-end of the train. bill darner, Richard Schroeder collection



Dressed in the University of Illinois “Fighting Illini” colors of blue and orange, C&EI’s new Whippoorwill streamliner clatters across the PRR diamonds as it glides northbound out of the Terre Haute station on an August morning in 1948. Parlor observation car 702-Chicagoland punctuates the train’s end, complete with neon C&EI herald. Photos of the Whippoorwill in as-delivered form and from the rear end in full color are extremely rare. This scene underscores the train’s understated beauty. Alas, it had a short-lived career and its equipment redistributed into the Georgian equipment pool while the Chicagoland was briefly assigned to the Humming Bird. Ultimately, Chicagoland was rebuilt by C&EI as a coach. Tom Gascoigne collection

# On Order

## FOR TRAVEL DELUXE



Two of the world's newest and best trains for daytime travel are now on order for the C&EI—fast streamliners, incorporating the most advanced features of modern power and car design. Even though it may be months before they can be delivered, we want C&EI passengers and C&EI communities to know that our program for bringing you the finest possible transportation and service is a reality, and is already under way.

One of these trains is scheduled for a round trip daily on the Chicago-Evansville route; the other will serve central and southern Illinois.

In calling attention to these trains, it must be emphasized that their building depends upon war conditions—upon the release of men and materials for passenger car construction. But we believe that our passengers, who have been patient and cooperative under conditions of wartime congestion, are entitled to a preview of deluxe C&EI transportation to come . . . not "dream" trains, but fully engineered and ready for building.



**CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS RAILROAD**

C&EI issued this promotion for its forthcoming "Chicago-Liners" in 1946 timetables. Note the disclaimer about expected delivery owing to wartime conditions. As it turned out, both the Whippoorwill and Meadowlark were among the first new streamliners delivered in the U.S. after war's end. Mike Schafer collection



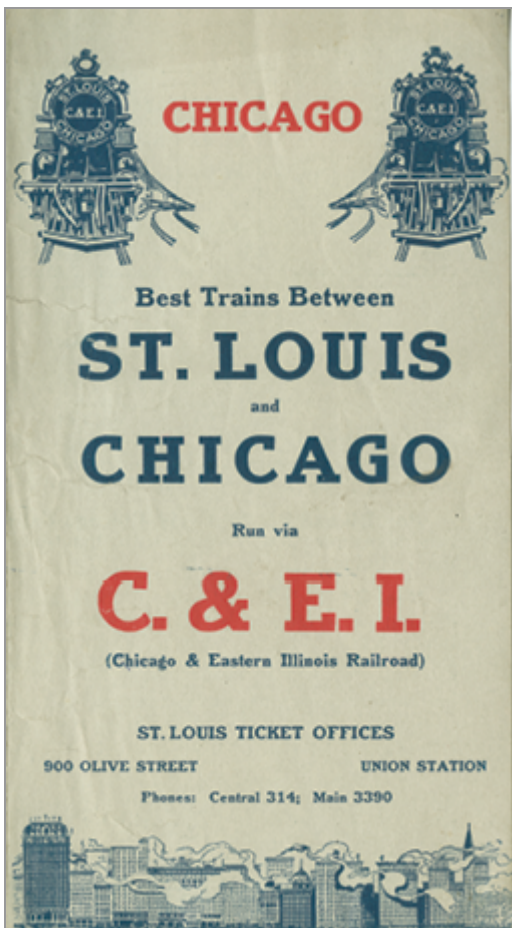
C&EI diner Shakamak Inn was built expressly for the Whippoorwill; it sported this unusual, angled seating arrangement for two or four people. The diner was later assigned to Humming Bird service. This car is alive and well and even occasionally operating today at the Monticello, Ill., railroad museum—but “disguised” as Illinois Central diner-lounge 4112, its identity after the car was sold to IC. C&EI historical society collection



The Cardinal was C&EI's last Chicago–St. Louis day train before it bowed out of that hotly contested market. The train is shown departing Chicago in the late 1940s, passing by the landmark South Branch lift bridge still in use by Amtrak today. photo, White River Productions archives; cardinal folder, Mike Schafer collection



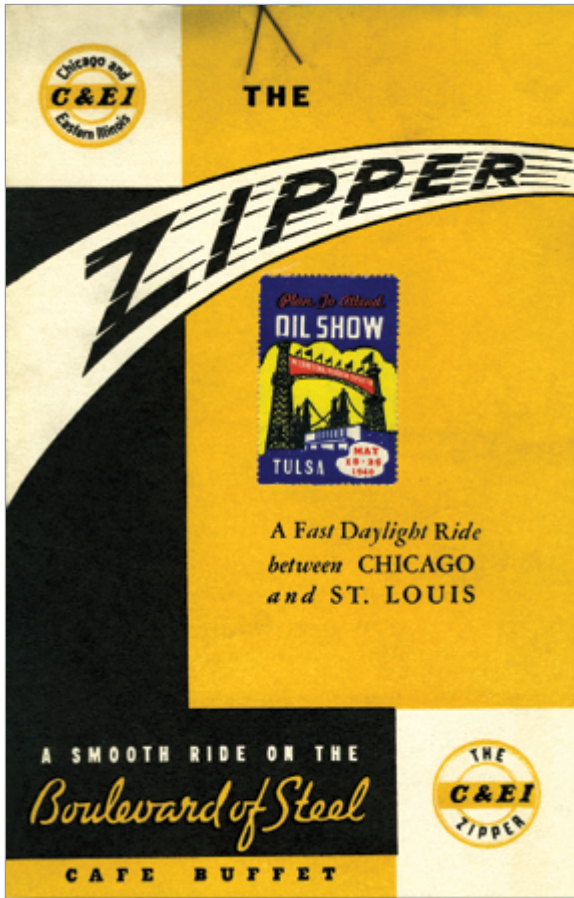
The short but sweet train featured a Railway Post Office car, coach, diner-lounge, and parlor-observation car with, of course, a drumhead sporting the train's name. both photos, robert f. collins, Lou Marre collection; menu, Mike Schafer collection



Being an overnight run between Chicago and St. Louis, photos of C&E.I.'s Silent Knight are quite rare. C&E.I. Pacific 1015—a K-2-class 4-



Station on May 20, 1940. Sid Davis, Bill Molony collection; timetable folder, Mike Schafer collection



In the 1930s, the Zipper was C&E's premier day train on the Chicago–St. Louis route, offering “A smooth ride on the Boulevard of steel.” Mike Schafer collection



1st Quarter 2020  
Volume 44, No. 1

Vernon is shown at Evansville in October 1937. Lou Marre collection



Electro-Motive Division of General Motors produced the oddball BL1/BL2 diesel model for less than two years. C&EI owned the only BL1 ever built as well as two BL2s. C&EI equipped at least this BL2 with a steam-generator for train heating (note the steam-generator exhaust stack between the front windshields). Here, C&EI BL2 number 201 has train 123 in tow at Salem, Ill., on a May morning in 1949. The Thebes sleeper appears to be gone by this time. Lou Marre collection

**Meadowlark**  
**CHICAGO-liner**  
 Brings Fast New Service  
 between  
**CHICAGO—**  
**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS**

**SCHEDULE**  
 Effective Sunday, October 6th

<b>No. 26</b>		<b>No. 25</b>	
<b>Northbound</b>		<b>Southbound</b>	
5:15 am	Lv Cypress	Ar 12:20 am	
5:25 am	Lv West Vienna	Ar 12:10 am	
6:05 am	Lv Marion	Ar 11:31 pm	
6:15 am	Lv Johnston City	Ar 11:21 pm	
6:25 am	Lv West Frankfort	Ar 11:11 pm	
6:36 am	Lv Benton	Ar 11:00 pm	
7:06 am	Lv Mt. Vernon	Ar 10:30 pm	
7:35 am	Lv Salem	Ar 10:01 pm	
f 7:50 am	Lv Kinmundy	Ar f 9:46 pm	
8:13 am	Lv St. Elmo	Ar 9:24 pm	
f 8:20 am	Lv Altamont	Ar f 9:16 pm	
8:52 am	Lv Shelbyville	Ar 8:46 pm	
9:15 am	Lv Sullivan	Ar 8:26 pm	
9:28 am	Lv Arthur	Ar 8:13 pm	
9:42 am	Lv Tuscola	Ar 7:59 pm	
9:51 am	Ar Villa Grove	Lv 7:50 pm	
9:59 am	Lv Villa Grove	Ar 7:41 pm	
11:01 am	Lv Watseka	Ar 6:39 pm	
11:26 am	Lv Momence	Ar 6:12 pm	
11:47 am	Lv Chgo. Heights	Ar 5:50 pm	
12:11 pm	Ar Englewood	Lv 5:24 pm	
12:25 pm	Ar Chicago	Lv 5:10 pm	

f-Flag Stop.

Above is approximate schedule at intermediate stations. Please consult your agent for details.

**CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS railroad**

The schedule for the new 1946 streamliner Meadowlark. Mike Schafer collection



Shown at Chicago in 1962, the Meadowlark had shriveled to a single Budd Rail Diesel Car. Jim Boyd, Kevin EuDaly collection



How the mighty have fallen. C&EI E7A 1100 and two sister units, numbers 1101 and 1102, began life in 1946 proudly pulling C&EI's new streamliners, the Whipoorwill and Meadowlark. Fast forward to the June 30, 1965, scene at Cayuga, Ind., as the 1100 drifts into town — crossing Nickel Plate's Toledo–St. Louis line on the south side of

be gone, and the 1100 might be found working the new Danville–Chicago Danville Flyer. Richard Schroeder



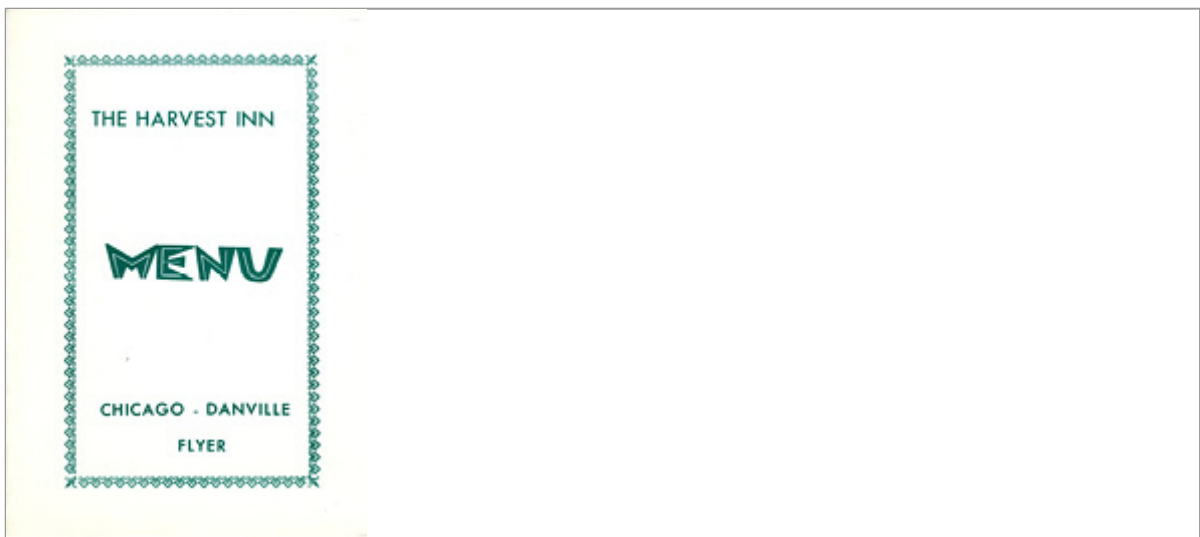
While a Chicago & Western Indiana Alco RS-1 switches Dearborn Station on the morning of March 6, 1956, C&EI FP7 1609 eases out from under the train shed with train number 1 — a nameless local to Evansville, running more or less on what had been the original Whippoorwill schedule. An ex-C&O coach and what appears to be one of the 1953 Budd coaches trail an express-baggage car. Richard Schroeder collection

## **The Danville Flyer**



It's the day after Thanksgiving 1965, and the Danville Flyer is probably brimming with passengers coming into Chicago for this, the first official day for Christmas shopping. E7 1100 has an easy consist to tote: a 1953 C&EI coach from New Dixieland days, ex-C&O buffet-lounge Harvest Inn, and another New Dixieland veteran.

Quietly and without fanfare on August 3, 1965, C&EI introduced a new "vestpocket" streamliner between Chicago and Danville, Ill. Operating under the numbers 3 (southbound) and 4 (northbound), the three-car train ran on a schedule that catered to people in upper C&EI territory wanting to spend a few hours in downtown Chicago in the middle of the day to shop at the likes of Marshall Field's or take in tourist pleasures such as the observation deck of the 42-story Prudential Building. Initially, number 4 left Danville at 6:45am, arriving at Dearborn Station at 9:30am, and number 3 left Chicago at 6pm arriving back at Danville at 8:30pm. Although the combined Humming Bird/Georgian was on a similar schedule at the Chicago end, the northbound train was a notoriously poor timekeeper, thus the Danville Flyer provided a much more reliable service. At start-up, the train was nameless, but then began being listed in timetables as the Chicago–Danville Flyer. In the end, which was on April 30, 1971, the night before Amtrak began operations, the Danville Flyer name had more or less become official.



The Danville Flyer had its own menu, with Harvest Inn exclusively signed to the Chicago–Danville run. Mike Schafer

This Flyer's consist rarely changed: buffet-lounge Harvest Inn sandwiched by two ex-Dixieland Budd coaches. Of note was that the cafe was staffed not by railroad dining/lounge personnel, but franchised. When C&EI was split up between L&N and Missouri Pacific in the late 1960s, the Danville Flyer became a ward of L&N. (L&N and C&EI jointly owned the main line north of Woodland Junction to Chicago while L&N owned it entirely below Woodland Junction.) By this time, the Railroad Club of Chicago had made several efforts to charter the Danville Flyer consist for a quick round trip excursion to Danville during the train's eight-plus-hour midday layover in Chicago. L&N turned out to be much more accommodating, and in 1970 the RRCofC operated a sold-out "Danville Flyer Fantrip" for which this writer set up photo stops. The Danville Flyer was the last hurrah of C&EI passenger service.—Mike Schafer

## **C&EI Post-World II Rolling Stock Sampler**



Clad in dark blue with orange trim and lettering, C&EI diner Shakamak Inn poses for its builder's photo in 1946 outside the Pullman-Standard plant on Chicago's South Side. Shortly, the car will be serving patrons riding the new Whippoorwill between Chicago and Evansville. The car is alive and mostly well as of 2020 at the Monticello, Ill., Railroad Museum, though now cloaked in Illinois Central brown and orange. IC acquired the car from C&EI in 1962.  
C&EI Historical Society

For a regional railroad, C&EI had an eclectic collection of post-World War II-produced passenger rolling stock. Its first order for 11 lightweight, streamline cars from Pullman-Standard's Chicago plant was for the new Meadowlark and Whippoorwill streamliners. Then, in 1950, C&EI bought eight used P-S cars, with semi-fluted sides, that had been built in 1946 for Pere Marquette Railroad's new Pere Marquette streamliners.



Four of the eight Pere Marquette coaches acquired by C&EI in 1950 were actually coach-observation cars, one of which is shown here in 1951 painted in blue with orange striping above the stainless-steel paneling. Lou Marre Collection



In 1951, C&EI purchased two second-hand Maine Central fluted-side restaurant-lounge cars built in 1947 by P-S, the Merry Meeting and Arundel; C&EI renamed them Merry Meeting and Merry Journey. Also in 1951, C&EI purchased three “family coaches” built by Budd in 1948 for C&O’s Chessie streamliner that never ran as such. C&EI rebuilt them into lunch-counter taverns C&EI 605-Magnolia Blossom, 606-Magnolia Gardens, and 703-Woodland; in 1965, the 606 was renamed Harvest Inn for new Danville Flyer service.



Tavern car Woodland, shown in 1967, was originally a “family coach” built by Budd in 1948 for C&O’s planned Chessie streamliner. Richard Schroeder

In 1953, C&EI bought 10 classic Budd stainless-steel coaches, further adding to the eclectic nature of its passenger-car fleet. Also in 1953, C&EI took delivery of four 6 section–6 roomette–4 double-bedroom (6–6–4) smooth-side sleepers from Pullman-Standard, clad in dark blue. In 1954, C&EI bought two P-S 5 bedroom–1 compartment–4 roomette–4 section stainless-steel sleepers.



Pullman-Standard smooth-side C&EI 6 section–6 roomette–4 bedroom sleeper Loblolly Pine and three sister cars were bought in 1953. Loblolly Pine also worked IC's Chicago–Sioux City, Iowa, Hawkeye in the mid-1960s. Richard Schroeder

Several of the original 11 P-S Meadowlark/Whippoorwill cars were rebuilt over the years. Baggage-coach 304 was rebuilt into lunch counter-tavern Turkey Run. Parlor-observation 702-Chicagoland was rebuilt into coach 459 in 1956. Baggage-lunch counter tavern 602-Sparhawk Inn was rebuilt into diner Potawatomi Inn in 1952. All seven Whippoorwill/Meadowlark coaches were sold to Illinois Central in 1961, primarily for service on IC's Chicago–Waterloo Land O'Corn.