

# The Short, Troubled Life of Penn Central

*by El Simon*

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**F**eb. 1, 2018, marked the 50th anniversary of the merger of two Eastern U.S. railroads, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central, to form the Penn Central Transportation Co. “Call us Penn Central,” urged the ads. Even today, the mere mention of the name can raise passions among those who worked for or patronized that railroad during its existence from 1968 to 1976. In this article, we will concentrate on PC’s passenger service, intercity and commuter, bearing in mind that this is just one aspect of the company’s problematic story, most of which has been discussed at length elsewhere.



On Feb. 1, 1968, the newly merged Penn Central inherited one of the nation's most famous passenger trains, the former Pennsylvania Railroad's Broadway Limited, linking Chicago with New York City. Lacking the spit-and-polish of the train's PRR heyday, a PC edition of the westbound Broadway nears the end of its run as it passes through Chicago's 21st Street interlocking en route to Union Station in 1970. mike schaffer

The PC merger was only one of several that were begotten during the 1960s. Among these were the Norfolk & Western-Nickel Plate Road-Wabash

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was a more profitable partner and/or the partners had not competed directly.

ACL and SAL, for example, served many common markets, albeit over different routes. Apart from its sheer size, PC would fail on these points, and it had other shortcomings as well.

As early as 1962, James Symes, an old Pennsy hand, was championing the NYC-PRR merger, and both boards of directors formally made the merger request. It appears that NYC was less enthusiastic, thinking that it had been frozen out of more desirable matches. As PC's organizational structure was finalized, many promising managers jumped ship. Although NYC's practices were more highly regarded by many in the industry, it became clear that Pennsy would prevail and become the dominant partner, electing a majority of the board and two of the three most senior executives. Chairman Stuart T. Saunders was an attorney brought over from Norfolk & Western to expedite the merger, and David C. Bevan, chairman of PC's finance committee, was a former banker. From NYC came President Alfred E. Perlman, who had a wealth of railroad experience.

In the six years leading up to the PC merger, it appears that opportunities to effect a seamless transition were squandered, for as time passed, the financial health of the two railroads continued to decline. Nevertheless, it appeared that every union, government agency, regulator, shipper, and the stockholders demanded and frequently received concessions that would make a successful outcome less likely. In a final insult, regulators extorted a requirement for PC to take on an even more financially weak partner, the bankrupt New York, New Haven & Hartford, effective Jan. 1, 1969, adding to PC's litany of problems. What were they thinking?

Penn Central's managers believed that passenger service west of both Buffalo,



Deep in former NYC territory, PC train 8-62-28 out of Chicago—in essence the former New England States—pauses at Albany Union Station shortly after daybreak in June 1968. The Boston section, train 28, came off here; train 62 will continue on down the Hudson to New York City. mike schaffer



Effective June 30, 1970

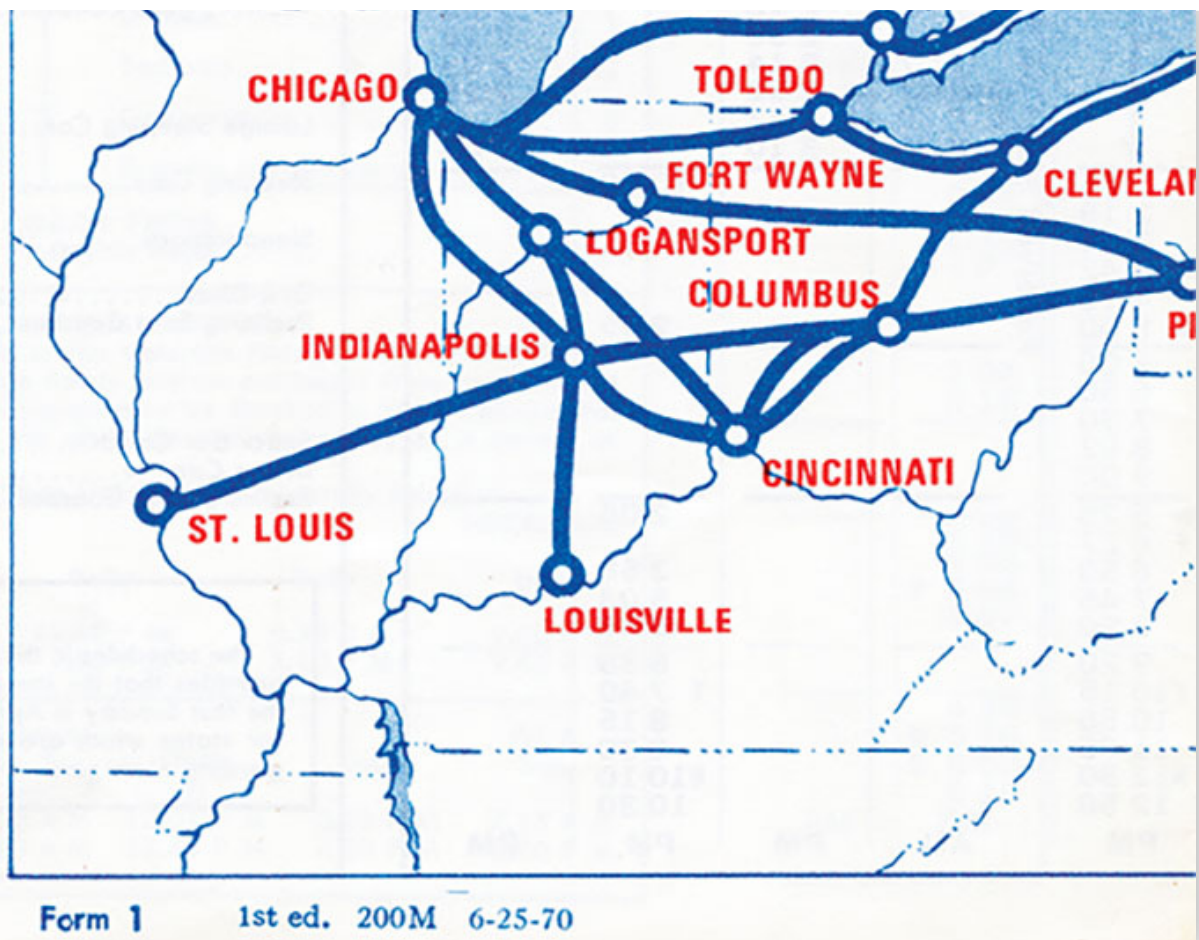
**PENN CENTRAL**

# ***EAST / WEST*** ***TIMETABLE***



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**DETROIT**



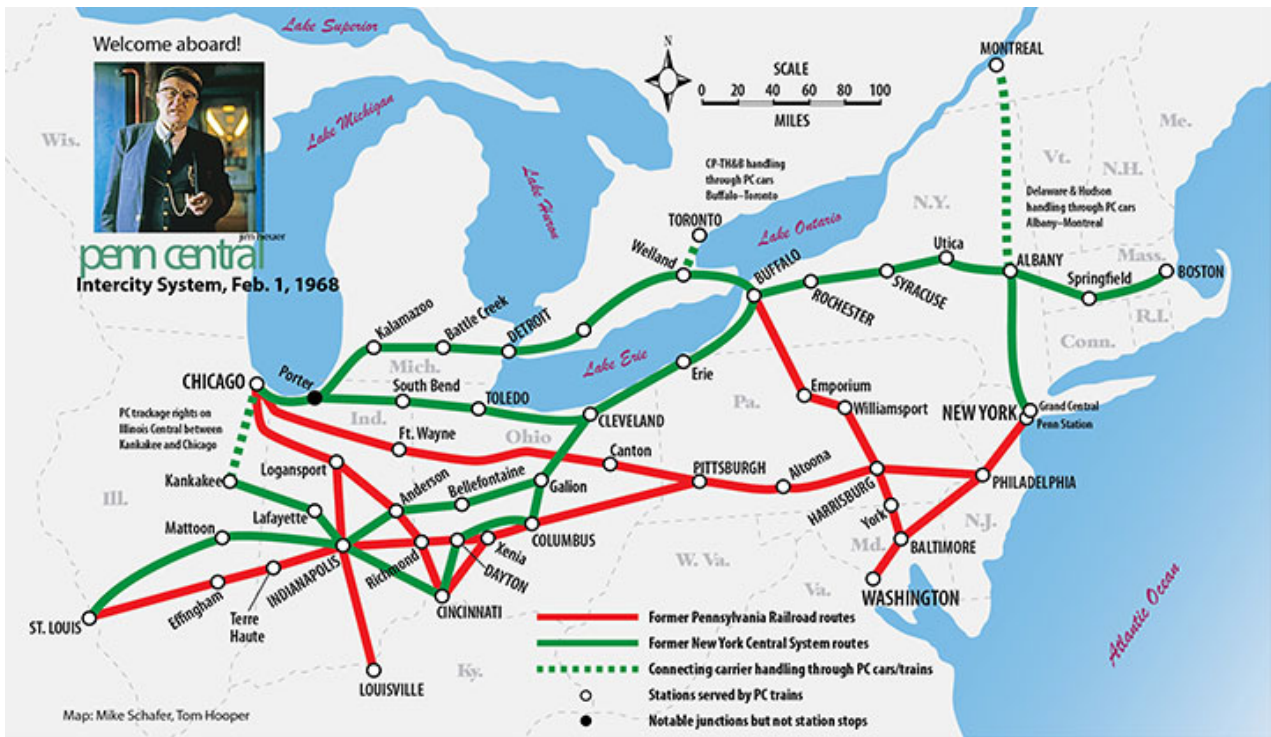
## East/West service

NYC's passenger train rationalization had been completed as of 1968 and included a train between the East and Chicago that included a baggage-dorm, twin-unit diner with kitchen-lounge, Sleepercoach, and sleeper; a Sleepercoach and sleeper from Boston to Chicago, a sleeper from New York to Chicago via Detroit, (soon cut to New York–Detroit), a sleeper to Toronto, and a Sleepercoach from New York to Detroit. Dining cars were to be carried between Buffalo and Chicago and between Boston and Albany. A second train between New York and Chicago would carry a Sleepercoach to Buffalo and a sleeper to Cleveland. This train continued to Chicago in daylight with a diner-lounge. Thus, lots of overnight switching was needed, particularly in Buffalo. The James Whitcomb Riley between Chicago and Cincinnati, and an afternoon train each way between Chicago and Detroit retained full dining service.

acquired the coaches (and a coach-lounge purchased from the Rio Grande Railroad) from the General, which had been discontinued at the end of 1967. Four sleepers offered the usual roomettes and bedrooms but also duplex single rooms, compartments and drawing rooms, as well as a twin-unit diner, which all still made for a decent train.



A PC edition of the Broadway Limited closes in on 21st Street interlocking on the approach to Chicago Union Station in 1969. An all-ex-PRR consist prevails behind ex-PRR and NYC power. Mike Schafer



Two trains linking New York with St. Louis, the “Spirit of St. Louis” and Penn Texas, ran within three hours of each other. Between the two trains, diners ran either to St. Louis or Indianapolis, and each train carried sleepers to Indianapolis and St. Louis. One train carried a bedroom-lounge to Indianapolis and a sleeper to Cincinnati via a connection from Columbus. Another sleeper ran from Chicago to Washington via a connection from Harrisburg. A snack-bar coach ran from Washington to Harrisburg. An additional sleeper ran west on the Broadway but returned on a train overnight to Pittsburgh and as a daytime run to New York. Finally, there were two New York–Pittsburgh sleepers, including duplex single rooms.

On alternate days, the South Wind linked Chicago with Florida over the Pennsy to Louisville (see PTJ 2017-3); sleepers, a diner, and coach-lounge were operated with additional cars in the busier winter season.

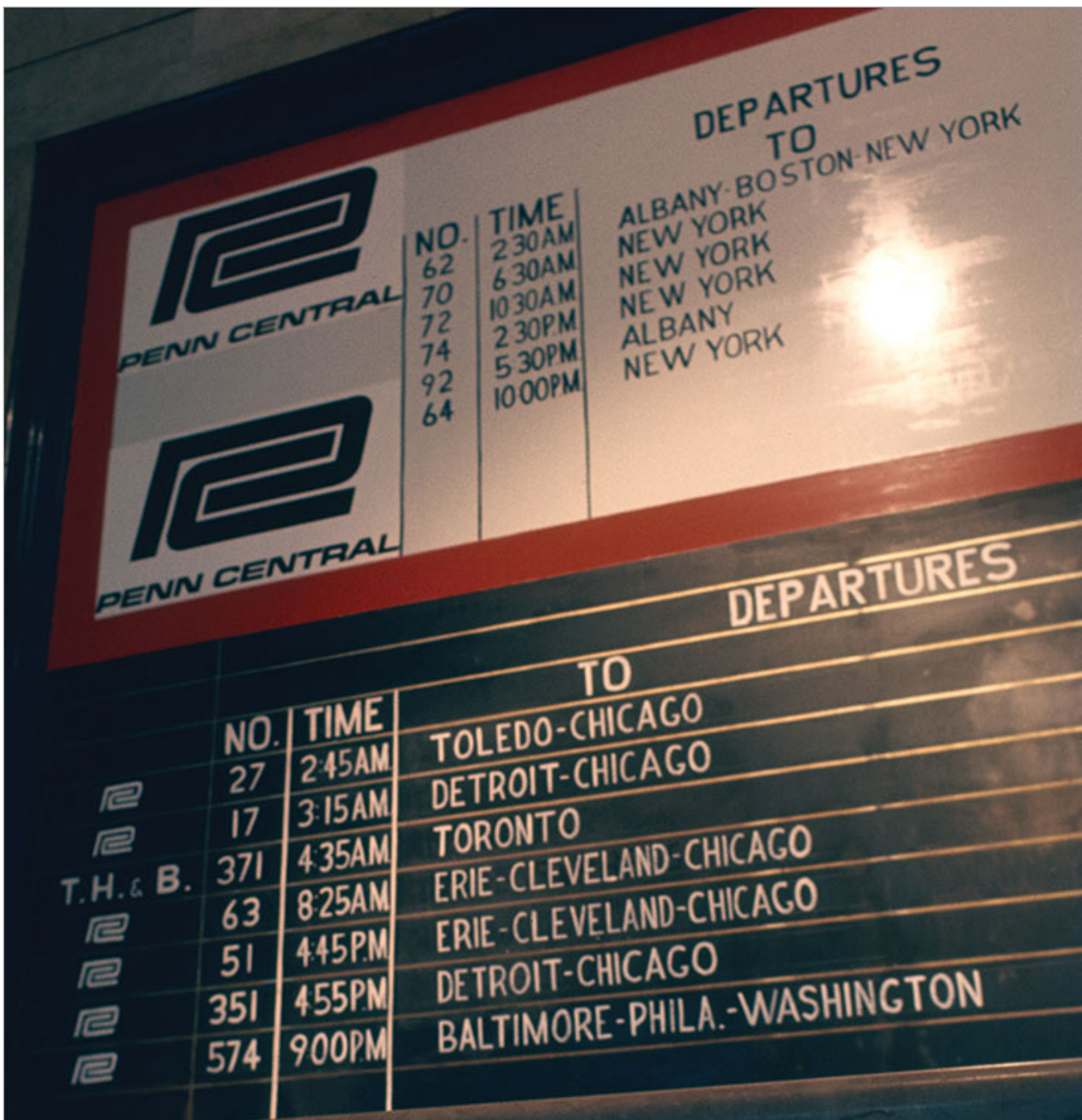




With shiny black paint covering the remnants of its former NYC “cigar-band” livery, E8A 4092 pauses at Niles, Mich., in June 1971, with the morning Detroit–Chicago Amtrak train. This is former Michigan Central trackage, now a ward of Penn Central. Jim Heuer



Between 1968 and 1976, PC was also exclusive operator of the Northeast Corridor, where former PRR electric locomotives led fast, frequent trains—including the next-generation Metroliners—between New York City and Washington, D.C. Leading the Afternoon Congressional through South Newark, N.J., in June 1968 and showing PC at its best, GG1 No. 4915 wears an early and rare “red-P” version of the PC logo. Mike Schafer



Buffalo Central Terminal's departures board in June 1968, with freshly applied PC identity. Jim Boyd

## Empire Service

Turning again to the former NYC, its service between Grand Central Terminal, Albany, and Buffalo had only recently been reorganized as the Empire Service,

the latter were ready, bedroom-parlor-lounges and tavern-lounges substituted. Apart from two previously mentioned trains that carried cars for points beyond Buffalo, seven trains were scheduled. These included one train between Albany and Buffalo, three trains between New York and Buffalo, and three between New York and Albany. Day and night service was provided to Montreal via the Delaware & Hudson north of Albany. Through cars on the day train included a coach and a tavern-lounge in which lounge seats were sold as parlor seats. The night train carried coaches, one or two “10&6” sleepers, (10 roomette–6 double bedroom) and a bedroom-lounge car serving refreshments and a buffet breakfast.

What would become known as the Northeast Corridor (NEC) still provided through service between Washington, New York City and Boston over PC’s three component railroads.



*With a freshly painted PC E8A and a grimy ex-NYC E7A on the point*

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*moments earlier, the train had gone through a see-saw back-up move to*

get from the ex-NYC main line to the Pennsy. Number 17 connected with New York/Boston–Albany–Buffalo–Cleveland–Chicago train 61-427-27 at Buffalo and operated to Chicago via the Canada Southern to Detroit and the old Michigan Central via Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, Mich. Mike Schafer

Another former PRR train in the PC timetable, the Penn Texas arrives at St. Louis in the spring of 1968. Mike Schafer; timetable, mike schaffer collection

## **Sun and sand connections**

Soon after merger day, Chesapeake & Ohio's through service to and from cities served by PC was reduced to seasonal runs from the Greenbrier and Homestead resorts (at White Sulphur Springs, and Hot Springs, Va., respectively). Southern Railway operated two connecting trains with PC, offering coaches and sleepers from points as far as New Orleans. A through diner was operated between New York City and Atlanta on the Crescent to offer proper meal service for breakfast and dinner. Seaboard Coast Line operated two through trains in conjunction with PC to and from Florida, the Champion and Silver Meteor. Peak winter service added the Florida Special and Silver Star. The Star ran year-round, but its shorter off-season consist was conveyed between New York and Washington as part of a regularly scheduled PC train. A summer Weekend Champion ran south to Jacksonville, Fla. PC carried through cars for SCL's Silver Comet (to Birmingham, Ala.), Palmland,

As Al Jolson said, “You ain’t seen nothin’ yet,” because we now turn to the Washington–Boston corridor, then as now, PC’s and Amtrak’s busiest intercity route. In 1968, the Metroliners were still in the midst of a long commissioning process, so nine Washington–New York and four Washington–Boston trains ran on roughly a 90-minute frequency. Several local trains linked Philadelphia with Washington, augmented by the famous “Clockers” leaving New York and Philadelphia “on the hour.”

Several additional frequencies served intermediate stations, and one of these was the longest scheduled train—all coaches except for a mid-train refreshment car. The Pennsy had a number of these cars and they also ran on North Jersey Coast and special trains.

Dining cars, with their high labor and supply costs, were an obvious target for savings. In 1967, ten modern parlor cars had been equipped to serve airline-style meals to first-class PRR passengers. The conventional diners remained until April 1968 but were then discontinued by PC, replaced by “Parlor Club Cars.” Coach passengers continued to be served in snack-bar coaches. Diners were retained on Boston–Washington trains and two New York–Washington round trips, which were scheduled to run to Boston on certain days. In 1969, six more parlor cars were converted into parlor-clubs and additional coaches were converted into snack-bars; thereafter, the Senator became the last corridor train with a diner or grill car, usually former New Haven cars. Staffed by waitresses, NH’s popular grill diners were set up so that you sat on a bench seat with your back to the window, facing across the aisle to the tables and windows on the opposite side. The Senator’s two trainsets were assigned a New Haven baggage-lounge and parlor car.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DADD FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL AND SENATORIAL ARCHIVES

Two pre-war NYC parlors were taken out of storage; though refurbished, some passengers complained about their glorified lounge seating, which was later converted by Amtrak to coach seating. Two Pennsy bedroom-lounges were redesignated and renumbered as parlor cars. These were supplemented by two coach-bar-lounge cars from the South Wind; parlor chairs replaced coach seating, and they were named John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, Nos. 7174–7175. Finally, six New Haven lounge cars—previously rebuilt with three drawing rooms for premium day use—exchanged their lounge seats for 19 single parlor chairs and were renumbered 7176–7181.



New Jersey Arrow MU cars and a Budd all-roomette sleeping car rebuilt as a coach illustrate the range of equipment deployed by PC in commuter service on the Northeast Corridor. Jim Heuer

snack-bar coaches. Additional streamlined coaches were available if needed, as well as P70 coaches rebuilt between 1948 and 1952, which received new trucks, air-conditioning, and high-back walkover seats. These were fine-riding cars, perfectly adequate for Corridor service. Close to 80 still remained and another 30 examples received reclining seats and/or snack-bars. Ninety-four long-distance coaches built by Altoona and ACF had proven to be a major disappointment and were well on the way out.

Initially, few cars were exchanged between their previous owners' territory, but NYC contributed diners and lounges while PRR provided sleepers. Only a few PC cars were assigned to SCL or Southern Railway trains out of New York City, and these tended to be sleepers which presumably had been maintained to a higher standard. The South Wind, however, used a number of Pennsy cars.

Additionally, hundreds of former PRR X-29 boxcars, older NYC baggage cars, and former troop sleepers still in the fleet were no longer needed with the transfer of bulk mail to dedicated trains and the evaporation of express business.

### PC vs. Pullman

Both PRR and NYC had sought to discontinue contracting with the Pullman Company for the provision of sleeping car and other services, thinking that they could save money by replacing Pullman's services with their own (very possibly at reduced service standards). Penn Central went further and threatened to no longer accept the Pullman Company's cars at Washington, which ultimately created a devastating impact on Pullman's business. Pullman had a year to survive, as operation of its cars ended Jan. 1, 1969, and



The saddest train of 1968 and probably for Penn Central's short history as a passenger carrier was the June 8 funeral train of Robert F. Kennedy. Carrying RFK's body from New York to Washington D.C., it experienced further tragedy when an opposing train struck and killed two onlookers that were on the tracks at Elizabeth, N.J. Passing the PATH (Port Authority Trans Hudson) Harrison station in New Jersey, all onlookers are safely on the high-level platform as the 21-car train files slowly past behind a pair of GG1s. George A. Forero

## **PC in New England**

Now we turn to the New Haven. All through 1968, NH's business continued to decline as PC routed New England freight over its own lines. Strapped as it was, PC lent millions to the bankrupt carrier; moreover, NH's trustees demanded an increase to its assessed valuation, which was deemed too low. (The Interstate Commerce Commission subsequently revised NH's value upward from \$145.6 million to \$150.9 million.) Commuter traffic was holding up, but losing buckets of money. One fortunate matter in PC's favor was a previously approved reduction in service from New York to Boston and Springfield. This took effect in February 1969; four trains ran eastbound and three westbound, including the famous Merchants Limited and a morning and noontime train, all of which carried parlor cars.

The overnight Owl was gone, but four through trains remained between Boston and Washington via the Hell Gate Bridge route. Moreover, there was still a good volume of mail; 18 modern Santa Fe Railway Post Office cars still on lease to NH were returned and replaced by surplus Pennsy cars

Despite its precarious financial condition, PC drew up plans to refurbish its new additions. Most failed muster on matters of cost, but close to 100 postwar NH cars did receive at least some attention. Commuter-service cars included 30 multiple-unit (MU) motors and trailers repainted in PC green, 25 or so “American Flyer” coaches, and about 15 postwar “washboard” MU cars—so named for their corrugated stainless steel sides—for “West End” service between New Haven and Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan. Boston received some surplus P70 coaches and 25 coach-lounges that were reconfigured for commuter service. New Haven had purchased a fleet of 50 parlor cars in 1948, which was now far in excess of requirements. Ten cars had been rebuilt to coaches for 1964 New York World’s Fair travel, and some parlor-lounges had been assigned to commuter bar service. Since the parlors had no drawing rooms—they were in adjoining lounge cars—they could not be used interchangeably with former Pennsy cars. New Haven’s ten diners were all gone by the end of 1970, and a handful of grill cars soldiered on as commuter bar cars. In the early Amtrak era, at least one of the grill cars actually made it out to Kansas City on the National Limited!



A Metroliner heads toward the B&P (Baltimore & Potomac) tunnels at Fulton in August 1970. dale jacobson; commemorative medallion, Robert Watson collectiov

## **The daily commute**

Boston's commuter service included five trains over the former NYC Boston & Albany route to Framingham or Worcester, Mass. Initially, open-window coaches were replaced by the P70s. The number of Budd-built Rail Diesel Cars on former NH routes was reduced, and remaining B&A trains were hauled by E-units and Alco RS-3s. Trains on the former NH lines were mostly powered by dual-service (freight and passenger) GP9s; over time, E-units allowed some of these to be transferred to freight service. The 60 NH FL9s had hauled most through trains from Grand Central to Boston, avoiding a

from Penn Station. This, along with the reduction in Boston service, allowed the initial transfer of 22 FL9s to NYC's former Harlem Line, where they replaced elderly Class T and P-2 electrics to North White Plains and Alco RS-3s to Brewster, N.Y., and points north. Trains west of New Haven used both 1930s-vintage m.u. motors and trailers and the 1954 washboards. Locomotive-hauled west-end commuter trains were made up of surplus mainline coaches, prewar American Flyer cars and surplus Pennsy and NYC coaches. These were drawn by FL9s and a few surviving straight-electric EP-5 "Jets" (so nicknamed because their blowers could sound like jet engines); these motors were barely 15 years old but had led a hard life. When one, No. 4971, caught fire in 1973 in the depths of Grand Central Terminal, it precipitated the retirement of the rest of the fleet.

Commuter train service to Poughkeepsie and Brewster, N.Y., on the former NYC paled in comparison with today's levels. Service was provided by 40 former mainline coaches rebuilt as high-capacity cars, and backed up by 70 or so cars from the 1920s. Both these trains and those on the NH included some bar cars and commuter club cars. Budd RDCs provided service on the former NH Danbury and Waterbury, Conn., branches, the northern end of the ex-NYC Hudson & Harlem lines, and the former Erie Lackawanna "West of Hudson" line from Suffern, N.J., to Port Jervis, N.Y. Multiple-unit trains serving ex-NYC lines drew upon the 100 cars built in 1950–51 and 87 newer cars built from 1962–1965, as well as 46 cars from the 1920s. Like the older NH cars, these were not air-conditioned.

On the Pennsy side, the iconic Penn Station had been razed prior to the merger, and its replacement beneath Madison Square Garden opened days after the birth of Penn Central. When PC began operations, all m.u. services as

One Trenton train was made up of a GG1 and coaches. Many commuters to Princeton Junction and Trenton, N.J., rode “Clockers” to avoid a slow, uncomfortable ride on vintage m.u. cars. Better times were ahead, as the state of New Jersey had ordered 35 new high-speed MUs from St. Louis Car. At Rahway, N.J., a line branched southeast to South Amboy, the limit of electrification at that time, where through trains exchanged GG1s for E7s and E8s.



The PC merger brought on a number of interesting operational changes. Who would have thought Pennsy’s iconic GG1 electrics would wind up in New Haven territory, yet here is the eastbound Washington–New York–Boston Colonial sweeping through Greenwich, Conn., behind GG1 4938—still sporting PRR keystones, lettering, and striping—beneath the old New Haven’s signature triangular catenary in June 1970. In pre-merger days, this train would most likely have swapped its GG1 for a NH EP-5 electric

In Philadelphia, headquarters city for PC and PRR, six routes radiated from Penn Center downtown to suburban stations. Service was provided by 200 MP54s and 64 newer MU cars built in three groups, two by Budd and one by St. Louis Car.

A lonely little operation soldiered on in New Jersey. A single one-car train made morning and afternoon trips between Camden and Pemberton with a short turn to Moorestown. A light Baldwin road-switcher, such as No. 8084, pulled or pushed the last pure P70, No. 1046, which was fitted with a rudimentary set of controls to contact the engineer while in push mode. It would deadhead over to Philadelphia every weekday, towing any RDCs that needed servicing.



By the time of this May 1969 photo at Crestline, Ohio, the once-mighty Ohio State Limited of New York Central fame had withered to this one-car PC train No. 15 between Cleveland and Cincinnati. John F. Bjorklund,

PC's three remaining commuter routes were minor operations, comprising two MP54 round trips between Baltimore and Washington, D.C.; a single RDC Detroit–Ann Arbor; and two Chicago–Valparaiso trains of P70s pulled by GP7s or GP9s.

During the Penn Central era, a start was made on upgrading the commuter car fleet. Boston received more than 70 postwar coaches from the west end, along with eight RDCs and seven P70s. The west end received two orders of M-2 MUs totaling 244 cars. All older MUs were replaced, leaving 24 cars for two Danbury through trains. Three remaining RDCs served branches during off-peak times. The Hudson and Harlem divisions received two orders of M-1 MUs totaling 128 cars. Only one commuter club car from the 1950–1951 m.u. order remained in service. Locomotive-hauled cars were all streamlined, with 51 coaches, 13 RDCs, 7 snack bar-coaches, and five other cars. New Jersey received 70 Jersey Arrow II and 33 Jersey Arrow I cars, 18 MP54s (all MUs), 52 ex-Santa Fe coaches, 29 P70 coaches, five ex-NYC bar cars, and five former Louisville & Nashville coaches. Philadelphia received 130 Silverliner IV and 62 earlier Silverliner MUs, and 37 MP54s. Washington, D.C. received eight MP54s, and Chicago received 14 P70 coaches.

Penn Central also rebuilt three trains of stored MU cars—one ex-PRR and two former NH—which ran for several years in North Jersey, freeing up MU equipment needed in Philadelphia. Looking back, Penn Central was now off and running—or perhaps stumbling, depending upon one's point of view.



Heading for Harrisburg over the former PRR route via York, Pa., single-car train 549 departs Baltimore Penn Station in August 1970. At one time, this train operated overnight to Buffalo. Dale Jacobson





A “torpedo-boat” steam-generator-equipped GP9 leads a pair of former PRR P70 coaches at Chicago, on an inbound “dummy” (commuter train) from Valparaiso, Ind., in 1968. Mike Schafer



Penn Central lettering had already been applied to suburban coach 2018 trailing a P-motor electric still clad in NYC “cigar band” livery at North White Plains, N.Y., in June 1968. The two Alco road-switchers at left, having just arrived with a suburban train off the non-electrified Brewster line, are also still sporting NYC markings—but not for long. Mike Schafer

## Demise of a giant

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PC's first two-and-a-half years of existence.

Management directed that only consolidated earnings would be reported, obscuring railroad-specific results, and urged discontinuing capital expenditures to conserve cash. Chairman Saunders directed that only he must approve any public statements regarding the merger's effects and earnings, and announced in September 1969 that he would not "invest another cent" in PC's financially hopeless passenger service.

Regulators refused to allow the removal of many passenger trains, increasing losses. In response, PC cut amenities, driving away business and further increasing losses. Bulk mail was concentrated on solid mail trains, robbing passenger trains of still more revenue.

In October 1968, most Chicago trains using La Salle Street Station (NYC's main terminus in the city) moved to Union Station, where PRR trains had called. In the East, a new station in Rensselaer, N.Y., replaced the NYC terminal across the Hudson River in downtown Albany.

The Metroliners achieved a much-delayed introduction to regular service between Washington and New York City.

Introduction of the TurboTrain between Grand Central and Back Bay (Boston) extended higher-speed Corridor service to complement the Metroliners between New York and Washington.

After applying to drop all passenger service west of Buffalo and Harrisburg in March 1969, in January 1970 PC wrote down \$126 million in passenger facilities west of those two points.



NYC's "Water Level Route" between New York and Chicago lived on under PC. In June 1970, Empire Service train No. 71, combined with Delaware & Hudson's Laurentian, skims along Annsville Creek just above Peekskill, N.Y. Mike Schafer

In May 1970, PC made its last purchase of passenger equipment, acquiring 10 mainline coaches from Union Pacific, Rock Island, and Rio Grande.

In a move that stunned observers, Penn Central declared bankruptcy on June 24, 1970. When the initial bankruptcy dust had settled, the Penn Central trustee retained one P70 coach in New Jersey; 14 P70 and four ex-EL streamlined coaches in Chicago; 54 streamlined coaches and boxcars, 19 stored 1950–51 MUs and 13 RDCs on the Hudson & Harlem divisions; and 24 suburban coaches and three RDCs in New Haven. Sixty-five coaches—rebuilt from former sleepers—were sold to NJ Transit (31), MARC (22), and SEMTA (12).



Two months after PC stunned the financial and railroad worlds by declaring bankruptcy, the Broadway Limited epitomized lost glory as it departed Chicago on Aug. 23, 1970. Jim Heuer

In the long-distance arena, following PC's declaration of bankruptcy, the "Spirit of St. Louis" and Penn Texas were combined and, in October 1970, through New York City–Los Angeles tri-weekly service via Southern's Crescent and Southern Pacific's Sunset Limited began. In September 1970, PC's New York City–Boston trains moved from Grand Central Terminal to Penn Station, and the TurboTrains followed in February 1971.



With minimal PC identification but plenty of Pennsy Tuscan red in evidence, this train awaits race-goers at Monmouth Park Racetrack in Long Branch, N.J. on June 3, 1971. Penn Central remained in the passenger business for several years after Amtrak took over PC's intercity trains because it was left with numerous suburban/commuter operations until locally funded entities could be formed to take them over. Mike McBride

With Amtrak's startup in May 1971, PC was a contractor on Amtrak trains using its routes, although deteriorating track in the Midwest resulted in a number of alternate routings.

Massachusetts and New York purchased segments of former New Haven lines, and Amtrak purchased the Beech Grove, Ind. (ex-NYC) and Wilmington, Del. (ex-PRR) shops from Penn Central. Elsewhere, control of PC passenger yards and stations was progressively transferred to Amtrak, and Amtrak purchased most of the Northeast Corridor, plus PC route segments in New York and

On May 1, 1976, Conrail took over PC's woes, and responsibility for commuter service in former PC territories shifted to various state agencies.

To be fair, looking back, it is easy to criticize the negative attitude expressed by some PC crews, especially on the Pennsy side, but remember that their futures were at stake and they had to withstand grief from angry passengers as well as deal with a number of their own grievances.

The Penn Central experience provided useful lessons on regulation and government support that were put to use in the 1971 founding of Amtrak and the 1976 formation of Conrail. One area of note was the abandonment or sale of branchlines or redundant trackage; PC's trustees had already earmarked elimination of approximately 5,000 miles from the 20,000-mile system.

Perhaps the choice of black for PC's locomotives unintentionally forecast the dark future ahead, just as Conrail blue heralded brighter days.

And so, as memories of this tormented railroad fade from the memories of those who worked for and patronized it, we have our books and movies to remind us of those days of promise when we were urged to "Call us Penn Central."



The last run of pre-Amtrak PC train 27 heads toward Chicago Union Station on May 1, 1971. Mike Schafer

El Simon was there at PC's beginning, returning from an Air Force tour in Southeast Asia ten days after the merger and taking several weeks' leave at his parents' home in Philadelphia, visiting Boston and New York City "to note consists and form a base line from which to measure future change."