

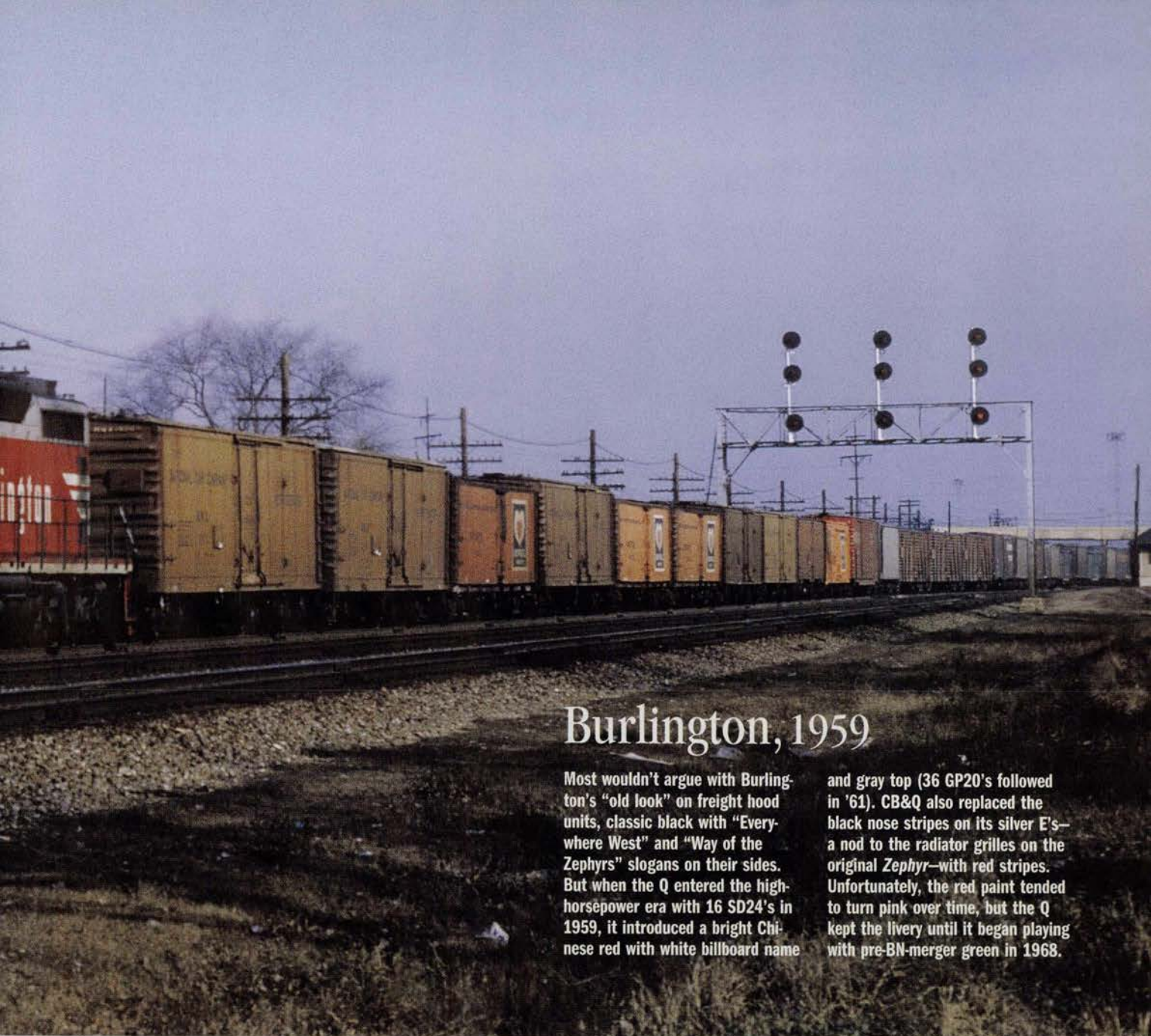


Bucking the trend:

Colorful diesels

of the **1960's**

When many roads were adopting somber paint schemes for their locomotives, a handful embraced bright new images



Burlington, 1959

Most wouldn't argue with Burlington's "old look" on freight hood units, classic black with "Everywhere West" and "Way of the Zephyrs" slogans on their sides. But when the Q entered the high-horsepower era with 16 SD24's in 1959, it introduced a bright Chinese red with white billboard name

and gray top (36 GP20's followed in '61). CB&Q also replaced the black nose stripes on its silver E's—a nod to the radiator grilles on the original *Zephyr*—with red stripes. Unfortunately, the red paint tended to turn pink over time, but the Q kept the livery until it began playing with pre-BN-merger green in 1968.

GP20'S LEAVE CICERO (ILL.) YARD, NOVEMBER 1964; J. DAVID INGLES

FOUR DECADES AGO, diesel locomotives, once dazzling novelties, were an established fact of life on North American railroads. At the same time, as passenger service contracted and small freight shippers switched to trucks, the railroads became less concerned with their public image. Seeking to cut costs, many roads looked to their locomotive paint schemes, some of which were quite elaborate and expensive to apply. The result was a proliferation of drab, simple liveries that, while cheap and durable, did not convey a sense of confidence or style.

Missouri Pacific, B&O, C&O, and Wabash, for instance, traded their eye-catching schemes for solid blue. Atlantic Coast Line gave up purple (!)

and silver for black. Southern Pacific dropped its *Daylight* and *Black Widow* liveries for dark gray with a dash of red. Pennsy and NYC, never flamboyant, just hunkered down further.

Happily, several roads bucked the trend with bright, modern color schemes. Some, like Rock Island and Lehigh Valley, couldn't seem to make up their minds and so can't be said to have selected a single image. Kansas City Southern and Louisville & Nashville tried, but the results were not compelling. And Union Pacific just rolled on with its 1934 *Armour* yellow, still in use today.

Herewith are 10 bright new schemes from the era. A few were final flameouts from dying lines, but others became long-lived.—R.S.M. and J.D.I.

Santa Fe, 1960

AT&SF picked up on the leads of others such as Burlington and DT&I to tweak its road-freight livery with a billboard-size "Santa Fe." But if Uncle John's basic colors of yellow on blue hadn't changed since the FT's of 1940, how does he qualify for inclusion here? Because it took him a while to admit the big 2400 h.p. units he was buying were road engines, not glorified switchers. In 1959, the first groups of EMD SD24's and Alco RSD15's came in black with silver striping and a small name and logo. The next ones wore a big silver "Santa Fe" before the last 30 SD's and 26 Alcos donned the blue and yellow. Later, cowl-carbodied F45's got the passenger-style oval nose logo.



TWO F45'S AND A WARBONNET FP45, NEEDLES, CALIF., SEPTEMBER 1971; JOE MCMILLAN



SD24 AND RSD15 "ALLIGATOR" LEAD THE WAY OVER CAJON PASS, NOVEMBER 1965; ROBERT J. ROBL, J. DAVID INGLES COLLECTION



Canadian National, 1961

In the first systemwide rail image makeover of the era, CN introduced its Allan Fleming-designed "wet noodle" logo and new colors on locomotives (red, black, and silver) and passenger cars (gray and black), replacing CN's postwar green, yellow, and black. Cab units had slanted silver bands on their flanks, and later this spread to hood units (note one such Geep hiding in the rear of the photo—the red RS18's were a custom group of HEP units for Tempo passenger trains). CN's U.S. roads—Grand Trunk Western, Central Vermont, and Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific—adopted customized variants, but CN still employs the basics today.



Delaware & Hudson, 1961



GE's at Ararat Summit, Pa. (left), Sharks at Whitehall, N.Y., (above): Jim Shaughnessy

As did many coal-haulers, the D&H liked solid-black diesels, and dressed its early fleet—all Alco S-type switchers and RS-type road-switchers—accordingly. Only yellow safety-striping on the ends relieved their drab look—until 1961, when RS11 5001 emerged in a striking bright blue and gray separated by a zig-zag yellow stripe. D&H stuck with this “lightning-stripe” style, applying it along “Warbonnet” lines in 1968 to its four ex-Santa Fe PA’s (and, later, its two Baldwin Sharknoses), and even would return to it after flings with solid blue.

SD45, GP30, C630, APRIL 1968, ALLENTOWN, PA., ALLAN H. ROBERTS, J. DAVID INGLES COLLECTION



Reading, 1962

When EMD delivered its first GP30's, 20 to the 1100-mile Reading Co. in 1962, they came in this builder-designed bright yellow and green livery that was a 180-degree turn from the railroad's previous somber solid olive drab. (OK, OK—Reading's few cab units, though mostly black, *did* have a nice bright-green band with yellow

striping.) The new scheme shouted, “new units, high horsepower.” It was carried through eight orders from all three builders for 92 more units of seven types through 1969, and also was applied to some older units. For its last new diesels in the 1970's, though, financially pinched Reading chose a solid—though bright—green.



GP30 AND U30C AT BERGEN, N.DAK., NOVEMBER 1974; JIM HEDIGER

Soo Line, 1962

Minneapolis, St Paul & Sault Ste. Marie and subsidiary Wisconsin Central used black on switchers and early hood units, with maroon-and-gold for cabs and, after 1953, road-switchers. When the two, plus the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic, merged as Soo Line Railroad in 1961, Soo p.r. man Wally Abbey thought a new look was in order—and *not* the solid maroon tried in 1960. Painting plaster models at home, Abbey devised a bold red-and-light-gray, tested on GP9 550 in early '62 and applied to two Alco RS27's new that April. A lighter off-white that graced 22 GP30's in 1963 spread to everything . . . until 1989, when Soo went to a solid candy-apple red.



F7'S AT RICHFIELD, WIS., SEPTEMBER 1972, TOM HOFFMANN

Erie Lackawanna, 1964

When EL's first high-horsepower diesels—15 Alco C424's—arrived in 1963, they wore the Erie-style black and yellow, and it appeared that Lackawanna's attractive maroon and gray, with yellow accents, was history. Not so fast. For when William White, who'd led DL&W 1941-52, returned to resuscitate the EL in mid-'63, the old

Lackawanna colors came back on the next new units—a dozen 2500 h.p. B-B models from each of the three builders—and were retained until EL went into Conrail. Designed, as were many old schemes, for cab units, the livery looked good on anything, including passenger cars (too bad the electric M.U.'s didn't get it!).



SDP45's AT PORT JERVIS, N.Y., JANUARY 1974; JIM SHAUGHNESSY

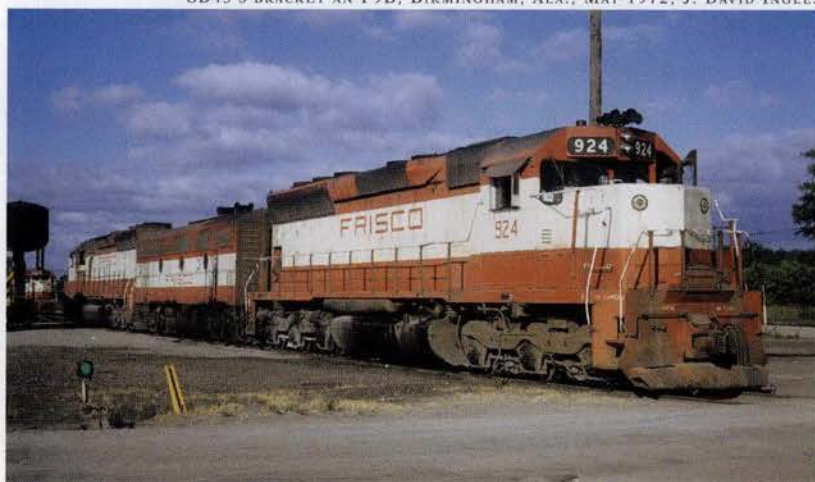


"REDBIRDS" NEAR SHERMAN, ILL., JULY 1970; J. DAVID INGLES

GM&O, 1966

When Gulf, Mobile & Ohio bought the Alton in 1947, it ditched the crimson and silver that dated from Gulf, Mobile & Northern's 1935 *Rebels* and adopted the historic red and maroon of the Alton, top player in the hot Chicago-St. Louis passenger market. Gradually GM&O diesels became solid red, or maroon (depending on which shop did the work). Then, for its initial second-generation order, 31 GP30's in 1962-63, it asked EMD to design the scheme. A jazzy black and white with billboard initials was the result, but although GM&O applied it again to 48 GP35's, when it ordered 21 SD40's in 1966, the scheme was as pictured above. The "Redbirds" would be unique, for later GP38's, while also red with big white letters, differed in the striping details.

SD45'S BRACKET AN F9B, BIRMINGHAM, ALA., MAY 1972; J. DAVID INGLES



Frisco, 1965

Black with a bit of yellow was the Frisco's freight and yard diesel look until its third order of U25B's and second order of GP35's, delivered in that sequence in early 1965 in this mandarin orange and white "for better grade-crossing visibility." It was applied to most older units, including F's and three E8's, but except for

a later custom job on four hoods, only cabs wore the "coonskin" logo. The scheme lasted until BN merged Frisco in 1980. Other converts to orange in the era included Illinois Central (from black, on freight units) and Toledo, Peoria & Western (from green). Western Maryland went from all black to an attractive red-white-and-black.

Great Northern, 1967

There was nothing wrong with GN's old livery of Omaha orange accented with Pullman green . . . until GN simplified it in 1963 by removing most of the lower orange panel. Bad move! So, when the road introduced its "Big Sky Blue" livery, with gray tops and a white band, amid much fanfare in 1967, it was a welcome change. Al-

though applied to many older locomotives (including F's, whose noses didn't wear it as well as hoods and cowls) and passenger cars, Big Sky Blue was short-lived. If GN was trying to create a look for the impending Burlington Northern merger, it failed. BN chose—and stuck with—Cascade green with white and black accents.

