



TRAVEL AT REDUCED RATES TO YOUR FAVORITE
WINTER RESORT
IN *Pullman* SAFETY & COMFORT

Courtesy of Swann Galleries, New York

Modernity: The 1930's work of Chicago artist William P. Welsh often depicted beautiful women in elaborate settings.

“...in Safety and Comfort”

Pullman Advertising, 1916-1960: Never highest among company priorities, its glory years were 1934-1951 under George Kelly

By Michael Zega • Illustrations from the author's collection

From the introduction of the vestibuled sleeping-car train—true hotels on wheels—to the first rumblings of World War I in Europe, the Pullman Company reigned among America's most profitable corporations. Not only did George Pullman invent the luxury express, he also consolidated, greatly improved, and expanded the national network of less-expensive tourist sleepers—the primary means of mobility for the expanding middle class.

This constant innovation in speed, safety, and comfort and the abundant publicity created thereby left little need, in the minds of Pullman managers, for advertising and promotion. Indeed, the publicity gained from the continual launching and re-equipping of limited trains by the individual railroads arguably exceeded any impression that might be gained through paid advertising by Pullman. Moreover, the thousands of booklets the individual carriers produced to promote their flagship trains invariably dealt with Pullman service at length.

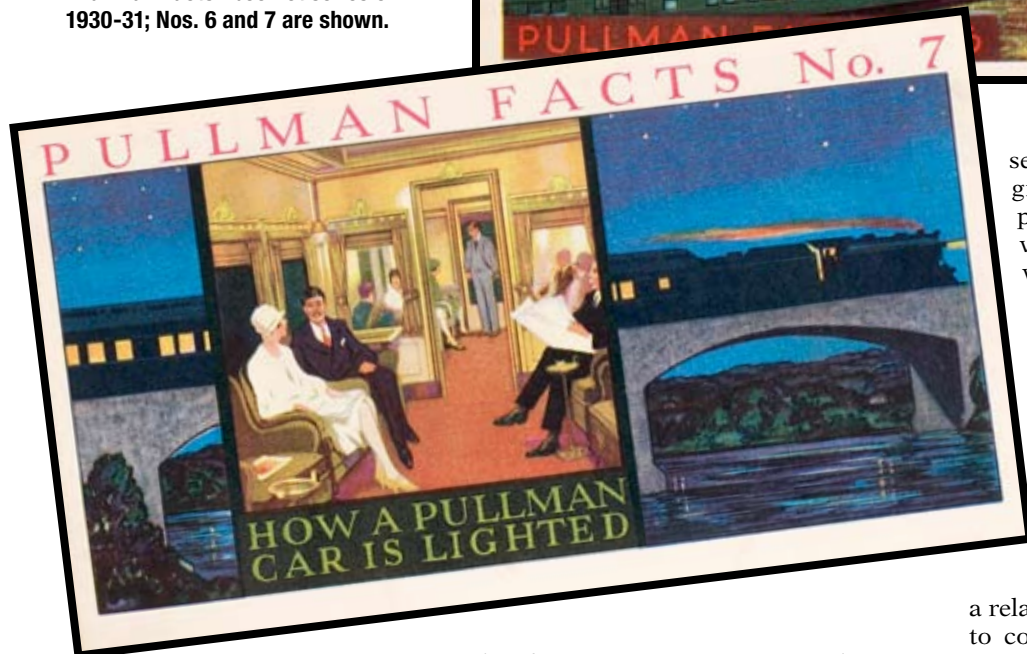
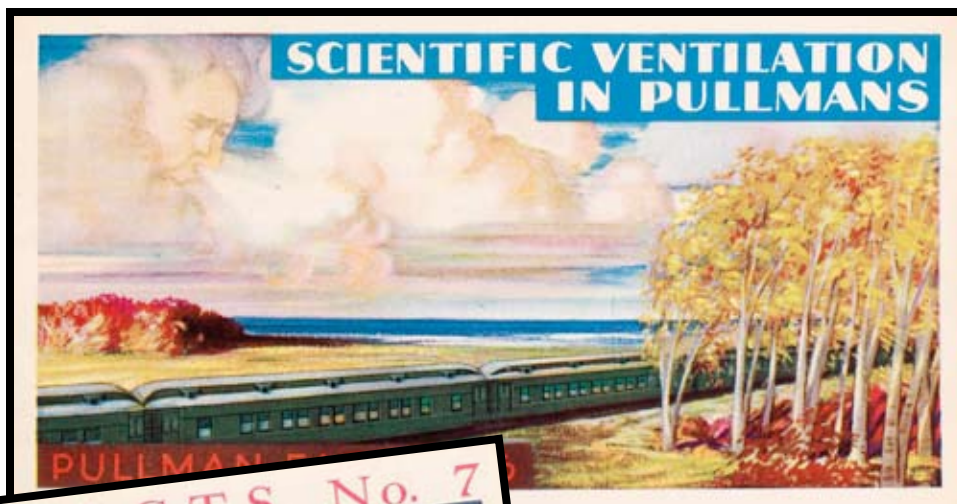
Still, by the 1910's, the standard Pullman car had provided reliable, safe, and comfortable travel for over a generation. Pullman's innovations and their benefits were increasingly taken for granted. If one listened carefully to the frequent traveler, there remained a great deal of room for improvement in sleeping-car design and operation. Tales of the acrobatics required in occupying an upper berth had entered the national lore, while poor ventilation and close quarters prompted increasing concern and speculation. As railroad writer Edward Hungerford reported, scientists' discoveries had just introduced the word “microbe” into public discourse.

It would fall to the independent sleeping-car operators, individual carriers such as the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul and the Great Northern, to draw attention to these shortcomings and bestir the complacent Pullman Company to respond. Once goaded,



Pullman's first, brief ad campaign, in 1916 with headlines such as “Convenience” and “Anticipation,” drew from pioneers such as AT&T and NYC.

Vivid artwork, lagging progress: Among the innovations of James Keeley, George Kelly's predecessor, was the "Pullman Facts" booklet series of 1930-31; Nos. 6 and 7 are shown.



Even though Pullman carried passengers for more than a century, the great bulk of its advertising was placed during the tenure of one individual, George A. Kelly (1886-1958), vice president of publicity from 1934 to 1951. Kelly, an attorney who came to Pullman as corporate counsel, assumed the position of Vice President of Publicity upon the death of James Keeley in 1934.

Keeley's most noteworthy success, the single occupancy section of 1930, was introduced to counter the ravages of the Great Depression. In spite of its unfortunate abbreviation, the "S.O.S." and a related program that paid commissions to conductors for the sale of upgrades reversed plummeting Pullman loadings in just two years.

Management's aggressive actions, pointed out *The Wall Street Journal*, allowed Pullman to maintain profitability despite the crisis. Keeley also dabbled in advertising, introducing the "Pullman Facts" booklet series of 1930-31, with titles such as "Scientific Ventilation" and "Hidden Mechanisms," which, for all their vivid artwork, only emphasized the company's lagging innovation.

By 1933, as Pullman introduced its streamlined, aluminum sleeper-observation-lounge, the *George M. Pullman*, to the public at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition, its passenger loadings fell to 13.7 million, just 40 percent of 1926's record high. In response to this core business crisis, George Kelly would focus on visibility and creativity.

A longtime admirer of the European travel poster, Kelly's first move was to hire the advertising firm Charles Daniel Frey Co. with the assignment of fashioning a distinctive style unique to Pullman. Chicago artist William P. Welsh (1890-1984) soon won the task of creating an image of Pullman modernity. Welsh had designed

the sleeping-car giant rose to the occasion, often with flashes of strategic insight and creative brilliance. Yet—and until the end—the regal Pullman Company regarded advertising and promotion as a necessary evil, rather than a useful tool, to be reserved for times of crisis.

To counter these trends, Pullman introduced its first advertising in 1916, an "institutional," or, in today's terms, "corporate" campaign created by the Chicago advertising firm Husband & Thomas. The advertisements' headlines and themes, "Convenience," "Anticipation," and "Cleanliness," drew heavily from pioneers such as AT&T and New York Central's "For the Public Service" campaign that introduced the improvements of 1913 at New York's Grand Central Terminal.

If not particularly creative, Pullman's initiative was duly noted, and—like all railroad advertising—was withdrawn in 1917 with the onset of federal control of the railroads during World War I. If brief, that campaign set the attributes that would define Pullman promotion for the following 40 years. Continuity was important to the staid Pullman managers.

The Cars on the New Haven, with their modern air-conditioning plants, double-wide seated against dual window and hand, glass-free lighting systems, revolutionize the new world of coast-to-coast travel.

The Grill Cars—elegantly modern in decoration and furnished with American Music, and leather ottoman and photo-athletic in which to enjoy a snack, a meal, or a tall, refreshing glass.

Opportunities for fun—recreation—and contacts with interesting people are never lacking... neither is the chance to rest. Because the supremely comfortable seats can be individually tilted to relaxing angles of every standard six groups.

The Greatest Fleet of Lightweight, Streamlined Chair Cars Owned by a Single Railroad
—THE NEW HAVEN
 BUILT BY PULLMAN-STANDARD
 THE WORLD'S LARGEST BUILDERS OF RAILROAD

A STIRRING chapter in the epic of modern transportation was dictated in 1931 when the progressive New Haven Railroad commissioned Pullman-Standard to build 50 streamlined chair cars. Generous in the number of accommodations they provided, it was believed their capacity would meet the newly-created need for this modern type of transportation.

But, from the day they took the rails, public demand for space on these cars began to grow. In 1936, the New Haven ordered a second group of 50 units from Pullman-Standard—later that same year another 50 including 3 cafeteria cars—and in 1938 the number was again swelled by the addition of 50 more.

Thus did this great fleet of 205 modern lightweight, streamlined units come into being within the short space of 6 years.

You have made Pullman-Standard streamliners gross the highest revenues

To those of you who have experienced the greatest thrill in passenger travel—the fun of taking a trip on a streamliner—the success typified in the case of the New Haven is perfectly logical.

In addition to million-dollar designs and manufacturing great cars, service and maintenance are the heart of Pullman-Standard.

PULLMAN-STANDARD CAR MANUFACTURING CO.

"Tops" IN STREAMLINERS ARE BUILT BY Pullman-Standard

Typical of carbuilder Pullman-Standard's ads reacting to competitor Budd's innovations of the late '30's was this for the New Haven, featuring contented passengers, the work of Albert Dorne.

The single-occupancy section, introduced to combat falling Depression-era loadings, had an unfortunate abbreviation but was a resounding success in spite of its improvised nature.

News for thrifty Pullman Passengers!

THE NEW CONVERTIBLE S.O.S.

SINGLE OCCUPANCY SECTION

"Okay, guys - this is it!"

PULLMAN

the Century of Progress Exhibition poster in 1933, and his work often depicted beautiful women in elaborate settings. For Pullman he did nothing less, winning abundant notice in the advertising community for his outstanding work. Indeed, the collaboration between artist, agency, and client proved so successful that it continued into the post-World War II era.

Kelly next initiated a national advertising campaign. By 1937, *Advertising Age* reported that Pullman ranked 76th among leading magazine advertisers, spending more than any other transportation company (Greyhound followed at 101, while Southern Pacific, the top railroad, ranked 194). In large part, Pullman filled the void left by deep cuts in railroad ad expenditures. Pullman president D. A. Crawford repeatedly used his public voice to point out that the railroad-funded

advertising that traditionally reinforced Pullman's franchise had all but vanished, and worse, that which remained sought to fill new all-coach streamliners by targeting lapsed Pullman travelers. Indeed, others of those who could still afford travel were turning to Greyhound and its new Raymond Loewy-designed motor coaches.

Pullman's budget allowed for full-page, typically four-color, insertions in most issues of the nation's leading weekly and monthly magazines, a schedule that would continue through 1952-53, when airline traffic finally surpassed its own. Throughout, Pullman offered a singular dominant theme, depicted early on in 1937's "A Pullman Captain and His Crew," summed up by the iconic image of ever-

Despite wartime traffic once again filling trains, Pullman ads such as this 1943 example with Dorne's illustration, emphasized "responsible, necessary travel" rather than only "war-related."

A PULLMAN CAPTAIN AND HIS CREW



Pullman Conductor W. B. Child of one of the country's crack passenger trains. He's had 35 years of service. He's seen at left with his crew—eight porters, barber, and maid. Their average length of service is 22 years.



This 1937 ad featuring a Pullman conductor with a barber, a maid, and eight porters exemplified the company's singular dominant theme of the period.

"captain" won those stripes on his sleeve liner's wind-swept bridge but up and down eted aisles of the Pullman car, seeing to the f thousands of passengers who have traveled re. He's captain of a crew whose fame is not in sea-going story books, but in thou- appreciative letters received annually from patrons. If you would know why folks like y Pullman, part of the answer lies in the ad thoughtfulness they experience at the

hands of the Pullman conductor and the Pullman crew. Pullman service—invitingly comfortable beds by night and quiet, spacious, clean lounging quarters by day—is made doubly enjoyable by the trained and competent people who put you at your ease when you travel this way. It's the *safest* travel in the world . . . and economical, too. Anywhere in America, and on various lines in Canada and Mexico. For full information, ask your ticket agent, or write THE PULLMAN COMPANY, CHICAGO

Rail — The safe way to go and the sure way to get there



"Did you ring, sir?"

NEXT TIME you take a Pullman, always ask you can go in Pullman comfort.

That's because the way Pullman works with the Pullman—through its centrally-located "pull" of sleeping cars—makes it possible to take care of the heavy military load and accommodations for thousands of civilians, too.

So, whenever you Pullman, always ask for Pullman service when you plan to travel!

Work wherever you should be sleeping! In our Pullman cars, every Pullman passenger is more than 100 years—each service car, port, and every Pullman car is a way of going places that can't be matched.

COMFORT Pullman cars are clean and safe. Pullman beds are the most comfortable in the world. You get maximum rest and comfort.

SAFETY Pullman Pullman conductors are trained to take care of Pullman cars. They help make your Pullman trip a memorable event.

PULLMAN The safest, most comfortable way of going places fast!

Iconic images of ever-smiling Pullman porters and dining- and lounge-car waiters and attendants offered the assurance of comfort and service.

smiling Pullman porters offering the assurance of comfort and service.

Of course, it was the upstart competitor Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Co. that had introduced and popularized the

fast, all-coach overnighter, primarily through a sophisticated advertising campaign. Pullman reacted by introducing its own, more elaborate, version—"Tops in Streamliners are built by Pullman-Standard"—in 1940, also produced by the Charles, Daniel Frey agency. The campaign led with aces high, spotlighting the *20th Century* and *Broadway* limiteds of 1938; typical was an ad featuring the New Haven's "Greatest Fleet of Lightweight, Streamlined Chair Cars . . ." The ad's real subject—contented, conviv-

ial passengers and well-wishers—were delineated by prominent illustrator Albert Dorne.

The onset of war and its attendant troop movements finally filled Pullman's unused capacity. By 1942, Pullman carried 7 million military personnel in addition to regular riders numbering nearly 20 million. Yet even as late as 1943, advertising still encouraged responsible, necessary travel, as exemplified by "Okay, guys—this is it!" also drawn by Albert Dorne. By 1944, advertising strategy had turned to discouraging all but war-related travel while trying to communicate an impression of patriotic corporate citizenship. Ads featured flags and customs of foreign lands, "where our boys serve."

Postwar marketing and advertising strategy reflected both the 1944 U.S. court ruling divorcing Pullman's sleeping-car and manufacturing business-

