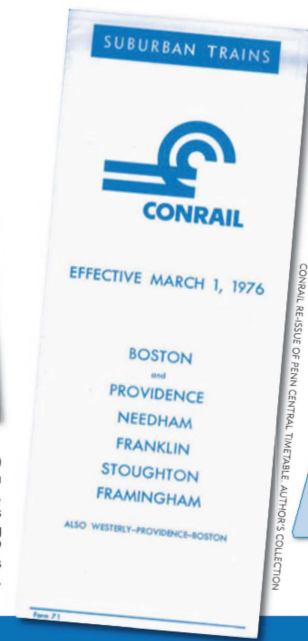




ERIE LACKAWANNA TIMETABLE, 1970, AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

CLEVELAND-WARREN-YOUNGSTOWN		READ DOWN		READ UP	
28		EASTERN STANDARD TIME		29	
Warren	6:00 AM	Cleveland	6:00 AM	Youngstown	6:00 AM
Warren	6:15 AM	Cleveland	6:15 AM	Youngstown	6:15 AM
Warren	6:30 AM	Cleveland	6:30 AM	Youngstown	6:30 AM
Warren	6:45 AM	Cleveland	6:45 AM	Youngstown	6:45 AM
Warren	7:00 AM	Cleveland	7:00 AM	Youngstown	7:00 AM
Warren	7:15 AM	Cleveland	7:15 AM	Youngstown	7:15 AM
Warren	7:30 AM	Cleveland	7:30 AM	Youngstown	7:30 AM
Warren	7:45 AM	Cleveland	7:45 AM	Youngstown	7:45 AM
Warren	8:00 AM	Cleveland	8:00 AM	Youngstown	8:00 AM
Warren	8:15 AM	Cleveland	8:15 AM	Youngstown	8:15 AM
Warren	8:30 AM	Cleveland	8:30 AM	Youngstown	8:30 AM
Warren	8:45 AM	Cleveland	8:45 AM	Youngstown	8:45 AM
Warren	9:00 AM	Cleveland	9:00 AM	Youngstown	9:00 AM
Warren	9:15 AM	Cleveland	9:15 AM	Youngstown	9:15 AM
Warren	9:30 AM	Cleveland	9:30 AM	Youngstown	9:30 AM
Warren	9:45 AM	Cleveland	9:45 AM	Youngstown	9:45 AM
Warren	10:00 AM	Cleveland	10:00 AM	Youngstown	10:00 AM
Warren	10:15 AM	Cleveland	10:15 AM	Youngstown	10:15 AM
Warren	10:30 AM	Cleveland	10:30 AM	Youngstown	10:30 AM
Warren	10:45 AM	Cleveland	10:45 AM	Youngstown	10:45 AM
Warren	11:00 AM	Cleveland	11:00 AM	Youngstown	11:00 AM
Warren	11:15 AM	Cleveland	11:15 AM	Youngstown	11:15 AM
Warren	11:30 AM	Cleveland	11:30 AM	Youngstown	11:30 AM
Warren	11:45 AM	Cleveland	11:45 AM	Youngstown	11:45 AM
Warren	12:00 PM	Cleveland	12:00 PM	Youngstown	12:00 PM
Warren	12:15 PM	Cleveland	12:15 PM	Youngstown	12:15 PM
Warren	12:30 PM	Cleveland	12:30 PM	Youngstown	12:30 PM
Warren	12:45 PM	Cleveland	12:45 PM	Youngstown	12:45 PM
Warren	1:00 PM	Cleveland	1:00 PM	Youngstown	1:00 PM
Warren	1:15 PM	Cleveland	1:15 PM	Youngstown	1:15 PM
Warren	1:30 PM	Cleveland	1:30 PM	Youngstown	1:30 PM
Warren	1:45 PM	Cleveland	1:45 PM	Youngstown	1:45 PM
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Warren	2:15 PM	Cleveland	2:15 PM	Youngstown	2:15 PM
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Warren	2:45 PM	Cleveland	2:45 PM	Youngstown	2:45 PM
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Warren	3:30 PM	Cleveland	3:30 PM	Youngstown	3:30 PM
Warren	3:45 PM	Cleveland	3:45 PM	Youngstown	3:45 PM
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Warren	10:30 PM	Cleveland	10:30 PM	Youngstown	10:30 PM
Warren	10:45 PM	Cleveland	10:45 PM	Youngstown	10:45 PM
Warren	11:00 PM	Cleveland	11:00 PM	Youngstown	11:00 PM
Warren	11:15 PM	Cleveland	11:15 PM	Youngstown	11:15 PM
Warren	11:30 PM	Cleveland	11:30 PM	Youngstown	11:30 PM
Warren	11:45 PM	Cleveland	11:45 PM	Youngstown	11:45 PM
Warren	12:00 AM	Cleveland	12:00 AM	Youngstown	12:00 AM

Conrail note:
No checked baggage limited.
Baggage in the above table refers to the elements of New York's New, Standard, and Intermediate Div. (Latter Div. Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day).
THIS COMPANY IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DAMAGES IN CASES OF NEGLIGENCE OR DAMAGE RESULTING FROM DELAYED TRAINS OR FAILURE TO MAKE CONNECTIONS, SCHEDULES AND EQUIPMENT SUBJECTS BEING SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.
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OPPOSITE: Conrail 4014 (former EL 825) lays over at the former Erie Lackawanna East 55th Street Yard in Youngstown, Ohio, on January 11, 1977, just a few days before the last run. BELOW: Ducking under Signal Bridge No. 7, CR E8 4039 (former New York Central 4039) departs Boston South Station on August 26, 1977. JOHN BENSON PHOTOS



The train was reduced from three coaches to one, and this time Conrail faced little opposition when they requested to discontinue the train. The last run took place on January 14, 1977, and was the last passenger train to depart the old Terminal Tower in downtown Cleveland.

Boston's South Side (1976-1977)
One of Conrail's larger operations was also one of its briefest. Both the New York Central (through its Boston & Albany subsidiary) and the New Haven railroads operated extensive commuter services out of Boston's South Station. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority began its program of subsidies as early as 1965. New York Central merged with the

CONRAIL COMMUTERS

CANCELLED

BY OTTO M. VONDRAK/ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR, PHOTOS AS NOTED

WHEN CONGRESS CREATED THE PLAN for the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), railroads in the Northeast were on the verge of crisis. Conrail was tasked with rebuilding a freight railroad network that was drained by the Penn Central bankruptcy and weakened by crushing debt and tax burdens. Seemingly lost in the shuffle were the myriad commuter trains operated throughout the new railroad's 17,000 mile territory. When Conrail began operations on April 1, 1976, they quickly became the nation's second-busiest passenger carrier with commuter services in Boston, Chicago, New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Baltimore.

Conrail inherited these passenger operations and continued to operate them based on existing contracts, though in many cases the subsidies were not enough to cover costs. The

Staggers Act of 1980 deregulated the industry and gave Conrail more freedom to set rates, but the commuter burden was still a drain on revenues. The Northeast Rail Services Act of 1981 directed Conrail to transfer its commuter trains to local authorities or a new government subsidiary by the end of 1982.

This month we wrap-up a three-part series taking a look at how Metro-North, NJ Transit, and SEPTA have evolved since taking over from Conrail. But what happened to the trains that were not transferred to new operators on January 1, 1983?

Cleveland-Youngstown (1976-1977)
Erie Lackawanna got out of the long-distance passenger business with the last run of the *Lake Cities* in 1970, leaving only its extensive network of commuter operations in suburban New Jersey, and a single train that ran between



Cleveland and Youngstown. Many of the riders came from Cleveland's eastern suburbs, and they were instrumental in keeping the train running into the Conrail era. As part of the Conrail takeover in 1976, the old EL offices in downtown Cleveland were closed. By this time, the train was mostly carrying railroad workers riding on free passes, and ridership dropped off dramatically.



Pennsylvania Railroad in 1968 to form Penn Central, with the New Haven following in 1969. Equipment consisted of coaches and locomotives largely of New Haven ancestry. Into the 1970s, notices inside timetables made it quite clear that Penn Central was operating the trains "as an independent contractor" for the MBTA, and could be discontinued at any time should funding be withdrawn.

Conrail continued the status quo when it took over in 1976, but immediately began demanding increased subsidies from the MBTA. The Conrail commuter era in Boston would not even last a whole year. The contract was put out for bid, and on March 15, 1977, the Boston & Maine assumed operation of the south side commuter trains. For the first time all of Boston's commuter trains were the responsibility of a single operator, since B&M had been responsible for operations out of North Station for many years. This arrangement continued until 1987, when Amtrak became the successful bidder on the MBTA contract. Boston's commuter trains have been operated by the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Company since 2003.

Chicago-Valparaiso (1976-1979)

The Pennsylvania Railroad operated a single rush-hour commuter service from Chicago Union Station to Valparaiso, Ind. The Valpo Local (also called the Valpo "Dummy") consisted of two morning trains and two evening trains serving the suburbs of northern Indiana. Only the railroad's name changed when control passed to Penn Central in 1968, and similarly to Conrail in 1976. The train remained Conrail's only Chicago commuter operation, usually consisting of ancient ex-Pennsy P70 coaches hauled by Geeps equipped with steam heat. It was a quaint throwback and contrast to the modern HEP-equipped cars being used on other Chicago commuter lines, evidence of the lack of subsidy available from either Illinois or Indiana for the Valpo train. When the Cleveland-Youngstown train was cancelled in 1977, the newer former Erie Lackawanna lightweight coaches were transferred to Chicago to replace the aging heavyweights. Conrail also leased some of the old streamlined coaches that were bumped from Norfolk & Western's commuter train to Orland Park when it was re-equipped with new cars. By 1979, Conrail was petitioning the Interstate Commerce Commission to discontinue the service altogether citing mounting deficits.

CHICAGO—GARY—VALPARAISO
and Intermediate Stations

CONRAIL

EFFECTIVE October 31, 1976

Board Down	Board Up	Stn. Set. Sun & Hols.	453	455
PH 454	PH 455		PH	PH
5:05	6:35	CHICAGO	7:10	7:20
D 5:33	D 6:04	16.9 Ac. ... CHICAGO	C 6:41	C 7:15
D 5:49	D 6:10	15.7 Ac. ... Waukegan	C 6:57	C 7:56
D 5:56	D 6:19	24.0 Ac. ... Jefferson Harbor	C 6:57	C 6:58
D 6:54	D 6:33	27.4 Ac. ... Gary (Stn. & Chevrolet)	C 6:10	C 6:47
D 6:04	D 6:30	23.3 Ac. ... Hobart	C 6:10	—
—	D 6:35	37.3 Ac. ... Wheeler	C 6:50	6:55
6:20	6:45	43.7 Ac. ... VALPARAISO	PH	PH

RESPONSIBILITY
Conrail cannot assume responsibility for transportation, expense or damage resulting from errors in these notices, directed trains, failure to make connections, or for shortage of equipment. The schedule shown in this time table is subject to change without notice.

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OPPOSITE: Conrail 5909 (ex-NYC 5771) and 7508 (ex-NYC 5936) leads the inbound morning Valpo Local into Chicago Union Station on June 8, 1978. Norfolk & Western's commuter train from Orland Park can be seen trailing behind from this vantage point on Roosevelt Road. **JOHN BENSON PHOTO** **ABOVE:** By 1979, the only tenants at the venerable Buffalo Central Terminal were Amtrak and the daily Conrail-TH&B run to Toronto. Upon closure of BCT, these trains then terminated at Exchange Street Station in downtown Buffalo. **KEN KRAEMER PHOTO**

The Amtrak Improvement Act of 1979 was intended to modify the original 1970 legislation and allow Amtrak to operate commuter trains "under an agreement with a State or local agency." It also included a provision to transfer operation of commuter trains from Conrail to Amtrak, and continue their funding and operation until at least April 1, 1981.

With the new legislation in place, the Valpo Locals were transferred to Am-

trak On October 29, 1979. The newly renamed *Indiana Connection* and *Calumet* were equipped with former C&NW bi-levels painted in Amtrak colors. An Amtrak budget cut killed the *Indiana Connection* in 1986, and the *Calumet* was cancelled in 1991 since no reliable source of subsidy could be found to continue its operation, though several proposals are currently under consideration for reactivation.

Buffalo-Toronto (1976-1981)

Opened in 1892, the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo operated on the Niagara Peninsula between its namesake international cities. It was jointly purchased by the New York Central and the Canadian Pacific railroads, yet it retained its unique identity for many years afterwards. The TH&B used trackage rights over its parent roads to access terminals at Toronto and Buffalo. A number of passenger trains were operated between the two cities, providing a sort of international shuttle service.



CANCELLED

By the 1970s, the schedule had dwindled down to a pair of Budd RDC's making one round trip daily between Buffalo Central Terminal and Toronto Union Station. The New York Central's share of the TH&B passed on to Penn Central in 1968 and to Conrail in 1976. In 1977, Canadian Pacific bought out the old NYC shares and gained majority ownership. Outwardly, there was little to show Conrail's involvement in the operation. The trains consisted of Canadian Pacific equipment, usually a pair of RDC's, operated by a CP crew. It was listed in timetables as a joint Conrail-TH&B-CP train independent of Amtrak (which took control of the nation's remaining intercity passenger trains in 1971).

When Buffalo Central Terminal was closed in 1979, the train then terminated at Exchange Street Station downtown. The trains lacked any kind of support or subsidy from either side of the border, and the railroads were eager to end the less-patronized operation. In 1978, VIA Rail Canada took over most of CP's and Canadian National's passenger services, but the TH&B operation was not included. The Canadian Transport Commission authorized the trains to be discontinued on September 29, 1980, and they didn't make it into the new VIA published timetable. But the CTC issued a reprieve on September 25, 1980, and the trains lasted until VIA and Amtrak could work out details for a new through service via Niagara Falls. The last run took place on April 25, 1981, using VIA Budd RDC's. Amtrak continues to provide through service over the route with the operation of the New York-Toronto *Maple Leaf*, as well as several *Empire Service* trains. ■