

## Florida warmth accessible by rail from Butler County

"The new through train service from Chicago to Florida was inaugurated last night when the first of the sumptuous Florida limiteds, which save 109 miles over any of the old routes between this city and St. Augustine, passed through Hamilton on the CH&D."

That's how a Hamilton newspaper described CH&D service to Florida in mid-January 1901. Until airlines captured the market in the late 1950s, and interstate highways opened in the 1960s, Butler County residents wanting to escape winter could do so by rail.

The 1901 account said "the train arrived in Hamilton from Indianapolis at 7:28 p.m., and at 8:30 o'clock tonight it will deliver its passengers in St. Augustine."

"No more beautifully appointed train has been placed at the disposal of Hamilton winter tourists. It carries no day coaches at all, but includes solid baggage cars, drawing room car and one or more standard Pullman sleepers, as business may demand."

"The new train is the result of an arrangement between several roads," the newspaper explained.

"On Mondays and Thursdays, it will run from Chicago and Cincinnati over the CH&D, passing through Hamilton at 7:28 p.m. On the return it passes over the CH&D on Wednesdays and Saturdays."

"On Tuesdays and Fridays it will run south from Chicago to Cincinnati over the Panhandle, passing through this city and returning the same way on Thursdays and Sundays on the northbound trip. On the Panhandle runs it will arrive in Hamilton at 6:50 p.m."

"On the other two days of the week it will run over the Big Four, passing through Middletown, but not Hamilton."

"The route below Cincinnati will be uniform and is over the Queen and Crescent and goes straight through, via Atlanta, Chattanooga and Macon to Jacksonville and St. Augustine."

○ ○ ○

The Southland, which originated Nov. 21, 1915, involved several railroads in connecting northern and southern cities with Cincinnati and Louisville as key links in the system.

Its starting point was listed as Chicago, but cars or sections also departed from Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis and other points.

By 1928, the Southland was considered the premier train between the Midwest and Florida. Its Butler County connection was the Pennsylvania Railroad, with stops in Hamilton.

South of the Ohio River, the Southland ran over the tracks of the Louisville & Nashville, Central of Georgia, Atlantic Coast Line and Florida East Coast railroads. From Cincinnati, destinations included Knoxville, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Orlando, Lakeland, Tampa, St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Its fastest schedule -- 31 hours and 45 minutes Chicago-Tampa -- was in the winter of 1942, a war year.

The Interstate Commerce Commission approved discontinuance of the last segment of the Southland June 29, 1959.

○ ○ ○

In the winter of 1946-47, a passenger could board a southbound New York Central train at 6:05 a.m. in Middletown and arrive in Miami at a minute before noon the next day.

The Florida Sunbeam was a cooperative venture of the NYC, Southern and Seaboard Air Line railroads with "complete sleeping car, dining and lounge car service."

In the winter of 1952-53, a similar schedule was available for passengers boarding the Baltimore & Ohio in Hamilton.

Departure time was 6 a.m. with arrival at 7:10 p.m. in Atlanta later that day and in Tampa at 9:15 the next morning.

*The Southland operated  
between Chicago and  
Florida from  
November 1915  
until June 1959*



## Cool Michigan breezes, convenient rail schedule attracted local tourists

Tracks of the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railway didn't enter Butler County, but the railroad served its share of local passengers.

One of many companies owned or controlled by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the GR&I specialized in tourist traffic.

"Summer trains to summerland," boasted the railroad which called itself "The Fishing Line" and included an appropriate illustration in its logo.

The Michigan and Indiana line operated between Richmond, Fort Wayne, Grand Rapids and northern Michigan resorts. Its passenger service flourished in summer months, hauling vacationers, including fishermen, to resorts in Michigan.

For some local families, a trip to Michigan's cooler climate was a summer tradition in the days before air conditioning became common. Few attempted it by car.

Passengers could board trains at the PRR station in Hamilton for the 503-mile trip to Mackinaw City at the end of the GR&I line. Stops also included Harbor Springs, Traverse City and Petoskey, popular resort destinations for Butler County residents.

In 1899, the PRR promoted "Northern Michigan's Most Popular Resorts" -- Traverse City, Petoskey and Mackinac Island for a long Labor Day weekend.

Fares were \$10 or \$11, depending on the Michigan destination. Children under 12 could travel for half those rates.

Trains left Hamilton at 11:35 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 31, and Saturday, Sept. 2, 1899, and arrived in the Michigan communities the next morning between 5:55 and 8:20 a.m. The return trip departed at noon Wednesday, Sept. 6.

The GR&I's Northland Limited in 1916 ran semi-weekly, starting in June. It offered daily service between June 25 and Sept. 23 on "modern steel electrically-lighted sleeping cars." There were no coach accommodations on the train.

Sections of the Northland Limited carried vacationers from Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati and Louisville.

A sister train, the North Michigan Resorter, handled passengers from Chicago and St. Louis.

'Summer trains to summerland,' boasted the Grand Rapids & Indiana, which called itself 'The Fishing Line'



### Grand Rapids & Indiana mileage from Hamilton and Richmond

Miles	Location	Miles	Location
0	Hamilton	54.2	Geneva
	via PRR	58.8	Berne
43	Richmond, Ind.	64.8	Monroe
		70.7	Decatur
0	Richmond, Ind.	79.6	Hoagland
	via GR&I RR	91.8	Fort Wayne
8.9	Fountain City	185.4	Kalamazoo, Mich.
15.3	Lynn	234	Grand Rapids
24.5	Winchester	378.8	Traverse City
33	Ridgeville	424.8	Petoskey
43.2	Portland	459.7	Mackinaw City
50.3	Briant		

In 1916, the Northland Limited left Hamilton at 8:10 p.m. over the Pennsy tracks to Richmond. It ran over GR&I tracks from Richmond to Mackinaw City, arriving at 1:55 p.m. the next day, a rail trip of 17 hours and 45 minutes.

The southbound sleeper train left Mackinaw City at 1 p.m. and arrived in Hamilton at 6 the next morning.

By 1950, there were changes in the service. The GR&I ended at Petoskey, making it a 468-mile trip from Hamilton. The northbound train left Hamilton at 11:45 p.m. and reached Petoskey at 2 p.m. Times on the return trip were 2:30 p.m. departure and 6:52 a.m. arrival.

The Grand Rapids & Indiana Railway Co. was chartered in July 1896 to take over the property of the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad

Co., which had been sold at foreclosure June 10, 1896.

June 1, 1871, the previous company had leased the 86-mile Richmond-Adams line owned by the Cincinnati, Richmond & Fort Wayne Railroad.

In 1853, the line north out of Richmond to Fort Wayne was planned as an Indiana extension of the Four Mile Valley Railroad that was supposed to connect Hamilton, Oxford and Richmond (see page 25).

## Take train to the Reds

Taking the train to Cincinnati was popular among fans of the Cincinnati Reds into the 1930s.

An example was a Big Four excursion for a Sunday afternoon, June 27, 1926, game against Pittsburgh. The round-trip cost 85 cents for the special train that left Middletown at 8:35 a.m. and departed Cincinnati at 8 p.m.

## Railroads capitalized on county fair popularity

Railroads capitalized on the popularity of county fairs. Each fall for many years, railroads offered favorable rates on special trains from cities and villages in and around Butler County to the fairgrounds on the northeast edge of Hamilton.

An 1884 report showed the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton transported 4,500 people into town in one day to attend the fair.

In October three years later, that record was smashed as four excursion trains arrived in Hamilton within 30 minutes, carrying about 5,000 people to the fair.

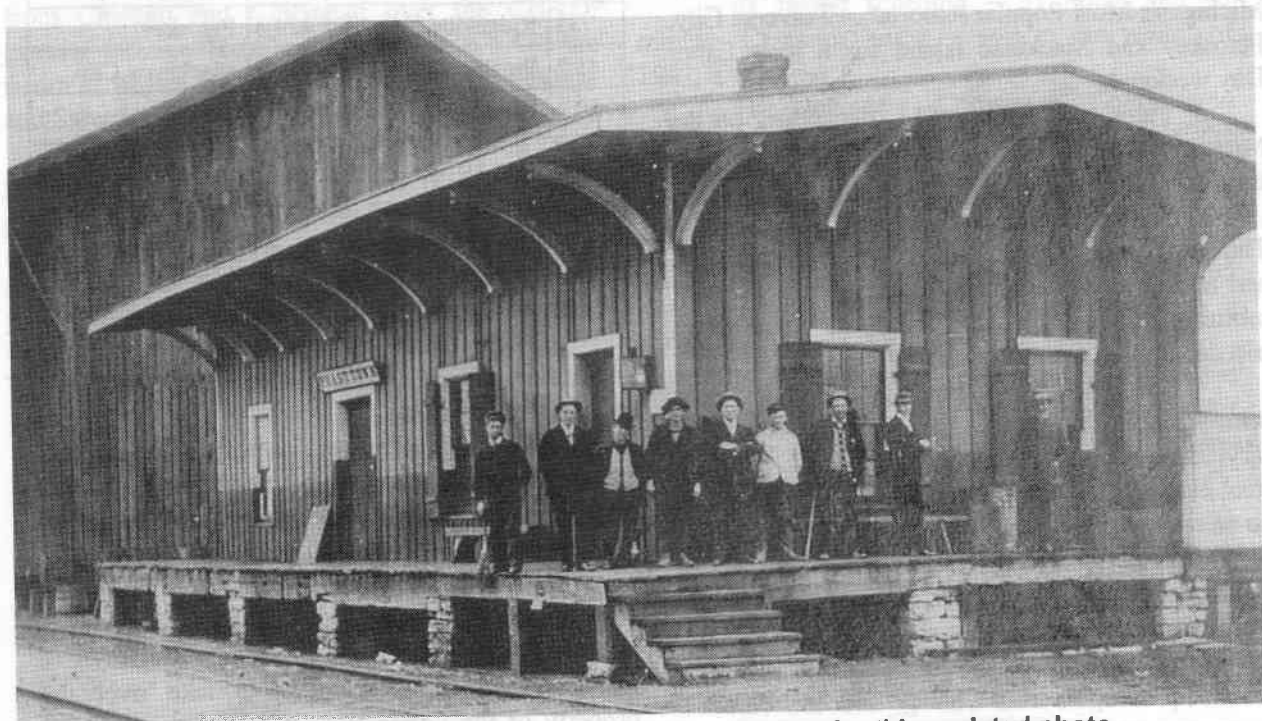
A newspaper said the seven-car special that originated in Indianapolis was "so crowded it had ladies even standing on the platforms of the cars."

A fair special from Richmond numbered 10 cars. Other excursion trains came from Dayton and Cincinnati.

In two days the CH&D brought 11,008 people to the 1887 Butler County Fair on special trains.

In 1904, the Pennsylvania Railroad promoted special trains and fares from its stations in Butler County to Eaton during the Preble County Fair.

Special trains left Hamilton at 8 a.m. with scheduled stops at Seven Mile at 8:13; Collinsville at 8:20; Somerville at 8:29; and Camden at 8:39 with arrival in Eaton at 8:56 a.m. The return trip started from Eaton at 7 p.m.



Nine men gathered at the CH&D's Poasttown Station for this undated photo

## Fast freight smashed head-on into stalled switcher in 1910 crash



Beyond the debris in the foreground, a freight car balances on a tender while a fireman is trapped under a coal pile in this Jan. 24, 1910, accident

There were only two minor injuries in a collision Monday, Jan. 24, 1910, on the Indianapolis division of the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad that awoke many residents of Hamilton's West Side.

Indianapolis-to-Cincinnati freight No. 97 struck a switch engine at Belt Line Junction near the Millville Avenue crossing in Hamilton at 1:55 a.m..

Fourteen cars derailed after the two steam locomotives collided, ripping out more than 300 feet of track.

Freight cars containing lumber, cotton bales and cotton seed caught fire, but the flames were quickly controlled by the Hamilton fire department.

The switcher -- scheduled to move off the single-track Hamilton-Indianapolis mainline before the arrival of the southeast bound freight -- stalled as it turned onto the Belt Line.

The freight, its crew believing No. 97 had a clear track, was traveling at 60 miles an hour when it smashed into the stationary switcher, which was pulling six cars. "The down grade at this point

makes slow running almost impossible," a newspaper noted.

Because of the curve between Millville and Kenworth avenues and darkness, the freight engineer couldn't see the blockage until seconds before the crash. A switchman had been sent up the track to warn the freight, but that effort was too late to prevent disaster.

The engineer and fireman aboard the freight suffered minor injuries and were treated at Mercy Hospital. The fireman was dug out from the coal pile in the tender while a freight car barely balanced over his head.

The steep grade west from the depot at South Fifth and Henry streets -- still a traction problem in the age of high-powered diesels -- contributed to the accident.

The switcher stalled twice before the accident. The first time the locomotive failed on the stone viaduct between the Great Miami River and North D Street. After a pause, it proceeded with only part of its train to the switch at the Belt Line, just northwest of Millville Avenue, where it stalled again, causing the crash

The High  
in Ohio Travel—



# OHIO STATE LIMITED

Overnight, every night  
between major Ohio cities and New  
York. Pullman private rooms, Pull-  
man Observation car. Reclining seat  
coaches. Streamlined dining car and  
club lounge for all passengers.

## Low Round-Trip Coach Fares

Next-Saturday-Night

**CLEVELAND** . . . . . \$4.50

Leave 10:35 p. m. or 12:41 a. m.  
Return on any train until 12:15 a.  
m. Monday.

**DETROIT** . . . . . \$4.00

**TOLEDO** . . . . . \$3.00

Leave 12:18 a. m. Return on any  
train until train leaving Detroit  
11:30 p. m. Sunday.

Next Sunday

**CINCINNATI** . . . . . \$ .85

Leave 6:28 a. m., 8:12 a. m. or 9:38  
a. m. Return on any train same  
day.

**COLUMBUS** . . . . . \$2.20

**SPRINGFIELD** . . . . . \$1.10

Leave 9:45 a. m. Return on any  
train same day.

Ask About Greatly Reduced Round  
Trip-Week-End Fares. Good in  
Sleeping Cars at 25% reduction in  
Pullman fares for round trip and  
in parlor cars at regular seat fares.  
**BIG FOUR ROUTE**

Top, 1954 NYC  
Ohio State Limited ad.

Above, 1933 NYC ad.

Right, illustration from 1949  
C&O timetable.

**TO  
TOLEDO  
DETROIT**

and the attractive Summer Re-  
sorts in Michigan and Canada.

Also to **CINCINNATI**  
**THE GREAT LAKES LIMITED**  
*AIR-CONDITIONED*

Leave Hamilton . . . . . 1:26 PM  
Arrive Toledo . . . . . 5:30 PM  
Arrive Detroit . . . . . 7:20 PM

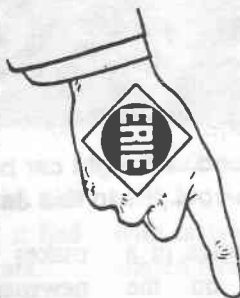
For reservations or any  
travel service consult  
ticket agent.

Leave Hamilton . . . . . 8:59 PM  
Arrive Cincinnati . . . . . 9:45 PM

# Baltimore & Ohio

FIRST RAILROAD TO AIR-CONDITION TRAINS

1934 B&O ad above, 1904 Erie ad below



No Extra Charge to  
Stop at Cambridge  
Springs & Niagara  
Falls :: :: :: :: ::

\$16.00 to New York  
\$18.00 to Boston  
FIRST CLASS

Only line from Hamilton to New York with through Pullman.  
Meals in diner. Train leaves Hamilton daily 4 p. m. Secure  
Sleepers and Full Information of :: :: :: :: ::

**WALLACE BEACH,** Ticket Agent,  
C., H. & D. Station.

Or Write H. C. HOLABIRD, G.A.P.D., Cincinnati, O.



## County's worst rail accident killed 24 people in July 1910

Butler County's worst railroad accident July 4, 1910, killed 24 people and injured about 35 when passenger and freight trains collided about 500 yards north of the West Middletown station near Poasttown.

The head-on crash at 1:02 p.m. on the Independence Day holiday was on the busy Cincinnati-Detroit mainline of the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad.

The southbound passenger train was the Cincinnati Flyer, No. 21, said to be the fastest train on the New York Central System between New York City and Cincinnati. The northbound CH&D freight No. 90 was almost stopped when the passenger train, traveling at 50 to 60 miles an hour, plowed into it.

"The two huge engines were reduced to a pile of worthless junk," a newspaper said. "The passenger coaches were splintered and broken into an unrecognizable mass of kindling, while along the tracks for 100 yards was strewn a miscellaneous lot of personal property dropped in the wild

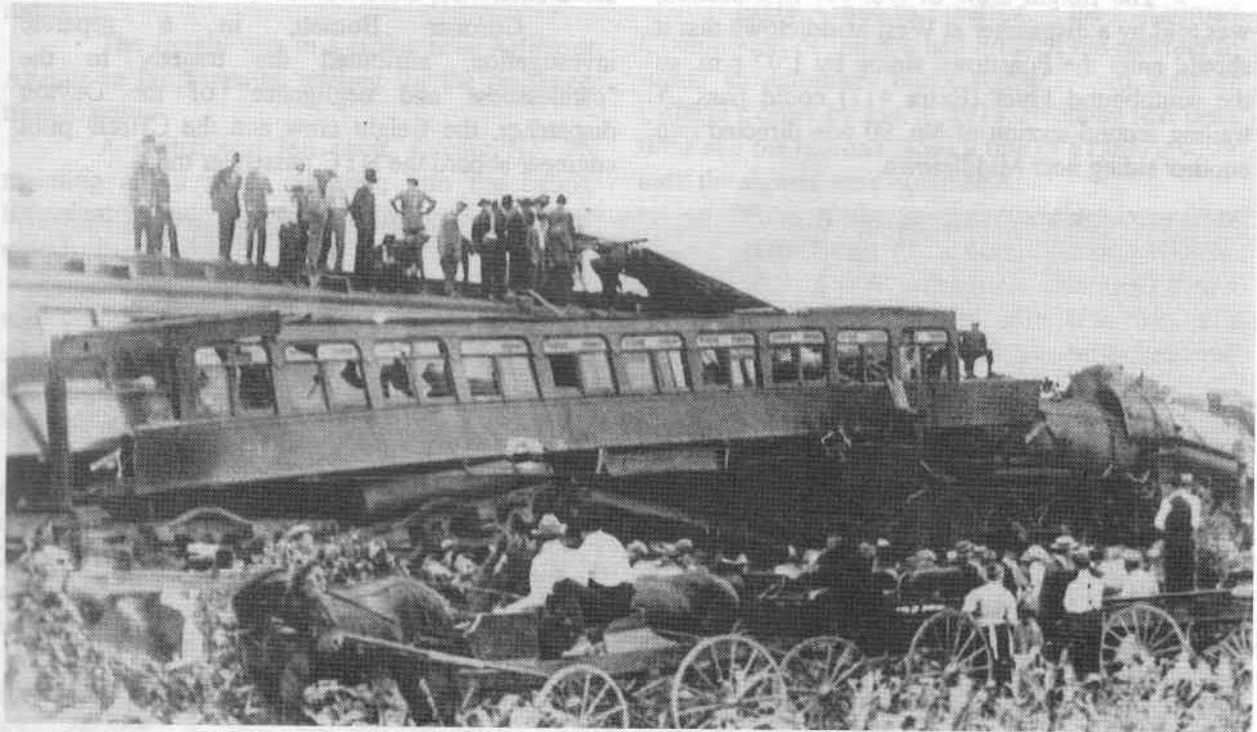
scramble of the passengers to get out of the coaches."

Within an hour, more than 2,000 spectators were at the scene, complicating the rescue and the preliminary investigation.

The Middletown News Signal praised the humanitarian response in that city. "The citizens with their vehicles were present in great numbers. All the doctors, the police and private citizens . . . with all the liverymen and undertakers, actively and earnestly doing each his part to relieve the suffering."

Several Hamilton surgeons went to the scene by train and auto. An extra train hauled some of the injured to Hamilton, arriving at about 4 p.m. at Dayton Street where five local ambulances waited to take the victims the remaining two blocks to Mercy Hospital. Other injured were removed to hospitals in Dayton (there was no hospital in Middletown then).

Some of the victims died in the Hamilton hospital, the last one eight days after the accident.



Spectators appear to outnumber rescue and salvage workers in this photo taken at the wreck site on the CH&D near West Middletown July 4, 1910