

## World War II servicemen averaged five rail trips before overseas duty

Statistics reflect the American dependence on railroads during World War II.

"More than 97 percent of all troops, about 90 percent of all Army equipment and supplies and about 90 percent of all Navy equipment and supplies were transported by rail during the war," reported the Association of American Railroads.

The AAR said "from December 1941 to August 1945, inclusive, a total of 113,891 special troop trains were operated for distances ranging all the way up to 3,000 miles or more."

During that period, according to AAR, railroads transported about 43.7 million members of the armed forces on special trains, an average of 971,000 a month. Those figures, AAR noted, didn't "include many millions of trips made by uniformed men and women traveling singly or in small groups in line of duty or on furlough."

AAR estimated that about 40 percent of total U. S. passenger travel in 1944 was by members of the armed services.

AAR said the average serviceman made about five rail trips before being shipped overseas, and two to five trips between arrival from overseas and discharge.

"The movement of an infantry division of 15,000 men," AAR said, "requires 283 passenger train cars, including sleeping cars, dining and kitchen cars, baggage cars, and a minimum of 20 locomotives."

Security considerations prevented the announcement of irregularly scheduled troop trains and POW trains passing over Butler County railroads, or publication of details and statistics on the high volume of war-related freight passing through or originating in the area.

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From trackside, the boy saw hundreds of freight trains hauling war materials, some it cloaked under canvas.

From the same vantage point, he also hailed his childhood heroes on troop trains and observed a mysterious enemy on POW trains.

He realized that local railroad workers were an important part of the national war effort, providing transportation services unparalleled in our history.

At an early age, he surmised that war was more than tanks, planes, submarines and weapons -- even locomotives. Instead, it was about people making sacrifices on the home front and the battlefields, and about loved ones facing constant danger -- some never to return alive.

### Station sendoffs returned during World War II

As in earlier wars, World War II troop sendoffs at local railroad stations were familiar events. Examples were two 1940 departures by a Hamilton-based National Guard company -- later part of the Buckeye Division.

The 65-man unit, led by Captain Arthur D. Fille, a Hamilton banker, returned from two weeks of summer training at Camp Perry in northern Ohio two weeks before Germany started the war Sept. 1, 1939, with its invasion of Poland.

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About a year later Company C was off for an extended three weeks of training. Its 85 men were among 65,000 guardsmen and army regulars in maneuvers at Camp McCoy and Camp Williams in Wisconsin.

The public turnout for the Sunday night event Aug. 11, 1940, was seen as an indication of Hamilton's war interest and patriotism in that tense time. Despite the scheduled 11:45 p.m. departure, hundreds of people lined downtown streets and the station platform as the men marched to the Pennsylvania Railroad depot.

A few weeks after completing training -- on the same day the U. S. Congress approved the first peace-time draft -- the local company was notified it had been mobilized. Sept. 16, 1940, Company C members were among 8,500 Ohio guardsmen called into federal service.

Wednesday, Oct. 22, 1940, more than 700 people, including the Hamilton High School band, were at the B&O depot. As the 57 troops and three officers left on a special train, they believed their terms would end 12 months later.

After a 37-hour train ride, Company C arrived at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, about 12 miles from Hattiesburg and about 150 miles from New Orleans. There the 147th Infantry became part of the 9,100-man 37th Infantry Division, better known as the Buckeye Division.

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# The Ohio State Limited

## NYC overnight between Middletown and New York

For businessmen in the Middletown area, the Ohio State Limited was a convenient train. An executive or salesman could leave work in mid afternoon and be in New York City -- 852 miles away -- to transact business the next morning.

If their business was brief, it was possible to return home on a similar schedule on the New York Central's Cincinnati-bound OSL.

In addition, the trains terminated or started from Grand Central Terminal in the heart of New York City at East 42nd Street and Park Avenue. The New York Central had opened the magnificent terminal in 1913. It is "an architectural as well as an engineering triumph," the NYC said in its 1924 timetables.

The Ohio State Limited started as an all-Pullman train.

In 1938, the Ohio State Limited (Train 15) consist included New York-Cincinnati coaches, sleeping cars and lounge car; Boston-Cincinnati and Buffalo-Cincinnati sleepers; dining car service

between New York and Syracuse and Columbus and Cincinnati. There also were sleeping cars for New York-St. Louis and Boston-St. Louis patrons.

The 1938 schedule had train No. 15 leaving New York City daily at 3 p.m., stopping in Middletown at 7:40 a.m. and terminating in Cincinnati at 8:30 a.m., a 17 and a half hour trip.

Eastbound train No. 16 departed at 3:30 p.m. from Cincinnati Union Terminal. It stopped in Middletown at 4:12, Cleveland at 8:30 p.m., Buffalo at 12:05 a.m., Albany at 5:30 a.m. and arrived at Grand Central Terminal at 8:20 a.m.

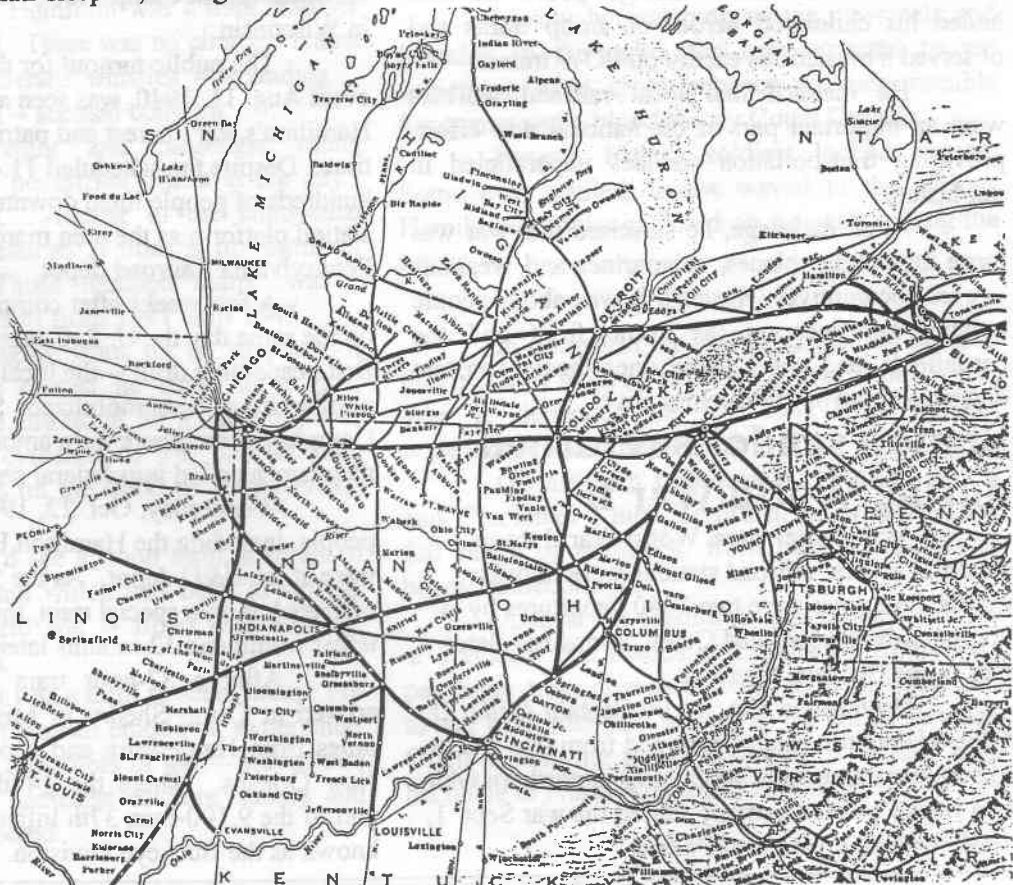
Both schedules were arranged to accommodate business travelers -- leaving in the afternoon and arriving at both ends before 9 o'clock in the morning.

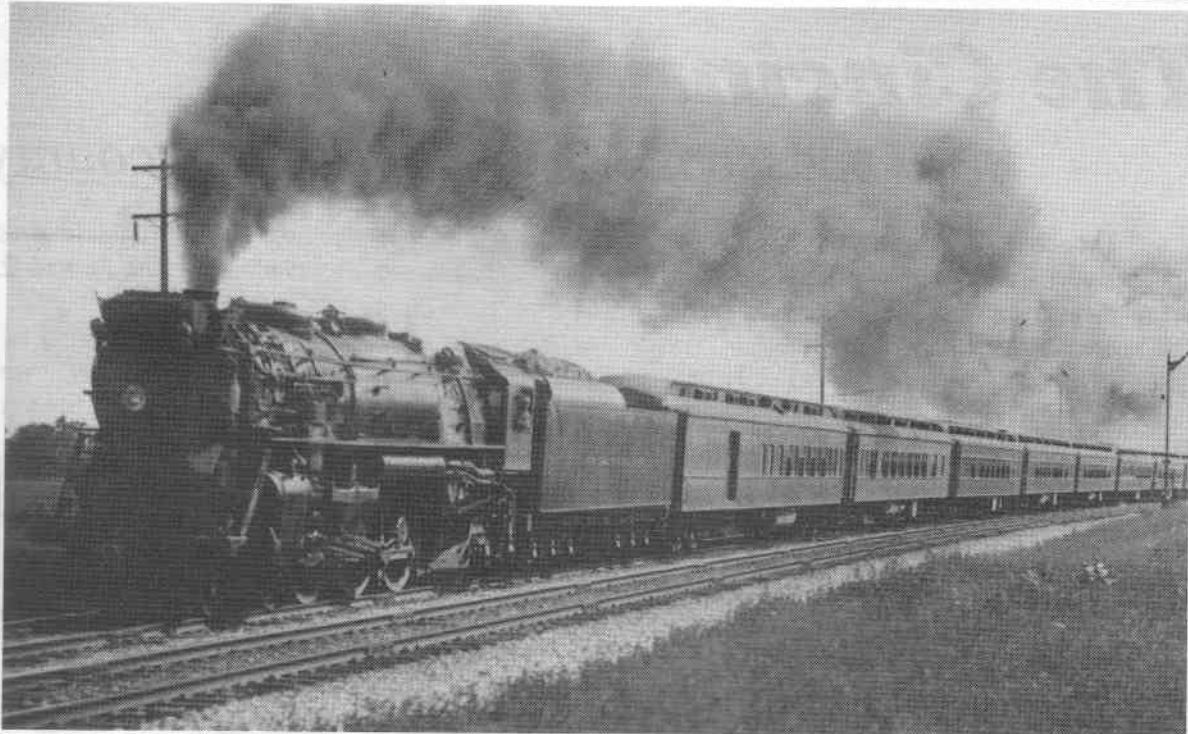
At Albany, N. Y., the OSL connected to trains serving Springfield, Worcester and Boston.

By 1946 -- a year after World War II ended and as railroading gradually returned to

**NYC  
1938**

Partial map of New York Central System, showing routes in Midwest, from 1938 timetable





This was the 10-car Ohio State Limited, train No. 16, in July 1929, photographed between Middletown and Franklin. NYC locomotive 6520, a 4-6-2, was built in 1926.

normal -- the Ohio State Limited chopped 45 minutes off its 1938 scheduled running time.

It left New York at 4 p.m. instead of 3, and arrived in Cincinnati at 8:45 a.m. instead of 8:30, a total of 16 hours and 45 minutes.

Other New York Central name trains serving Middletown in 1938 were the Cleveland Special, the New York Special, the Knickerbocker, the Hudson River Express and the Midnight Special -- all operating between Cincinnati and New York City.

A total of 18 passenger trains stopped daily in Middletown in 1938, according to the NYC's timetable.

In 1954, the railroad described the Ohio State Limited as "overnight, every night between major Ohio cities and New York. Pullman private rooms. Reclining seat coaches. Streamlined dining car and club lounge for all passengers."

There was no Ohio State Limited on Penn Central's last passenger timetable, dated March 3, 1971, two months before Amtrak took over (or eliminated) the railroad's passenger service.

The last two trains -- one in each direction -- through Middletown were known as the Cincinnati Limited, numbers 77 and 78. Their

routes were radically different than the OSL, bypassing Cleveland, Buffalo and Albany.

Between Columbus, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York, the 752-mile Cincinnati Limited was combined with the Spirit of St. Louis, which connected St. Louis and New York via Indianapolis.

Only the schedule resembled the old Ohio State Limited: 5:02 p.m. leave Middletown, 9:20 a.m. arrive NYC on No. 78; 4:05 p.m. leave New York City, 8:02 a.m. arrive Middletown.

## Conrail in brief

April 1, 1976, took over operations of six bankrupt railroads in northeastern U. S.

Operated more than 11,000 route miles in 12 states, the District of Columbia and Quebec. (In 1976, Conrail inherited 17,000 route miles.)

Headquarters: Philadelphia.

April 8, 1997, CSX and Norfolk Southern agreed on a division of Conrail, effective June 1, 1999. CSX acquired about 4,000 miles and Norfolk Southern about 7,500 miles of Conrail routes.

(Sources: Conrail, CSX and Norfolk Southern Internet sites, 1998-1999, and 1999 news releases)

# *The Cincinnatian*

## *B&O passenger train classiest in county*

The classiest passenger train to operate through Butler County was the Baltimore & Ohio's Cincinnatian, a highlight of the final decades of B&O passenger service.

In its final years, it operated daily between Cincinnati and Detroit, after its introduction as a Baltimore-Washington-Cincinnati train with limited stops. It attracted lookers and admirers on both routes.

"It was the most talked about, most photographed train on the entire Baltimore & Ohio," said Harry Stegmaier, author of books on B&O passenger service. "Rail photographers came from everywhere to encounter this steam-powered streamliner."

"Even when standing it gives an impression of movement, of speed," said S. Kip Farrington in *Railroads of Today* (1949).

"No train designed for the daycoach trade was ever so carefully custom-built to carriage trade specifications as the Cincinnatian," said Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg in *The Trains We Rode*.

"During the war, B&O designers had dreamed about the trains they would build for postwar passenger comfort. The first postwar fruit of their imagination was the Cincinnatian," said Timothy Jacobs in *The History of the Baltimore & Ohio, America's First Railroad*.

"Throughout the day the Cincinnatian's observation-diner offered B&O cooking, southern style, including the train's specialty -- spoon bread," said Mike Schafer and Joe Welsh in *Classic American Streamliners*.

Featuring royal blue, each train was a matched set of cars and a locomotive. The latter was a 4-6-2 Pacific type, all bearing presidential names (Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe). The B&O added a bullet-nosed streamlined shroud or skirting to each of the four steam locomotives.

Its cars bore familiar Cincinnati names -- Fountain Square, Peebles Corner, Eden Park, Hyde Park, Indian Hill, Winton Place, College Hill, Walnut Hills, Oakley and Norwood.

Each train in each direction was limited to five cars. The first car was a combination

baggage-buffet-lounge, and the fifth and final car was a round-end observation car that seated 23 people in its dining area and 21 in its rear section.

The B&O advertised the Cincinnatian as a "deluxe, all-coach, daylight streamliner" with "extra comfort, extra thrills and a break for your budget."

"You pay only coach fare, but enjoy many privileges," the railroad boasted. "You can reserve a 'Sleepy Hollow' seat in advance without charge. There are friendly lounges, a modern diner and coffee shoppe, stewardess-nurse service, radio programs, refreshing air-conditioning, plenty of room for walking about."

The Cincinnatian's first run between Baltimore/Washington and Cincinnati was Jan. 19, 1947, preceded by PR and advertising campaigns. Trains 75 and 76 were scheduled to complete the 570-mile course in 12 and a half hours.

The westbound Cincinnatian left Baltimore and Washington at 8 and 9 a.m., respectively, and reached Cincinnati at 8:30 p.m. The eastbound train left Union Terminal at 8:45 a.m. and was scheduled into Washington at 8:15 and Baltimore at 9:15 in the evening.

For several reasons, ridership didn't match B&O expectations. By 1949, the company was losing about \$100,000 on its stylistic masterpiece.

Trains 75 and 76 made their last trips between Baltimore and Cincinnati June 24, 1950.

The next day, June 25, they were switched to the Cincinnati-Detroit run, becoming No. 53 southbound and No. 54 northbound.

In a 1953 timetable, the Cincinnatian was scheduled to make the 258.1-mile trip in five hours and 50 minutes, allowing for 13 stops. Another train (No. 355) with numerous stops covered the same route in seven hours.

The southbound Cincinnatian, according to the 1953 timetable, left Detroit at 3:10 p.m. with stops in Dayton at 7:30; West Middletown 7:58; and Hamilton 8:15 and arrival in Cincinnati at 9 p.m.

By 1964, the schedule had been altered. Northbound, the Cincinnatian left the Queen City at 11 p.m., Hamilton at 11:54 and arrived in



This was the eight-car Cincinnati, B&O train No. 54, in November 1955 as it steamed by Wayne Yard in Fairfield. Up front is streamlined 4-6-2 Pacific locomotive No. 5303.

Detroit at 7:15 a.m., a nightly trip of eight hours and 15 minutes. Service also had declined. Food and beverages were available, but not in the style of the Cincinnati of earlier years.

It was worse in 1970, a few months before the birth of Amtrak. The two Cincinnati's -- one in each direction -- were the only passenger trains on the Cincinnati-Detroit route.

Its amenities were limited to "reclining seat coaches." No checked baggage was handled on the Cincinnati. You carried your own on and off the train.

Food wasn't available on the trains. The 1970 timetable said "food and beverages may be purchased at Toledo station during station stop."

That meant a long wait for refreshments for northbound riders, who left Hamilton at 10:47 a.m. and arrived in Toledo at 2:30 p.m. The southbound Cincinnati left Toledo at 11:45 a.m. and reached Hamilton at 3:25 p.m.

By this time -- instead of the four specially styled steam locomotives -- power was by ordinary diesels, devoid of the script Cincinnati markings. They had been replaced by diesels in 1956.

Gone, too, were matching blue, gray and silver cars bearing such names as Fountain Square, Eden Park and Winton Place.

Passengers on the 1970 trains wouldn't have recognized the original Cincinnati of 1947, described by S. Kip Farrington, an author who was enthralled by trains.

The Cincinnati, he said in his 1949 book, "places at the disposal of the traveler armchair comfort and service de luxe, leaving the passenger completely relaxed and refreshed at the journey's end."

"On many trains," Farrington said, "the coach passenger is denied the use of other more luxurious cars of the train. This is not so on the Cincinnati and the traveler finds that every luxury of the train is available for his use and enjoyment."

On the 1947 Cincinnati, he wrote, a passenger "can move around on the train, relaxing in the buffet-lounge section to read or enjoy a light lunch or beverages. The diner-observation gives him an opportunity to enjoy a complete dinner, to write, or enjoy the scenery in lounging comfort."

# Amtrak, 1971

## Federal railroad system interrupted passenger service in Butler County

A 120-year era climaxed Friday evening, April 30, 1971, with the end of scheduled passenger service through Butler County.

The next day, May 1, Amtrak took over the shrinking business of hauling people from 20 rail companies and cut the number of trains nationwide in half overnight.

It would be nine years and several train changes and line abandonments later before resumption of passenger service to Hamilton.

Amtrak -- or the National Railroad Passenger Corp. -- was created by Congress in 1970 to maintain a national passenger network linking the nation's major cities.

The government-backed system was formed because of increasing requests from railroads to abandon costly passenger operations. Losses were estimated at \$200 million that year.

In its first year, Amtrak projected a loss of \$110 million as it planned to run 182 passenger trains over 20,600 miles of track connecting 314

cities. Dropped were 178 trains operated by 20 member railroads.

Among those eliminated were six which had served Butler County -- four daily trains that stopped in Hamilton and two that served Middletown. Those six trains -- which made their last runs Friday, April 30, 1971 -- were:

- Southbound Penn Central No. 77 at 8:02 a.m. and northbound No. 78 at 5:02 p.m. from Middletown over the former New York Central line connecting Cincinnati, Cleveland and New York.

- Northbound Baltimore & Ohio No. 54 at 10:47 a.m. and southbound No. 53 at 3:25 p.m. from Hamilton on the B&O mainline between Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo and Detroit.

- Northbound Penn Central No. 65 at 9:12 a.m. and southbound No. 66 at 6:10 p.m. on the former Pennsylvania Cincinnati-Chicago route.

Amtrak operations started less than six hours after the departure of No. 66 from the South Seventh Street station in Hamilton. Its official birth was 12:01 a.m. Saturday, May 1, 1971.

Amtrak continued Cincinnati-Chicago service, but the route was over former New York Central tracks through Indiana, not the former PRR line through Hamilton.

That Amtrak train -- then called the James Whitcomb Riley -- was moved in 1974 to the former Chesapeake & Ohio route through southwestern Butler County.

In the summer of 1978, the Chessie System -- which had acquired the C&O line -- abandoned that route from Cincinnati west through Cheviot to a point just southeast of Fernald.

That forced Amtrak to relocate the Cardinal, a name assumed in 1977 because it was the state bird in six states on the train's path between Chicago and Washington.

The new route started July 17, 1978, through Hamilton, but the Cardinal didn't stop at the local station. Amtrak wasn't authorized to

### Amtrak's Cardinal mileage from Chicago

Butler County stations/stops in bold face

| Miles      | Location         | Miles | Location            |
|------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 0          | Chicago          | 554   | Montgomery          |
| 29         | Dyer, Ind.       | 596   | T.urmond            |
| 74         | Rensselear       | 607   | Prince              |
| 121        | Lafayette        | 629   | Hinton              |
| 149        | Crawfordsville   | 650   | Alderson            |
| 196        | Indianapolis     | 675   | White Sulphur Sp'gs |
| 253        | Connersville     | 708   | Clifton Forge, Va.  |
| <b>295</b> | <b>Hamilton</b>  | 766   | Staunton            |
| 320        | Cincinnati       | 806   | Charlottesville     |
| 381        | Maysville, Ky.   | 853   | Culpepper           |
| 434        | South Portsmouth | 888   | Manassas            |
| 463        | Ashland          | 912   | Alexandria          |
| 479        | Huntington, WV   | 920   | Washington, DC      |
| 528        | Charleston       |       |                     |