

The
GREEN DIAMOND

Winter 1980



All Concerned

On May 28, 1932 the Panama Limited was discontinued due to declining business. And for the next two and a half years the Illinois Central struggled through the Great Depression without its flagship--a train which had known few peers in its twenty years of operation. Reborn when business conditions improved, the Panama was the IC's standard bearer for thirty-five more years. Almost ten more years were to pass with the Panama now bearing the red, white and blue of Amtrak livery. On February 1, 1981, the Panama Limited name again was discontinued. Amtrak renamed Trains 58 and 59 the City of New Orleans after the Illinois Central's daytime streamliner which had been discontinued in 1971.

Several reasons have been suggested for this abrupt name change. Certainly, in a generation more familiar with boarding passes and four lane concrete than with the crisp sheets in a roomette berth, the advertising value of the trusted name(?) was diminished. The City of New Orleans name, moreover, had been shown in marketing research to have better public recognition. Also, the "new" name is certainly more fitting considering the train's destination. The City of New Orleans is also well known from a popular song of the same name written by Chicagoan Steve Goodman. This song, known as a "cross-over hit" in the music industry for its appeal to rock, folk, and country music audiences, has insured the City name with broad based recognition. Mr. Goodman, incidentally, rode the IC coach train only between Chicago and Champaign, not to New Orleans.

Paradoxically, the second reason suggested for the demise of the Panama Limited name centers on the value of the name for advertising purposes; and, a debate between the Illinois Central Gulf and Amtrak which goes back to 1974. ICG followed the lead of the Sante Fe which had requested that Amtrak discontinue the use of the name Super Chief for Trains 3 and 4 because of poor service on that train and had undermined the value of a valued trade mark; ICG President Alan Boyd made the same request regarding the Panama Limited. Because the Sante Fe held trade mark protection for their trains' names, Amtrak discontinued the Chief names. Apparently the ICG had less legal protection and Amtrak became concerned that they would lose all of their train names. The Panama Limited rolled on for six more years until Amtrak got a new president, Alan Boyd, the man who had requested the renaming of Trains 58 and 59. This supposed role of Mr. Boyd in the recent name change has not been verified by Amtrak.

Although we regret the demise of the Panama Limited, the City of New Orleans is a better name for this train. The contrast between the Panama tradition and a train which often was all coach and offered at best only cellophane wrapped, micro-wave

heated meals was jarring. The 1980's are bad times for passenger service. Let us hope that just as the bad times of the 1930's ended with the restoration of the Panama Limited, so will our present sorry passenger service end with the rebirth of the most famous train in Mid-America.

For now, however; it is the responsibility of ICBS members to keep the name of the Panama Limited alive if only as a remembrance of the Train's better days. In an upcoming issue we would like to commemorate the Panama with the photos and remembrances of our members. You can help by contributing your views. We do not envision a comprehensive history of the Train but rather a personal look back at the Illinois Central's pride. Your participation is important.

Illinois Central Historical Society

Box 157

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016



Membership dues for 1981 have been retained at the same level as the last two years. Due to the increasing membership and experience of our society, you can expect even more for your money in the year to come. Please sent your dues today.

Regular	\$7.00
Sustaining	\$10.00
Life	\$100.00



MOUNDS :

The 1928 Wreck of "The Chickasaw" and
New Orleans Limited"

Text By
John Mitchell

Early on the morning of August 6, 1928, a 16-foot-long section of twelve-inch cast iron pipe fell from the tenth car of a northbound freight which left Mounds, Illinois shortly after midnight, onto the adjacent southbound track. Not long afterwards this section was struck by a southbound passenger train, No. 203 (St. Louis section of New Orleans Limited), traveling at 55 mph, and the pipe was thrown back onto the Northbound track. The engine crew of this train heard a report, but at the time they merely thought they had run over a torpedo and continued at reduced speed. Upon inspecting the engine at Mounds, however, the engineer observed marks on the pilot which made him realize an obstruction had been hit. Unfortunately, this was not reported to the dispatcher until No. 203 reached Cairo Junction (Now North Cairo), five miles further south.





The dispatcher accordingly warned northbound passenger train No. 16 (The Chickasaw) of a possible obstruction on the track north of Mounds. This train accordingly traveled more slowly than usual, but nevertheless struck the loose section of pipe, about 3 a.m. No. 16 was not derailed and stopped safely, but one end of the pipe was forced against the inside rail of the northbound track, shifting it out of alignment toward the other track. Before a warning could be given southbound passenger express No. 3 (The New Orleans Limited), came bearing down upon the scene at 60 mph and sideswiped the other train. Nine persons were killed and 144 injured in the resultant collision.



In the investigation of this collision, responsibility was placed jointly upon the yardmen at Mounds for their failure to inspect the lading of the northbound freight more carefully, upon the crew of No. 203 for failing to report their encounter with the obstruction more promptly, and upon No. 16 for traveling too fast after it had been warned of the possibility of some object on the track.



A New Star

Shines Over the Prairie

"Land O' Corn"

A new member is added to Chicago's great family of streamlined passenger trains by the Illinois Central System



By David S. Oakes

Chicago undoubtedly is the center of the world's greatest network of railway lines and naturally should originate the preponderance of transportation news. During the last few years this news has flowed in a particularly strong current because these have witnessed changes of revolutionary stature and significance. One after another, the railroads have announced new equipments, new and faster schedules, features of special sorts and innovations in almost all departments of construction, operation and service. From this city in practically every direction speed the modern symbols of experience and research. Almost it seemed nothing could be added to the array of new trains but the Illinois Central found the way to introduce still another triumph for the benefit of territory somehow left without such individual recognition. It is the "Land O' Corn."



The latest entrant for honors in the field of up to the minute passenger transportation was commissioned in regular service on Sunday, October 26th, between Chicago and Waterloo, Iowa. It traverses the empire where holds sway, as Governor Richard Oglesby poetically worded it, "the corn, the royal corn, within whose golden heart there is of health and strength for all the nation," a country of unsurpassed practical loveliness. Itself a practical facility, and yet a thing of beauty, which taps regions heretofore dependent upon conventional equipment, its name hardly could have been chosen with a keener sense of the appropriate.

Its round trip scheduled daily begins at Waterloo at seven o'clock in the morning and ends there at ten-forty-five in the evening. Arrival in Chicago at twelve-twenty-five and departure at five-fifteen allow a full afternoon for the transaction of business in the metropolis. On the east-bound journey the "Land O' Corn" clips nearly two hours and on its westward flight more than an hour and a half from the time required by standard trains to cover the 274 miles between the termini of the run. It handles neither mail nor express, which fact



In repose beside the Waterloo, Iowa, station, the new streamlined passenger train in rail passenger equipment.



R
C
D
b



The gleam of stainless steel, the immaculate gunn-lino counter, the comfortable stools and the compact arrangement of the appliances and fittings make the luncheon bar cosy and inviting.





streamliner is a model of the modern idea
of rail travel.

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To Chicago and Back in a Day SEE and RIDE



The Streamliner **LAND O' CORN** CHICAGO — ROCKFORD — FREEPORT DUBUQUE — WATERLOO

This splendid streamlined train provides fast, convenient service to the great corn producing region for which it is named. Its comfortable coach seats, attractively decorated interiors, coffee shop with lunch counter and dining tables serving inexpensive but tasty meals, porter service and all-weather air conditioning make it a real bargain in low-cost travel.

FAST CONVENIENT SCHEDULE

7:00 am Lv.	Waterloo.....	Ar. 10:45 pm
7:27 am Lv.	Independence.....	Ar. 10:11 pm
7:51 am Lv.	Manchester.....	Ar. 9:47 pm
8:48 am Lv.	Dubuque.....	Ar. 8:52 pm
9:11 am Lv.	Galena.....	Ar. 8:26 pm
10:10 am Lv.	Freeport.....	Ar. 7:24 pm
10:42 am Lv.	Rockford.....	Ar. 6:54 pm
A11:06 am Lv.	Genoa.....	Lv. A6:30 pm
12:25 pm Ar.	Chicago.....	Lv. 5:15 pm

A—Stops to receive or discharge
Chicago passengers

Diesel-type engines with hydraulic drive ensure velvet-smooth riding at all speeds and effortless starts and stops.

SMOOTH DIESEL-TYPE POWER WITH HYDRAULIC DRIVE

COFFEE SHOP—DINER



In the "Land O' Corn" one rides as he would in an automobile. No operating mechanism obscures the view and alongside the driver especially passengers have all the thrills of motoring and none of the strain.



Travel always generates an appetite and the "Land O' Corn's" dining section itself is a stimulant to this natural impulse.

shortens the time required for station stops, and so it can maintain its much briefer schedule without resort to excessive speeds. On the other hand, it halts at the same number of stations served by the regular trains inasmuch as its purpose is to give all of these communities equal rights in its comforts and time economies.

Unlike some streamliners seen in Chicago the "Land O' Corn" has been designed to give its all to the passengers. The engines are below the floor and every bit of space, with the exception of the engineer's seat, fits into a general scheme of facilities for the exclusive use of those fortunate enough to be aboard. No attempt has been made to introduce glamor but no effort has been spared to endow this train with the utmost in convenience for the ease of body and mind. Nor is this to overlook the harmony of decor and the pleasing external aspects of the new flyer.

Sleekly streamlined, the compact unit of two cars presents a colorful sight as it streaks through the "Land O' Corn." Above the windows a wide red stripe meets the overhang of the aluminum roof. An aluminum swath, bordered by narrow bands of yellow, frame the windows and below them a sweep of blue extends downward over the apron which has been parted to give access to trucks and machinery. The treatment of the car interiors employs the varied colors of the corn plant. Greens, yellows, reds, jasper and silver have been used in floor coverings, upholstery, drapes, walls and ceilings to produce an unobtrusive yet distinctly appreciable and admirable effect.

In these hundred and fifty feet of new streamliner the heights from rail to top of floor and from floor to ceiling have been increased, as compared with those of previous equipment, to provide added room for the installation of mechanical apparatus and more spacious interiors. The leading car is a coach with seats for seventy passengers while the rear car is a buffet coach fitted with thirty-nine seats and accommodations for sixteen persons in the dining section. Provision has been made for the addition of a third coach, presumably with an observation parlor, should future traffic demands justify it.

Power is supplied to drive the "Land O' Corn" by three Diesel motors, each of which develops 225 horsepower. Two of these motors are suspended in rubber on the trucks of the front car and the third on the rear truck of the second car. All of them are con-

trolled from the driver's seat at the front of the train. They were built by the Waukesha Motor Company under license from the Hesselman Motor Company of Stockholm, Sweden. Unlike the conventional Diesel, these engines employ a positively timed electrical ignition system supplied by a high tension magneto, a scheme which induces greater power and flexibility from a given basic engine weight. The transmission is a hydraulic torque converter which includes a direct drive feature. For acceleration and performance on heavy grades the hydraulic element furnishes the necessary torque multiplication while for higher speeds and lesser grades the direct drive element couples the engine directly to the drive axle.

The entire train is cooled, heated and ventilated automatically by an all-weather system which filters the air and maintains comfortable degrees of temperature and humidity regardless of conditions out of doors. Curtained, dustproof windows of shatterproof glass afford wide clear vision. The seats are of tubular construction with reclining backs supported by springs and rubber sliding seat cushions and arm rests. They are numbered individually for the purpose of advance reservation. A side ceiling fixture with magnifying lens is located over each seat to shed an ample supply of light at the reading plane. In the dining section eight persons can find places at the stainless steel lunch counter while eight others can be served in two booths equipped with tables and double seats.

To introduce the "Land O' Corn" to those who stand to realize most from the new service, a pre-inaugural run was made on Friday, October 24th, when prominent business executives in the cities en route were invited to enjoy the train. Dean of the group was Mr. John W. Rath, president of the Rath Packing Company of Waterloo and a director of the Illinois Central System. Rather than simply a party of businessmen, these actually were friends and neighbors. Mayors of adjacent towns compared political notes and manufacturers hobnobbed with publishers. The train gradually filled as fresh contingents boarded it at successive stops. For every one it was a gala occasion and an experience as happy as it was eventful.

Beside the Cedar river the "Land O' Corn" stood gleaming in the early autumn sun. Promptly on the tick of seven the retractable steps folded in and the train was on its way. Break-

fast was served continuously and it was a revelation to see how the efficient little kitchen and dining section could provide ham and eggs, toast and coffee for so many corn fed appetites without confusion or delays. Up at the controls, behind his broad window equipped with windshield wiper, defroster and sun visor, Engineer Wheeler was a picture of the modern engineer who rides on a rubber cushion, wears his Sunday clothes and is far removed from his real hogger days when a collar full of cinders and Johnson bar fatigue were considered standard accessories.

When the American Car & Foundry Company contracted to build the "Land O' Corn" in Saint Charles, Missouri, it had a considerable fund of experience to draw upon and profited accordingly. The Illinois Central's "Illini" and "Miss Lou" were placed in service last year and their operation suggested certain improvements which have been incorporated in the new two-car unit. Especially to be remarked is the riding quality of this train, even as its speed approaches the governor limit, regardless of the rider's position in the train, thanks to roller bearings, equalizer springs and shock absorbers to control nosing and take up both vertical and lateral motion.

The common conception of Iowa is a parquet floor of agricultural lands but the journey from Waterloo eastward discovers much beauty in rolling landscapes and bucolic compositions for the Grant Wood school. Pheasants rocket up in

front of the train, herds of pigs both great and small scamper in precipitate flight as she flits past, and sleek cattle cease their pensive ruminations to survey the shining new monster whose like they have not seen. Between the prairies of Iowa and those of Illinois the great valley of the Mississippi introduces scenic effects which are grand, especially in a season when the russet and bronze of oaks and the gold of elms are at their gorgeous peaks. Among the miniature canyons with their shelves of limestone the path drops gently to the river level by sinuous twists between slopes lit by the crimson of sumac--"like wounded summer, crept away to die."

On the Illinois side the track burrows through the stony cliff and then follows the shore of the Mississippi southward until it finds an opening in the Galena river valley whence it can ascend to the higher ground by easy stages. To see the Galena of today, dreaming beside the little stream, is to pounder upon the times when it was the promised metropolis of Illinois and a lively river port, the only reminiscent fragment of whose steamboat days is the Illinois Central's draw span. Once again there are fertile prairies on every hand, the vast corn lands whose black soil never fails to rear its Myrmidons of maize. Gently and swiftly, the train glides once more into populous country and presently is in the fringes of the city itself. With minutes to spare it picks its way through the tangle of tracks and among the ranks of industries and all too soon ends this pleasant interlude of modern travel--the first journey in the "Land O' Corn."

REMEMBER

Don't delay in sending your 1981 dues or you may miss the next issue of the Green Diamond. Future articles include:

- The Panama Limited
- The Green Diamond trainset
- The IC's first rulebook
- Chicago's Great Central Station

Also, details of the 1981 Annual Meeting will soon be available.



INTERESTING ISN'T IT?



Connecting the Great Lakes with the Gulf of Mexico,
Illinois Central Railroad is well named
"The Main Line of Mid-America."

- And, it is also interesting to know that the Illinois Central:
- was the first Lakes-to-Gulf railroad.
 - was the first railroad in the United States of more than 500 miles in length.
 - was the first railroad to employ colonization agents.
 - was the first railroad to establish a land office.
 - was the first railroad to sell land to settlers at low prices, on easy terms, and at low interest rates.
 - was the first to accept grain from farmers in lieu of cash.
 - was the first railroad to urge crop diversification.
 - was the first railroad to employ a traffic solicitor.
 - was the first railroad to build a locomotive in Illinois (1862) in Iowa (1870) and, in Mississippi (1878).
 - was the first railroad to erect and operate grain elevators at New Orleans.
 - was the first railroad to build special facilities for the handling of bananas at New Orleans. (incidentally, our railroad hauls more bananas than any other railroad).
 - and so on, almost ad infinitum.
 - but, the Main Line of Mid-America does not live on memories, although proud of them. Progress is the keynote of our thinking. Eager for more and more ideas for improving our service, both freight and passenger, we have encouraged employee thinking through our Suggestion System. Our railroad was the first to introduce a permanent systemwide suggestion system, and in the past twenty-three years we have adopted 90,750 ideas and paid awards to employees totaling \$1,235,000.



**ILLINOIS CENTRAL
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Box 157 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

Mounds, Illinois
August 6, 1928

