

The EMD/GM Aero Train



This presentation is dedicated to the memory of Charlie Lehman, owner of Railworks who made the most beautiful models in HO of the AeroTrain in brass.

There actually were several types of new lightweight trains introduced in the mid-1950's. The basic concept of these trains was to bring people back to the rails much as the classic motor trains of the 1930's did. The problem was, the situation in the 1950's was totally different than the Depression era 1930's...

For example the Burlington's Pioneer Zephyr.



Illinois Central's Green Diamond.



The New Haven's COMET.

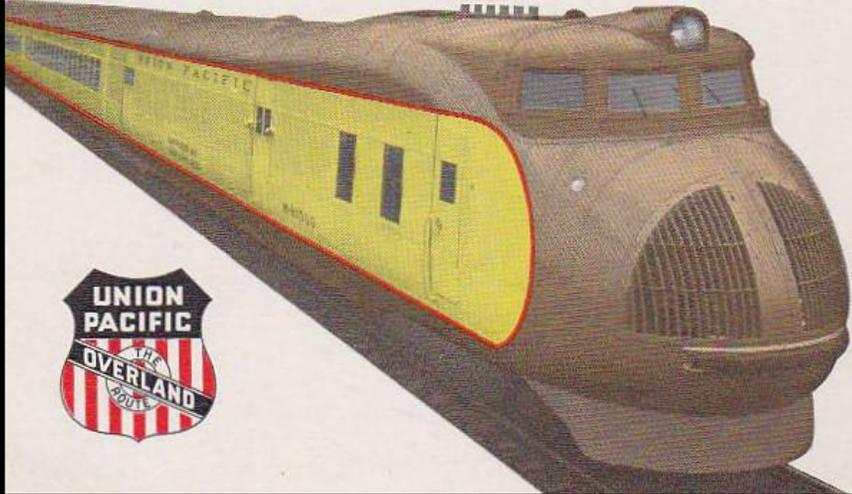


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UP's M-10000.

The Streamliner

America's First Fully Streamlined, Light-weight, High-speed Train
Completely Air-conditioned



EASTBOUND

Lv Salina . . .	7:00 am
Lv Abilene . . .	7:32 am
Lv Junction City	8:00 am
Lv Manhattan . .	8:28 am
*Lv Wamego . . .	8:42 am
Lv Topeka . . .	9:18 am
Lv Lawrence . . .	9:48 am
Ar Kansas City	10:30 am

WESTBOUND

Lv Kansas City	4:00 pm
Lv Lawrence . . .	4:42 pm
Lv Topeka . . .	5:12 pm
*Lv Wamego . . .	5:47 pm
Lv Manhattan . .	6:02 pm
Lv Junction City	6:30 pm
Lv Abilene . . .	6:58 pm
Ar Salina . . .	7:30 pm

* Flagstop

In 1952, the C&O began experimenting with a lightweight train. They spent over \$500,000.00 to develop it. It literally went nowhere!

WIN \$1,000

**Help us name
"TRAIN X"!**



Someday, soon, "Train X" will be beyond the planning stage. It will be an accomplished fact. And Chesapeake & Ohio wants a name for it—a name as unique and distinctive as the train itself.

We will pay one thousand dollars in cash for the best name submitted.

The information you'll need to choose a name for "Train X" is included in this leaflet. Rules and regulations governing the contest are outlined on the back page.

Here's your chance to name the train of the future . . . and win \$1,000 in cash.

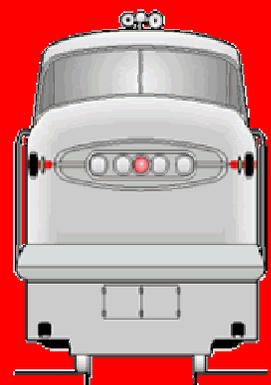
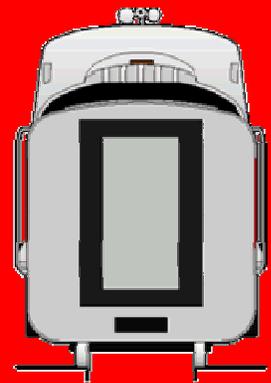
The Chesapeake & Ohio Railway

*So, a new era of lightweights
began in 1956 with GM
announcing their AeroTrain.*

EMD artists conception for the AeroTrain.



EMD artwork for the AeroTrain's engine, the LWT12. It was built on a SW1200 frame!



The “inspiration” for the obs car;
The Pontiac rode and sold better!



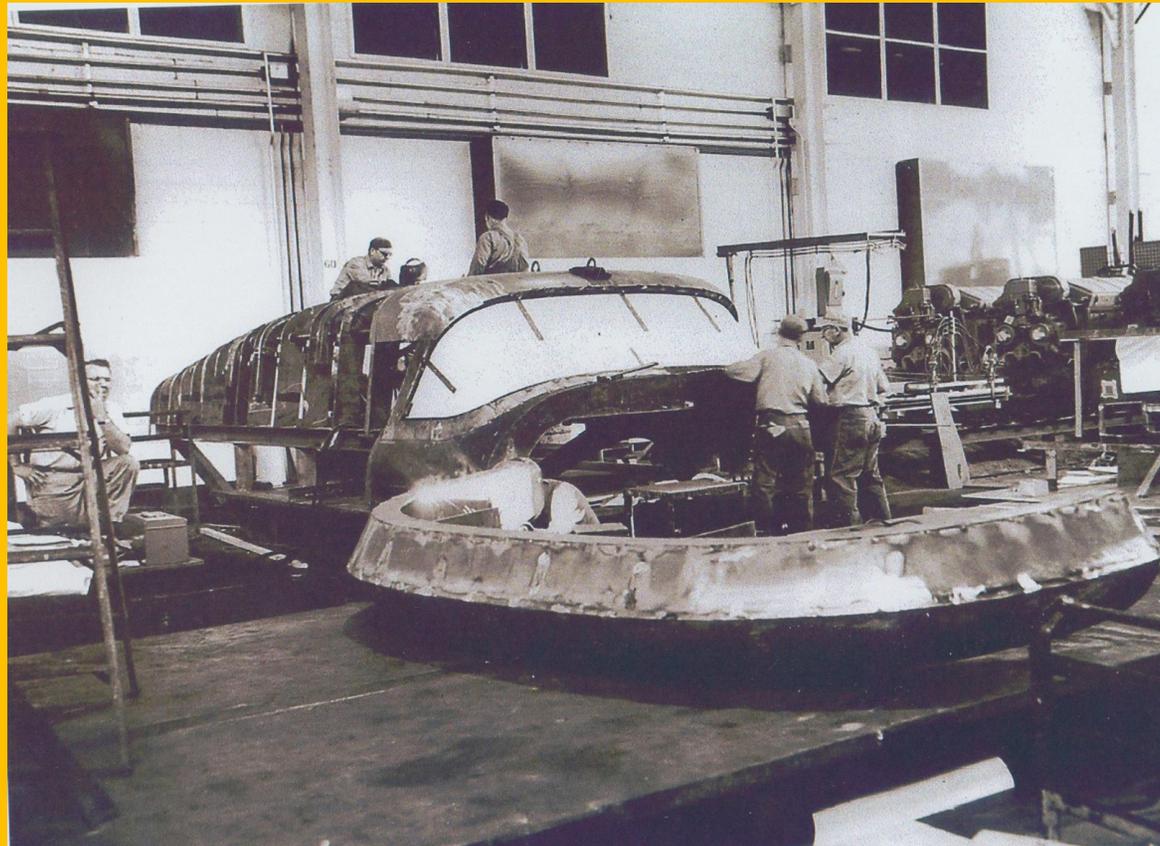
*Chuck Jordan, EMD designer of the Aero Train.
Personally autographed and presented this photo to Charlie Lehmann*



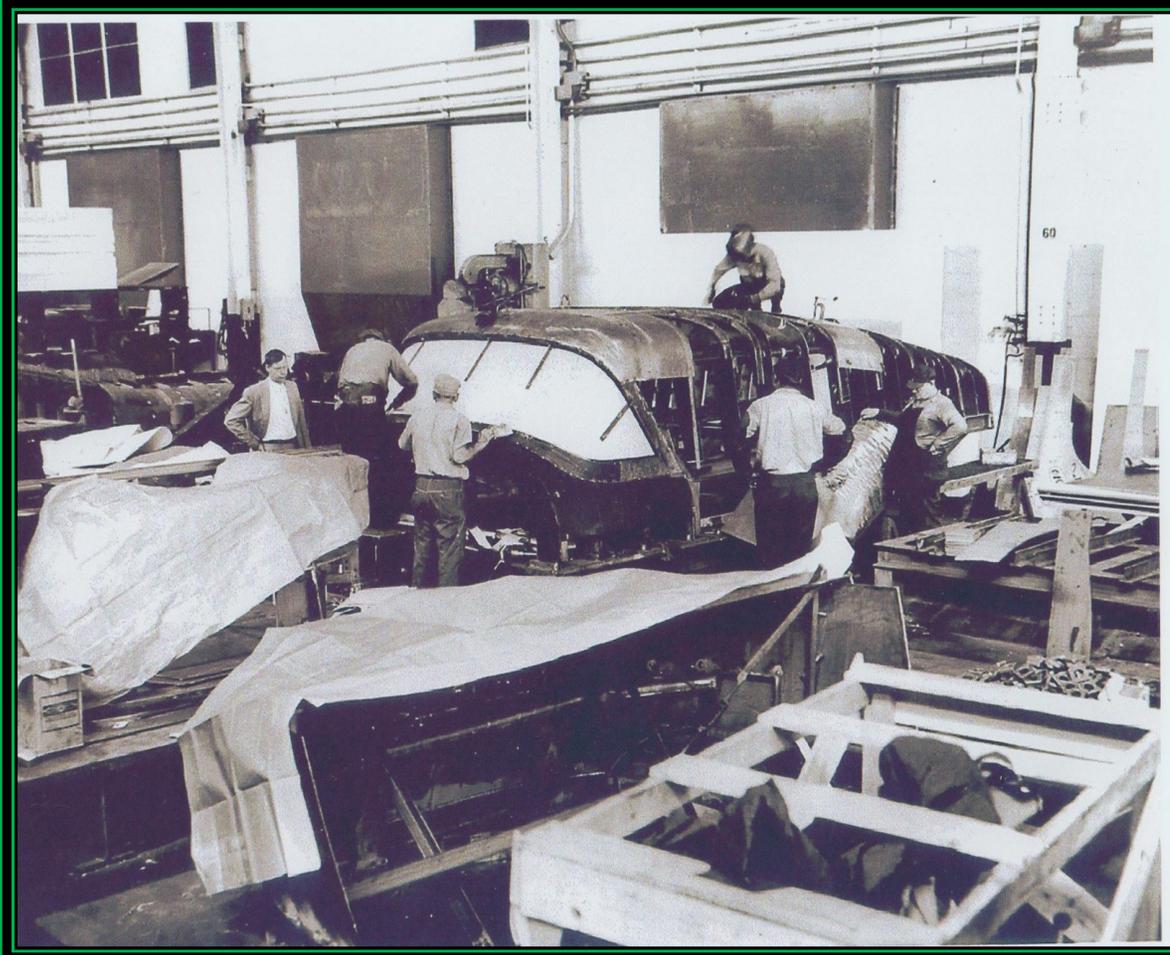
Chuck Jordan standing by his creation.



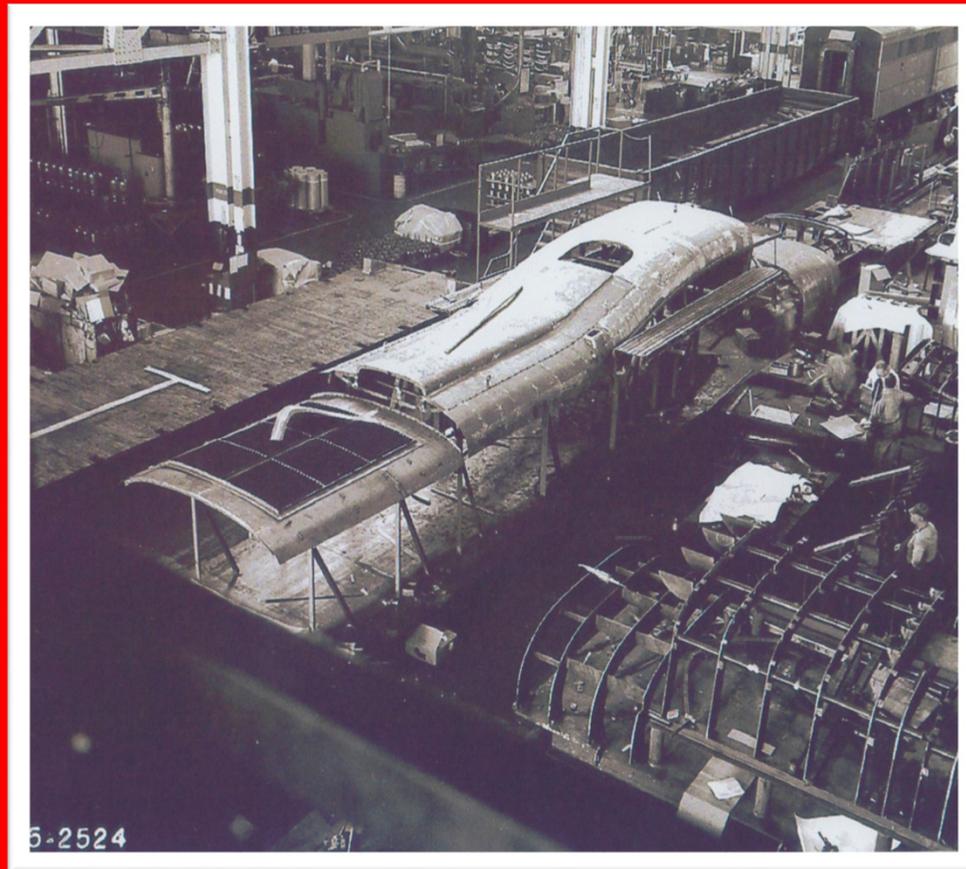
Fabricating the cab at La Grange.



Installing windshield and interior components.



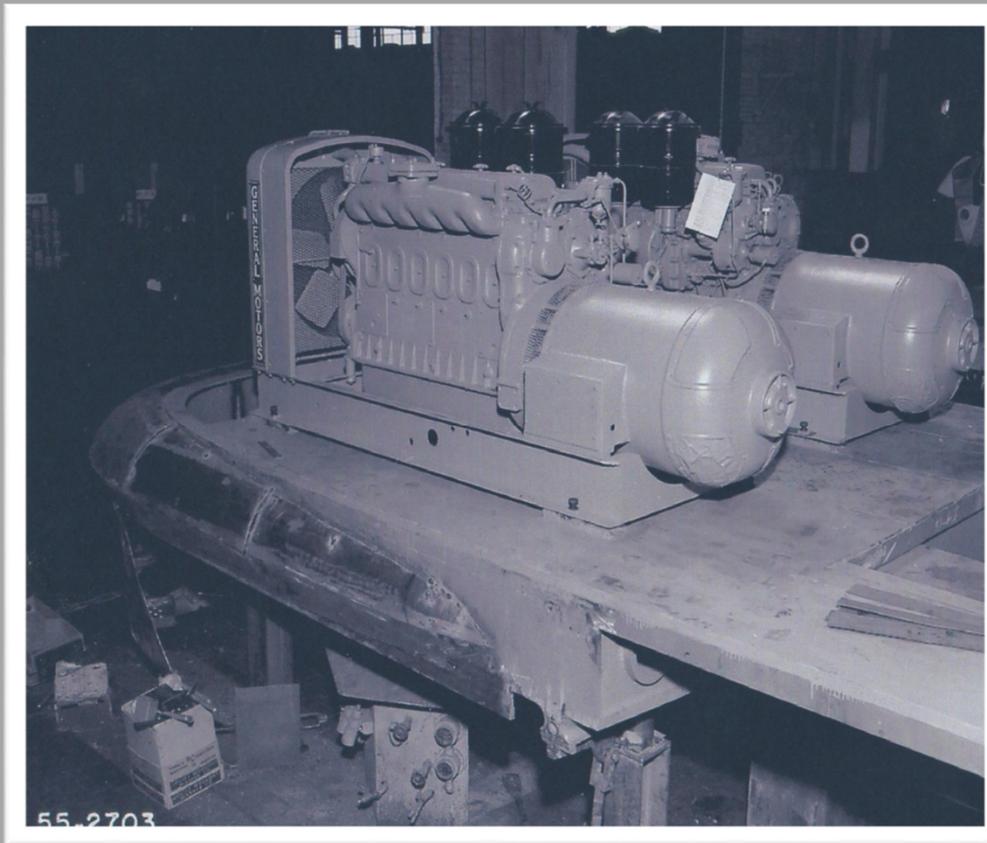
The LWT12 taking shape from the rear.



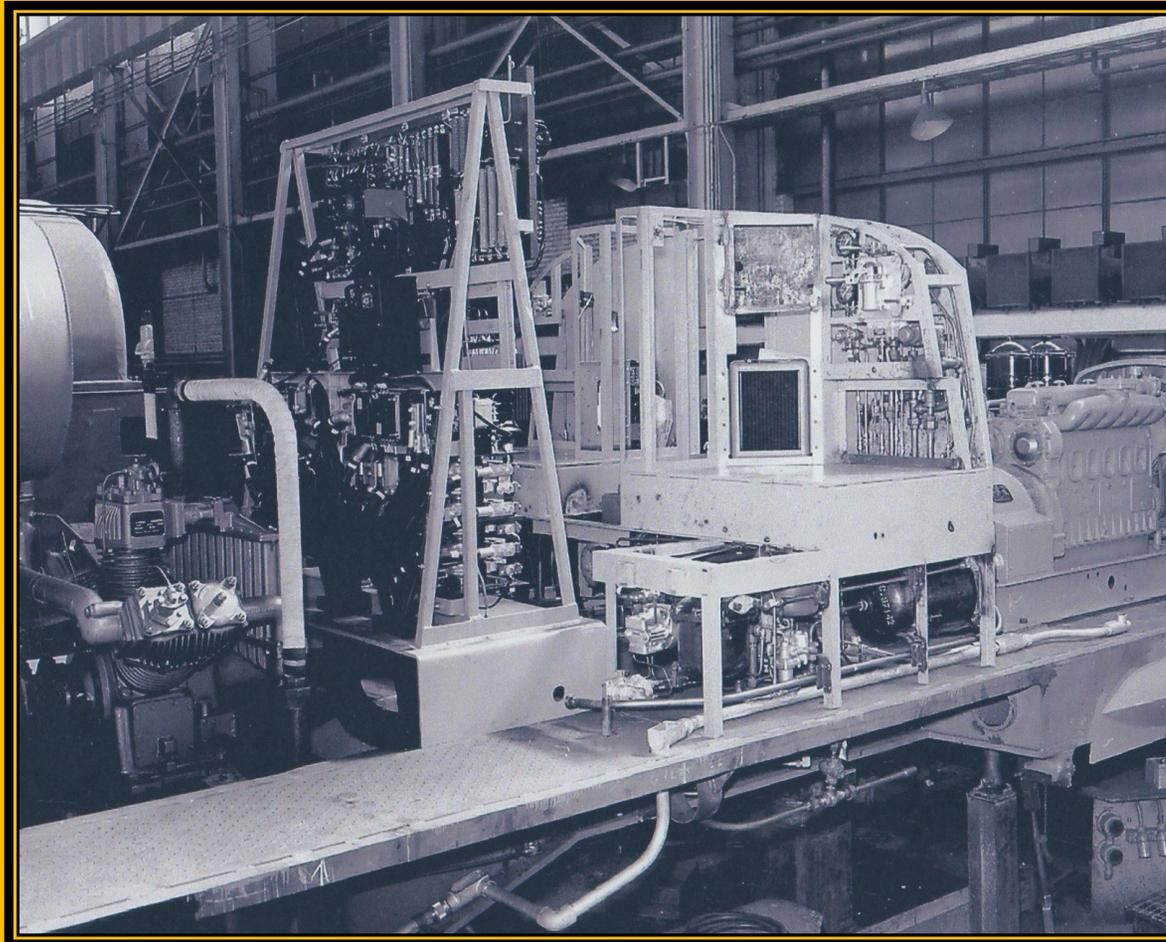
Upperworks of the carbody taking shape.



Detroit Diesels with the HEP generators.



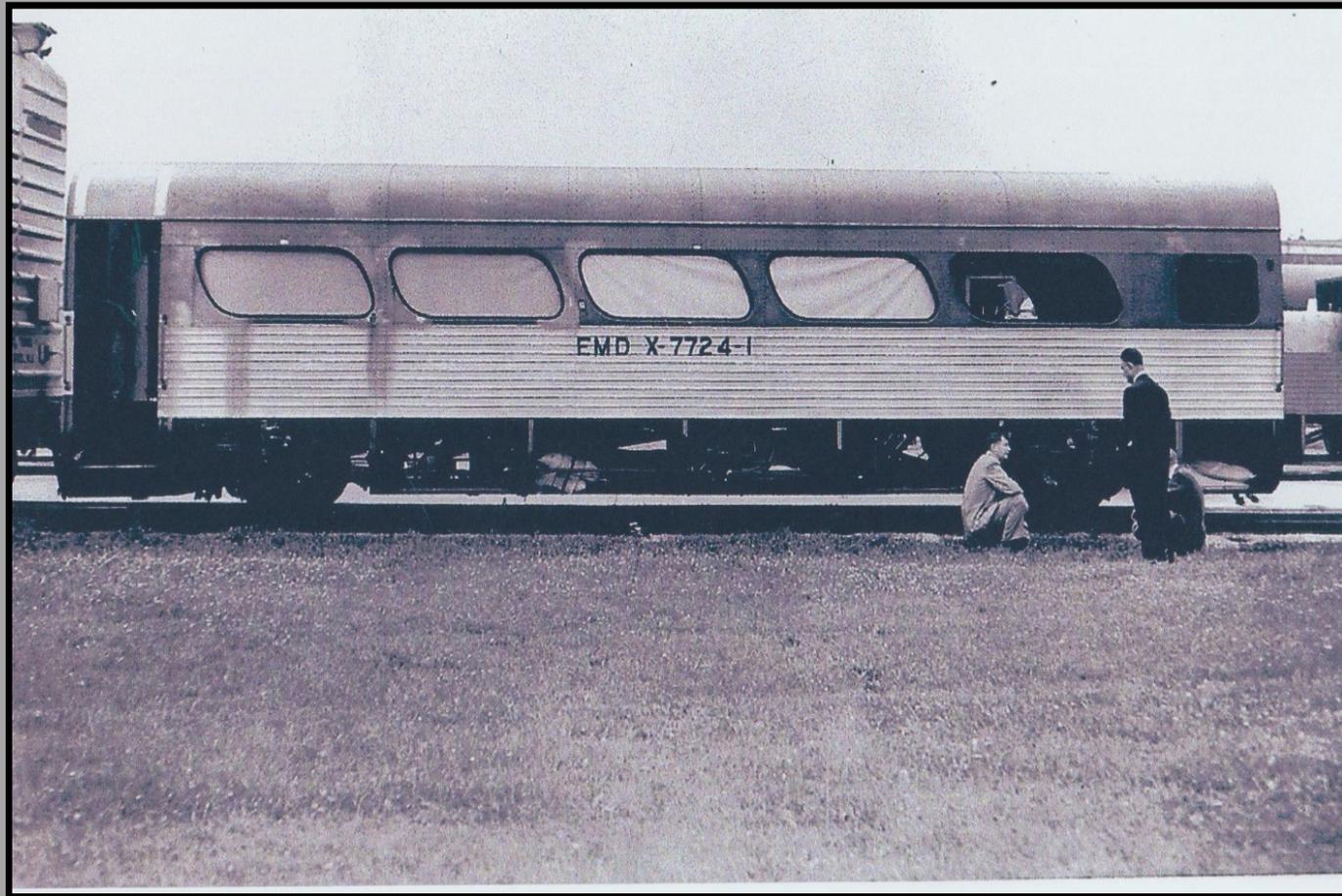
Electrical cabinet for the HEP.



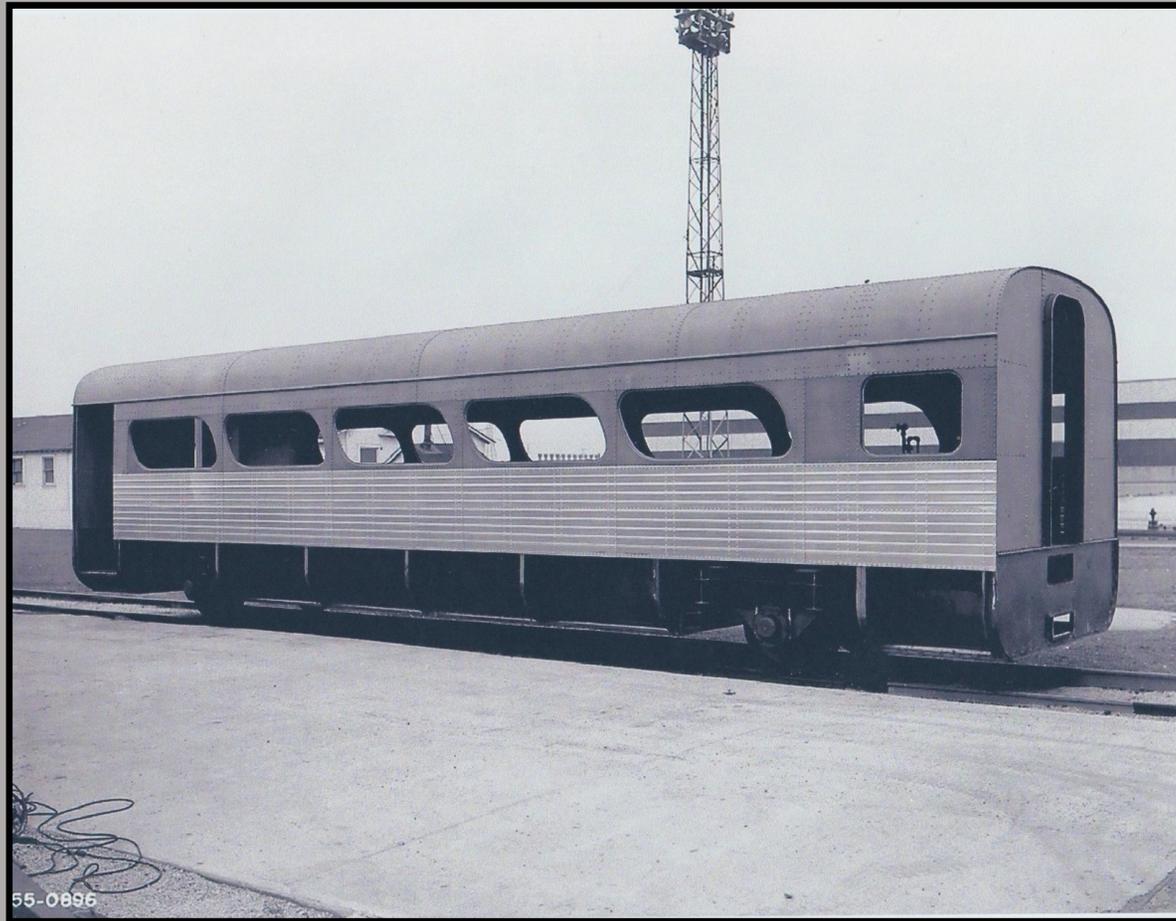
FROM BUS TO AEROTRAIN???



Prototype test car.



Carbody shell nearing completion.



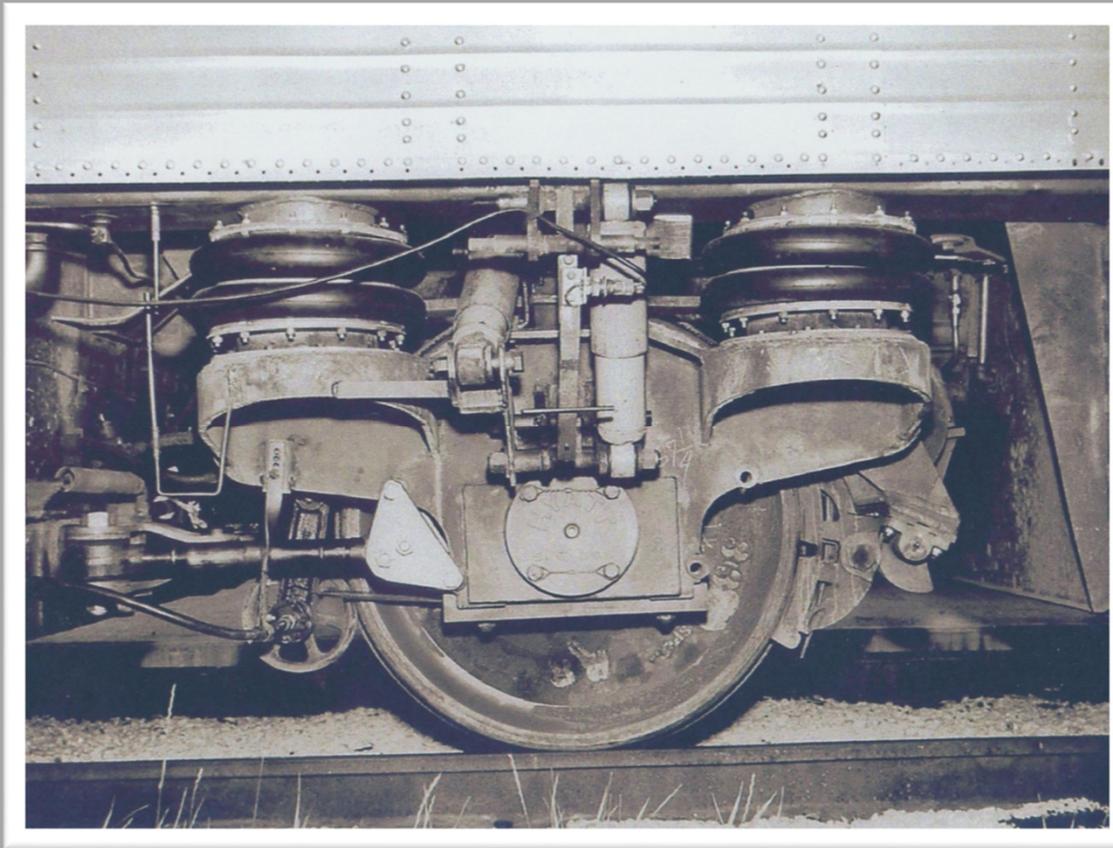
Completed coach.



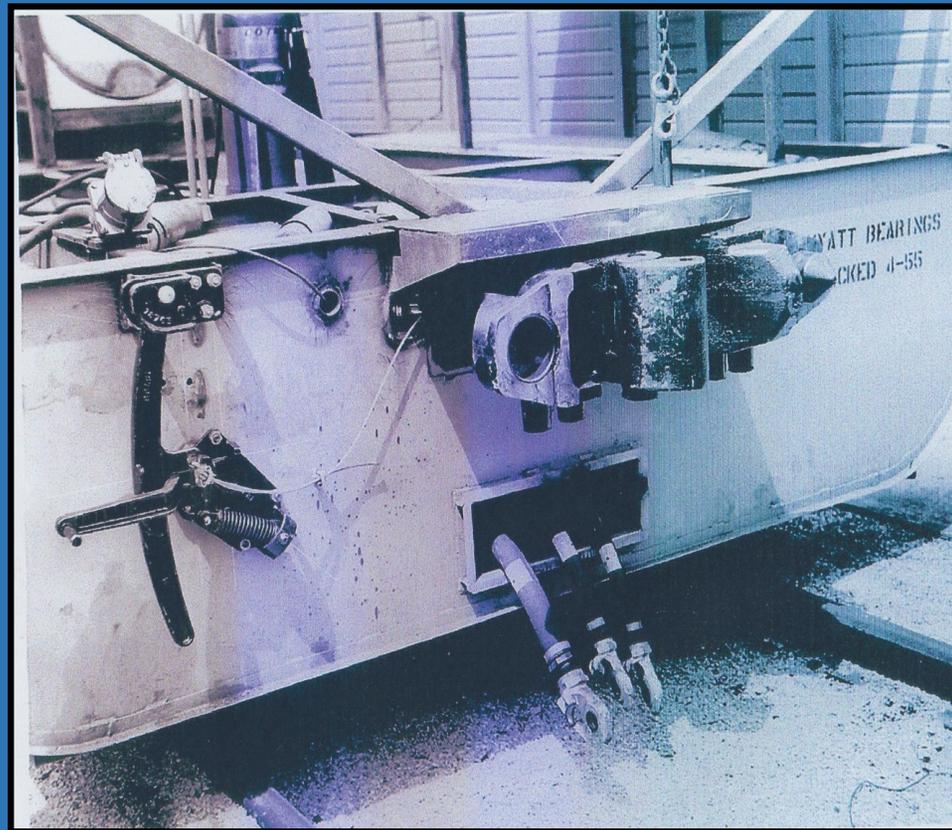
Note the lavish, uncrowded interior.



Single axle truck for the coaches. Two per coach.



Coupler and air hoses.

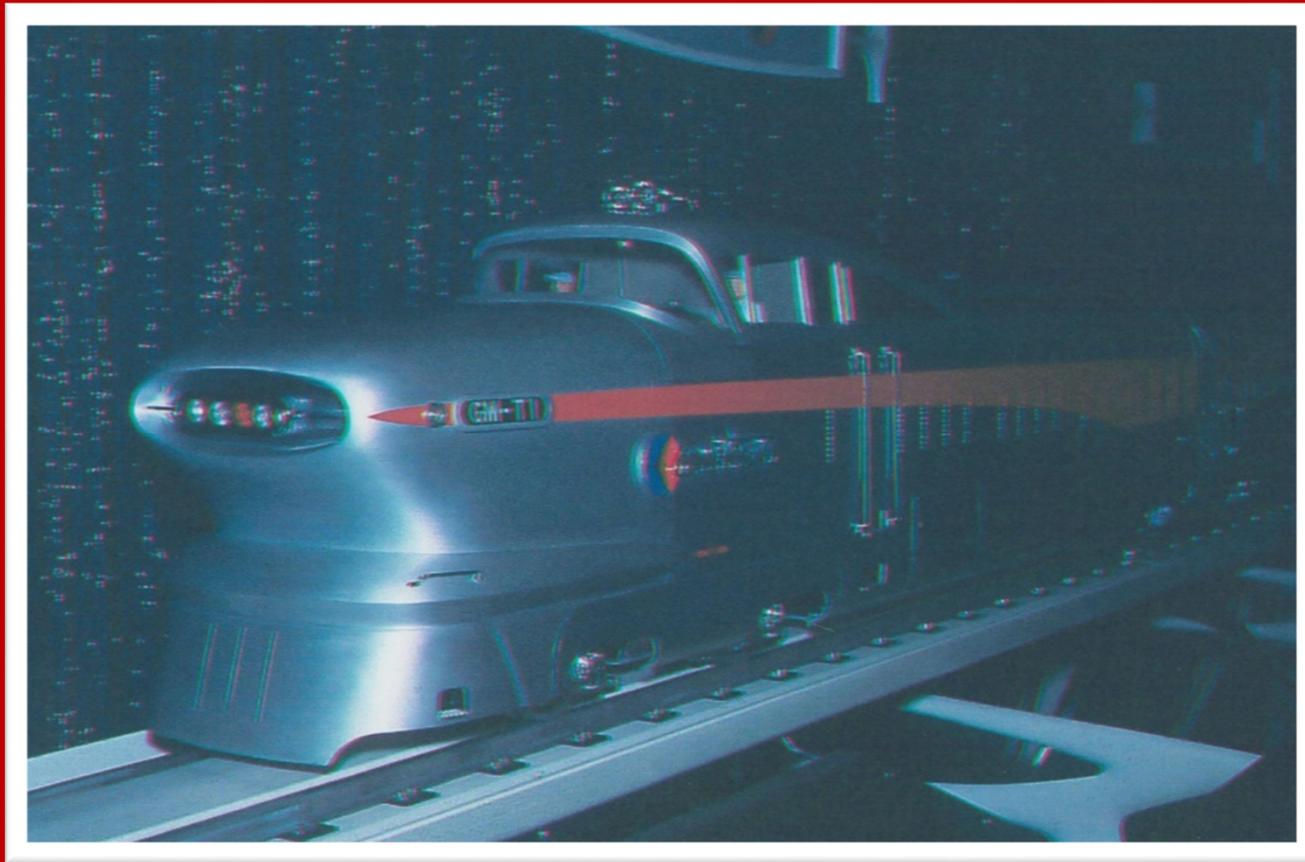


Ralph Kramden's bus was much better!!

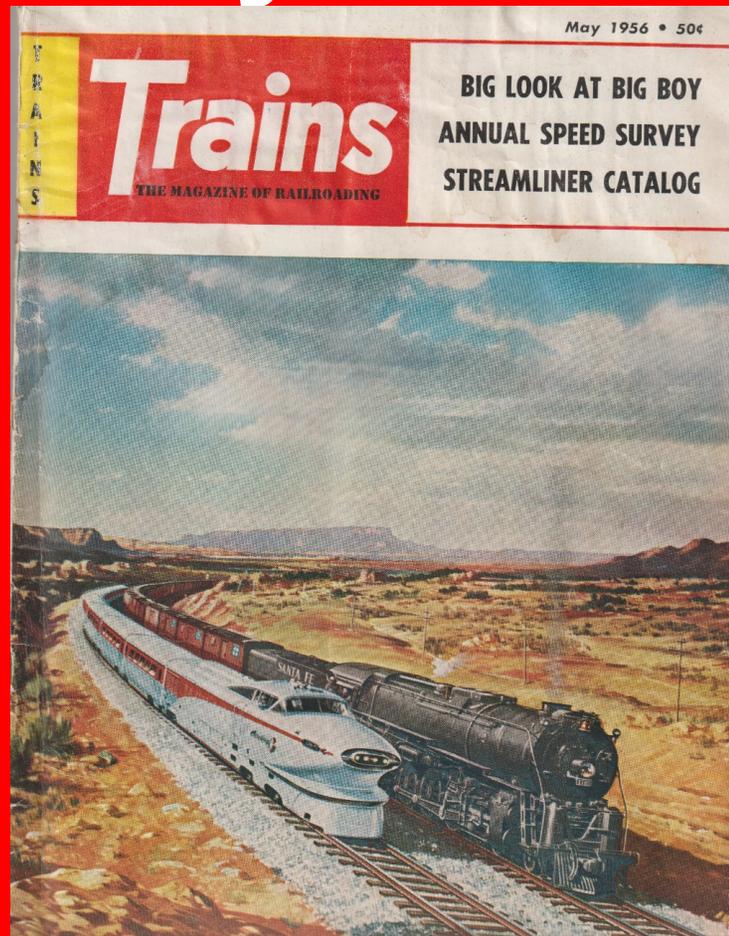


AeroTrain publicity.

GM's scale model of the AeroTrain. Wonder where that model is today??



Trains, May, 1956 \$.50!



Trains Magazine, 1957 Locomotive Showroom.
...come on in and look around!



The AeroTrain in RR News Photos; Trains Mag.

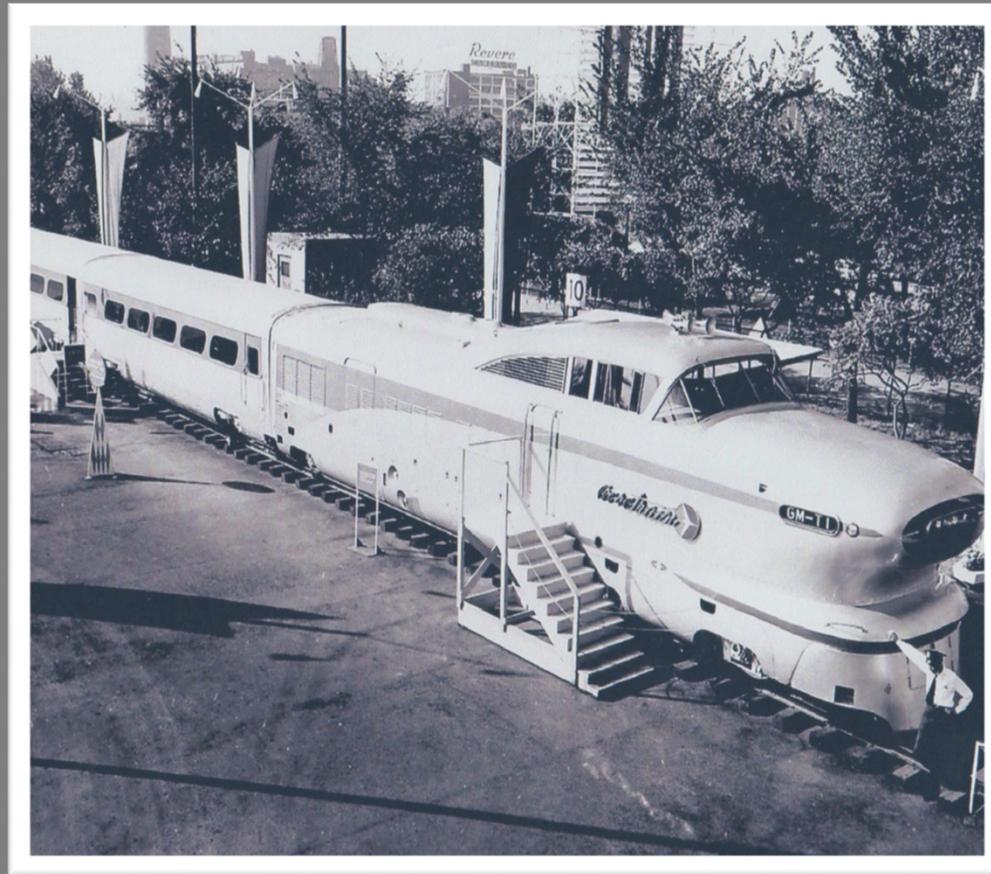


Robert C. Schell Jr.

AEROTRAIN-TYPE locomotive (technically a B-1 type), also used on Rock Island's *Talgo*-type *Jet Rocket* with minor modification, is EMD's contribution to the passenger lightweight market. Unit has a two-axle power truck at the front, an idler axle at the rear; its single V-12 engine develops 1200 h.p. for a pair of standard D-37 traction motors. Two 6-cylinder auxiliary power units in the nose supply A.C. for train lighting, heating, air conditioning. Performance-wise, unit is, in effect, "half an E9," and so are its major components, simplifying maintenance. Statistics: 89½ tons; 13' 8" high over cab; 54' long; 10' in width.

GP9 ROAD-SWITCHER — more familiarly known as the *Geep* — is 1957's best-seller. Versatile 1750 h.p. B-B hood weighs 124 tons, has six gear ratios with top speeds from 55 to 89 mph, measures 56' 2" long, 10' 3½" wide, and 14' 6" high. A steam generator and dynamic braking are optional features. A V-16 diesel turns over an A.C.-D.C. generator (A.C. for auxiliaries such as cooling fans; D.C. for propulsion purposes), which feeds four D-37 traction motors. In a few cases (AT&SF, UP), *Geeps* have been sold in cow-and-calf combinations. All major components are interchangeable with F-type road units. Prices start at \$160,000 for a GP9.

The AeroTrain on display. Note the crowds!



But wait. . .the tour is free!!!
Crowds finally showed up!



PRR calendar painting by Grif Teller of the
AeroTrain.

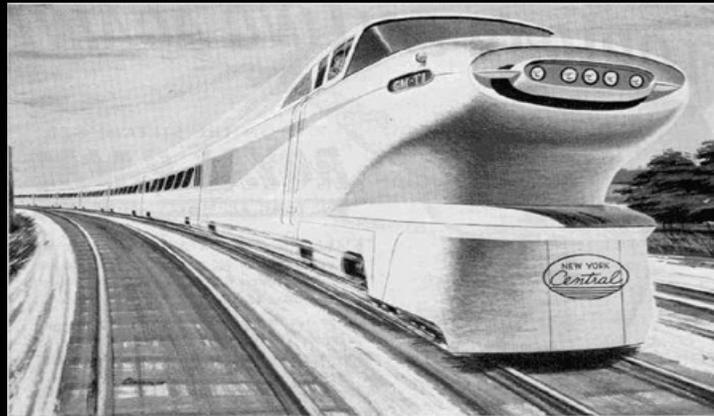
The painting was more spectacular!



PRR *AeroTrain* in Altoona, PA.



A optimistic advertisement by the NYC.



The New York Central opens a new era in rail transportation with this fabulous new "dream train"

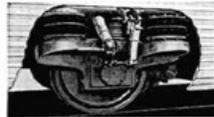
THIS TRAIN WILL SAVE AN INDUSTRY

The New York Central brings you a fast, lightweight new train that can revolutionize rail travel, increase employment, and strengthen our national defense.

This new "dream train" is like nothing you've ever seen before—and it will soon be rolling on the New York Central.

Designed and built by General Motors, it makes a clean break with the past. Like today's Chevrolet compared with the old high wheelers, it is lighter, lower, faster and much quieter and more comfortable—all at much lower cost.

But the most important thing about this train is that it can actually save America's railroad passenger business.



Cars are literally suspended on air—Air under pressure fills the doughnut-like rubber bellows at each end of the wheel track. Vibrations and noise are absorbed passing through the air... giving the smoothest, most comfortable ride you've ever felt.

Few of those who sometimes justifiably criticize railroad passenger service realize that the cost of building and operating present high wheel equipment has become so prohibitive that the railroads lost almost 700 million dollars on this service during the last year.

The railroads are up against subsidized competition from airlines, buses, and private automobiles—to say nothing of restrictions imposed by regulatory bodies, so often politically motivated.

These factors combine to make it impossible for us to set fares which can even come close to making up our loss. Last year this passenger loss nearly equalled the total net income that America's railroads earned from all sources.

We know of no other industry required to render service at a loss. Not even the strongest one can do so long, even if public opinion or our Constitution would permit it.

Needless to say, this is a very serious

situation—from the railroads' standpoint and from the public's. And it's even more serious from the standpoint of national defense. To keep our country strong, we need strong, vigorous, up-to-date railroads.

Trains like the one you see above can convert the present shrinking railroad passenger industry into a dynamic, growing one. With a steel underframe and aluminum body, it is 50% lighter than standard trains. It is 60% less expensive to build and 60% less expensive to operate.

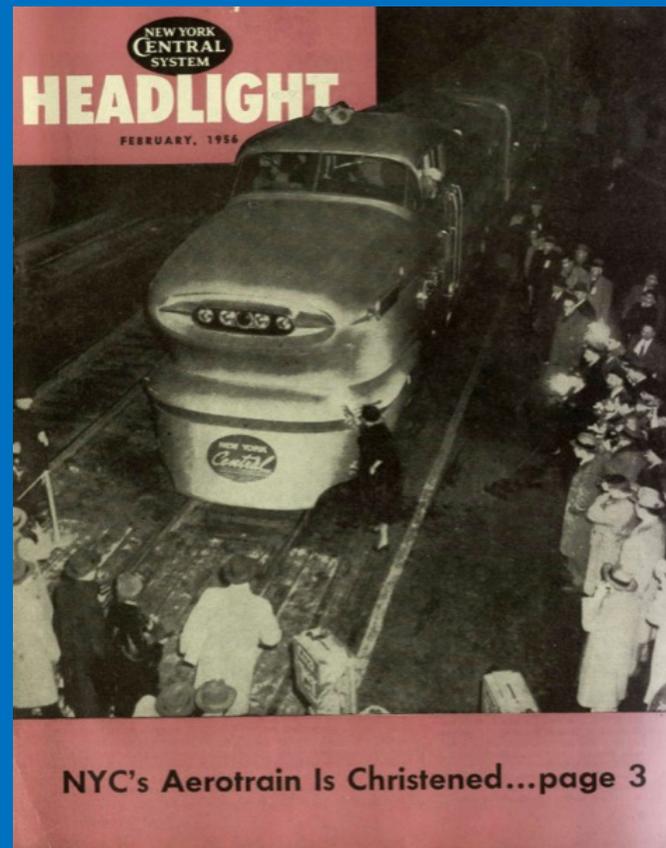
It will enable us to offer faster, smoother service—and to keep passenger fares at a lower level than they otherwise must be. And by revitalizing the railroad business, it can lead to more employment.

The train pictured here is the first of two "dream trains" soon to be running on the Central. The second, called "Train X," is now being built by Pullman-Standard. The Central is doing all it can to encourage these two manufacturers to quickly get into volume production of these new trains.

We salute General Motors for building our first new train. Next Spring it will go into service between Chicago and Detroit in a speedy daylight run. When you look it over, see if you don't agree that a new era in railroading has begun.

New York Central Railroad

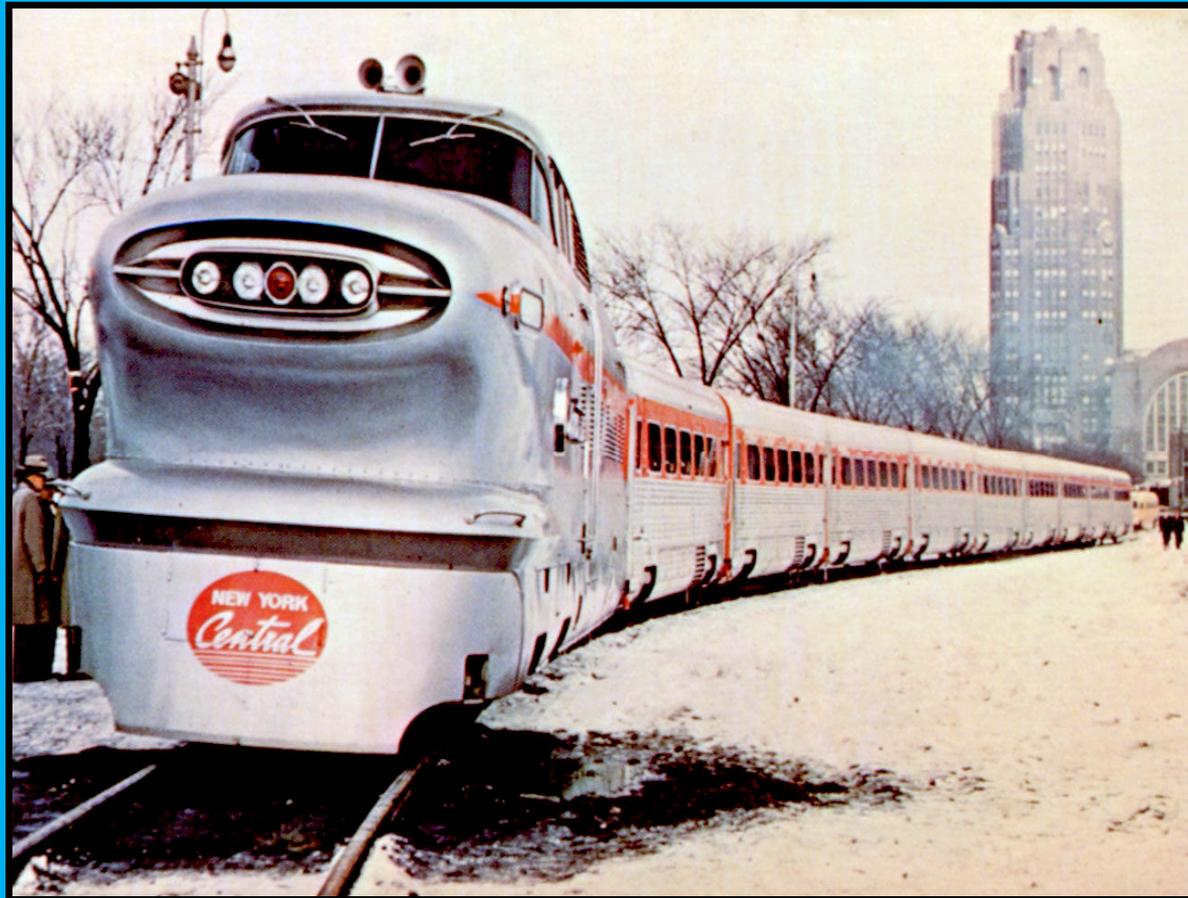
NYC's company magazine, the "HEADLIGHT."



AeroTrain on the UP as the
“City of Las Vegas.” The UP took a
gamble with this and lost!



AeroTrain on the NYC in Buffalo.



The AeroTrain on the “Standard RR of the World.”
On display in Penn Station, NY Jan. 6-9 1956.
34,000 people toured the train. Too bad not that many rode it.



Since diesels could not operate into Penn Station, NY; a GG1 pulled the train to/from Newark.



AeroTrain under the wires enroute to Pittsburgh.

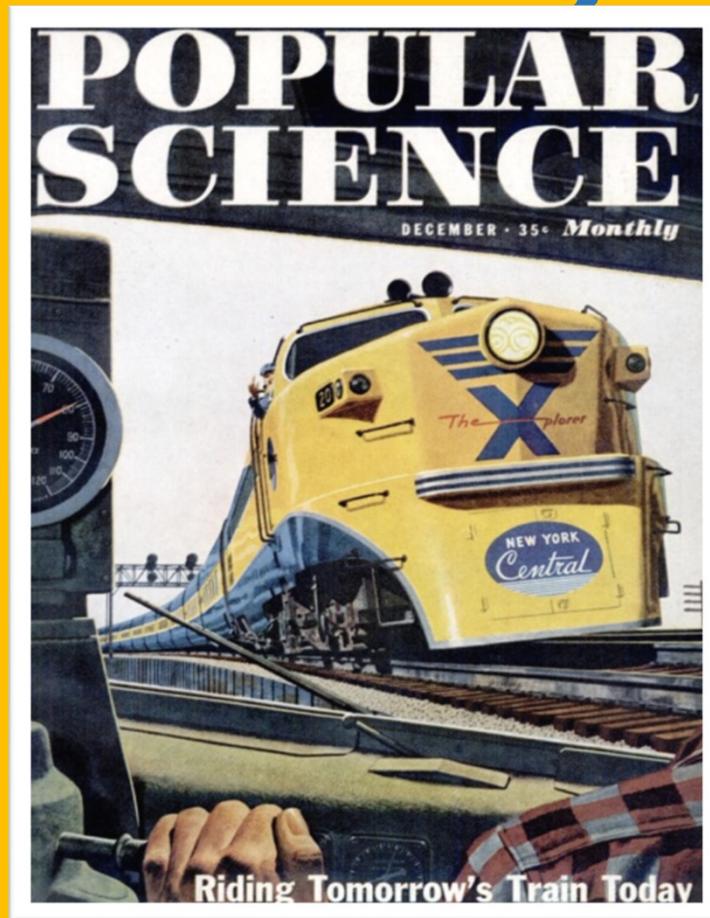


AeroTrain on the Rock Island in commuter service.



The AeroTrain's competition.

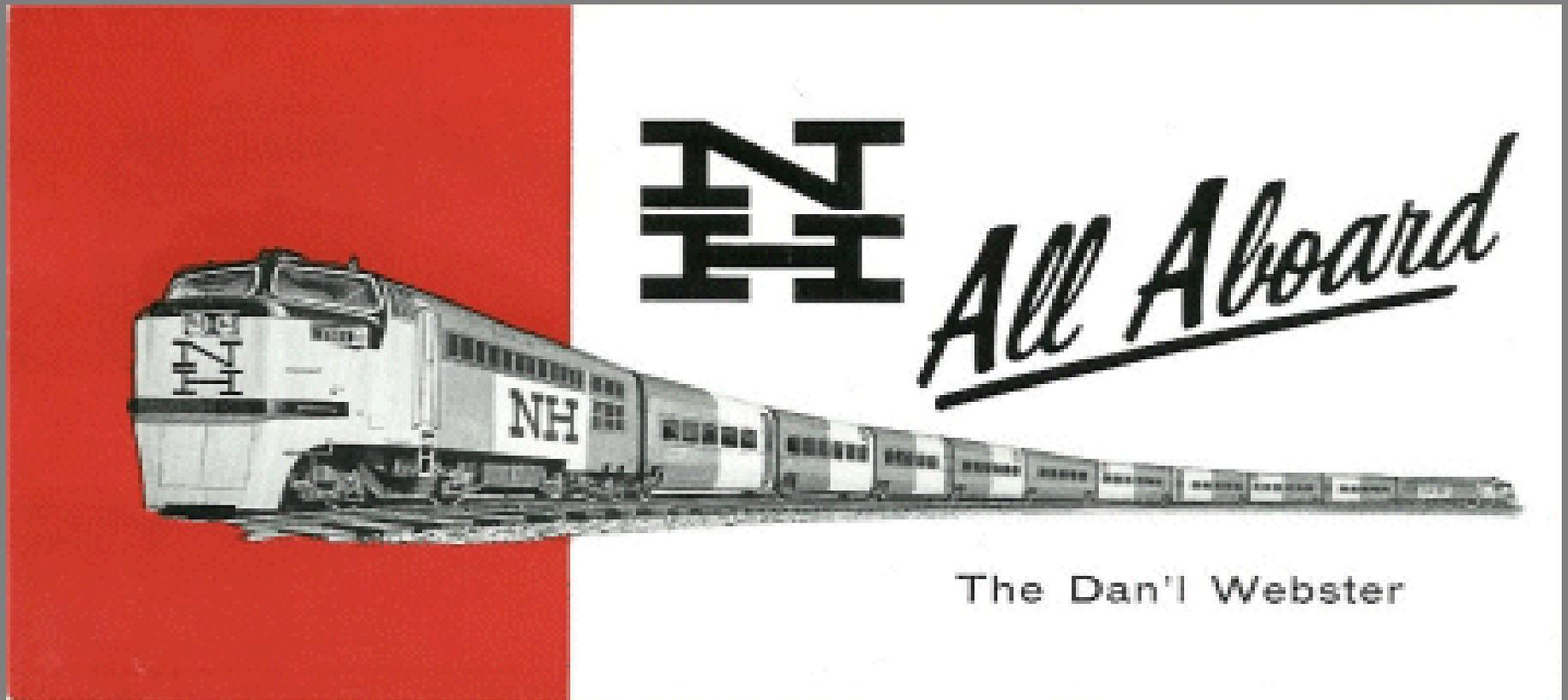
The NYC's "Xplorer"



Engine by B-L-H, cars by Pullman-Standard.
The train had so many issues, employees renamed
it “The Xploder.”



The New Haven's Dan'l Webster.



The Dan'l Webster. Engines by B-L-H, cars by Pullman-Standard.



The New Haven's "John Quincy Adams."
Its engines were the first "diesel-electric-electrics."



New Haven's "Roger Williams."



Rock Island's "Jet Rocket." No oxymoron there!
Engine by EMD, cars by AC&F.



Tail car on the “Jet Rocket.” Looks like Tyco!



- **The Jet Rocket was used in Chicago commuter service. When that ended, the CRI&P sold the engine to the**
 - **US Navy for land-based**
 - **catapult testing.**

That didn't go too well. . .



So, when the testing didn't go well. It was given back to the CRI&P and donated to the Green Bay RR Museum in Wisconsin where it still resides.



The Rock Island's "Jet Rocket" engine
in Green Bay, WI.



The Pennsy's "Keystone" tubular train.



Motive Power was a GG1, and a power car to supply HEP to the train.



Power car for the “Keystone.”



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Jack Smith

Painting by Peter Lerro of “The Keystone” passing Arsenal Tower in Phila.



The Afternoon Keystone

© Peter A. Lerro, 2007

So, why were the lightweights so successful in the Depression years and flops in the 1950's? In the 1930's, most trains were pulled by smoke belching, black steam engines and dark green cars. People yearned for something new, inventive and eye-catching. The lightweights provided a needed lift for the doldrums of the Depression.

After WWII, the railroads looked forward to a post-war boom in travel. It never happened! People wanted new cars, not trains. Congress passed the Interstate Highway Act and air travel became the way to go. In essence, the railroads invested heavily in a dying industry. All of the lightweights could not compete! They all had mechanical issues and awful riding qualities. The public was not impressed!

The NYC's "Xplorer" and the NH's "Dan'l Webster" and "John Quincy Adams" were withdrawn from service as failures. The PRR, NYC and UP gave the AeroTrains back to GM. The "plunge" into the lightweights was a dismal failure. Eventually "out of the ashes" Amtrak was created in 1971 to save the American passenger train.

The AeroTrain survives in models.

The 1956 Varney HO model with Kemtron "AeroDrive."



A battery operated tin AeroTrain.



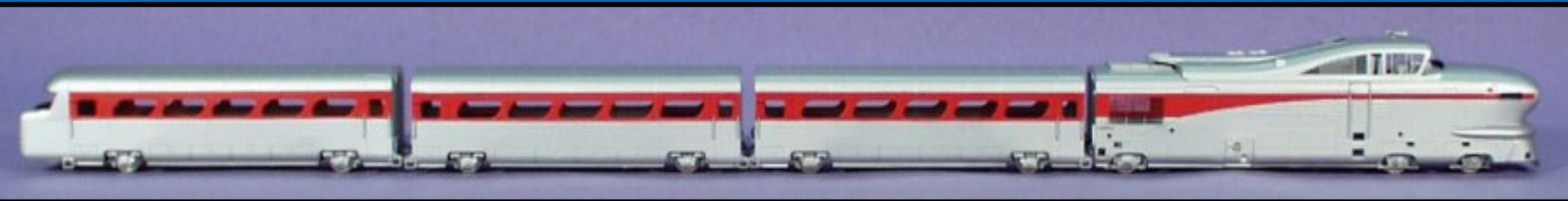
MTH O-Scale AeroTrain.



ConCor HO Scale AeroTrain.



H0 brass AeroTrain by Railworks.



Even playing cards issued by GM!



Ironically, the models and playing cards were more successful than the train that inspired them.

The end. . .thank you!!

