

NORFOLK SOUTHERN AT 40 HORSE POWER

In Memory of Beloved Trains Editor Jim Wrinn



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Our favorite images of NS: Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Virginia

ON THE COVER: Southbound NS train 218 enters the Charlotte Intermodal Facility, in Charlotte, N.C., on April 26, 2014. Casey Thomason
ABOVE: Original NS heritage unit ES44AC No. 8114 leads westbound train 745 at Marshall, N.C., along the French Broad River, on Sept. 16, 2015. Grady McKinley

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Similar approaches helped make merger of N&W, Southern Railway succeed

From the RAILROAD MAPS special issue, 2013

HISTORIANS HAVE ARGUED one key to the success of Norfolk & Western's 1982 consolidation with Southern Railway was that the railroads shared a similar culture — determined, forward-looking, and committed to success. This served to douse the fires of early rivalries with a single-minded focus on making the unified system work, and work well.

It helped that each railroad also had a solid franchise — not always the shortest or fastest route, but track that was productive and well-maintained.

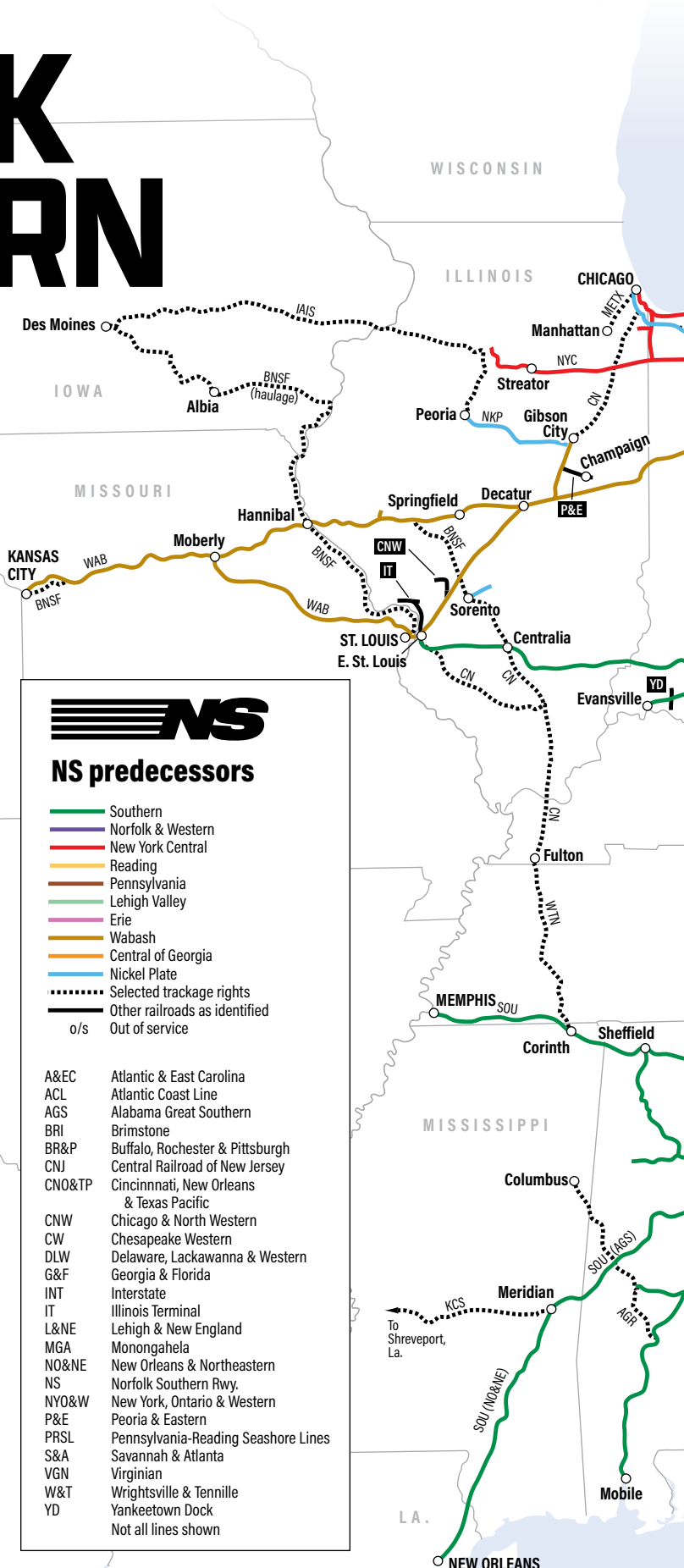
In the 1960s, when most railroads were merging to eliminate parallel lines, including the giant Penn Central, N&W by force looked outward, acquiring the Nickel Plate, leasing the Wabash, and tying all three together with a Pennsylvania Railroad line from Columbus, Ohio, to Lake Erie. N&W's strategic play got it more than just track: It gained access to western gateways and new traffic sources, such as Wabash's Detroit-area auto business, that would reduce its dependence on coal.

Southern and N&W might not have been prominent on each other's radar screens before the CSX accretion of 1980 (Southern previously had explored a merger with Missouri Pacific and petitioned unsuccessfully for Monon's route to Chicago). But each recognized the benefits of combining two strong Eastern railroads that shared common endpoints that served different regions.

Buying 58% of Conrail in 1998 was an equally critical move that strategically positioned Norfolk Southern for handling today's growth commodity, intermodal traffic, which polished the rails of Conrail's high-volume traffic lanes between Chicago and the Eastern Seaboard.

Historically, Norfolk Southern's component franchises remained essentially independent operations: Coal moving on former N&W lines had nothing to do with the land-bridge containers rolling across the former Pennsylvania main line. However, that historic traffic separation dissolved with the Heartland Corridor and Crescent Corridor projects, clearing previously restricted main lines for double-stacked container traffic.

— Matt Van Hatten





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- AGR Alabama & Gulf Coast
- AMTK Amtrak
- BNSF BNSF Railway
- CF&E Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern
- CN Canadian National
- CNYK Central New York
- CP Canadian Pacific
- CSX CSX Transportation
- CUOH Columbus & Ohio River
- IAIS Iowa Interstate
- KCS Kansas City Southern
- METX Metra
- NBER Nittany & Bald Eagle
- NJ NJ Transit
- OHCR Ohio Central
- OSRR Ohio Southern
- PAS Pan Am Southern
- WTN West Tennessee



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Norfolk Southern's history is rich and diverse. Here are 40 of our favorite places that make the heart race just a little faster. They're the living legacies of the main predecessor railroads that make up today's NS.

1. HORSESHOE CURVE

Without question, Horseshoe Curve is one of the most iconic U.S. railroad sites. The curve was the most prominent feature of the Pennsylvania Railroad main line when it opened for business on Feb. 15, 1854. The line was a practical engineering solution for a railroad between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, over the Allegheny Mountains. Westbound trains climb a maximum grade of 1.85% from Altoona to Gallitzin, Pa., before descending to

Johnstown on a maximum 1.1%. Horseshoe Curve would eventually have four main tracks, which characterized most of the PRR between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. With the dramatic decrease in passenger traffic, plus longer and less frequent freight trains, Conrail removed one of the mains between Altoona and Gallitzin in 1981. Horseshoe Curve was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. PRR GP9 No. 7048 is on permanent display. Casey Thomason

2. ALTOONA WORKS/JUNIATA SHOP

The Juniata Shops complex in Altoona, Pa., was constructed in stages by the Pennsylvania between 1850 and 1925, with subsequent modifications over the years. Between 1866 and 1946, a total of 6,783 steam, diesel-electric, and electric locomo-

tives were built at the shops. The PRR was a leader in research and development, and a stationary testing plant constructed in 1905 was used to evaluate motive power until it was discontinued and the facilities razed in 1968. Peak employment at the shops came in the 1920s, when there were more than 16,000 workers.

3. ELKHORN TUNNEL AND FLAT TOP MOUNTAIN

As the N&W built westward into the Pocahontas coal-field region of southern West Virginia, a 3,014-foot tunnel was punched through Flat Top Mountain in 1888. The selected elevation was the same as the Pocahontas coal seam No. 3, a valuable vein of coal 10-feet thick. The east-bound approach to the tunnel included 4 miles of 2% grade, plus the grade inside the tunnel itself was 1.4%. Even with a

NS 40

SACRED

The Norfolk Southern places that inspire

1

steam-powered ventilation system, the movement of eastbound coal using steam power was quite inefficient. The solution was electrification initially between Eckman and Bluefield, W.Va. N&W had such confidence in its modern steam locomotive designs that a new double-tracked 7,107-foot Elkhorn Tunnel was placed into service in 1950. The crest of the grade was 40 feet below the old bore, and along with revisions to the approach on both sides of the new tunnel, reduced the eastbound traffic to 1.4%. Ron Flanary

4. ROANOKE, VA.

No location is more associated with the Norfolk & Western than Roanoke, Va. Between 1884 and 1953, the Roanoke Shops (also called the East End Shops) built 447 steam locomotives for the railroad. The

best known of these are Class J 4-8-4 No. 611, built in 1950; Class A 2-6-6-4 No. 1218, built in 1943; and Class Y6a 2-8-8-2 No. 2156, built in 1942. In 1953, the shop built its final locomotive, Class S1a 0-8-0 No. 244, the last steam locomotive manufactured in the United States for domestic use. The N&W also owned the Hotel Roanoke, which was adjacent to the station (today it's owned and operated by Virginia Tech). The 1905 passenger station was slated for full remodeling in 1941. Architect Allmon Fordyce of Raymond Lowey and Associates of New York did the plans and specifications. With steel and other building materials still in short supply following World War II, construction didn't start until 1948, and it opened for service the following year. The station has since been restored and remodeled as the home of the



PLACES

by Ron Flanary



Southern Railway's steam story is best told at Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, where 2-8-0 No. 630 and legendary 2-8-2 No. 4501 reside. They pull trains on museum trackage and occasionally on a shortline partner.

NS



WHERE TO FIND HISTORY

Legacies of Norfolk Southern's
predecessors are thriving
Story and photos by Jim Wrinn

TODAY

