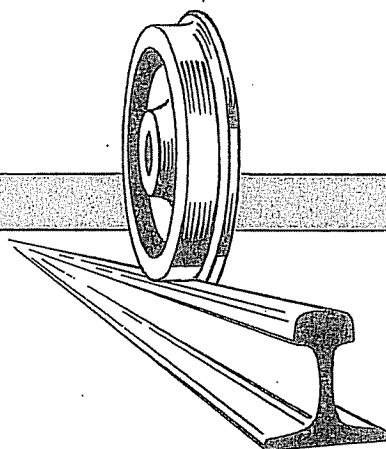


Rail Oddities

ODD and
INTERESTING FACTS
about the
RAILROADS



Rail Oddities

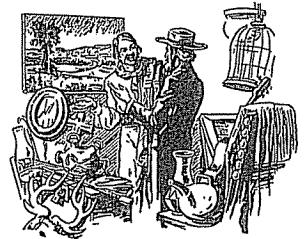
Odd and Interesting
FACTS
About the Railroads

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING • WASHINGTON, D. C.

DECEMBER, 1954



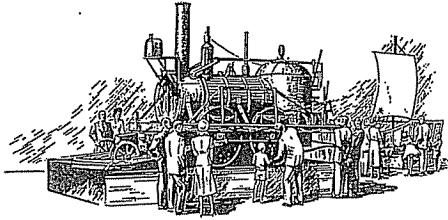
In 1855 a railroad president commissioned a poor but promising young artist to paint a picture of the company's new round-house. It was to be used as an advertisement and the price paid was \$75.00.



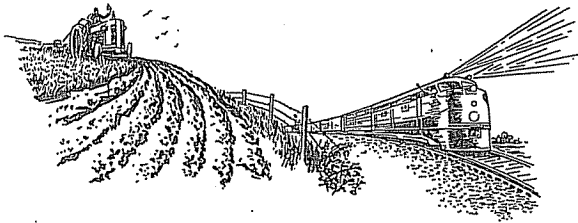
Years later — by an almost incredible coincidence — the artist himself ran across the picture in a second hand shop in Mexico City, and he bought it back.



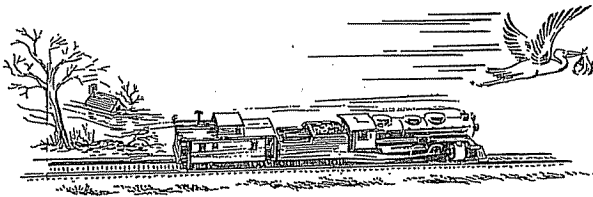
The painting, "The Lackawanna Valley" now hangs in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. It is admired as one of the finest early works of the renowned artist, George Inness (1825-1894).



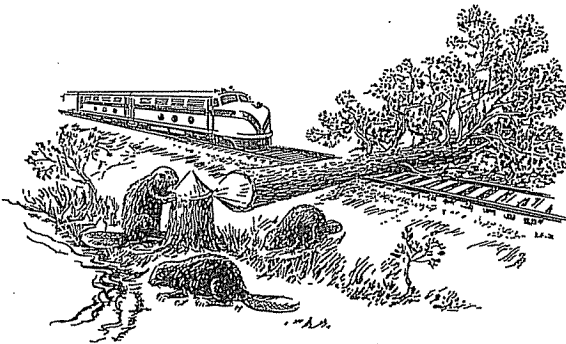
Every year more than a million persons visit the fascinating railroad museum at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C.



At a Public Utilities Commission hearing on a railroad's petition to discontinue unprofitable train service, a farmer appeared to voice his protest. His reason: he liked to hear the whistle blow.



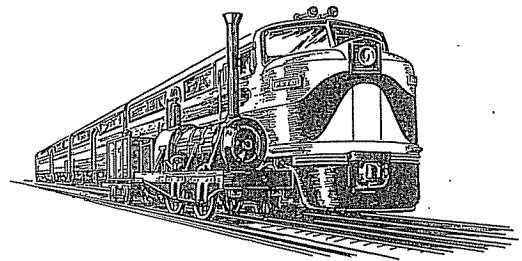
In a remote western sawmill town, largely isolated by floods and storms, a railroad crew made up an emergency special train (engine and caboose) and rushed a mother-to-be toward the nearest hospital—45 miles. But the baby insisted on being born en route . . . in the caboose . . . conductor assisting.



Trains were delayed on one of the big railroads a little while ago when beavers felled a tree across the track.



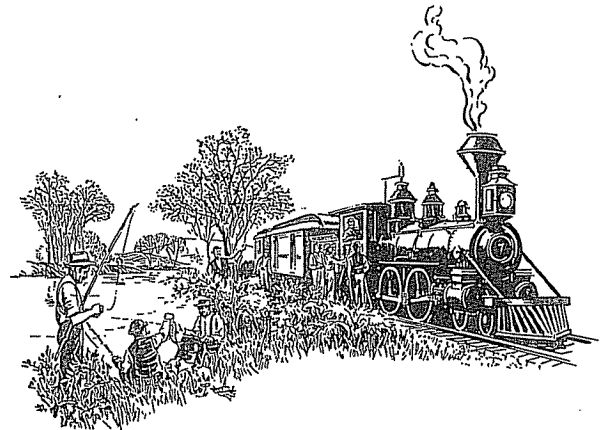
While dismantling the old railroad depot in the fabulous gold-rush town of Deadwood, S. D.—workmen discovered \$1,200 in twenty dollar bills cached away in the attic.



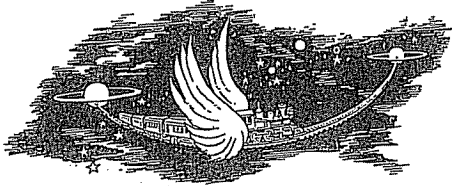
"Old Ironsides," the first steam locomotive built by Matthias Baldwin, cost \$3,500. A modern 3-unit diesel-electric locomotive today costs about \$500,000.



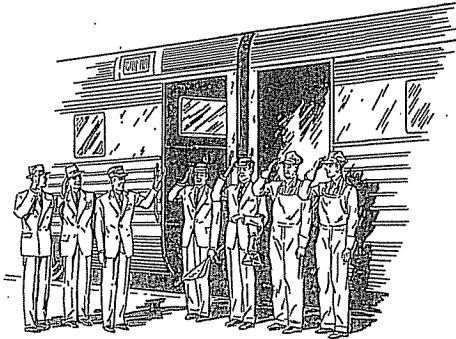
A railroad dining car, equipped for a round trip, starts out with a stock of 240 tablecloths, 800 napkins, 500 dishes, 700 pieces of silverware and 200 pieces of glassware . . . plus towels, pantry and kitchenware and food.



Sixty years ago an accommodating engineer would often stop his train to let off anglers at a favorite fishing spot . . . sometimes wait around awhile to see what luck they had.

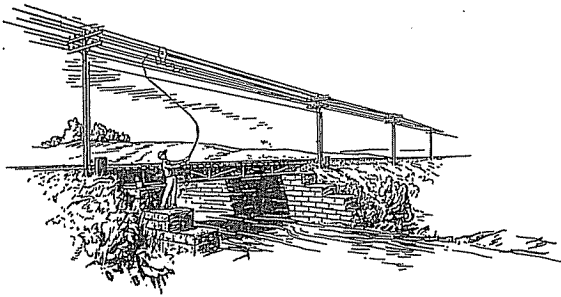


An early line in Florida was known as the heavenly railroad. It ran between the towns of Jupiter and Juno.

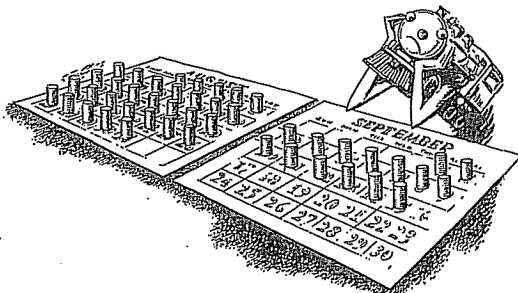


When the conductor of a famous passenger train recently made his final run, after 42 years of railroading, his four sons made up the crew . . . engineer, fireman, brakeman and flagman. Two other sons, both railroad men, went along as passengers.

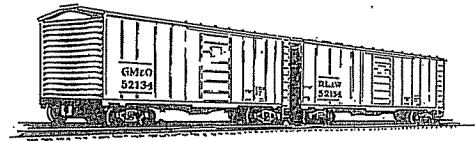
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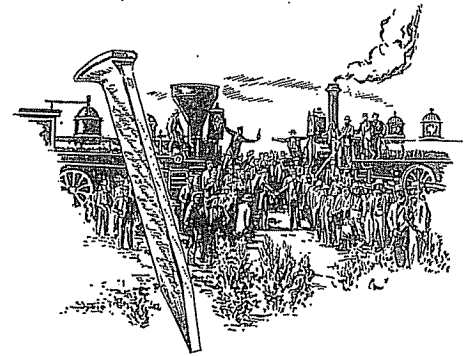
Seventeen trains on 107 miles of track were stopped for two hours when a man fishing from a railroad bridge in Kansas got his line tangled in the wires of the railroad's automatic signal system.



Taxes paid by railroads in a recent year took the total revenues derived from 46 days of operation.

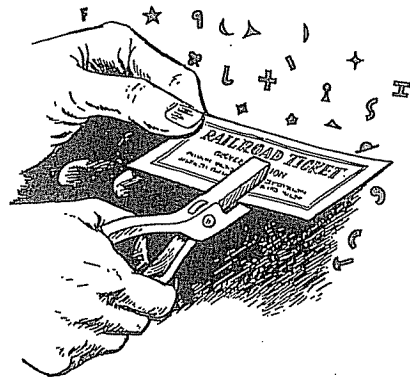


Bearing identical numbers . . . two freight cars of different railroads—one from Chicago, the other from Baltimore—arrived in a Virginia town on the same morning and were spotted end-to-end on a consignee's siding. The chances of such an occurrence are about a million to one.

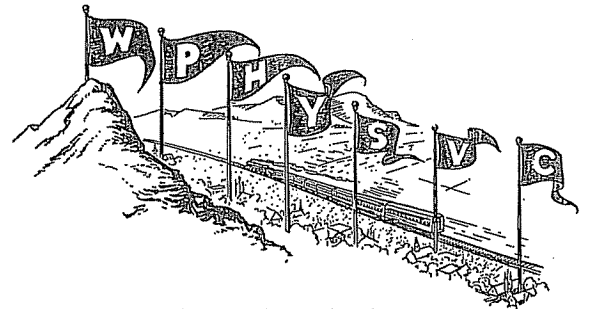


The famous golden spike, driven to symbolize the completion of the first transcontinental rail route (1869), was presented to Stanford University and is now in the Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco for safe keeping.

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Among all the ticket punches used by over 10,000 railroad conductors in the United States, no two of the punches make a hole of the same shape.



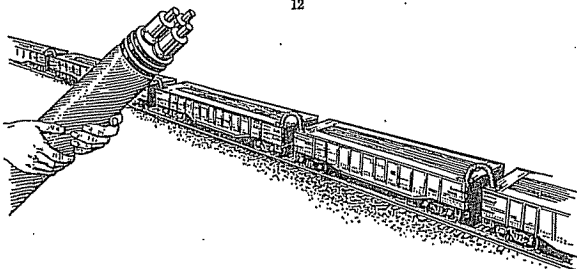
You can board a train and, without changing cars, travel from Cornell to Vassar, Stanford, Yale, Harvard, Princeton and Wellesley on the 50-mile Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway.



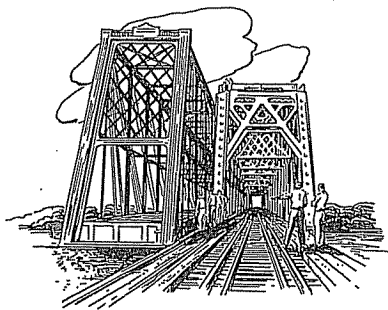
Since this time yesterday,
the American railroads
paid over \$2¼ million in
taxes . . . the daily
average all through the year.



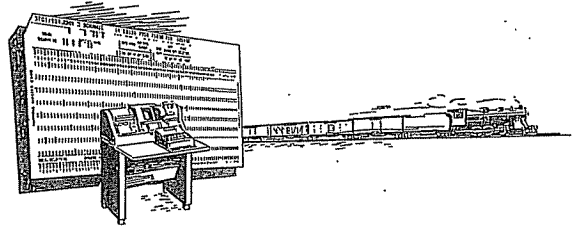
Brief cases head the list
of articles left on trains.
But people leave all kinds
of things including wallets,
watches, golf clubs, canary birds and homing pigeons.
One lady left a bag containing jewels worth \$125,000—
safely returned by the Pullman Company.



Loaded in nine gondola freight cars, an
underwater cable 39,000 feet long was
recently shipped from New Jersey to Puget Sound
. . . all in one piece. 4½ inches in diameter,
the copper cable weighed 700,000 pounds.



Rebuilding its bridge across the Ohio River, a rail-
road (1) moved an old span off its piers in 57
minutes; (2) moved a new 518-foot span to the same
piers in 75 minutes; (3) hooked up the tracks and
resumed full main line operations all within 20 hours.

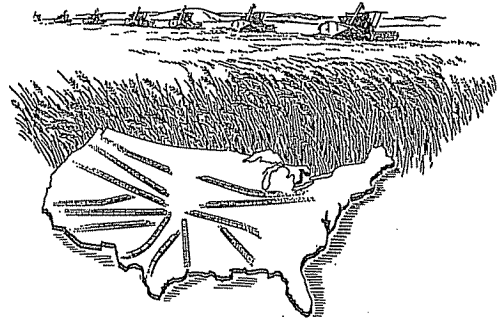


The railroad industry pioneered in the adoption
of the punch card tabulating machine. The
first commercial use of such a machine was
made by an American railroad in 1896.

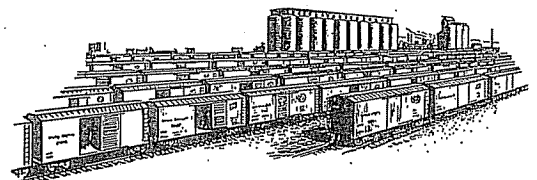


Consisting of more than 350,000 items, the largest
railroad library in America, and probably in the
world, is maintained by the Association of American
Railroads at its headquarters in Washington, D. C.

The annual movement of America's gigantic
wheat crop is the biggest single
transportation job in the world.



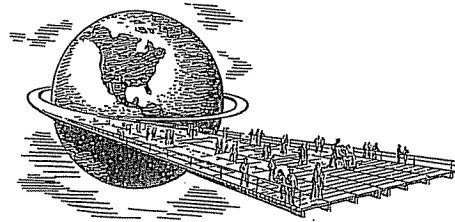
Thousands of boxcars, owned by many
different railroads, are concentrated in
the wheat belt at harvest time.



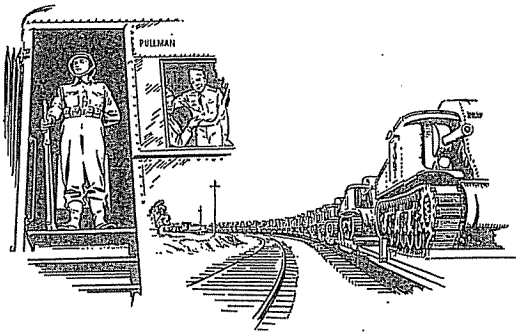
Loaded, emptied and re-loaded time after time, it takes
750,000 carloads of 1,800 bushels each to
move the wheat alone. Other grains
take another 900,000 carloads.



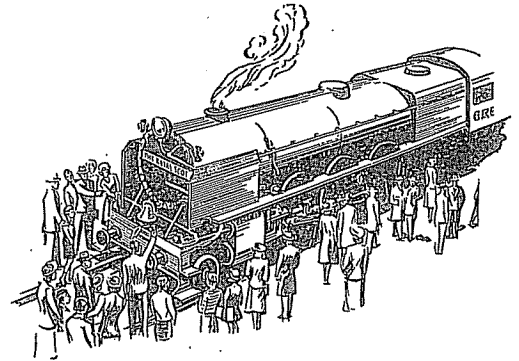
Natives of the jungle village of Mengale, in French Cameroon, West Africa, are summoned to their mission church by the ringing of a locomotive bell — the gift of an American railroad.



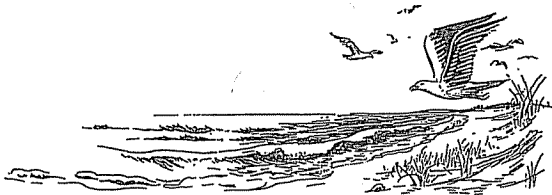
Under the tracks of American railroads are more than a billion cross ties — enough to encircle the earth with a "Boardwalk" fifty feet wide.



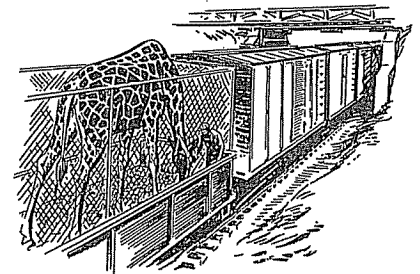
Worth remembering . . . in World War II railroads handled more than 90 percent of all the war freight and 97 percent of all the organized military travel.



British people are fascinated by their two railway locomotives which carry a bell — the only engines in England so equipped. The bells were added for American exhibition tours made by the "Royal Scot" and the "King George V"



A century ago, on a sandy waste along the New Jersey coast, a world-famous resort — now visited by 16 million people annually — was founded by railroad men.



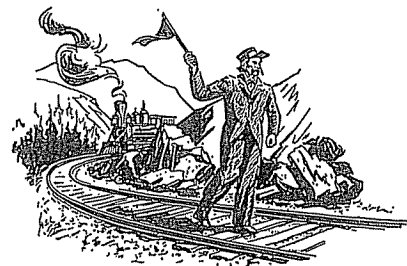
Railroad men in a big quandary over getting a circus giraffe under a low bridge solved the problem by dropping a carrot on the floor of the cage . . . sneaked train under bridge while giraffe's head was down.



They laid out its streets; planned its development; raised the capital; built two railroads to the place.



A train conductor, Alex Boardman, conceived the idea of laying boards along the beach because people tracked so much sand into the hotels and railroad coaches — "Boardman's Walk," Atlantic City's fabulous boardwalk.



In early days, when a train from one direction was late at a meeting point, a train from the opposite direction could proceed after waiting half an hour but in such cases a trainman had to walk ahead and "flag" his train around each curve.