ERIE RAILROAD
ITS BEGINNINGS
~AND TODAY

ERIE RAILROAD

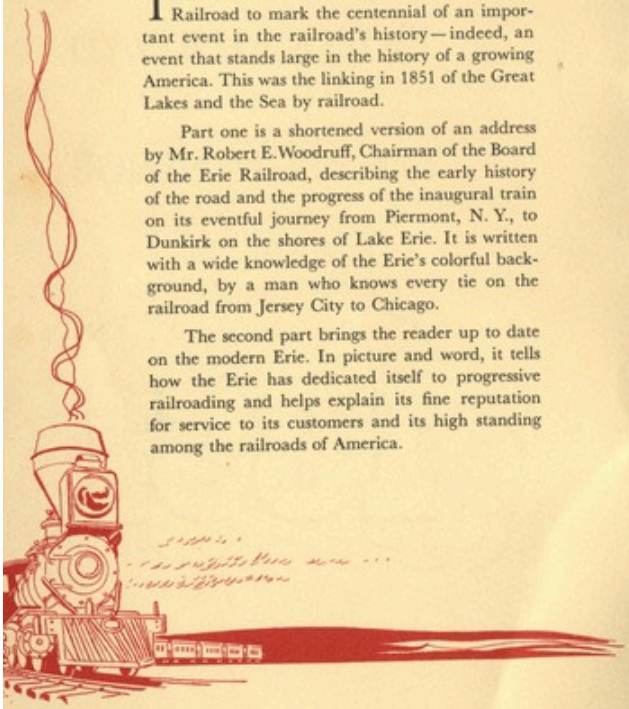
ITS BEGINNINGS

Foreword

THIS book is dedicated to friends of the Erie Railroad to mark the centennial of an important event in the railroad's history—indeed, an event that stands large in the history of a growing America. This was the linking in 1851 of the Great Lakes and the Sea by railroad.

Part one is a shortened version of an address by Mr. Robert E. Woodruff, Chairman of the Board of the Erie Railroad, describing the early history of the road and the progress of the inaugural train on its eventful journey from Piermont, N. Y., to Dunkirk on the shores of Lake Erie. It is written with a wide knowledge of the Erie's colorful background, by a man who knows every tie on the railroad from Jersey City to Chicago.

The second part brings the reader up to date on the modern Erie. In picture and word, it tells how the Erie has dedicated itself to progressive railroading and helps explain its fine reputation for service to its customers and its high standing among the railroads of America.



OFFICE *of the* NEW YORK *and* ERIE RAIL ROAD Co.

May 1, 1851

Sir:

The Board of Directors of the New York and Erie Rail Road Company contemplate opening their road to Lake Erie, on the 14th inst. They respectfully invite you to be present on that occasion to accompany them on a tour over the Road, to examine this great work, leaving this city from the Pier foot of Duane Street, at six o'clock, on the morning of Wednesday, the 14th, and returning on the morning of the 17th.

As the number of guests invited is necessarily limited, the favor of a reply to this invitation is solicited.

You are particularly requested to preserve the enclosed ticket, and show it on going on board the boat, at Duane Street Pier.

Chas M. Leupp
Shepherd Knapp
John J. Phelps
Homer Ramsdell
Thomas W. Gale

Committee of Arrangements

was connected with Albany, Rochester and Buffalo only by local railroads of different gauges, the forerunners of the New York Central System.

Not only was the New York and Erie the longest railroad in the country, it was also *the widest*. Gauges on other roads varied, with a maximum of 4′ 8½″, the present standard gauge. The Erie, however, was a deluxe railroad and had a 6′ gauge.

There were two reasons for this width. First, 6′ gauge railroads had been built in England and the chief engineer of the New York and Erie believed that traffic would be so dense and the locomotives so heavy that the 6′ gauge would be necessary. The second and more important reason was that the charter granted by the State of New York contained a stipulation that the New York and Erie must never connect with any other railroad leading to any other State. The idea was that the movement of traffic to the Port of New York would be controlled by an all New York State railroad.

The first president of the railroad, Eleazar Lord, felt that the best way of insuring this was to provide a gauge different from that of other roads.

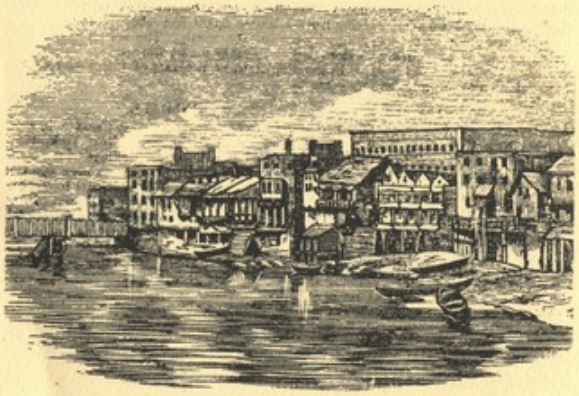
This gauge was in use for 40 years and its correction was expensive. In the light of future events, the decision to build a 6′ gauge railroad was short-sighted but the present-day Erie benefits in having wider clearances than exist on other eastern railroads.

The railroad had its birth in December, 1831, when a convention was held in the little town of Owego, New York, to discuss the needs and desires of the residents of the Southern Tier of New York State for improved transportation. A year later, as a result of that convention, a company was organized to build the New York and Erie, and incorporated by an Act of the New York Legislature dated April 24, 1832.

The Southern Tier area of New York State was largely undeveloped. Its largest town was Elmira, with a population of 3,000. The people of the Southern Tier looked with envy on their northern neighbors who had profited so greatly through the construction of the Erie Canal in 1825.

The Erie Canal had not only given better transportation than the stagecoach and Conestoga wagon to Utica, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo, but had become the gateway to the entire Midwest through its link with the Great Lakes at Buffalo.

Improved transportation had opened the entire northern New York State country and brought it prosperity. The people in the Southern Tier wanted similar benefits for themselves and their communities. They knew that their taxes had contributed a portion of the cost of the Erie Canal, and they requested—in fact, demanded—some improved form of transportation for themselves.



ELMIRA, FROM THE RIVER

VIEW OF PIERMONT

THE early development of the railroads in this country is a story not without human interest. I want you to join with me in retracing a *very historic trip* on one of our early railroads:

May 14, 1851—Piermont, Rockland County, New York—26 miles north of the New York City Hall, on the west bank of the Hudson River.

Seven-forty A.M. The sun had risen brightly over the eastern hills following a night of rain.

Thousands of men, women and children—in fact the whole countryside—were waiting on the shores and on the pier extending out into the Hudson. They were all looking down the river.

A steamer appeared. As the steamer "*Erie*" slowly moved into the

pier, bells rang, whistles blew, a band on the boat started to play. On the pier itself two magnificently decorated passenger trains were waiting.

As the boat came to a stop a battery of cannon fired the Presidential salute.

A very distinguished party transferred from the boat to the pier. Among them were Millard Fillmore, the President of the United States—Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State—John J. Crittenden, the Attorney-General—W. C. Graham, the Secretary of the Navy—N. K. Hall, the Postmaster-General—Hamilton Fish, ex-Governor and United States Senator—ex-Governor Marcy, many U. S. Senators, Representatives and State officers—a total of 300.

What brought these people to Piermont—obscure Hudson River town? It was indeed a memorable and historic occasion, for, on May 14, 1851, *the entire line of the New York and Erie Railroad was to be opened to traffic*. For the first time a train was to be run from Piermont, the eastern terminus, to far-away Dunkirk, New York, the western terminus, on Lake Erie's shores.

The journey was and still is unique in railroad history. *It was the first long-distance railroad trip ever made in the United States*. Never has it been equalled in the number and prominence of the distinguished guests. Six were candidates for the office of President and no less than a dozen were aspirants for the Vice-Presidency.

Benjamin Loder, eighth president of the railroad, had extended formal invitations to all of these honored guests. With him at Piermont, to welcome them, were his Board of Directors and his official staff, including General Superintendent Charles Minot and Chief Engineer Horatio M. Allen.

It was Mr. Allen who had run the first locomotive ever to operate on this continent—*The Stourbridge Lion*—had built the first locomotive ever built in this country—*The Best Friend of Charleston*—and had been the fifth president of the New York and Erie.

The New York and Erie was not the first railroad in the United States. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the Mohawk and Hudson had already begun to operate. A branch of the Delaware and Hudson was in service at Honesdale, Pennsylvania, and the Camden and Amboy, the Paterson and Hudson River—now a part of the Erie System—as well as several other roads, were in existence in 1851.

But the New York and Erie was the first *long railroad* in the United States. When the New York and Erie opened for traffic, New York City

GREAT VALLEY STATION—HEART OF INDIAN RESERVE

Surveys had indicated that a canal through their territory was not feasible, but that a railroad was. It was this which led to the convention in December, 1831.

It was a gigantic undertaking, through a wild, wooded, and uninhabited country, from the Hudson to Lake Erie. There were many disappointments. Money was hard to raise, even though the communities had helped by giving land for station sites and right of way, and individuals had purchased the company's stock.

At the outset, it was estimated that the cost of building the railroad would be six million dollars. Actually, when the road was finally completed to Dunkirk, the cost was over $20,000,000!

Work was begun in 1835 when the first dirt was turned at Deposit, New York. The first section completed was from Piermont to Goshen, in 1841. From there the line was advanced to Middletown by 1843, to Port Jervis by 1848, to Binghamton in 1849, and, finally, to Dunkirk in the Spring of 1851.

Now let's return to the two trains waiting at Piermont to begin their long journey.

The great pier on which the trains waited was a mile long, 300 feet wide, and covered 90 acres of land which had been reclaimed from the river. On the pier were shops employing 200 men, tracks and a roundhouse with stalls for thirty locomotives.

With the passengers safely aboard, the first train with President

Fillmore and other members of the official party, pulled out at exactly eight o'clock. Daniel Webster, at his own request, was seated in an easy rocking chair securely fastened *on a flat car*. He didn't intend to miss any of the scenery. The second train followed seven minutes afterward.

The conductor of the first train was "Poppy" Ayres, a jovial 300-pounder, about whom many stories have been told. One is of historic interest. Some years before, "Poppy" had rigged up a device to signal his engineers. It consisted of a rope running to the engine, with a stick attached to the engine end. When "Poppy" wanted the engineer to stop the train, he would pull on the rope and the stick would jump. His engineer, Hamel—the first engineer on the New York and Erie, by the way—felt that he was at least the equal to, and possibly the superior of the conductor. He ran the engine, didn't he? Consequently he refused to accept any orders from "Poppy", and several times cut the stick down.

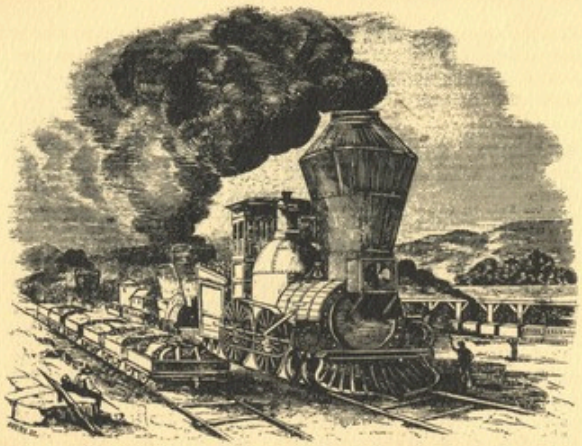
Finally "Poppy" lost patience. Following one of Hamel's refusals, he went forward to the engine at the next station stop and thoroughly licked the engineer. "Poppy's" stick was never interfered with again but the precedent was firmly established which placed the conductor in charge of the train on American railroads.

Throughout the journey many stops were made along the route to take guests aboard and to permit the local people to see and sometimes hear the distinguished members of the party. At all the stations there were crowds, banners, and speeches and band music.

It was indeed an occasion! Not only was it the inauguration of the first through-service over the railroad, but the people, then as now, were keenly anxious to see the President of the United States, his Cabinet, and particularly the orator, Daniel Webster.

About the time the first train arrived at Goshen its engine began to give trouble. Something was wrong with the valves. Before long the train was an hour behind schedule.

General Superintendent Minot met the emergency at Middletown by using the newly-built telegraph line to wire instructions to Port Jervis to have another engine ready when the train arrived at that point. It was Minot also who, over this same telegraph line in the Autumn of 1851—only a few months later—wired the first telegraph train order ever sent on any railroad. As a result of that experience, Minot put a dispatcher in charge of train operation over each division—a universal railroad practice from that day to this.



LOCOMOTIVE COMING ALONG THE SUSQUEHANNAH STATION

Leaving Middletown the trains descended the long grade into the Neversink Valley and arrived at Port Jervis. The site of this little town, now the terminus of the Erie's New York and Delaware Divisions, at the intersection of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, was just a swampy waste land before the opening of the railroad. Nearby ran a highway, one of the oldest roads in the United States. Tradition has it that the road was built about 1690 by Hollanders seeking gold or copper in the Delaware River mountains.

The engine which Minot had ordered was waiting to be coupled to the first train. It was a "*Swinburne*," named for its maker who was a guest on the train, and replaced a "*Rogers*."

The engineer driving the Swinburne engine was very happy; this was a big day for him. He had inherited the Swinburne engine after other engineers had persuaded the company that it was not efficient. In addition, this engineer was a friend of Swinburne. When the latter walked forward during the coupling, the engineer said to him, "Swinburne, I'm going to make you today, or break my neck!"

From Port Jervis to Narrowsburg—34 miles, the railroad followed

closely the windings of the Delaware River. The iron rail made at Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the first rolled in this country, was new. The ballast and the roadbed left much to be desired. But the engineer had made a promise. It was full steam ahead for him. He made that 34 miles in exactly 35 minutes. To say that the officers of the road were astonished is to speak mildly. The passengers were alarmed. Some of them wanted to get off and walk.

At Narrowsburg there was a delay because of hot journals. But soon the trains proceeded westward, with stops at Cochecton, at Callicoon and Deposit. It was at Deposit that the first spadeful of dirt for the construction of the railroad had been turned in 1835. Consequently a somewhat longer stop was made, permitting President Fillmore and Webster to make back platform speeches.

Construction was started at Deposit for a definite purpose. From the start it had been difficult to get stock subscriptions. The people at the west end of the proposed line claimed that if the road started at the Hudson

THE BRIDGE AT NARROWSBURGH

River it would never get beyond Middletown and would not benefit them. Those at the eastern end, at New York, where most of the money was, retorted that if the work started at Lake Erie, the road would never get beyond Elmira, so why should they invest their money? Therefore it had been decided to start construction at Deposit, just about the middle of the line. The first contracts for grading covered the forty miles between Deposit and Callicoon.

At the ceremonies incident to the start of the work, James Gore King, the second president of the road, who had traveled a hundred miles by stagecoach from Catskill on the Hudson River to Deposit, announced the purpose of the meeting, and said, "What now appears a beautiful meadow will in a few years present a far different aspect—a track of rails with cars passing and repassing loaded with merchandise and the products of the country. The freight will amount to $200,000 per annum in a few years."

it would be cheaper and better to place the road on stilts than it would be to grade the roadbed. They also felt that a trestle would be free from snow in the winter and above floods in the spring and summer months. Many miles of this trestle work had been built, not only at this point but also in the Canisteo valley near Hornell, but when the time came to lay the rails the plan was reconsidered and the timber trestles were abandoned. Instead the road was built on earthwork.

An extended stop was made at Binghamton, then a village of about 2,000. Here the trains were greeted by the largest crowd since leaving Piermont and President Fillmore spoke briefly. Daniel Webster addressed the crowd in these words: "I can hardly say more than express the pleasure I have in seeing you and the western end of this great work of art. I have crossed the upper branches of the Delaware and the Susquehanna, and I know something of these rivers at their mouths; but never had I seen

ELMIRA DEPOT

them as they issue from these lofty, sublime and picturesque hills. It is a beautiful and a vigorous and a healthy country. May God bless you and enable you to enjoy all its blessings."

At seven o'clock the trains ended their first day's journey at Elmira. With a population of 3,000, this was the metropolis of the Southern Tier. Presidents Fillmore and Loder led one group to Brainard's Hotel and sat side by side during a fine dinner, while Webster headed the other group to Haight's Hotel for an equally sumptuous meal. After dinner the two groups reunited at Brainard's and the two Presidents held a reception in the lobby, shaking hands with all the citizens of Elmira.

After a night of merrymaking and celebration, the trains were a little late departing the following morning. One of the two conductors did not show up—probably the first violation of *Rule G!*

Just west of Elmira the trains passed through Horseheads. The name was given, legend said, when settlers moved in and found the skulls of many army horses which the soldiers of General Sullivan had been obliged to kill during the Revolutionary War.

The day's first stop was at Corning, a new village which had been created by the building of the railroad. There was a noticeable lack of applause for the distinguished guests on the train at this point. Most of the residents were Democrats and the official party from Washington was composed almost entirely of Whigs!

On and on went the trains, through Addison, through Canisteo, and finally to Hornellsville, destined, under its modern name of Hornell, to be a top-ranking town along the Erie Railroad, site of one of its principal locomotive repair shops and main stores depot.

Leaving Hornellsville, Charles Minot doffed his coat and climbed up on the engine to ride into Dunkirk. Pusher engines assisted the trains up the steep hill west of the town to the summit of Tip Top, 1,776 feet above sea-level, the highest point on the main line of the Erie.

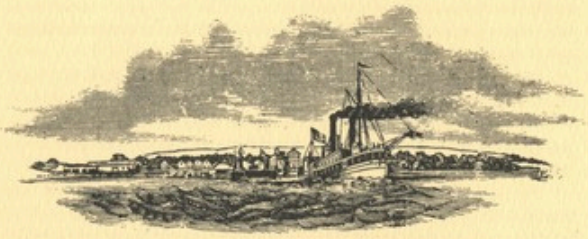
Wellsville, Belmont, Belvidere. Now the trains were passing through vast wooded regions, showing no signs of cultivation, with only an occasional log hut here and there.

A stop was made at Cuba, where the last spike in the construction of the road had been driven a few weeks before, on April 21st. At Cuba was the "Seneca Oil Spring" where petroleum was first discovered on this continent. The Indians used its oil waters for medicinal purposes before the discovery of America.

At Allegany a delegation of Cattaraugus Indians from the near-by reservation met the trains, attired in their native costumes and heavily painted for the ceremonies. The scenic beauty in this section was judged by the travelers to be "the most stupendous any railway ever passed through."

The town of Salamanca, now an important division point on the Erie, did not exist in 1851. Located about 14 miles west of Allegany, it came into prominence when the Atlantic and Great Western Railway was built. Its name was derived from the Spanish Marquis of Salamanca who was a liberal contributor to the building of this later railroad. The town enjoys the distinction of being located entirely on Indian Reservation lands.

The travelers got their first glimpse of the distant waters of Lake Erie as the trains reached Dayton, where an accident marred the festivities. A townsman, shooting off an old cannon, was seriously injured by the



VIEW OF DUNKIRK FROM THE PIERS

explosion of the old piece. History says that a liberal fund was collected among the passengers to pay the unfortunate man's medical expenses.

At 4:30 on the afternoon of May 15th, the people of Dunkirk heard the first whistle of the incoming trains, now combined into one. Horatio Brooks, an engineer on the road, later a division superintendent, and still later the founder of the great Brooks Locomotive Works of Dunkirk, came out from Dunkirk with the engine "*Dunkirk*" to meet the approaching train and escort it into town. As it entered the city the special party was met with the shrieking of whistles and the pealing of bells. A navy gunboat in the harbor, surrounded by all manner of floating craft, fired the Presidential salute.

A great arch had been erected across the track and near it, at the very end of the railroad, stood a pedestal on which was the old plough used in 1838 to break the first ground at Dunkirk. The pedestal's base bore the single word: "*Finis*".

As a final fitting touch, the new hotel had been named "The Loder House".

The officers of the railroad alighted near the arch and the chairman of the Reception Committee introduced President Loder to the thousands of people gathered there. On behalf of the officers and directors William E. Dodge, a director, responded, in part:

"We have reached the goal of our hopes. And now, as we look back on the days of darkness, disappointments and toil—and they were many—let us today forget them all in our rejoicing that over all we have triumphed, and that at last this arduous work has been accomplished. The Empire

City and the Great West, the Atlantic Ocean and the inland seas, are by this ligature of iron made one.

"Who will attempt to predict the future of this road? Although my friends have called me crazy in my estimates of its growth, I feel today that if I am spared to make fresh estimates ten years hence I shall wonder at my present tame views and stinted calculations.

"What mind can keep pace with the progress of this country? What was Buffalo, or Cleveland, Detroit, Cincinnati or St. Louis, in 1832, when this road was chartered? Where were Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota? Where California and Oregon? Just in proportion as this country expands and its foreign and domestic commerce develops, will the business of this road increase. Who can compute its income and importance as years go on? We have built this highway for you and your posterity."

A mighty banquet was held for the distinguished guests at the Loder House. The villagers and others enjoyed, a contemporary account says, a tremendous barbecue arranged in an immense pavilion near the tracks. A single table, 300 feet long, ran the length of the pavilion. On it were piled meat from a yoke of barbecued oxen, ten sheep roasted whole, a hundred roasted fowl and other meat and game. Two men were required to carry a single loaf of bread. The loaves were ten feet long and two feet thick. Ranged along the table were barrels of cider to wash down the viands. The festivities lasted until midnight.

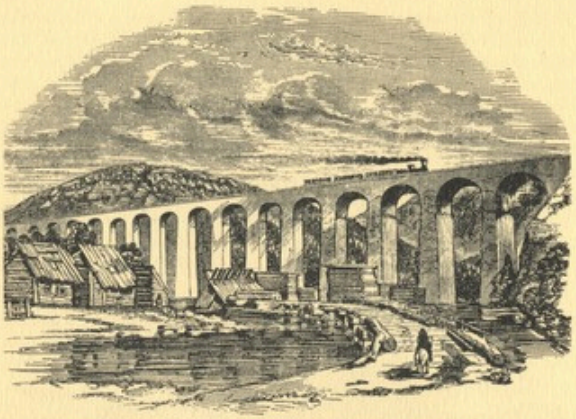
And so ended the history-making trip over the new railroad between Piermont and Dunkirk.

The New York and Erie Railroad had begun to serve the Southern Tier and the nation. The communities along its line now had the transportation service they desired and they grew and prospered.

Great industries were established throughout the area. Eventually the state-barrier restrictions of the charter were removed and the railroad was permitted to connect with railroads running through New Jersey to Jersey City.

Today Dunkirk is at the end of a branch line of the Erie Railroad. The lines to Chicago and to Buffalo have superseded the line to Dunkirk as Main Lines. Today Piermont also is at the end of a branch line, superseded by Jersey City at the eastern terminus.

Yes, the road has changed in its material appearance. Many times 446 miles in length now, it has grown with the communities it has so long and faithfully served. The Erie has come a long way since that memorable pioneer journey of one hundred years ago.



THE STARRUCCA VIADUCT

This prediction was received with incredulity by some of those present, and President King modified his prediction by adding, "at least eventually."

Leaving the picturesque Delaware River valley at Deposit the trains climbed the steep grade of Gulf Summit and passed over the divide to the valley of the Susquehanna River. In those days, it must be remembered, there were no power shovels, no bulldozers nor wheel scrapers. The handling of earthwork was limited to the wheelbarrow, the pick and shovel, and horse-drawn carts, and the sheer costs and delays from this type of labor forced the early engineers who located the line to reduce to a minimum the amount of grading work to be done.

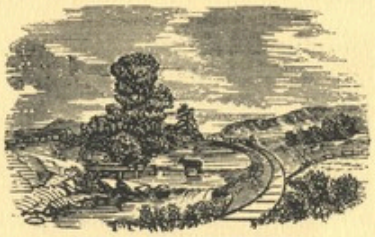
Going down the western slope, the passengers saw ahead of them the great Starrucca Viaduct. Here a stop was made for all aboard to alight and get a good view of this mammoth work of man.

In the surveys of the road this spot had been a great stumbling block. It was necessary to carry the road for 1,200 feet over the Starrucca Creek valley, at a height of 110 feet above the valley floor. Too high for a timber trestle, the amount of earthwork required would have been stupendous.

A happy solution was found when James Kirkwood, a Scotch civil

engineer, offered to build *a stone arch* bridge. His offer was accepted and he built the Starrucca Viaduct, with its 18 arches of stone, each 50 feet in diameter and 110 feet high. This was a great engineering feat for that day but true appreciation is only possible when one knows that today this same great structure carries a double track railroad with modern heavy locomotives and heavy train loads. Small wonder some of the passengers called it the eighth wonder of the world!

Now the train crossed into the State of Pennsylvania, which it had done once before for a short distance after leaving Port Jervis. The charter granted by the State of New York had stipulated that the road must be built entirely within the State of New York. The engineers had attempted to comply with the language of the charter but had finally decided that because of the lesser amount of earthwork required on the



VIEW ON THE SUSQUEHANNAH

Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River for about 26 miles, construction costs would be materially cheaper than they would be on the New York side. Appropriate legislation was obtained, both in New York and Pennsylvania, to make this possible. Here again, to save grading, the line dropped down into the little village of Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, only to turn north again and back into New York State about 10 miles beyond.

The trains arrived at Susquehanna Depot only eight minutes late. Here the passengers found the most extensive yard on the railroad. Sixteen locomotives were lined up on a sidetrack and saluted the trains with whistles and bells. A procession of railroad employees appeared, led by a pioneer engineman of the road, playing a copper key bugle.

Leaving Susquehanna the passengers soon noticed a long timber trestle paralleling the track. Originally the engineers had estimated that

THE MODERN ERIE

● The progressive and courageous pioneering spirit of the Erie Railroad is more evident today than ever.

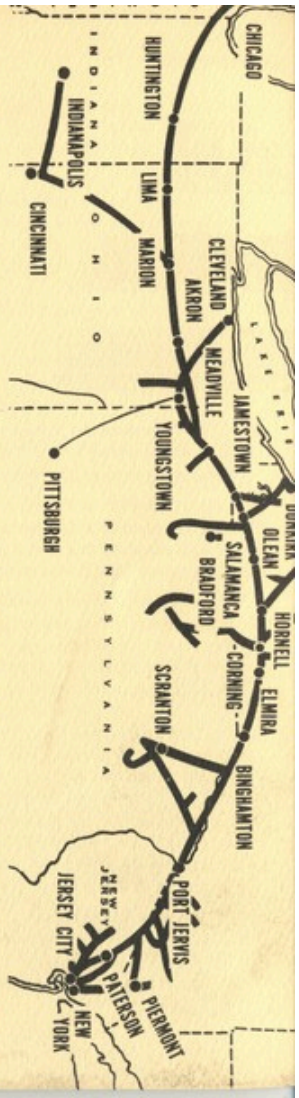
It was the Erie spirit in the early 1800's which sparked the construction of the first main line American railroad dedicated to the opening up and development of a virgin territory. It is the Erie spirit in 1951 that makes it one of the most progressive of American railroads, ready to serve our country well in peacetime or in war.

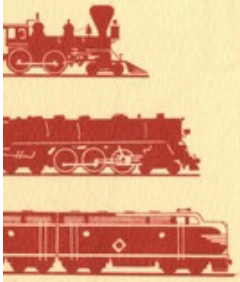
Today, the Erie operates 2245 miles of railroad serving the six key states of the East and Mid-west—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The main line extends from New York (Jersey City) to Chicago with principal branches to Scranton, Pa., Rochester and Buffalo, N.Y., and Cleveland and Dayton, O. The Erie area, often called "The Heart of Industrial America", is rich in coal, iron, sand, limestone, salt, gas, oil and industrial products of those resources, along with agricultural produce. It contains more than a third (34 per cent) of the nation's population, and nearly half (45 per cent) of the country's manufacturing plants.

Today, as in 1851, the Erie is a leader, as well as a good neighbor and productive community member, in the populous and important area it serves.

With typically bold and confident pioneer spirit, the Erie has spent over $114,000,000 for new equipment and improvements in the last decade.

Paul W. Johnston, president of the Erie, clearly sets forth the Erie's policy:





"We cannot stand still. We must continually progress and go forward. The investment of funds in modern equipment is necessary to provide the kind of service essential to Erie area industries. People expect the railroads to be prepared to serve in peace and war.

"It is up to us to keep abreast of new developments, to adapt them to our needs, as dictated by our passengers and shippers, and to make our customers conscious of Erie's willingness to serve in the best possible manner with safe, efficient and dependable service.

"Our tremendous investments in new equipment indicate Erie's faith in its industrial area. We are constantly striving to make the Erie emblem recognized as the 'Mark of Progress in Railroading.'"

As a general rule, 88 per cent of Erie's total business is derived from the movement of freight, 4 per cent from passengers, 7 per cent mail express and miscellaneous, and 1 per cent from other sources. In 1950 its total revenue from all sources was $167,436,439.

The Erie has been a leader in the conversion to the modern type of diesel-electric motive power. In its more than one hundred year history it has passed through the era of the wood-burning locomotive, to the coal-burning steam locomotive and now the oil-burning diesel locomotive. This in itself is an indication of railroad progress. Today the Erie has a higher percentage of diesel locomotive ownership than any other trunk line operating between New York and Chicago. In the short span of seven years the number of diesel units owned by the Erie has risen from 12 at the middle of 1944 to 396 units at the present time. Although the original cost of diesel power is four to five times that of steam, its operating cost is from one-quarter to one-third less that of steam. In face of rising costs in every direction, the diesel has been a big factor in holding down the cost of rail transportation. Erie has been a leader in recognizing that value and in acting upon it.

Since 1945 more than 5300 freight cars of all types were purchased by the railroad. These alone would make a train over fifty miles long. At the present time the Erie owns 24,504 freight cars, a valuable asset in the

country's defense effort and in moving the materials so vital to our American industrial economy. The large white Erie diamond has become a familiar sight on freight cars carrying everything from automobiles and coal to washing machines and meats.

The Erie, through vigorous merchandising of its efficient freight service, has become a pioneer carrier of West Coast fresh fruits and vegetables into eastern markets. It hauled the first car of California perishables into New York City back in 1887. Today, it carries more than 90 per cent of west coast citrus and deciduous fruit into the New York Terminal Market. One of the Erie's titles and another badge of its excellence is "The Route of the Perishables."

"NY-98," an Erie "Hot Shot" freight train of several sections, each averaging close to 100 cars daily, arrives at Croxton freight yard in Jersey City each afternoon. The perishables are re-iced, divided into groups, moved to the float bridge in Jersey City and lightered across the Hudson River by tugboat, ten to sixteen cars to a car float, to the Duane St. station.

Here, in the night, the citrus and deciduous fruits are sorted and arranged in the world's largest display of fruit for auction.

The auction itself rivals the Tower of Babel. The fantastically fast-talking auctioneer utters a strange torrent of sound apparently unrelated to any form of human speech, completely confusing to the uninitiated listener, but thoroughly understood by the experienced buyers, whose

quick signals tell the auctioneer the number of cases being bid for from any particular lot, and at what price. All in split seconds.

The auction is completed by mid-morning, and by noontime the huge pier is cleared of all the produce that came in during the night and is on its way to the market places around the city to meet the daily food needs of New York's millions.

The Erie has been called "The Railroad that Goes to Sea." Where its rails end at Jersey City on the west side of the Hudson River, the Erie's "Navy" of 257 boats takes over to deliver passengers to New York City and freight to the many terminals around Manhattan Island for loading export shipments destined for foreign countries all over the world.

The Erie fleet consists of ferryboats, tugboats, heated barges, refrigerated barges, carfloats, hoists and lighters, every kind of craft used in harbor operation.

Always a trail-blazer, Erie pioneered in the development and use of radio-telephone equipment on trains—now approaching completion on the entire main line. Through its use, train crews on passenger and freight runs are in direct communication while the train is running. Crews of passing trains, through radio-telephone, can check each other's cars and report. Trains and wayside base stations are in constant contact and wayside stations have an emergency radio link with dispatchers in the event of telephone or other wire failure. This type of radio communication increases the safety and dependability of service.

"Q. A." on the Erie stands for "Quick Action." It is Erie's own system designed to provide shippers with up-to-the-minute information about the location of their carload shipments while enroute, by use of a coast-to-coast teletype network. "Passing reports" are flashed to focal points and relayed to Erie sales agencies all over the United States. Thus, Erie is able to put its finger quickly on the shipper's car among the 28,000 to 30,000 freight cars running daily over its 2,245 miles of track. Shippers thereby are enabled to reroute cars to take advantage of better markets.

The Erie in 1950 moved 42,339,984 tons of freight over distances totaling 10,447,819,374 ton miles, at a rate of 56,986 gross ton miles per train hour. This latter figure, the accepted measure of railroad operating efficiency, places Erie well toward the top among main line American railroads.

Erie employes themselves christened the newly-inaugurated "Flying Saucer" freight trains, when Trains 99 and 100 were placed in service and cut a full day from the running time between New York and Chicago.

These swift diesel-drawn freights make possible second morning delivery of less-than-carload shipments between these two points.

In addition to its extensive freight operations, the Erie also maintains a substantial passenger service. Here again Erie has invested heavily in modernizing its passenger coaches and facilities, and in the purchase of the most modern type of roomette-bedroom sleeping cars and the latest word in 4500 horsepower two-unit diesel passenger locomotives. All of the Erie's passenger trains west of the New Jersey commuter area are diesel powered. Erie coaches on all through trains are air conditioned and are provided with individual adjustable seats and lighting, broad vision windows and clean washrooms to give passengers the utmost in comfortable transportation.

True to its pioneer spirit, the Erie has set many "Firsts" since the historic journey across New York State from the Atlantic seaboard to the Great Lakes in 1851.

FIRST

railroad in the United States of over 400 miles in length—1851.

FIRST

trunk line railroad to link the Atlantic seaboard and the Great Lakes.

FIRST

railroad to use six-foot gauge track—the broadest on the American continent in 1851.

FIRST

railroad to transport California fresh fruit to the New York market—1887.

FIRST

railroad to ship milk to New York City—1842.

FIRST

railroad to use iron rails rolled in America—1847.

Over the years, the Erie has provided many skilled and seasoned rail executives for other railroads. It has often been called "The Little Red Schoolhouse of Railroading." Nineteen past or present presidents of other railroads have worked for and learned their railroading on the Erie.

Loyalty and cooperation have become a tradition among Erie employes. Of the 21,456 employes, 4,000 have been with the railroad for more than 25 years; 1,000 have been with the road for more than 40 years and 100 have been with Erie for half-a-century.

The Erie looks ahead with confidence and with the same progressive spirit which made it a pioneer in 1851 and has characterized its growth since that time. When the spirit is right, there is progress. The spirit of the Erie is one that stands out as forward looking, progressive and completely loyal to the ideals of serving the public with the best in railroad transportation.

As in the past, the Erie, in the years ahead, will bend its sincere efforts to the job of being a good neighbor and a valued and productive member of the community of which it is proud to be a part.

The Erie is also proud of its heritage—a great example of the daring and doing that has made America great. In the sacrifices and struggles of those early pioneers is the oft-repeated story in our country's history of free men working with a vision of progress—in this instance, to serve the public need for better transportation.

The indomitable spirit of the pioneer builders remains as a guiding force for the Erie men and women of today in their constant aim to provide the best in service—and build a better railroad for the years to come!

FIRST

to construct a telegraph line along its right of way—1850.

FIRST

railroad to use the telegraph for directing train operations—1851.

FIRST

railroad to invent the use of a bell-cord for conductors to signal the engineers—1842.

FIRST

railroad to use the ticket punch.

FIRST

railroad, in 1861, to provide tank cars for movement of petroleum.

FIRST

today in freight, providing the highest and widest clearance between Chicago and New York.

FIRST

today, in volume of West Coast fruits and vegetables carried to eastern seaboard markets.

FIRST

to install a complete and comprehensive train radio communications system over the entire main line—1950.

The history of the Erie is filled with the names of great men. In looking back over the years, it would seem that most of the financial tycoons of that era had had some part in Erie's career, at times a rough and rugged one. Among these were Eleazar Lord, A. S. Hewitt, Daniel Drew, Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, J. Pierpont Morgan, E. H. Harriman, James J. Hill, E. H. Gary, George F. Baker and the Van Sweringen brothers.

In the battles of some of these dynamic figures and in their quest for power, no matter who or what stood in the way, Erie took some bruises. But the railroad was more fibrous and resilient than any of those who buffeted it about. It came through and, under strong and courageous leadership, thrived and grew even greater.

The Erie has not missed a stock dividend since 1942, when, after complete reorganization of the company the year before, a stock dividend

was paid for the first time in sixty-nine years. Since 1942, a dividend of $1 per common share has been paid annually, and increased in 1948 to $1.50, and in 1950 when $1.75 was paid.

The Erie is made up of many things—men, money, material. Here is the Erie as it is today:

Investment in transportation property	$469,315,302

Number of employes	21,456

Number of stockholders	25,563

Miles of all tracks	5,496

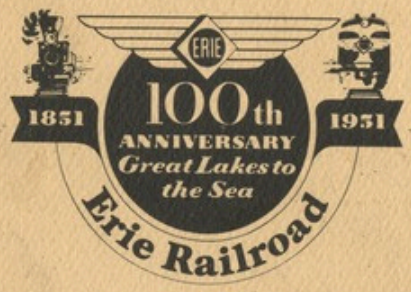
Number of diesel locomotive units	396

Number of steam locomotives	235

Number of passenger cars	662

Number of freight cars	24,504

Number of boats	257


ERIE
1851
100th
ANNIVERSARY
Great Lakes to
the Sea
1951
Erie Railroad