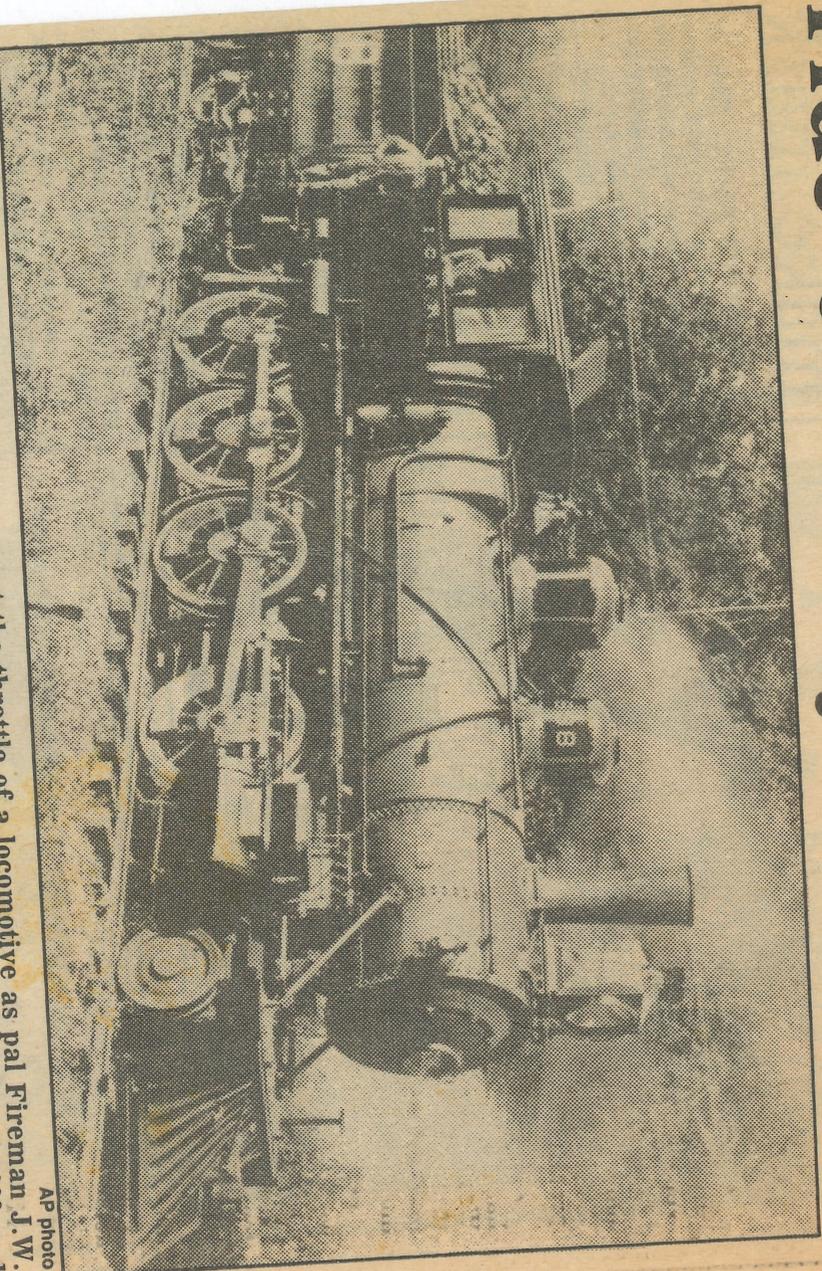


Ride of Casey Jones



AP photo

Engineer John Luther "Casey" Jones at the throttle of a locomotive as pal Fireman J. W. McKinnie stands nearby. Jones hit another train in Vaughan, Miss., in April of 1900 and became an American folk hero. This is not the train he rode to his death.

freights, one headed north and one headed south, were

switched off to a siding on the East side of the main line, but the caboose and three cars of the southbound train were still protruding onto the main line.

Sim Webb the fireman first saw the caboose, shouted, and jumped to safety. Casey Jones hit the emergency brakes but stayed with his engine as it crashed into the rear cars of the freight and lunged to the left, coming to rest pointing in the direction it came. A bolt or a splinter of lumber pierced Jones in the throat. He was taken on a stretcher to the depot a half-mile away, where he died lying on a baggage wagon.

In addition to Webb, three passengers, an American Express messenger, and two postal clerks were slightly injured.

"All the crew safe, you say, and the passengers too?"

"Thank God, that is clever, and his soft eyes closed as

his pale face smiled

"And he whistled down brakes forever."

What went wrong? Webb said later he saw a flagman and heard the torpedoes, explosive devices placed on the tracks to warn the engineer, but Gurner contends Jones was "short-flagged."

"The flagman didn't get far enough back for Jones so see him in time to stop," he says.

Nonetheless, the railroad's investigation concluded that, "Engineer Jones was solely responsible for the accident as a consequence of not having responded to flag signals."

According to railroad records, the Illinois Central Railroad awarded Webb \$5 for his injuries. The messenger, who hurt his back, got \$23, and the two postal clerks \$1 each.

Why didn't Casey jump?

"That is really the hard one to answer," Gurner says.

"Once the engineer puts the brake in emergency, reverses the engine and opens the sand-

need of his services."

Even though Gurner insists Jones was a "fine engineer," he found railroad records that showed Jones had been suspended nine times, for periods ranging from 5 days to 30 days, for safety violations between Feb. 14, 1891 and May 22, 1899. The offenses included such things as "collision in Water Valley Yard," "running through switch at Carbon dale," "for not recognizing flagman who was protecting work train."

Jones lived in Water Valley from 1893 to 1896.

"When they tore the old Water Valley depot down, I got this wealth of old records that were being hauled off to the garbage dump," Gurner says.

But the railroad in Water Valley today is only a memory.

"They ran the last train in February of '82," Gurner says. "They even took up the tracks. That was adding insult to

Railroader traces last

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Bruce Gurner has been a schoolteacher, commercial fisherman, photographer, but what really got into his blood was railroad-ing. And on one small but famous slice of it — the last ride of Casey Jones — he's become the expert of experts.)

By DAVID L. LANGFORD
AP Newsfeatures Writer

WATER VALLEY, Miss. — The 20th century was not quite four months old when railroad engineer John Luther "Casey" Jones crashed the Cannon Ball Express into a freight train at Vaughan, Miss., and became an American folk hero.

Bruce Gurner had not been born then, but you'd never guess it listening to him talk, sitting under a shade tree in his front yard on the edge of town, thumbs tucked under the bib of his overalls, a railroader's cap on his head.

"Casey Jones was a good engineer," he was saying. "Casey would have made a good jet pilot. He was a bit of a chance-taker, but he got caught in a trap that was not of his own making.

"If Casey hadn't of gotten killed, he would have died of a broken heart, because he sure would have gotten fired for what happened. Railroad-ing was his first love. Even his wife Janie — she was the cutest thing — came in second to railroad-ing."

Bruce Gurner, 68, former schoolteacher and railroad engineer, historian and photographer, fisherman, curator of his own backyard museum of railroad memorabilia, chronicler of the last ride of Casey Jones. Retired 10 years ago, after losing the sight in his left eye, Gurner spends much of his time these days in his canoe out on Enid Reservoir, running trotlines in quest of crapple and catfish.

"I tried to be a commercial fisherman for a while after I retired, but I found out that when you do it regular it's not as much fun," he says. "No telling where I would have gone if I hadn't been kind of lazy."

For 40 years or so he had



Bruce Gurner

alternated between two careers, railroading and teaching in high school. He was also shooting pictures for the local weekly newspaper and working with the Yalobusha County Historical Society, while raising five sons and a daughter.

Among his fondest memories are working on the City of New Orleans, like his father and his uncles. That's the passenger train that splits the heartland on its 920-mile run from Chicago to New Orleans and was made famous by Arlo Guthrie's hit folk song in 1972.

"When I quit teaching at Oxford I put in two years on that beautiful City of New Orleans firing (working as a fireman) for Cap Gardner. Boy, was that high living. Making twice as much money as I was teaching. Eight days a month off."

If you want to listen, Bruce Gurner can talk to you for hours about highballing up and down the Illinois Central tracks from Memphis, Tenn., to Canton, Miss., and the golden era of steam locomotives, in the days when Water Valley was a railroad town, with a big roundhouse and shop, and people like Casey Jones lived there.

"Come all you rounders if you want to hear

"The story told of a brave engineer,"

"Casey Jones was the rounders name,

"A high right-wheeler of mighty fame."

"It took me 25 years to figure out what happened to him down there at Vaughan," says Gurner, who collected rare photographs and old railroad records and the recollections of Casey Jones' widow and the old-timers who had ridden with him. "Thing is, nothing would have ever come of it except that an engine wiper in the Canton shop, who was an old friend of Casey's, wrote that ballad about it and some vaudeville performers picked it up.

"Engineers were getting killed all the time in those days of heavy traffic on single-track railroads, when slow freights had to be sidetracked to make way for the passenger trains. Sometimes they didn't even get their names in the paper when they got killed, but Casey had a song written about him and America had a new folk hero."

At 12:50 a.m. on the morning of April 30, 1900 Casey Jones pulled out of Memphis' Poplar Street Station at the throttle of the Cannon Ball Express, with Sim Webb as his fireman and J.C. Turner the conductor. Casey was leaving an hour and 35 minutes late and wanted to make up the time before he reached Canton.

"Through South Memphis yards on the fly,

"He heard the fireman say,

"You got a white eye."

"All the switchmen knew by the engine's moan

"That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones."

In an self-published account of Jones' last ride, Gurner, who has made that same run many times, described how Jones had probably made up that lost time.

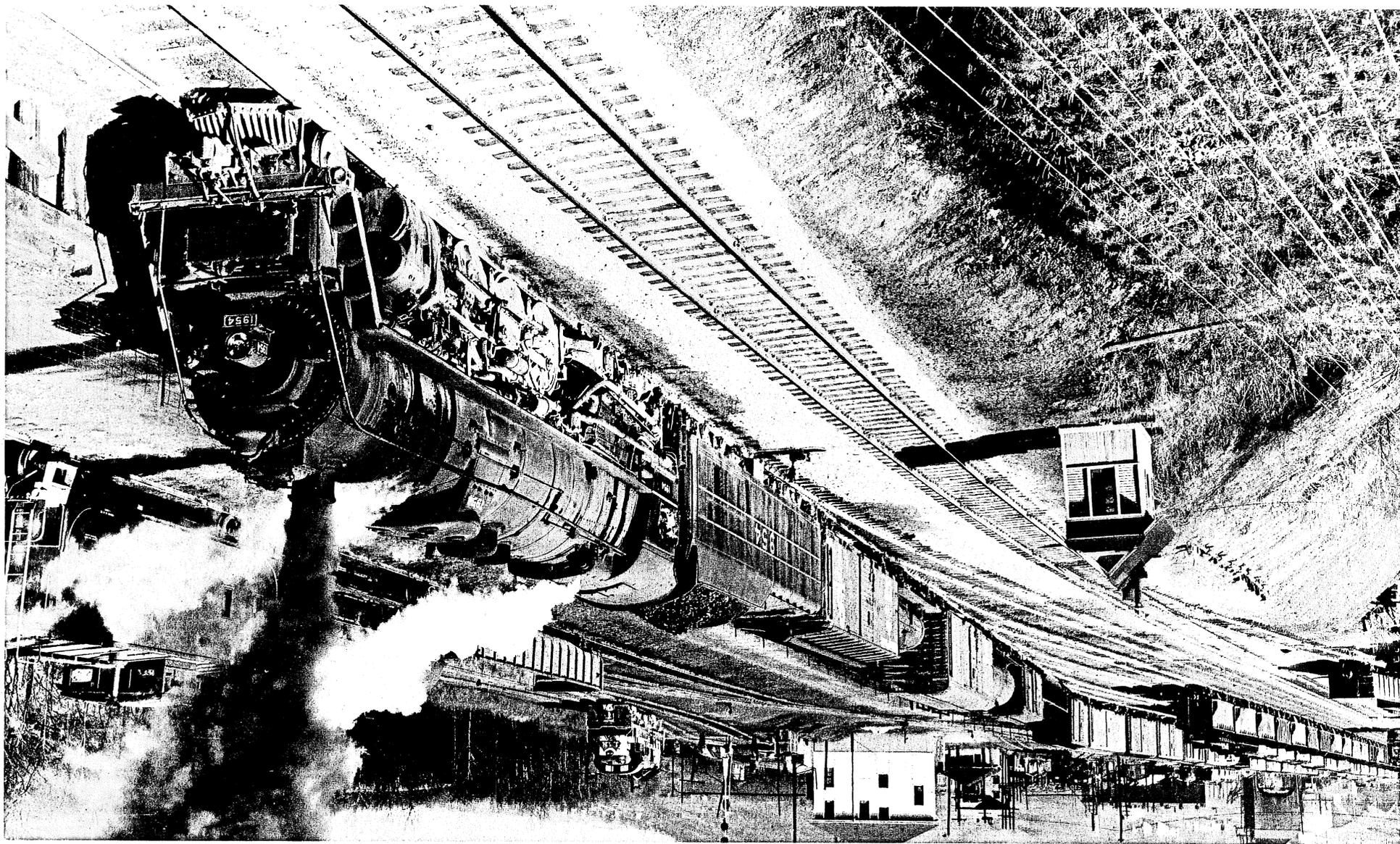
"Passenger comfort was not too important in those days and damage suits for being thrown about at high rates of speed almost unheard of," Gurner says.

The Cannon Ball was on time when it reached Goodman, 10 miles north of Vaughan, but disaster awaited down the tracks. To make way for the passenger train, two long

L&N M-1 Class 2-8-4 type No. 1954 starts an Atlanta-bound fast freight from DeCoursey Yard near Cincinnati in 1956. Crews dubbed M-1's "Big Emmas."

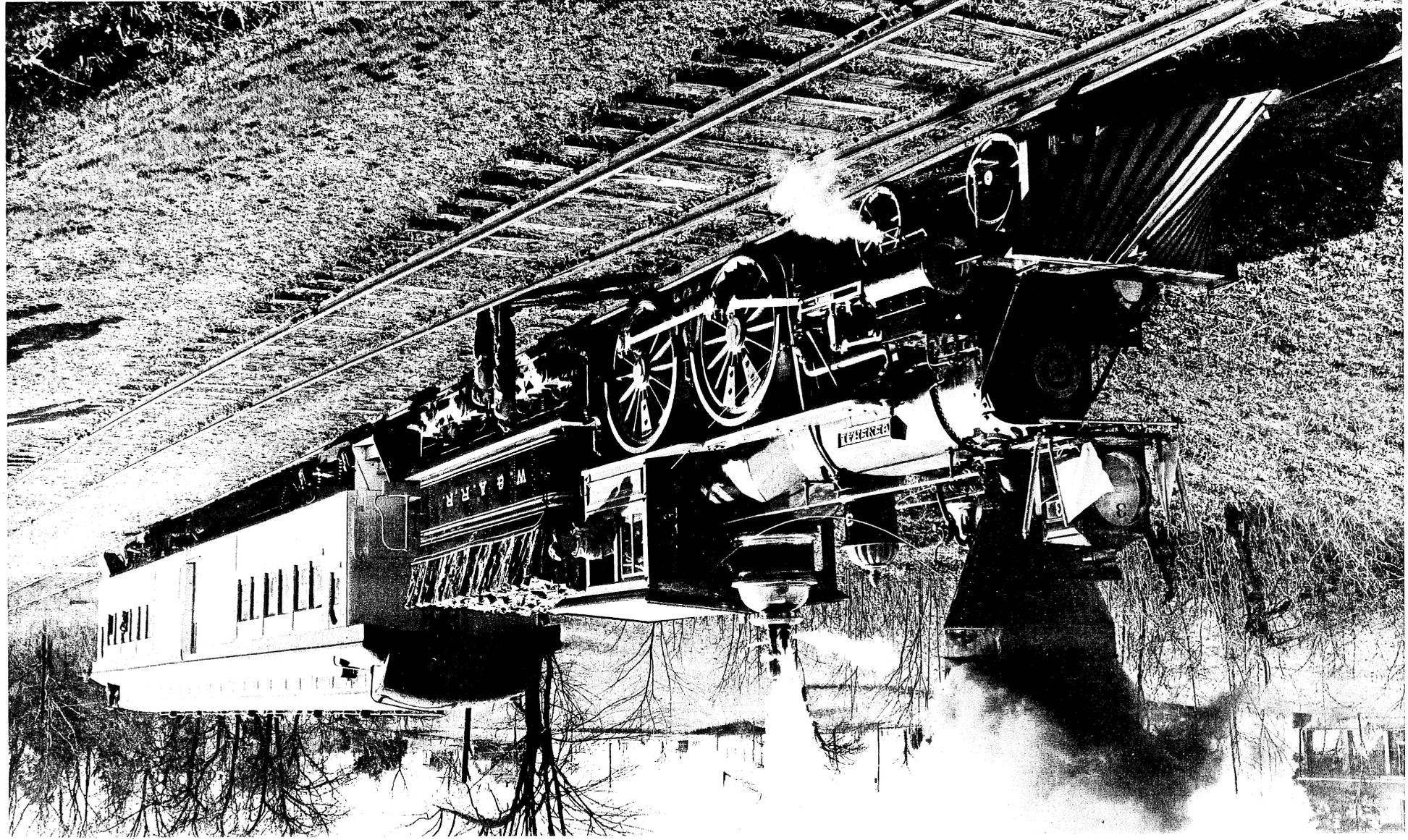


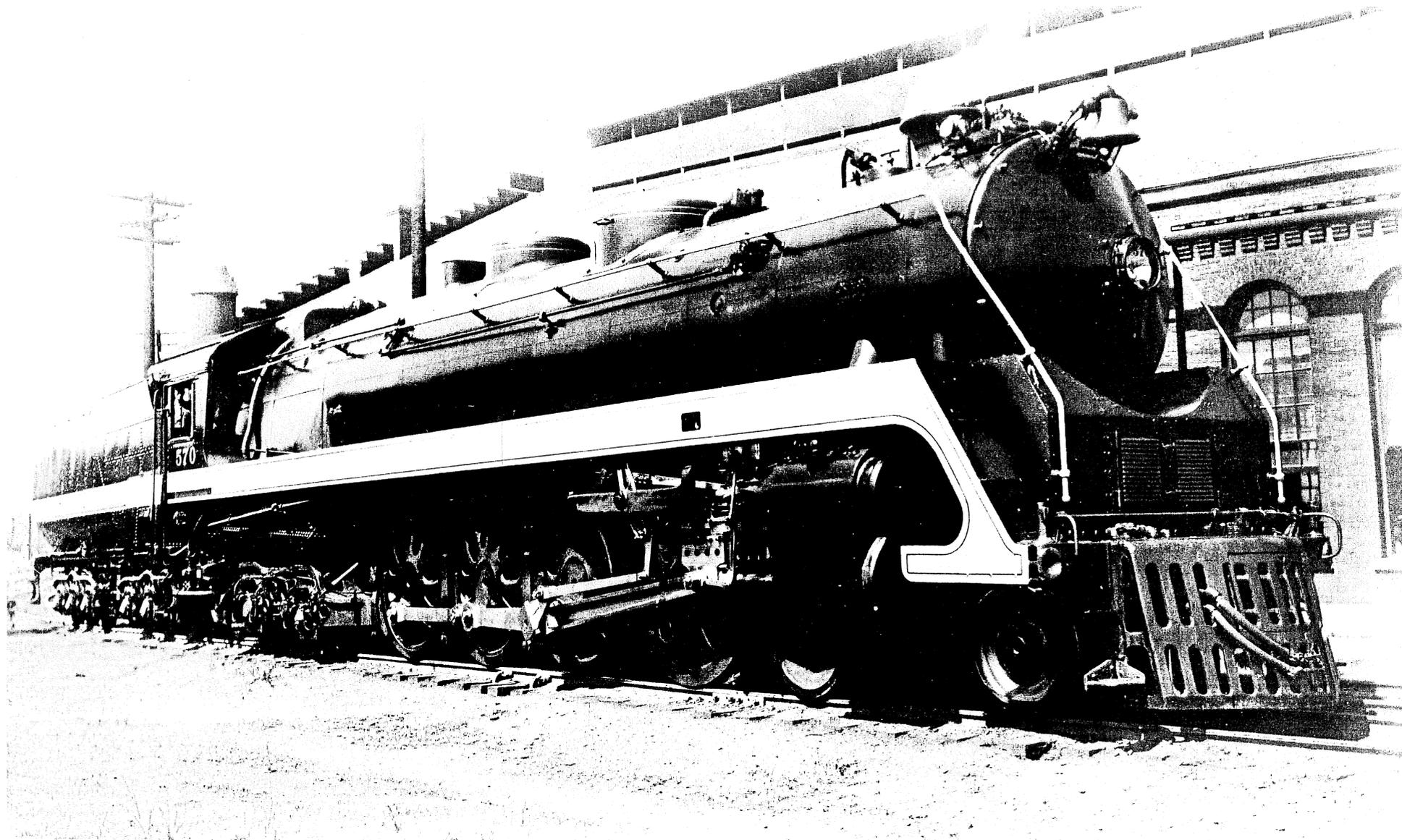
Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



In 1961-62, L&N restored historic "General" for Civil War Centennial events. Engine ran over much of South, East in 1962-65, is today on permanent display at Kennesaw, Ga. (where it was stolen in 1862).

Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM





Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



Newest steam power on Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis (L&N Subsidiary) were 20 dual-service 4-8-4 types, built by American Locomotive Works in 1942-43. "Dixie Line" crews nicknamed them "Yellow Jackets."



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



No. 1499, a GE U30C 3,000 h.p. diesel locomotive, came to L&N in 1972, was first of GE's new "X/R" (Extra Reliability) line of motive power. Big six-axle is painted in distinctive black, white and gold color scheme.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



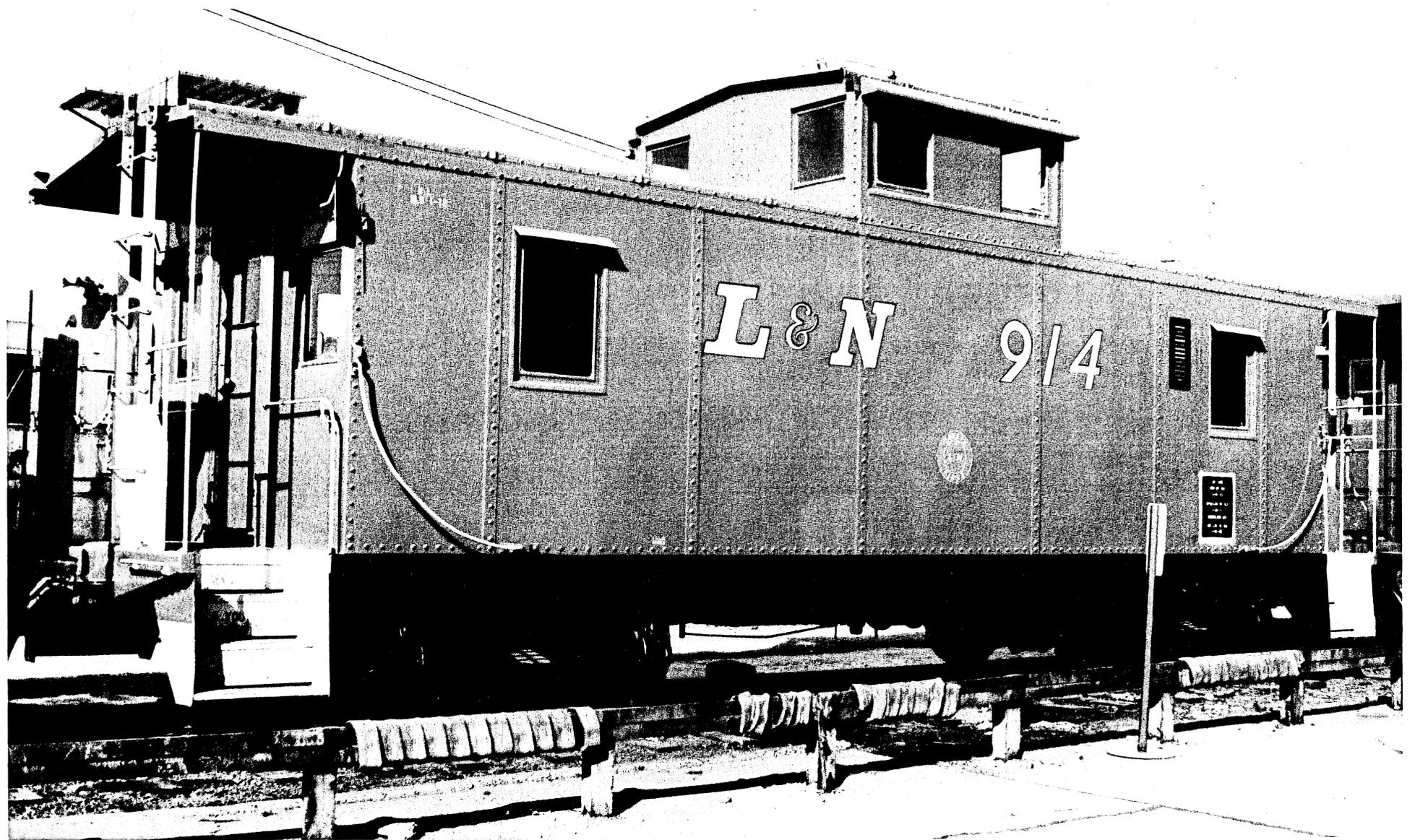
Chicago-Miami streamliner, "South Wind," speeds toward Louisville in 1941. Streamlined L&N 4-6-2's with large tenders enabled "Wind" to run non-stop from Nashville to Birmingham to establish record for steam-pulled passenger trains.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



Best-known of L&N's passenger trains was The Pan-American, inaugurated in 1921. The "Pan" highballs toward Louisville in 1941 behind 4-8-2 No. 407.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



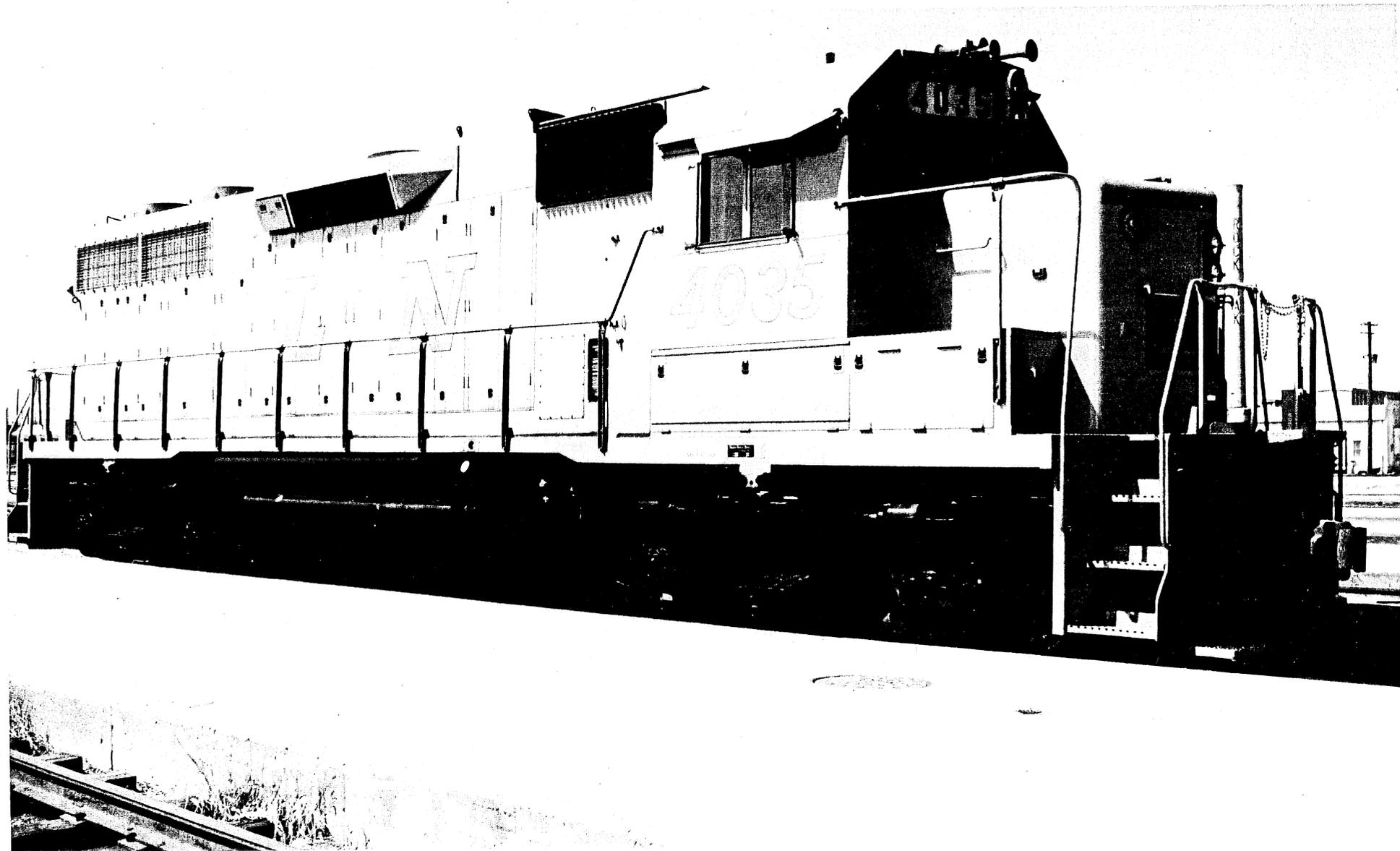
On L&N, "little red cabooses" still bring up the rear of all freight trains. Cabooses (and L&N owns both cupola, bay window types) are painted red, with yellow steps, ladders, lettering and numerals.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



Cincinnati-bound L&N fast freight rolls northward from Louisville behind trio of Alco "Century" C-630-type high-horsepower diesels built in 1966.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



“Work Horse” units of L&N’s diesel fleet in 1970’s are EMD GP-38 and GP38/2 units like No. 4035. They’re used all over 6,500-mile L&N system.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



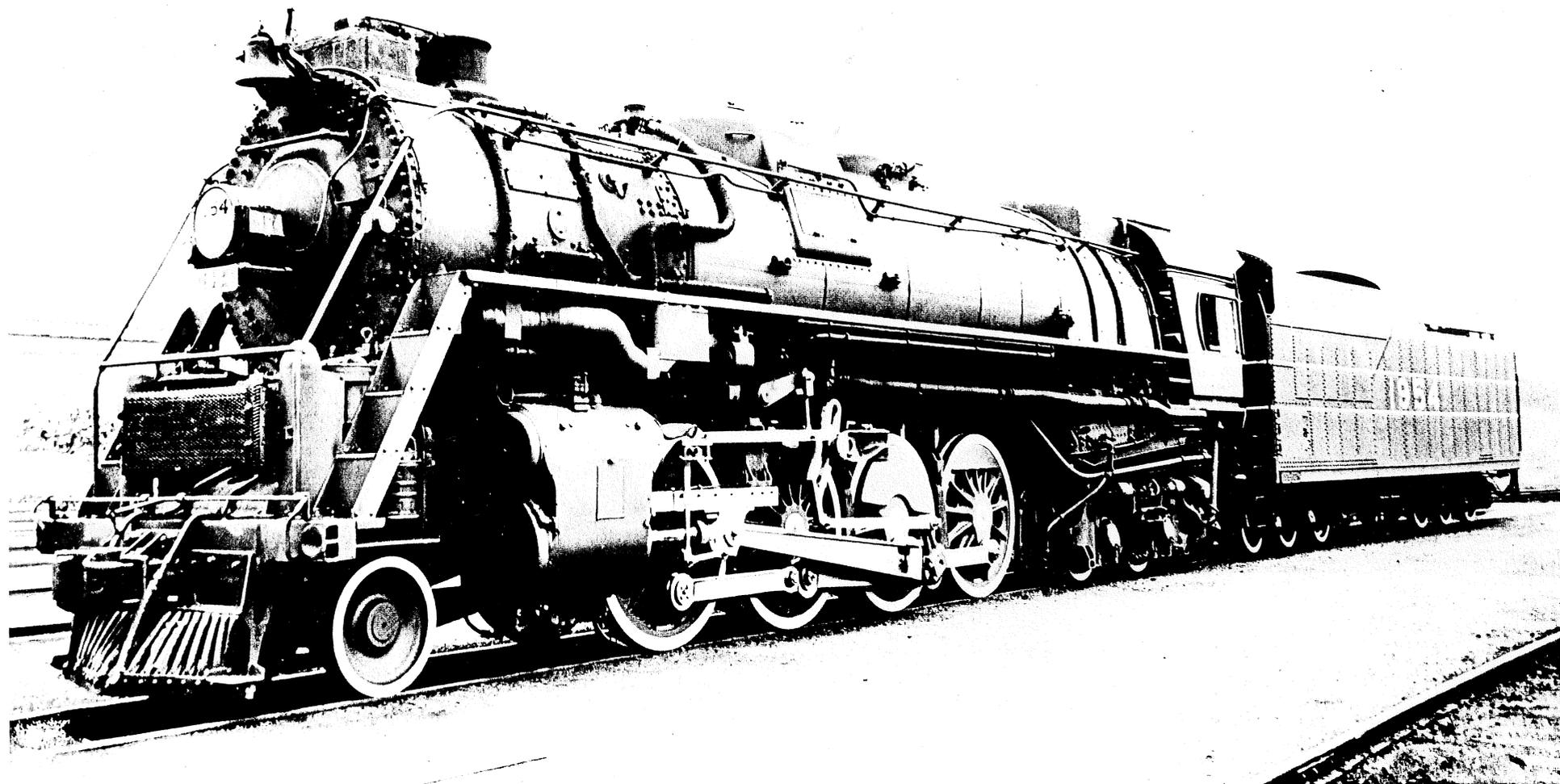
The southbound "Humming Bird" leaves Birmingham in 1954. Famed L&N Cincinnati-New Orleans train was nation's first post-World War II streamliner.



Courtesy of
THE FAMILY LINES SYSTEM



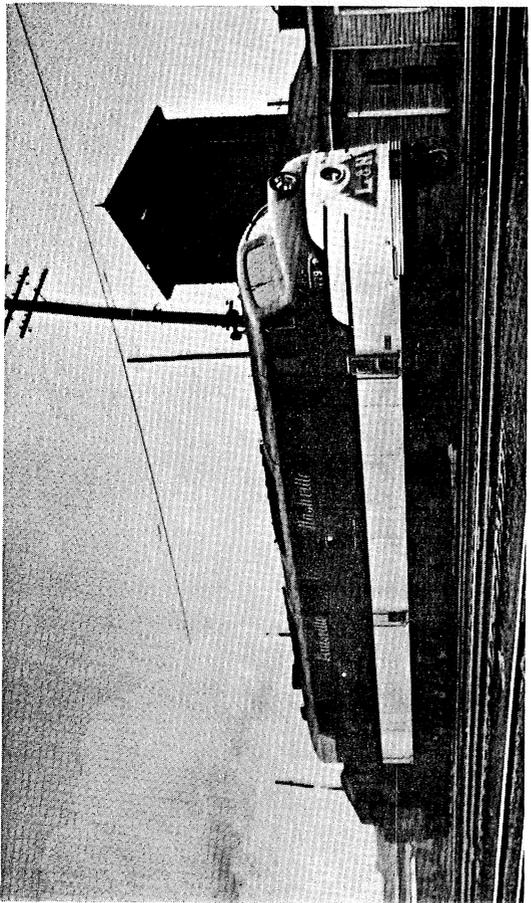
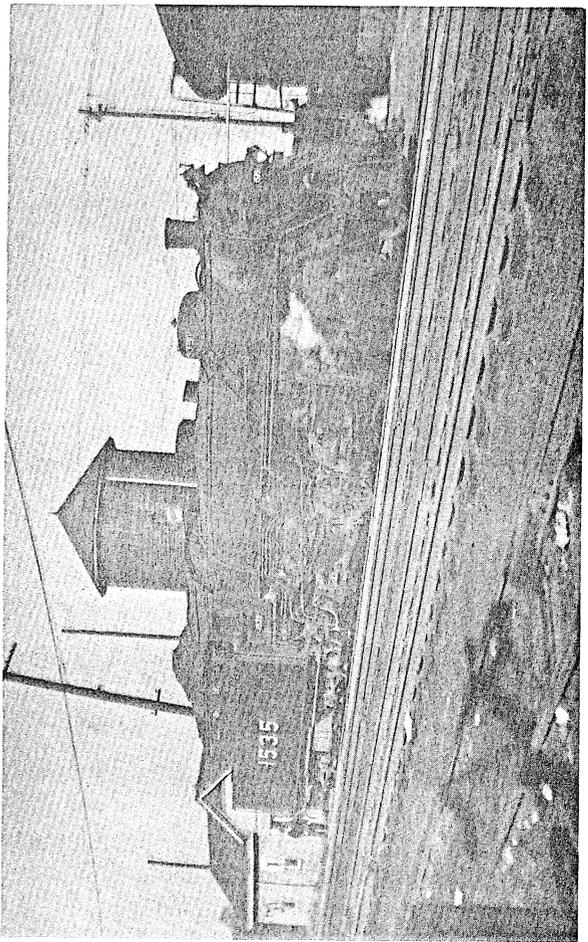
Deep in the Western Kentucky coal fields, an L&N unit train eases through tipple, picking up 7,000 tons of coal it will deliver to Georgia power plant.

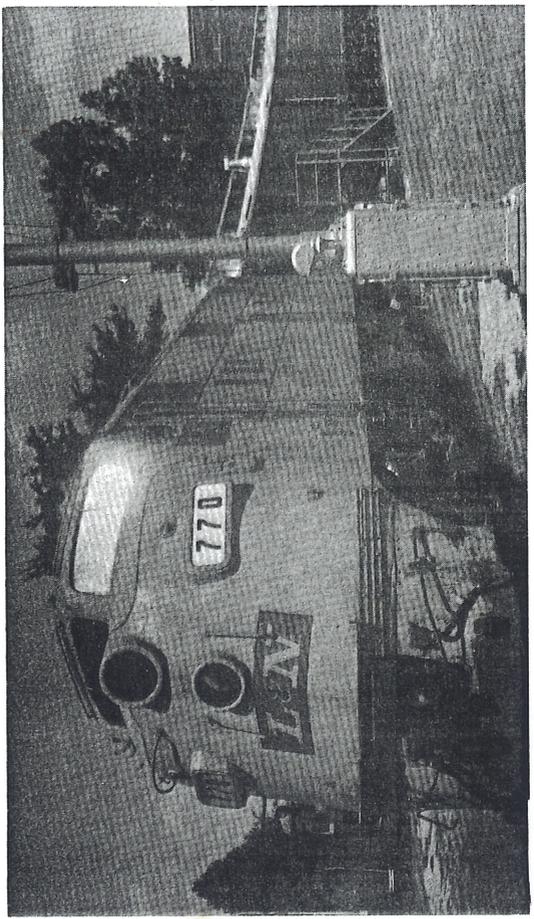


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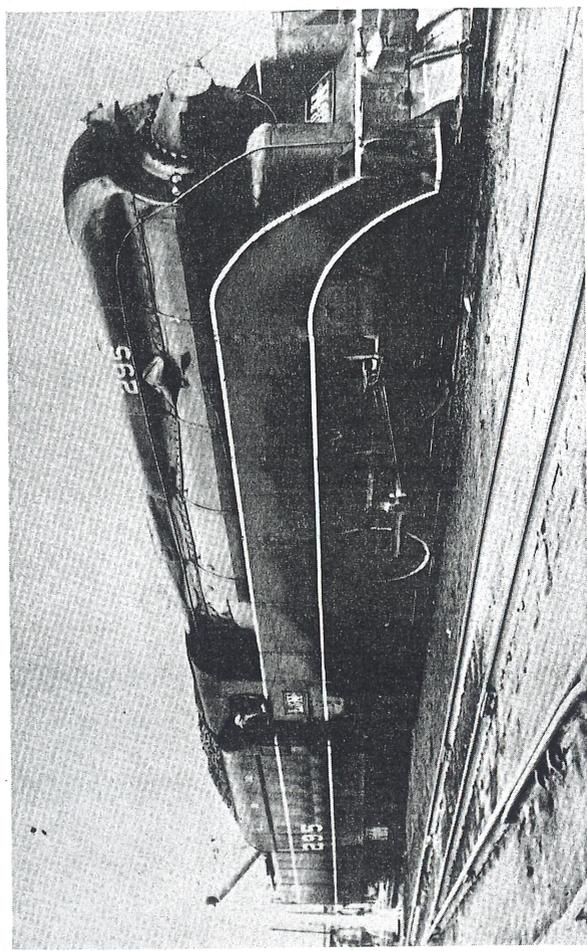
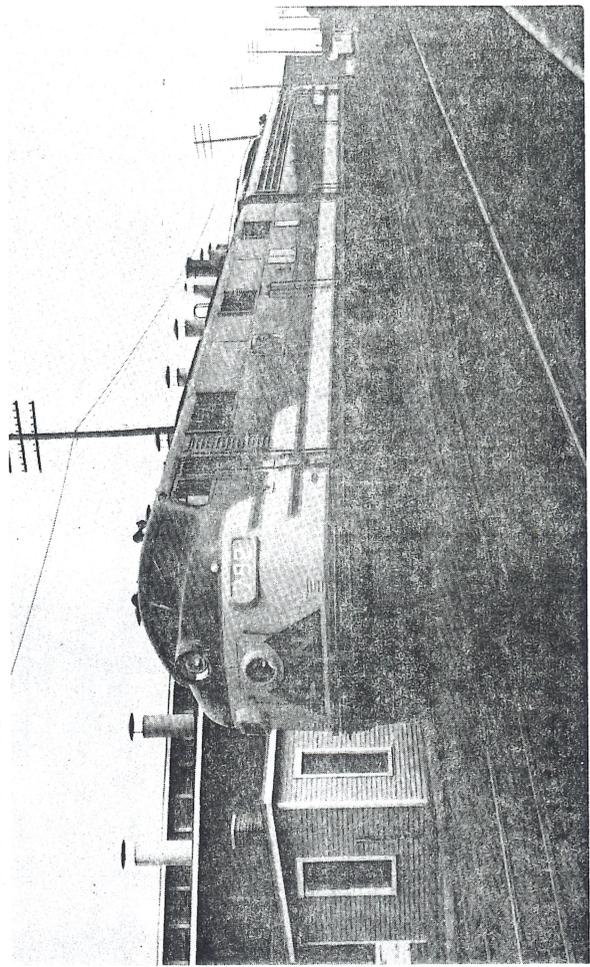


Biggest, finest L&N steam locomotives were 42 2-8-4 M-1's, built by Baldwin and Lima from 1942-1949. No. 1954 is pictured when new at Baldwin.



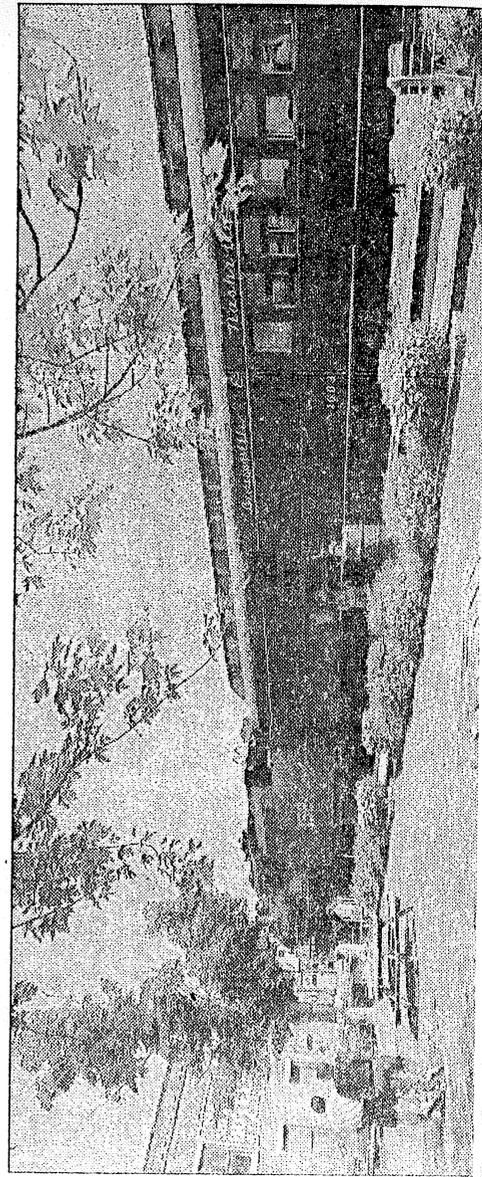
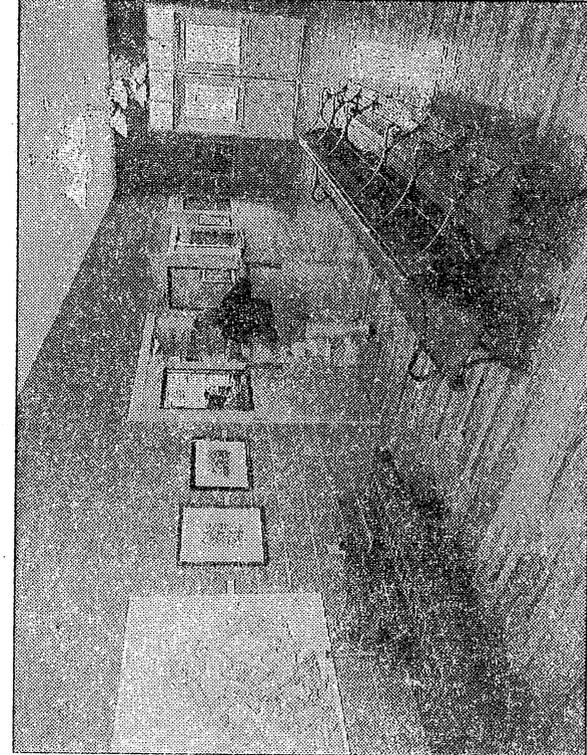
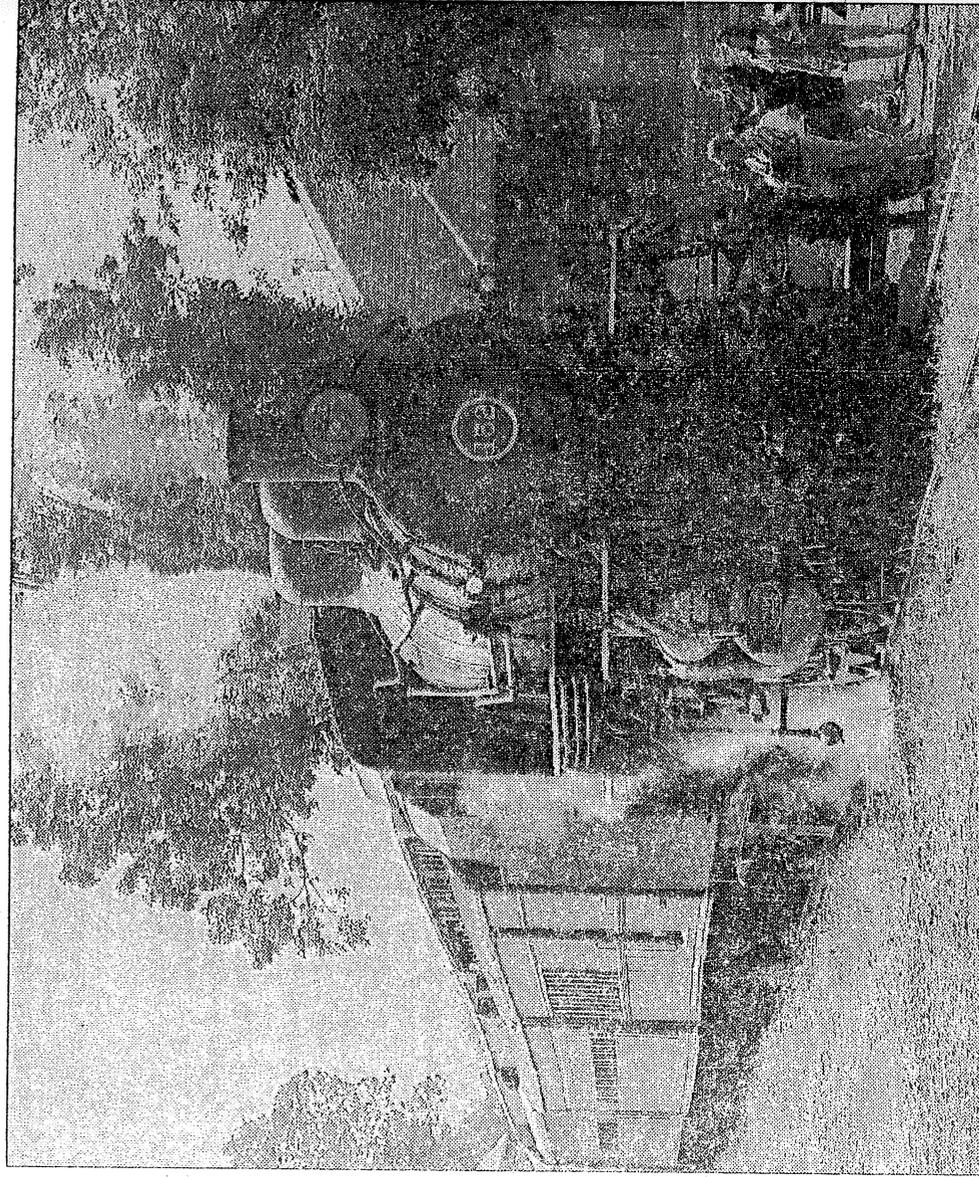


L & N TRAIN # 792



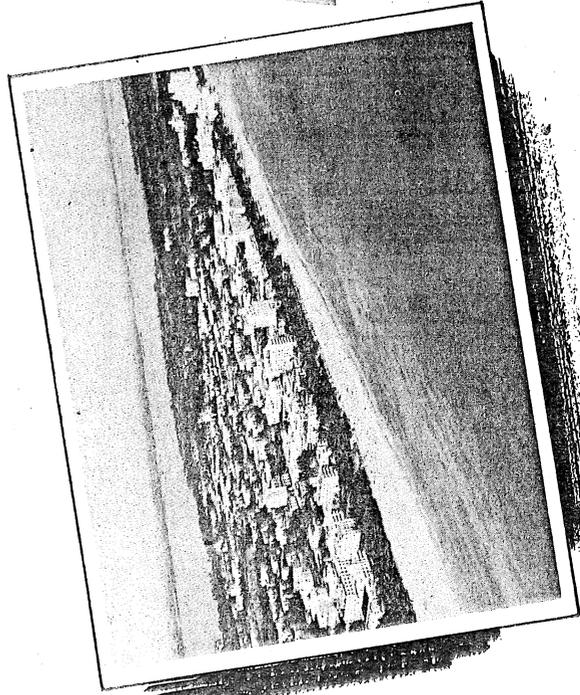






Visitors to the Kentucky Railway Museum in New Haven got a close look, above, at Engine 152, the state's only operating steam locomotive, as it prepared for an excursion yesterday to Boston, Ky. Visitors, at left, walked through a new replica of the original New Haven depot. The 5,000-square-foot building, which opened yesterday, includes an exhibit of memorabilia that tells the story of "The People Who Built the Railroads." Below, the steam engine waited at the depot before departing yesterday, just as passenger trains did from 1857 until the late 1950s.

STAFF PHOTOS
BY JAMES H. WALLACE

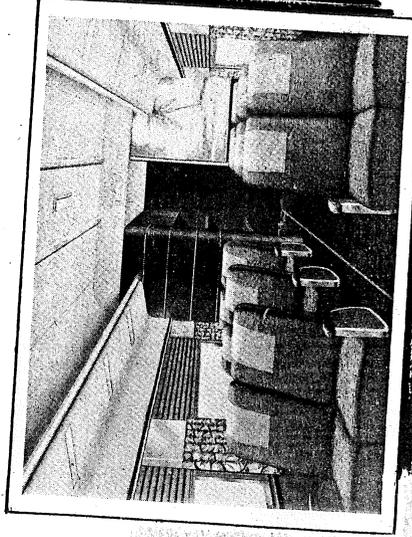


TO MIAMI

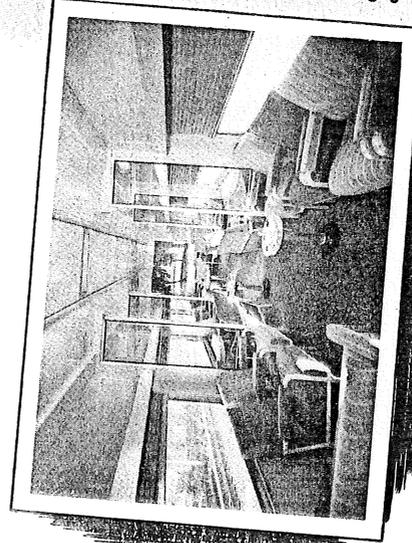
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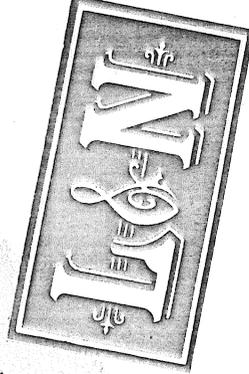
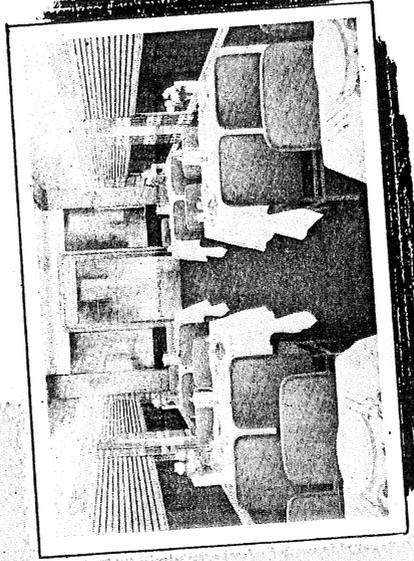


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4:45 PM (EST)	Ar. Miami	Lv.	12:50 PM (EST)	

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