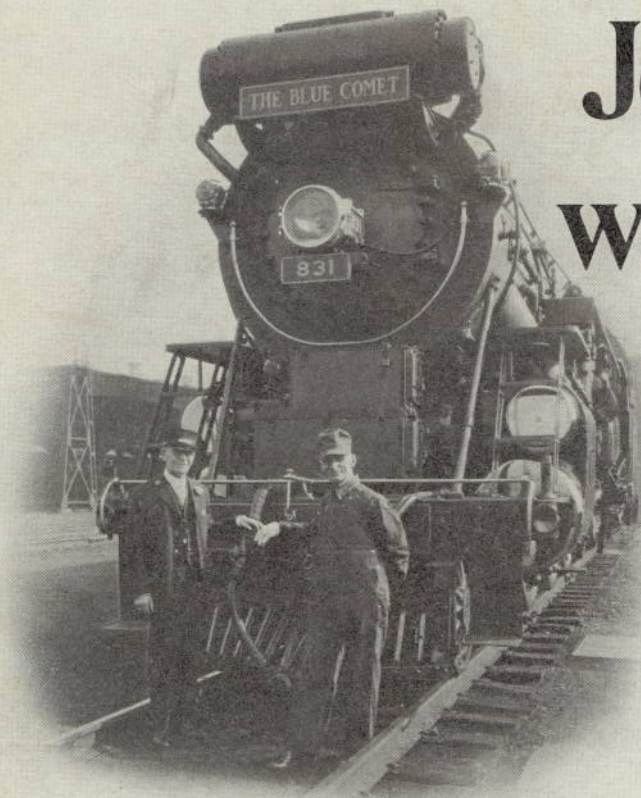


# **Trains**

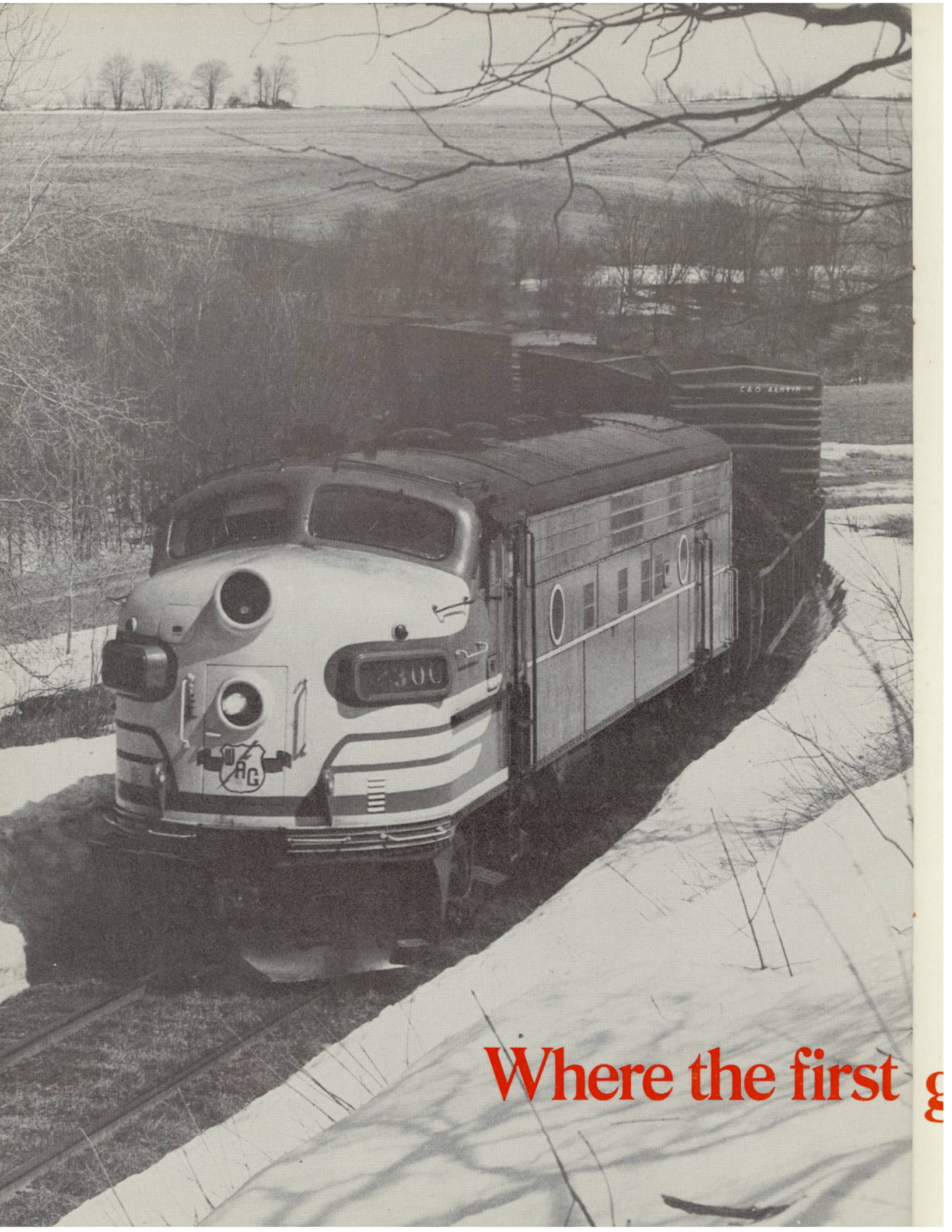
**THE MAGAZINE OF RAILROADING**

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Once upon a time the  
Jersey Central  
was a proud and  
prosperous  
railroad.



**But no more**



Where the first g

**I** BASIC OPERATIONS on the Wellsville, Addison & Galeton changed relatively little between 1956 and late 1970. Two crews usually were called out five days a week; occasionally they missed a day and once in a while they worked on Saturday. The crew called at 8:30 a.m. assembled their train at Galeton and departed for Elkland about an hour later. The Wellsville crew came out at 9:30 and also spent about an hour switching—including the carshops if the first crew hadn't—and making up their train. Although they had the longer and tougher run, the Wellsville crew usually worked almost the same number of hours as the Elkland crew, since there was little switching on the Wellsville run. Out of Galeton, the first stop was the Coudersport & Port Allegany interchange at Newfield Junction, and even this wasn't worked every day. (The C&PA ran only when it had to, sometimes just twice a week.) Little traffic, perhaps one or two cars a week, came to the WAG sidings north of the junction. A small scrapyard, a team track, and one or two other occasional shippers are located within the yard at Wellsville, and the yard is only a stone's throw from the Erie Lackawanna interchange that formerly gave WAG most of its inbound traffic. This consisted of carloads of "green" animal hides from Midwest slaughterhouses, some tank cars of chemicals for the tanneries, and a little general "lumberyard/feedmill" traffic. (If you want to know why they're called green hides, get downwind of one of those cars in hot weather.) Part of the tannery traffic was set out for the C&PA, since there is a large tannery at Coudersport, and a little of the general traffic went that way too.

The climb to Cutler Summit from the Galeton side could take 1½ to 2 hours with one of the GE's on the point. An observer at the top of the grade could see the train at several points down the hill and note its slow progress up the 2.85 per cent sprinkled with tight curves. The southbound approach is not as steep but is somewhat longer: When the

**DAVID H. HAMLEY**  
photography / THE AUTHOR

train exceeded the capacity of one GE, two were used—doubleheaded, for the GE's had no M.U. From Pusher Siding north, the line is on a slight descending grade, following the Genesee River into Wellsville. The trackage from Galeton as far as Brookland likewise is on a slight upgrade. Coming down either side of the hill required a deft hand on the air, for the GE's, which had been built for plant switching, also lacked dynamic brake. When the return trip was made after dark, motorists on the nearby highway south of the summit could see only the car wheels rimmed with fire and the glowing brake shoes. At each grade crossing the GE's sounded off with one of the loudest, most strident air horns that ever split an eardrum. This high-pitched blast could be heard for miles up the valleys; the exact location of a train was never in doubt.

The Elkland branch is the shortened version of the Addison line. The 14.2 miles beyond Elkland generated no traffic at all, and the interchange at Addison was with the same Erie—now Erie Lackawanna—line that ran through Wellsville, making that second connection redundant. When a bridge north of Elkland showed weakness in 1959, that part of the line was quickly abandoned. The Elkland crew doesn't have a Cutler Summit with which to struggle, but the long climb from Gaines Junction to Westfield can be a problem if the train is particularly heavy. Normally the crew goes to Elkland first and makes the side trip to Ansonia on the way home, but this is reversed if a needed car is waiting at the Penn Central interchange. Some days two trips to Ansonia are made, some days none. The caboose and cars destined for Galeton are left at Gaines Junction while the crew works the branch. Two large tanneries at Elkland and Westfield generate most of the traffic on that line, but a fair amount comes

from a number of farm-equipment dealers, feedmills, and other small industries scattered along the line. A few customers were added in 1964 when the NYC's parallel branch between Westfield and Elkland was lifted. The Elkland crew usually leaves Galeton with a good train. Formerly this included inbound cars for the tanneries which had been brought down from Wellsville the previous day, plus empties and an occasional load from the few small industries at Galeton.

THE C&PA had been independent of the WAG until 1964, when the C&PA too joined the Salzberg family of short lines. Although C&PA maintained a separate corporate existence, it shared everything but equipment and engine crews with the WAG. The two GE 44-tonners that served C&PA had their major maintenance work performed at Galeton. The big WAG GE's never ventured on the C&PA, however, even on plow trains, for the elderly 60-pound rail of the little road would have looked like a pretzel after the passage of a 132-ton locomotive. C&PA's D1 and D2 were the original diesels on the line and were painted in Salzberg orange and cream to match their bigger brothers after the 1964 takeover.

Snowplow trains were a necessary evil on both roads, and each had a venerable Russell wing plow which came with the purchase of the WAG line from the Baltimore & Ohio in 1955. Focal point of the snow trouble has been Cutler Summit, where drifts 15 feet deep are not unusual. Even the lower land on either side becomes inundated with white stuff. During the winter of 1969-1970 (when over 200 inches of snow was dumped on the land), C&PA once needed five days to clear its 16-mile line. In periods of heavy snowfall, the WAG plow train often was run continuously back and forth over the Summit to keep the line open. Once a big drift plugged it solid; even a couple of units couldn't push the plow through, and the expensive alternative was to dig it out by hand. And expensive operations are something

# generation became the second

Will the fans one day converge upon a live F7?



Frank G. Tatnall Jr.

SP 6380, first of the secondhand F7's to be repainted, emerged in November 1968 as WAG 2000 (above). After one winter on the WAG, she went to the Louisiana & North West. No. 2300, one of the three F7's currently active on WAG, grows along the Genesee River south of Wellsville (below), passing a unique retainer wall of old auto bodies.



financially limited roads such as the WAG can do without.

ONE of a short line's biggest expenses except for labor is motive power. WAG admittedly was over-equipped with the ex-Ford GE's, particularly after 1958. Only 2 were used on a given day, although there were 7 on the roster. Lighter 1200 and 1300 often were found far from home heading up Salzberg salvage trains dismantling the trackage of those less fortunate. Much of New York, Ontario & Western was ripped up using WAG units, and the same act has been repeated several times since then. Still, 7 units were more than enough; and beginning about 1959, one by one they were retired and picked for parts. First to go was 1300, which was used very little by the WAG; it was followed by 1200 in 1962 and 1400 in 1963. In later years the remaining 4 units were active: 2 working, 1 for standby, and 1

shopped or out ripping up trackage elsewhere. As old age crept up on the big GE's, they became less and less dependable—a trip without something going wrong became an infrequent affair, particularly on the rough Wellsville run. Many times the shopmen had to be sent out to rescue a unit, disrupting other work and running up expenses. Parts became difficult to obtain without a lengthy wait, and it was apparent that the long useful life of the unique GE's was drawing to a close. Some replacement power had to be located quickly.

Relief first came in June 1968 when WAG bought 3 EMD F7's from GE's supply of trade-in units. Two F7A's from Southern Pacific arrived in the company of an F7B from Western Pacific. The intention was to operate the B unit, but it proved to have a bent crankshaft and was relegated to parts supply. Both A units underwent a complete engine overhaul at

Galeton before seeing service. New bearings and rebuilt power assemblies were applied, and the finished units were almost like new. The first unit completed, WAG 2000 (ex-SP 6380), ran its maiden trip to Wellsville on November 19, 1968. The outlines of the old SP silver, orange, and black paint scheme were used as the basis for the WAG's repaint of the 2000 in red and yellow with black trim. A new emblem was designed for the new power: a shield bearing the road's initials and a stylized blacksnake whip, symbolic of the leather industry. (At first the crews viewed the whip as symbolic of something else!) The emblem, plus the whole F7 redieselization, was the work of Leonard Ferguson, formerly Diesel Power Superintendent and now General Superintendent of the WAG, a man who takes great pride in his company and its workers.

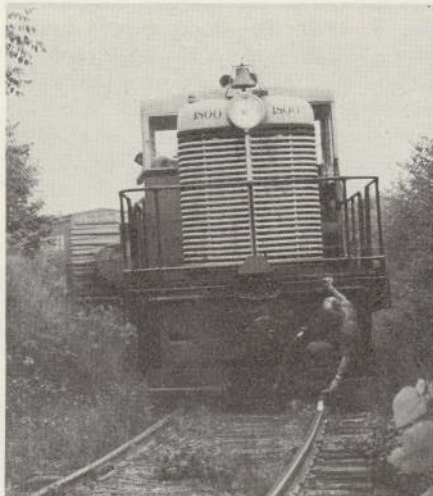
The 2000 was as big an improvement over the aged GE's as the GE's were over the ancient 2-8-0's they replaced. No longer did it take 1½ hours to climb from Brookland to Cutler Summit; now the trip could be made in 15 to 20 minutes without violating the 25 mph limit. Through the winter of 1968-1969 No. 2000 held down the Wellsville run. When the F7 was descending either side of the big hill, the dynamic brake came into play, holding the train back with ease and safety. Thus first-generation power discarded by SP became the eagerly welcomed second generation on the WAG. The few drawbacks of a cab unit in general were easily overlooked in view of the power, dependability, and low price of the F7's. No. 2000 had come from the SP with a plow pilot, and this came in handy on the WAG, which has a miniature Donner Pass in its Cutler Summit. This unit could bull its way through all but the worst, keeping the number of plow trains to a minimum. Unfortunately, No. 2000 couldn't be used on the Elkland branch, since the unit couldn't be turned at either Elkland or Ansonia. But the big power was really needed going to Wellsville, where a wye was available. The former SP 6378 was near completion as WAG 2100 and had made a few test runs when WAG crews received word in June 1969 that the F7's were to be sent off the line and the GE's returned to service.

Not that anything was wrong with the F's—to the contrary, their success was what had caused 2000 and 2100 to be shifted to the Salzberg-owned Louisiana & North West. L&NW had bought one ex-SP F7A at the time of the WAG purchase (the ex-WP F7B originally was intended for L&NW's use too) and

needed still more. The conflict in Vietnam was the cause, for L&NW serves a huge ammunition plant. Aside from the lone F7A, only a pair of EMD SW8's were owned by the L&NW. This power proved incapable of keeping up with the burgeoning traffic, and the call went out for more units.

Back from the Galeton bone line came 1500 to rejoin sisters 1700 and 1800. The elderly GE's proved more troublesome than ever, and another F-unit purchase from GE's trade-in pile was quickly arranged. Four units, all A's, were bought this time; but alas, the GE strike delayed delivery of the "new" power until November 1969. Rebuilding of the first unit, SP 6443, to WAG 2200, took until March 1970, because the versatile WAG shopmen frequently had to interrupt their F7 work to patch up one of the GE's. No. 1500 had expired in December, and when 1800 met its fate in early March, 2200 had to be pressed into service sans paint job and a few other finishing touches. At this point the proud Leonard Ferguson requested that visiting fans refrain from photographing the new F7 until it could be painted properly.

The painting was done a little at a time during the spring and summer of 1970, and as fall neared, work was well under way on the second unit. SP (actually Texas & New Orleans) 365 was being transformed into WAG 2300, undergoing the usual rebuilding. The 2300 entered service in November 1970, enabling WAG to operate a two-unit set which made even easier work of the daily runs. SP 6309 was the next unit shopped. It arbitrarily was given road number 2500 but never was lettered as such



AUGUST 8, 1969, was a bad day for ex-Ford GE 1800 on the WAG. On the climb to Cutler Summit, she lost a traction motor. Now her sanders have quit, causing a stall; later one of her engines went out.

or operated on the WAG, for it was sent to L&NW as soon as the overhaul was finished. The fourth unit of the group, SP (T&NO) 379, was finished up as WAG 2400 in January 1972. This pair-and-a-spare set is expected to fill the motive-power needs of the WAG for the foreseeable future. All this time the venerable 1700, the last surviving GE, continued to function without major problems — to the amazement and delight of all. Although 1700 had been mainly a standby unit since the completion of the overhaul of the second and third F7's, it worked on both the Wellsville and Elkland turns in early 1971. This run of good fortune in the motive-power area, however, has not carried over to the WAG's

freight-car fleet during the past several years.

Under newly adopted per diem rules, the daily charge for the use of a car no longer is a fixed figure for all cars. It now varies with the type of car, the capacity, and the car's age—all used to measure its relative value. This formula, while it encourages the building of modern, specialized car fleets, has exactly the opposite effect in regard to WAG's elderly, although serviceable, cars. For a while, the cost of keeping one car in repair exceeded what could be charged for its use, and a return-home call was issued to take all WAG cars out of interchange. Recently the per diem rate for these lower classes of cars was raised, but it's still questionable whether the cars will be kept in operation. The effects of increases in labor rates, parts prices, and supplies could quickly evaporate that small margin of profit and put the operation back in the red.

In the meantime, the financial straits in which the Penn Central finds itself may keep some WAG cars running even if the WAG itself goes out of the car business. These cars have been leased to PC for on-line use and have turned up lettered "TOC," the reporting marks of the long-absorbed NYC subsidiary Toledo & Ohio Central. Perhaps PC still had enough pride that it didn't wish to put its own name on a 30-to-40-year-old wooden-sided box car.

The car situation took a severe turn for the worse early on the morning of January 6, 1971. Fire of undetermined origin destroyed the 1894 carshops at Galeton with a loss estimated at \$500,000. Destroyed with the building were three WAG cars,

### FROM FORDS TO F'S

Road No.	Builder	Model	Serial	Date	Notes
300	GE	50-ton	11767	5-36	Diesel/battery type. Originally GE 6, Pittsfield (Mass.) plant. To Unadilla Valley 300 in 1954, to WAG briefly in 1956, returned to UV 3-56. To Southern New York 300 9-57. (SNY ceased operations in 1969, unit returned to WAG in 1971 pending disposition, along with UV's GE sister No. 5.)
1200	GE	125-ton	12229	9-37	Ex-Ford Motor 1000. Two Cooper-Bessemer GN6 engines, 960 h.p. total. To WAG 12-55, retired 1962, scrapped 1969 at Luria Bros., Modena, Pa.
1300	GE	125-ton	12230	9-37	Ex-Ford 1001, same engines as 1200. To WAG 12-55, retired circa 1959, sold to Luria 1969. Shipped from Galeton 9-70, cut up at Modena, Pa.
1400	GE	132-ton	12507	6-39	Ex-Ford 1003. Two C-B GN6 engines, 1000 h.p. total. To WAG 5-56, retired 1963 and scrapped at Luria Bros., Modena, Pa., 1969.
1500	GE	132-ton	12570	3-40	Ex-Ford 1007. Two C-B GNL6 engines, 1000 h.p. total. To WAG 5-56, retired 1967, reactivated 6-69, retired again 12-69. Stored dead as of 12-71.
1600	GE	132-ton	12508	6-39	Ex-Ford 1004, same engines as 1400. To WAG 3-58, retired 6-69, sold as scrap to Luria Bros., Modena, Pa., 1969.
1700	GE	132-ton	12569	3-40	Ex-Ford 1006, same engines as 1500. To WAG 3-58, in service.
1800	GE	132-ton	12506	6-39	Ex-Ford 1002, same engines as 1400. To WAG 3-58, retired 3-70, stored dead as of 12-71.
2000	EMD	F7A	16561	7-52	Ex-SP 6380, bought via GE 6-68. In service 11-19-68, to Louisiana & North West 45 6-69.
2100	EMD	F7A	16559	7-52	Ex-SP 6378, bought via GE 6-68. In service 6-69, to L&NW 46 6-69.
2200	EMD	F7A	18157	2-53	Ex-SP 6443, bought via GE 11-69. In service 3-70, active.
2300	EMD	F7A	18358	5-53	Ex-SP (T&NO) 365, bought via GE 11-69. In service 11-70, active.
2400	EMD	F7A	18372	3-53	Ex-SP (T&NO) 379, bought via GE 11-69. In service 1-72, active.
None	EMD	F7B	8997	1-50	Ex-WP 921C, bought via GE 6-68. Used as parts supply.

two foreign cars, a number of maintenance of way hi-railer trucks and track machines, large amounts of tools and supplies, and a spare 16-567 engine for the F7's that was undergoing a rebuild in a corner of the carshops. Quick action by the local fire department kept the fire away from the locomotive shops and several other nearby buildings, but the loss was a heavy blow at a bad time. Car repairs that had to be performed were handled in the enginehouse during the day while the units were out working. This was hardly a convenient arrangement, but the completion of a new 100 x 170-foot prefabricated combined carshop and enginehouse in December 1971 soon eased the situation.

All of the difficulty with the freight-car fleet brought about a marked decline in revenue, for the WAG was heavily dependent on per diem payments to stay in the black. When expenses began to overtake income, a hard look was taken at various parts of the line. The portion that looked the worst was the 37 miles between Galeton and Wellsville. Fewer than 100 cars a year were delivered to customers on the line, not counting those destined east of Galeton or delivered to the C&PA. Originated traffic was all but nil. The operating problems of the hill were a constant drain on WAG's resources, and each approaching snowstorm was cause for fear that it would block the track at Cutler Summit. If the rest of the line were to survive, this part would have to go.

Thus a petition to abandon the Wellsville line (and necessarily the C&PA, which also was losing money) was submitted to the ICC in September 1968. Little action on the case took place until early 1970, when the ICC tentatively approved the petition. In May, Erie Lackawanna, the State of New York, and several shippers took exception to the decision because of the EL's loss of interchange traffic at Wellsville and the shippers' loss of their rail service, and the whole thing went back to the ICC once more. Again a decision for abandonment was rendered on November 16, 1970, and again the objections were raised. A final decision for abandonment of the Wellsville portion of the WAG is expected sometime in 1972, but considering the "progress" to date, the contest could well drag on longer.

Beginning in late 1970, incoming traffic was partly shifted to Penn Central delivery, and the Wellsville run was made only infrequently, usually once or twice a week. The C&PA, for the most part unencumbered by the hassle between the WAG, shippers, EL, and the ICC,

made its last revenue trip on December 8, 1970. The locomotives and a few nonrevenue cars were left at Coudersport. In December 1971 the diesels were moved to Galeton for storage. Originally the plan had been to take the pair of 44-tonners to the WAG's headquarters after the last run and to store them in the ill-fated car shops. Had this been done, they would have been lost in the fire; so procrastination is not always bad. One of the little GE's will be used on the salvage train on the C&PA once dismantling begins. Likewise, since a salvage-train locomotive can't be turned conveniently, 1700 most likely will be used on the WAG's rail-uprooting train, if such is needed.

The lack of turning facilities never bothered the GE's, though. Since a GE is a symmetrical unit to begin with, and has dual control to boot, reversing one was a matter of walking across the cab, whereupon the rear became the front. Obviously, the same cannot be said of a single F7A. And thus arose the problem of turning the cabs on the Elkland run. The most apparent solution was to run a pair of them back to back, but on light tonnage days this became a wasteful operation. Fortunately, the difficulty has been rectified, at least in part. A wye formerly existed at Ansonia and has been rebuilt; most of it was still there, although long hidden by weeds. On April 9, 1971, surveyors were busy laying out a wye at Elkland and construction now has been completed. Finding a spot for the Elkland wye was a problem, since every piece of nondescript land in which the railroad expressed an interest suddenly increased several times in value.

The only problem area remaining is Gaines Junction. Here the rapidly increasing difference in elevation between the diverging tracks makes the building of a third leg to the junction all but impossible. This remains a thorn in the side of F7 utilization, and it appears that some backup operation may be necessary at times. Ferguson would rather have had a couple of hand-me-down GP7's than the F7's, but useful and versatile Geeps are not as readily—or as cheaply—obtainable as are F's. The crews are pleased with the new power—turning problems or no—and they're obviously glad to be free of the slowness and unreliability of the GE's.

FROM the railfan's point of view, though, an interesting chapter in dieseldom will wheeze to a close when the fuel shutoffs are flicked for the last time on the pair of Coopers in the 1700. Nos. 1200, 1400, and

1600 went to scrap in 1969, and 1300 would have gone at the same time if it could have been moved. It had to be partly reassembled (having been robbed of one truck) before going to the junker in 1970, and that project took an understandably low priority. The retired 1500 and 1800 are being held as parts supplies for 1700 as long as 1700 remains active. When it is finally retired, very likely all three will make that last trip together. The passing of the "Fords" will be regretted by all fans who have had a chance to view them in action—but certainly not by WAG crews and shopmen. Although one of the Fords surely is deserving of preservation, the possibility is remote. Few rail museums could come up with the price for 132 tons of scrap, and the limited finances of the WAG preclude a donation.

Within a few months the rails between Galeton and Wellsville, much of which is the original iron laid down in 1895-1896, may join the big GE's at the junkyard. As other parts of Frank and Charles Goodyear's rail system have fallen silent, so must Cutler Summit, Pusher Siding, the horseshoe curve at Brookland, and dozens of other secluded spots along the history-steeped right of way. The forays of the chipmunks that gather nuts between the rails at Newfield Junction no longer will be interrupted by the squeal of flanges and the rattle of draft gear. The magnificent sight and sound of one of the stylish GE's cresting the summit with the sand flying and the big-bore Coopers' raspy voices booming will have to be appreciated by future generations of fans through the media of film and tape. The steam fans mourned the passing of the ex-B&S 2-8-0's in 1956, and we will mourn the passing of the last of the GE-Cooper-Bessemeres. At some date in the future, a generation of fans who now are too young to appreciate the GE's will gather at Galeton to view the rarest of the rare: a live and operating F7. There must be something about the clean air at Galeton, scented with a touch of sawmill incinerator smoke, that acts as a preservative of motive power. Or perhaps it's the men.

That the WAG is today a going concern is due in no small measure to the tenacity, pride, and resourcefulness of the men who have guided and labored for the line since 1956. If the longevity of the F7's under this care proves as good as that of the GE's, the F7's will be running in 1986. The hills that stand guard over the WAG's trackage will have changed little by then. Perhaps, with good fortune, the same can be said of the WAG at that time. **I**