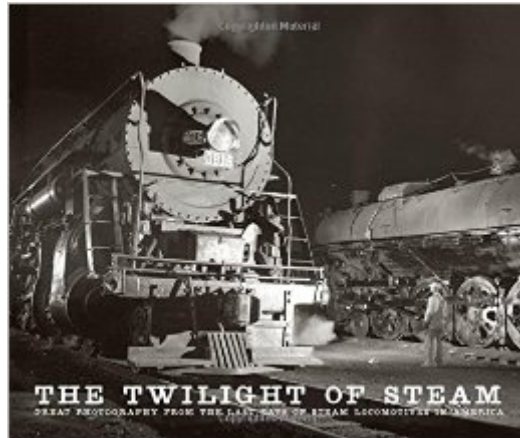


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The Twilight Of Steam: Great Photography From The Last Days Of Steam Locomotives In America



Synopsis

Plate 3: Central Vermont No. 467 and a pair of Canadian National Fairbanks-Morse C-Liners lead a northward freight. THE TWILIGHT OF STEAM FOR AMERICAN RAILROADS, the early 1950s was a time of rapid transition as colorful new diesels quickly displaced steam locomotives. The economics of diesel power were so compelling that once production models had been perfected, the writing was on the wall. Yet many observers often didn't see the writing until it was almost too late. Others were more astute and stayed ahead of the tide of dieselization, making photographs of the last of steam for posterity. During its transition from steam to diesel, Central Vermont often mixed motive power on its freights. In this view, a northward freight crosses the Millers Falls high bridge with one of CV's revered 2-8-0s in the lead. Behind it is a pair of Fairbanks-Morse C-Liner diesels borrowed from CV's parent, Canadian National. In the final years of steam operation, when steam and diesels were mixed, the diesels tended to lead. These diesels didn't serve for long on the CV, however. By the late 1950s, the railroad had dieselized with its own fleet of EMD GP9s and Alco switchers.

PLATE 64 Norfolk & Western No. 608 leans into a curve with a passenger train, 1956. John E. Pickett

PLATE 64 Norfolk & Western's streamlined J-class 4-8-4 is an American classic. A product of the railroad's Roanoke Shops, it was known for its great looks and exceptional performance. Norfolk & Western's mainline was equipped with Centralized Traffic Control that allowed dispatchers to run trains on either track in both directions on signal indication. John E. Pickett

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Customer Reviews

You're a laddie of ten waiting on the platform at the Hartford, Conn. Station. It's early December 1948 and you're on your annual pilgrimage to the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Show with your parents and little brother. Your train is the New Haven Railroad Nathan Hale, the early morning accommodation with a string of the New Haven's ubiquitous 1938 Pullman Standard "American Flyer" coaches, a parlor car and, best of all, a grill car with sideways seating, hot chocolate with tiny marshmallows, and a train coloring book. Here comes the train! Out of the short tunnel north of the station, around a short left-hand curve and passing not ten feet in front of you behind a USRA heavy Pacific. Unfortunately, these 1400s were gone in a few years, replaced by Alco DL109s and Fairbanks Morse C-liners as the great steam locos of my childhood headed into the twilight of their years, never to be experienced by today's ten year olds or their younger brothers. Happily, Brian Solomon's newest book, *The Twilight of Steam*, a handsome coffee-table tome, serves two notable purposes. It lets me relive what I saw in steam, and it helps me show my kids and grand kids what went before the SD70MACS, Geep 38s, and Amtrak P42DC units that frequent the same rails today. As a railroad practitioner who works mainly with short lines and regional railroads, I find it immensely helpful to know what worked in the past and how it relates to what works today. To be sure, the trains have changed, but where they go and what they do hasn't. *The Twilight of Steam* sets the scene for today's railroad renaissance, letting us geezers recall some favorite moments and at the same time letting today's fans and professionals learn from the past and carry the traditions forward.

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