

Collection #
SC 2737

NICKEL PLATE RAILROAD COLLECTION, 1934–1949

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 2 Folders

COLLECTION
DATES: 1934–49

PROVENANCE: G.L. Bailey, Ridgeville, IN, 1 February 1968; John Hellebrand,
Palinurus Antiquarian Books, Jenkintown, PA, June 2001

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1968.0226; 2001.0813

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1880 a survey was made from St. Louis to Fort Wayne, Indiana, to connect with the Lake Erie & Western Railroad. The survey was purchased by a group of men known as the Seney Syndicate and two additional surveys were made. One from Chicago to Fort Wayne, the other from Fort Wayne to Cleveland, which was originally intended as the eastern terminus of the New York, Chicago & St. Louis, which adopted the nickname Nickel Plate Road.

Early in April 1881, Major Henry L. Merrill, an experienced railroad builder, assumed charge of construction. The first rails for the NPR were laid between Arcadia and McComb, Ohio, and the first train was run over the road 22 October 1882. The Lake Shore & Michigan Southern, later a part of the New York Central System, quickly realized the value of the NPR as a competitor and purchased the road and held controlling interest in it until July 1916. By June 1922 the NPR operated 523 miles of track between Chicago and Buffalo.

In July 1922 the NPR more than doubled the miles of track it operated on. By securing control of the Lake Erie & Western Railroad Company 707 miles of track were added, reaching from Sandusky, Ohio to Peoria, Illinois, with two branches in Indiana. Another 453 miles were added when an affiliation with the Cloverleaf, the Toledo, St. Louis & Western railroad, was started.

The Lake Erie & Western's mainline started in Ohio with the Fremont & Indiana Railroad Company in April 1853. The F&I was incorporated to build a line from Fremont southwest towards the Indiana State line. As years passed more track was laid and the line was completed in 1888.

Crossing the LE&W at Tipton, Indiana was a line that extended from Indianapolis to Michigan City, Indiana. This line became part of the LE&W in April 1887. Built by the Peru & Indianapolis this was the oldest track on the Nickel Plate System. Another LE&W line extended from Fort Wayne, through Muncie to Connersville. The line at New Castle that split off to Rushville was acquired by the LE&W in 1890.

In 1949, the Nickel Plate Road leased the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, which it had controlled for a number of years. The line gave the NPR a financially stable railroad that was a consistent money maker.

In the late fifties NPR found itself in a precarious competitive position. The potential merger of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania forecasted competitive and financial disaster for the NPR. The Nickel Plate needed to find a powerful ally to assure itself a strong position in the merger conscious east. The Norfolk & Western Railway, looking for a way to extend its coal carrying to the Midwest, became that ally. The merger of the Nickel Plate and the Norfolk & Western could be a benefit to both railroads and develop a strong Midwest to tidewater rail systems carrying a broad

base of commodities.

With the ultimate acquisition of the Pennsylvania's Sandusky Line as the connection between the Nickel Plate and the Norfolk & Western, the Akron, Canton & Youngstown and the Pittsburgh & West Virginia railroads were forced to ask for inclusion in the new system. After more than four years of hearings and planning, the merger became a reality on 16 October 1964.

Sources:

The Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society, 2005 [cited 21 January 2005]. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.nkphts.org/>)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of two folders. In the first is train order #41 which was for #98 at Redkey. It is identified as the last order from W.L. Bailey. The envelope that the order was put in is also included and is printed with an address for "A.H. Perfect Co." in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the second folder are blueprints of passenger car equipment for the Nickel Plate Road that were revised in 1934, 1938, and 1943. The blueprints are oblong folio sheets which were bolted together, and include illustrations, sections, and plans of all car types.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

CONTAINER

Nickel Plate Road Train Order #41, last order from W.L. Bailey and envelope, 14 Dec. 1949

Folder 1

Nickel Plate Road Passenger Car Equipment, blueprints, Oct. 1934– Aug. 1943

Folder 2

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2737).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.