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The Sentinel

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Historic Iron Boxcar

Old Maud's Debut
I-5D Caboose
Vehicle Paint Schemes

Message from the President

Fellow Members,

Well the 2020 year is coming to a close and this past seven months will live in our memories for many years to come. As president I have had communication from both sides of the COVID-19 situation now facing our country. Each side has its points but as the leader of this volunteer non-profit educational society it just does not pay to take any risks to endanger anyone's health. That is why we are canceling all in-person events for the remainder of 2020. The archive volunteers are doing their part by wearing face coverings and keeping safe distancing from each other. There may be some changes coming later this year and the executive team will make decisions as soon as the facts are made available to the public. Maryland is starting stage three activities this Labor Day weekend and hopefully people will be smart so the pandemic can go away. So, pray for this to go away and we can return to life as we knew it in 2019.

The following events are canceled for 2020: No in person convention. You must check our website for details to participate on Zoom. The virtual convention will be October 3rd. When you register for the password to participate, you must give the moderator your full name, NO nick name or email addresses for ID. The model-train

flea market will not happen this year and the holiday party is also canceled. Some organizations are already canceling first quarter events for 2021. We will make that call around November.

The company store has a few new items ready for sale. The Bethlehem Car Works B&O D-14 combine kits are in. These HO scale cars represent the first twelve delivered to the B&O. We have already sold close to twenty kits, but have plenty more to sell. Examination of the kits shows outstanding details on the resin casting. A number of the D-14s lasted into the early 1960s. David Leider's book, *The Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal History* is now in for sale. A quick review of the book reveals an extensive history of the road's early years and the numerous railroads that made investments in its development. For B&O historians, it is a great investment in your knowledge of our favorite railroad. This softcover book has a MSRP of \$44.95 with the company store selling it for \$40.45 to members. The 2021 calendars are in and, if you preorder, they are being shipped now. There are a few extras left, so if you missed ordering get your order in now.

Publications are now back into production. Joe Nevin is back in finishing up the dining car book and hopefully a rough draft will be done by the end of

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On the Covers

FRONT COVER: RDC 9940, RDC 2, December 1978.

(William P. Nixon photograph, B&ORRH Archives)

BACK COVER: [FIGURE 10 & 11] Ford Econoline pickup truck, West Marietta, Ohio, May 1967. (Photograph by John Teichmoeller, courtesy of John Teichmoeller)

[Figure 12] General Motors Corporation stake body trucks and track workers, West Marietta, Ohio, May 1967. (Photograph by John Teichmoeller, courtesy of John Teichmoeller)



RDC 1972, Ivy City, Washington DC. (Jim Shaw photograph, B&ORRHs Archives)

B&O's *SpeedLiners*

By Gene Stebbins

Most people think of railroads as trains, composed of one or more engines pulling a group of cars, either passenger or freight cars, but many times, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, passengers rode in a single car.

As railroads evolved during the nineteenth century, there arose interest in the use of single-car transportation of people rather than a full train. This was a cost-saving measure, primarily on branch lines where the demand was lighter than between major urban areas.

The Budd Company of Philadelphia began producing stainless-steel passenger cars in the 1930s for a number of streamlined passenger trains. Stainless steel was lighter and stronger than the traditional steel previously used, and did not rust. The problem had been developing an effective way to fasten the plates together on the car. Screws and rivets detracted from the streamlined look and eventually rusted. Budd developed and patented the process

of shot-welding to assemble its stainless-steel cars.

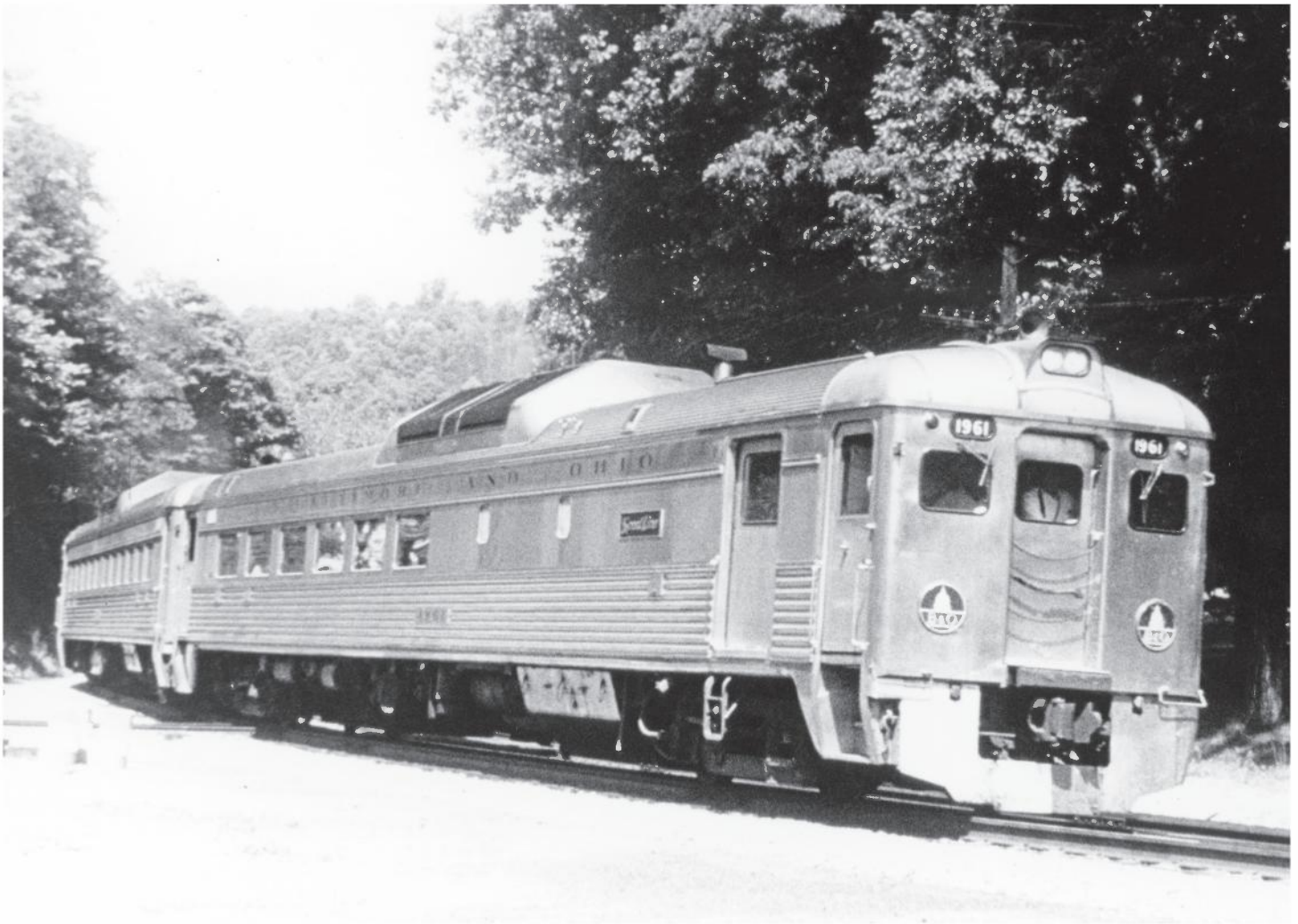
In 1949, Budd introduced its Rail Diesel Car (RDC) line of self-propelled cars. The cars featured two compact diesel engines, originally developed by Detroit Diesel Division of General Motors for use in tanks and landing craft during World War II, coupled with torque converters, all mounted below the floor of a stainless-steel passenger car body. The engines were cooled by radiators mounted on the car roof in a dome projecting up from the middle. This design made nearly all of the interior of the cars available for passengers and/or cargo, and substantially reduced the noise level inside the cars.

All of the RDC cars could be operated from the vestibule at either end of the car, or from another coupled car, making it possible to create a small train of three-to-five cars. Maintenance costs on the Budd cars was significantly less than that of a steam locomotive, since removing and replacing

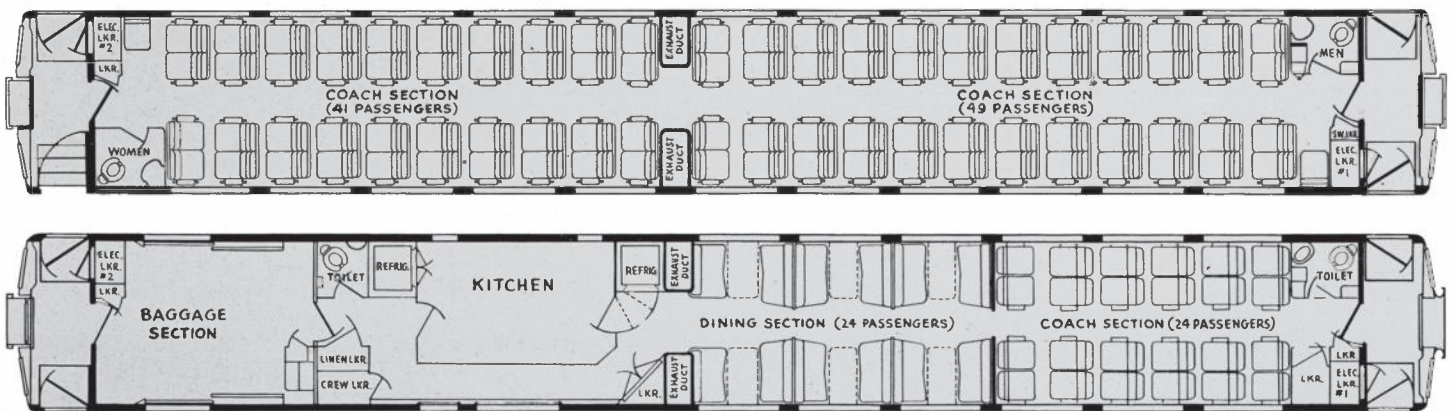
a malfunctioning engine took only about an hour.

Between 1949 and 1962, the Budd company manufactured 398 RDC cars, most of which were RDC-1s or RDC-2s. The RDC-1 was a passenger coach seating 90 passengers. The RDC-2 was a combination coach-baggage car, seating about 74 passengers and providing a 17-foot baggage compartment in one end of the car. Each car measured 85 feet long. On level track, an RDC car was capable of a top speed of 84 mph.

During the period from 1900 to 1960, the Baltimore and Ohio constantly faced significant financial problems as it sought to compete with the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central, especially for passengers from eastern cities. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) set the rates they could charge for both cargo and passengers, and increasing these rates was a long and tedious process. Meanwhile, labor sought increased pay and



RDC 1961, unknown date and location. (B&ORRHS Archives)



other operating expenses rose as well. As automobiles became more common, the demand for trains on regional or branch lines decreased. All these factors made the local passenger train a money-losing proposition, but dropping trains that were losing money was a difficult and lengthy process.

In 1950, the B&O decided to invest in

16 Budd RDC cars to use on their more lightly traveled runs. They were purchased in three groups beginning in 1950, with the second group bought in 1953, and the remainder in 1956. They also acquired some RDCs with the C&O merger and purchased several from other railroads. The B&O initially purchased 12 RDC-1 coaches and four RDC-2 baggage-coach combines.

The B&O reconfigured the RDC-2 cars to include a small kitchen and dining area, calling it a "refreshment diner" car. Budd also made two other configurations, but the B&O did not buy either of those.

These cars were assigned to various branch line operations where B&O officials felt passenger demand was not sufficient to justify a full train. Operation was mostly



RDC 9931, Versailles, Pennsylvania, April, 24, 1972. (Richard Adams photograph, B&ORRHS Archives)



confined to areas of commuter operations, such as Washington, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh. By 1955, however, B&O management began wondering if the RDCs could be used in long-distance operations.

In 1955, the B&O announced a railfan venture in co-operation with the Washington Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society to operate a train of RDCs from Washington to Chicago on Memorial Day Weekend. Aside from building goodwill with the railfan group, the B&O wanted to see if RDCs could be grouped into larger trains for long-distance travel.

The venture was a huge success. The three-car train carried 214 passengers and crew to Chicago in 12 hours and 19 minutes, nearly three hours less than the time used by B&O's regularly scheduled trains, and an hour less than it had ever been done before. The return trip was made in nearly the same time. The trip proved that the RDC car could be used in multiple over a long distance.

RDC 6379, unknown date and location. (B&ORRHS Archives)



RDC 6517, RDC 1, Camden Station, Baltimore, June, 26, 1956. (B&ORRHS Archives)



RDC 1900, RDC 1, Mount Clare, Baltimore, April, 6, 1967. (Herbert H. Harwood, Jr. photograph, B&ORRHS Archives)