

Memo from John Barriger, Traffic Inspector, to D.M. Shaeffer, Manager of Mail & Express Transport, Recommending a Fleet of Pennsylvania Twenty Hour New York-Chicago Trains to Compete with the *Twentieth Century Limited*

Reprinted from Lucius Beebe's 20th Century

Memorandum written January 5, 1926 by John Barriger in His Capacity of Traffic Inspector for The Pennsylvania Railroad To D. M. Shaeffer, Pennsylvania Manager of Mail and Express Transport, Recommending a Fleet of Pennsylvania Twenty Hour New York-Chicago Trains to Compete With *The Twentieth Century Limited*.

Item in box heading of *New York Evening Post*, Tuesday, December 29, 1925:

10 MILLIONS EARNED IN YEAR BY THE 20TH CENTURY LIMITED

Earnings of the *Twentieth Century Limited*, crack train of the New York Central Railroad, broke all records in 1925 with gross revenues exceeding \$10,000,000, it was revealed in a preliminary estimate made public today, says the Associated Press.

The train which makes an overnight run between New York and Chicago was operated this year in almost 2000 sections.

It is the policy of both the Pennsylvania and the New York Central Railroads to stress the 20-hour New York Chicago service to the exclusion of other classes and to concentrate this business onto a single schedule on each road. Regardless of what may have been the supposed value of this policy to the Pennsylvania at the outset, it is working out to its detriment and should be modified.

Prior to the war, if my recollections and information are correct, the traffic on the 20-hour trains was very light. It was only during the strenuous years of 1918-1919-1920 that the increasing value of time, increasing average wealth and standards of living, and the relatively decreasing value of the dollar brought high extra fare trains from the realm of an occasional luxury to that of a general necessity.

From 1902 to 1918, the (eighteen and) twenty hour trains, while setting the standards of New York-Chicago passenger service were far from being the dominant factors in travel between those cities. Now they are. *The Twentieth Century Limited* was firmly established as the beneficiary of the new era in the utilization of de luxe service when the *Broad Way**

*Since *Broadway* refers to the Pennsylvania's magnificent line and not to Gotham's Gay White Way—is not *Broad Way* to be preferred to *Broadway*?

was restored and the advantages of the former were greatly reinforced through one of the most effective advertising campaigns ever carried on. Relatively little was done to exploit the *Broadway* except in Pennsylvania time tables and to refer rather generally to the System as the route of the *Broad Way Limited*.

Not very long ago, running the *Century* in two sections was an event upon the New York Central. It was only during 1921, I believe, that NYC 25 and 26 were placed upon a regular two-section basis, with a third section being required only during peak load periods. In January, 1922, the travel incident to the opening of the Automobile Show in Grand Central Palace, New York, required operation of the *Century* in five sections and it was an unparalleled occasion in New York Central annals which was featured long after in picture, story and advertisement. Now each day's *Century* out of New York and Chicago totals 20 or more sleepers and compartment cars and rush periods run the total from 30 to 50. While the *Broad Way* has been developing a substantial business, *The Century* has been developing a substantial business. *The Century* has been growing faster, both in actual numbers of passengers and in percentage of increase.

The reason for the latter unfortunate condition, which I do not think is as generally understood throughout the Pennsylvania as it should be, is that a continually increasing percentage of the New York-Chicago travelers are being educated to use only the 20-hour service and when this is accomplished, regardless of which road effected the result or enjoys the immediate benefit, *The Century* is in far the greater number of cases, the ultimate beneficiary.

Unquestionably the *20th Century Limited* is the finest name that can possibly be coined for a train, and its natural appeal has been so magnified and exploited that the train which bears it has a remarkably powerful hold upon public imagination. Passengers almost feel that their own personal prestige is enhanced by using that train and that the extra fare is a social investment as well as a purchase of travel comforts and service.

Aside from what seems to me to be an obvious and pressing necessity for the Pennsylvania to advertise the *Broad Way* on a national scale, it should overturn some traditional policies, which are strengthening its competitor at the expense of itself, by:

1. Not stressing the 20-hour service to the extent of confining service features to those trains.
2. Weaken the prestige of the *Century* among travelers preferring 20-hour service by forcing the splitting up of the traffic among other trains leaving at another period of the day.

Considering the above separately and in some detail:

Item No. 1. The difference in amounts of extra-fare between the 20 and 22-23-24 hour trains is small, if not actually trifling, yet the difference in service commanded by the extra fare in the two cases is tremendous. As service features are usually more desirable to the traveler than speed, he seeks the 20-hour trains far more because of their higher quality of equipment, service and comforts than because of their shorter schedules. The 20-hour trains are the only **FIRST-CLASS** trains from the service-equipment standpoint between New York and Chicago and they monopolize the patronage of nearly all passengers between those cities who can afford to pay an extra-fare and whose traveling convenience does not

force the use of a train with a later hour of departure or arrival.

Both the PRR and the NYC are doing all they possibly can to focus the attention of the New York-Chicago traveling public on the 20-hour trains. The Pennsylvania probably assume that one of its patrons educated (or forced by service conditions) to the 20-hour trains will be retained by it. Unfortunately the grip of the *Twentieth Century* upon the public imagination is so great that a PRR patron who finally gives up the *Manhattan* or the *Pennsylvania Limited* for the *Broadway* is often soon lost to the *Century*. Quite a few cases of this have come to my attention, enough to permit me to generalize. While *Broadway* service, particularly equipment and dining car features, is superior to that of the *Century*, the difference is insufficient to counteract the lure of the latter's name.

The Pennsylvania Railroad should not exploit the 20-hour trains to the exclusion of 22-hour service. Our *Manhattan-Pennsylvania-Gotham Limiteds* attest to our ability to secure our share of the traffic in a field free from the pull of the *Century's* name.

The *Gotham-Pennsylvania-Manhattan Limiteds* should be counterparts of the *Broadway* from the service and equipment standpoints. I recognize the objections that can be raised to this, particularly extension of use of observation cars, inclusion of barbers and stenographers in train personnel, giving *Broadway* dining car service and the conclusion that the net effect will be zero (or a minus quantity owing to the expense) because the NYC will do likewise. I believe that giving 22-hour service of a character on a par with 20-hour service will keep a great deal of the traffic in a field where the Pennsylvania can control the situation rather than to force it over where they are at a disadvantage. We should do this notwithstanding the probability that the New York Central will immediately follow suit. We have real gains to be accomplished through the change. They will change entirely as a defense.

A second and perhaps more effective way of weakening the hold of the *Century* upon the traveling public will be to force the splitting up of the 20-hour traffic among several trains. The volume of traffic on the several sections of the *Century* and upon the *Broadway* certainly justifies, from the public's standpoint, the operation of 20-hour trains at more than one time of the day.

Basing my conclusion upon number of Pullman cars operated (with due allowance for 20-hour trains being operated on lower berth basis almost entirely) it is very conservative to say that as little as one-half of the total New York-Chicago business is handled by the *Century* and the *Broadway*, yet all the 20-hour trains (from 4 to 8 per day) have a single hour of departure and arrival. No effort is made to force all the 22-hour traffic and all the 28-hour non-extra fare traffic onto a single train schedule on each road, yet its volume is less than the 20-hour business and it certainly deserves no greater consideration in the important matter of range of choice of hours of departure.

The NYC under the present arrangement of concentrating all 20-hour business onto a single schedule on each road inevitably gets a larger share of the business than it could possibly have under any other so why doesn't the Pennsylvania force a new deal since it is within its power to do so. I know the objections to inaugurating another 20-hour New

York-Chicago train on the Pennsylvania but the game would be worth the candle. It would soon be operating on a very profitable basis and its business would not come, save in very small part, from other PRR trains but would be drawn from the Central. Remember the *Gotham Ltd.* Some thought that its establishment would merely mean dividing traffic of other PRR trains but how did it work out — No. 54's patrons came principally from Michigan Central No. 40 (The Transatlantic Limited). (In July 1922 I believe the MCRR's 22-hour New York train leaving Chicago at 8 P.M. had some other name and number.)

The present 20-hour New York-Chicago schedules are admirably arranged for those who do not come from or go beyond Chicago, but they are not well adapted to those making connections to or from the west. All of the most popular western limiteds leave Chicago in the evening and arrive in Chicago either in the early morning or (a few) in the evening. Thus, the large numbers of travelers between New York and western cities using these limiteds of western line in connection with the *Broadway* or the *Century* have longer layovers than they need or usually desire. The closest connections consistent with surety is the average passenger's preference.

The Pennsylvania has a greater advantage over the NYC in bidding for connecting line traffic at Chicago by reason

<i>Railroad</i>	<i>Limited</i>	<i>Arrives Chicago</i>
CB&Q	<i>North Coast</i> (NPRR)	9:25A
CB&Q	<i>Oriental</i> (GN)	7:55P
CB&Q	<i>Chicago-Nebraska</i>	7:55A
CB&Q	<i>Denver</i>	7:00A
CB&Q	<i>Minnesota</i>	7:55A
CM&StP	<i>Olympian</i>	9:25A
CM&StP	<i>Pioneer</i>	8:35A
C&NW	<i>Overland</i>	8:50A
C&NW	<i>Los Angeles</i>	8:55A
C&NW	<i>Portland</i>	9:35A
C&NW	<i>North American</i>	6:55A
C&NW	<i>Northwestern</i>	8:35A
AT&SF	<i>California</i>	10:00A
AT&SF	<i>Navajo</i>	8:30A
CRI&P	<i>Golden State</i>	10:00A
CRI&P	<i>Rocky Mountain</i>	4:15P

of its being most advantageously situated with respect to the CB&Q, CM&StP, C&NW, and equally well located with respect to the CRI&P (by reason of Englewood Union Station). (Neither the PRR nor the NYC can be considered conveniently located to the AT&SF (using Dearborn Station) although the Central is the closer. (In this connection will the Santa Fe's efforts of some years ago, to enter the Chicago Union Station ever be revived.) It certainly should be a tremendous advantage to the Pennsylvania to have this great southwestern carrier housed with it, while not hurting the competitive in-

terests of the western and northwestern lines already there, except to a small extent with respect to Kansas City traffic upon which, however, the AT&SF has long had supreme control and the change could hardly take much business from the C&A, CB&Q, CMStP that they can get in the face of existing competitive conditions. All should benefit through the lighter financial burden of operating C U S through division among five instead of four proprietary interests and with the Santa Fe definitely taken care of, and hence out of any terminal project in the LaSalle-Dearborn-Grand Central section of Chicago, ambitious schemes, possibly overshadowing C U S, may have to be dropped or scaled down.

As an offset to the PRR's advantages in securing connecting line traffic, the New York Central using LaSalle Street Station "On the Loop" has the more convenient location from the standpoint of many Chicago passengers. While no rearrangement in schedules can deprive them of this advantage, a rearrangement can bring out the advantages of the PRR for connecting line business (particularly westbound) with corresponding detriment to the NYC. Schedules have never done this before — as eastern limiteds of both roads allowed such generous quantities of time for changing trains.

Arrival and departure at Chicago of principal limiteds of western roads are listed below:

<i>Departs from Chicago</i>	<i>Destination</i>
10:35A	Seattle
11:00P	Seattle
6:15P	Omaha
11:30P	Denver
6:30P	Minneapolis
11:00P	Tacoma-Seattle
6:30P	ditto
8:00P	San Francisco
8:10P	Los Angeles
10:15P	Portland
6:30P	Minneapolis
10:00P	ditto
8:00P	Los Angeles
9:45A	ditto
8:30P	Los Angeles-Santa Barbara
10:00A	Denver-Colorado Springs

I believe that the Pennsylvania should establish a 20-hour train leaving New York at 11:00 P.M. and reaching Chicago at 6:00 P.M. or a few minutes before 6:00. A similar east-bound service should be established from Chicago but the time of departure does not suggest itself so definitely as in the case of the westbound train. The closer the connections with western limiteds the better for the PRR.

As to where the traffic is to come from, I believe that it will be largely from the New York Central and that it can be obtained.