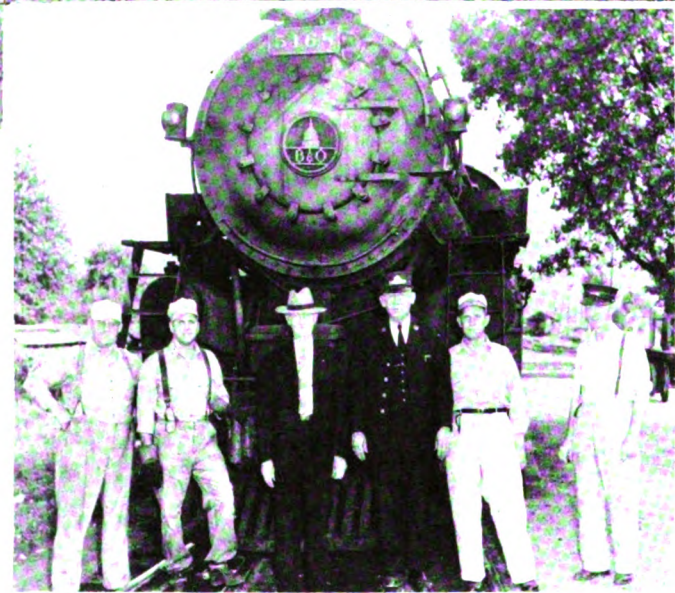


# "Valley 55" RUNS NO MORE



**One of the most colorful chapters in B&O history came to a close on August 20 when Trains 54 and 55 were discontinued after 114 years of service to the people of the Shenandoah Valley**

Above: Train 54 on its last run over the Valley Branch that figured prominently in railroad history and Civil War campaigns. On the left, members of the crew and friends, l to r, Engineer Charles F. Deck, Fireman Earl Dodson, Hugh Funk, retired agent, who served the B&O and Southern Railroads for 49 years at Strasburg, Va.; Conductor Frank M. Brannum, Mr. Wolf, station employee at Strasburg, and Baggage-master B. B. Bissett

By **GEORGE PACKETT**

**"VALLEY 55"** runs no more. This historic old train made its last run between Harper's Ferry, W. Va., and Strasburg, Va., on August 20. This closed 114 years of B&O service to the Valley.

Valley 55 (southbound) and Valley 54 (the same train northbound) were part and parcel of the great Shenandoah Valley of Virginia which they did so much to develop. No stretch of track in all the world has been filled with more color, romance and glamour than the 50-mile B&O line between Harper's Ferry and Strasburg Junction. It was in 1835 that the Winchester & Potomac Railroad opened its line for service between Harper's Ferry and Winchester. On this line much history was made during the War between the States and in later years. It was not until 1870 that the line known as the Winchester and Strasburg Railroad extended service beyond Winchester to Strasburg Junction. Trains that were operated into Strasburg

used tractive rights over the Southern Railroad. This covered slightly more than one mile.

The Valley trains were known and loved by people in all walks of life.

The Valley trains were patronized by folks from all parts of the country who came to the Shenandoah Valley, on business or to visit its many water resorts or the caverns for which this section has always been noted.

The Shenandoah Valley line originated with the Winchester and Potomac Railroad, whose franchise dates back to 1831. At first its rails were wooden. Later these were replaced by metal rail. Today much heavier rail still carries heavy freight trains of stone, lime, apples, grain and flour to the main lines of the B&O for destinations throughout the world. But passenger service is no more. There simply were not enough people riding these trains to justify their continuance.

In years past passenger service flourished, and at least four trains daily, each way,

were required to handle the traffic. On this line came the currency for banks in the Valley. The first reels for moving pictures traveled in on these trains. Mail and express for the merchants and people living in this great valley were brought in. Also riding these trains were the "drummers" of yesteryear, who came to sell their goods to the many merchants of the valley.

### Horse-drawn Carriages Met Train

At Winchester and Strasburg, horse-drawn carriages met all trains. The three hotels of Winchester, the Evans Hotel, Taylor House and the Winchester Inn furnished free transportation from the depot to the respective hotels. On Sunday evenings most of the natives of Winchester and Strasburg came to the depot to meet the evening train.

Service on the valley line was slow but dependable. Except for the period of the Civil War, or in time of floods or giant snow

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drifts (which often blocked the tracks for days) the valley trains operated on good schedules.

On the train leaving Strasburg at five o'clock for years, an old white-haired Negro, Dick Wells, served Virginia fried chicken and coffee for 25 cents. His chief business was with the drummers. But when our family traveled, Mother always packed a shoebox lunch. Father wore a duster to protect his Sunday suit. To all of us a ride on "the Valley" was a real event.

On the last run of this historic train on August 20, members of the Winchester Chamber of Commerce, newspaper reporters and many old-timers made the trip from Winchester to Strasburg. On this trip, Hugh Funk, 88, who was joint agent for the B&O and Southern Railway at Strasburg Junction for 49 years, met the train. Mr. Funk is one of Strasburg's most beloved and respected citizens. He entered railroad service on May 22, 1882, and retired on April 30, 1941. His entire railroad life was spent at Strasburg, except for three weeks when he worked at another point.

### Served In Three Wars

The Valley line served nobly during three great wars—the Civil War, World War I and World War II. Thousands of valley lads used this line in traveling to and from camps. The same trains returned many bodies of our fallen valley heroes, to rest under the bright stars of this beautiful Shenandoah Valley.

Privately owned automobiles and busses have taken passenger business from the rails in this section. With permission of the Public Service Commissions of three states, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia, the railroad decided to discontinue its passenger service on this line.

While the Valley passenger line does not pay now, it did pay off handsomely in 1861 for General Stonewall Jackson. In his day it was strategically as valuable a railroad as could be found anywhere in the nation. Over the main line of the B&O, in from the West through Harper's Ferry, coal was being hauled to Baltimore to fuel ships blockading the Confederacy.

In the South the Confederate railroads found their depleted stock of "iron horses" struggling under the vastly increased burdens of wartime traffic. The Southerners also badly needed more locomotives.

Between Winchester and Harper's Ferry lay the critical link. The railroad beyond Winchester had not been completed. At Harper's Ferry, in the early morning of May, 1861, Stonewall Jackson simply helped himself to four of the B&O's smaller engines. He whisked them down the rickety valley line to Winchester, hitched his horses to them and hauled them down the old valley pike to Strasburg. There he put them on the tracks of another new

railroad, the Manassas Gap Line, now known as the Southern Railway. But Jackson could not hold his ground in Harper's Ferry. A month after he took those four engines he was ordered to evacuate the town. He did so, destroying everything behind him.

### Jackson Destroyed Equipment

Jackson put the torch to 42 locomotives, destroyed 305 coal cars and dynamited the combined railroad and road bridge across the Potomac River. Then he fell back to Martinsburg. There he found more B&O engines. Clearing the road to Winchester of all travel, and the Valley pike to Strasburg, he commandeered from farmers around Martinsburg 40 of their strongest horses. These were hitched four abreast and ten horses deep, to the first 50-ton locomotive. A specially selected group of 35 machinists, teamsters and laborers were assigned to supervise the movement.

The machinists stripped the bulky mechanism down to its essentials—they substituted a roughly constructed emergency truck for its front wheels and linked their prize to the horses with a massive chain. The project was successfully completed, but after the end of the war the locomotives were returned to the B&O.

The history of "Valley 55 will live forever in the memory of all who ever had the pleasure of riding the colorful little trains. The many fine B&O men who served the Valley Railroad so well—they will remember, too.

In passing, we pause to pay tribute to the memory of the following, who played such a great part in the operation of the Valley trains. Space and memory do not permit us to name all, but here are a few: T. C. Prince and J. E. Spurrier, both superintendents of the Valley; J. Luther Maphis, chief clerk; Dr. Julian F. Ward, company physician; T. B. Patton, ticket agent, and Hunter B. Chapman, of Winchester. J. J. McCabe, trainmaster, Brunswick; employees at Strasburg Junction, G. W. G. Packett, Sock Licklider, Cy Smith, Bill Walters, Landy Keister. Track Foreman Frank Horn, Supervisor Sam Licklider and Conductors Martin Phalen, Bud Hawkins, D. C. (Skinny) Yattes and Sam Yattes. Engineers Buton Swain and Uncle Bob Earl. All these now rest in their terminal at Journey's End.

The crew of Valley 55 and 54 for the past several years who also made the last official run consisted of: Frank M. Brannum, conductor; B. B. Bissett, baggagemaster and conductor; Earl Dodson, mail clerk; C. Burke Coffman, fireman, and last, but not least, Engineer Charles F. Deck.

As Engine 5168 passed through Harper's Ferry tunnel on the moonlight evening of August 20, another chapter in history was closed. Valley 55 and 54 will run no more.

## Those "Special Weeks"

YES, we know. Every time you turn around it's "Be Kind to This" and "Eat More of That" Week. Did you ever wonder how many of these special days and weeks there really are?

Here, at last, and for whatever it's worth, is the true count. There are actually on record with the government in Washington a total of **477** special days and weeks. That's more red letter days, as any poor harrassed American can plainly see, than there are days on the calendar.

Come to think of it, what are WE doing at work today?

But there's one special week that we're heartily in favor of. It's "Do Nothing Week." Originated by "week-weary" students at the Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville, Ga., "Do Nothing Week" is celebrated by students of the college each year in April. Since it was instituted two years ago the week has gained nationwide publicity. Classes go on as usual—the "Do Nothing advocates" haven't been able to lick this obstacle yet. But there are no special meetings on the campus, no drives, no strenuous extra activities—just a week with plenty of rest and one skit and song session, poking a little fun at the special week craze that has swept the country. GSCW girls say that their "Do Nothing Week" really has a serious purpose. It is to remind Americans that what all of us really need most of all in these straneous times is just to rest and relax a little more.

## (Journey's End—From Page 30)

Andrew P. Gallagher, 48, assistant agent, Lehigh and Howard Streets freight station, Philadelphia, died suddenly September 17. Mr. Gallagher began his B&O career in Philadelphia September 4, 1919. He was appointed general foreman February 18, 1946, and was selected for the position which he held at the time of his death on February 14, 1948. For many years Mr. Gallagher was active in the affairs of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, and he served as division chairman of that organization. He was also past president of the B&O Veteran Employees' Association, a member of the Holy Name Society, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. At the age of fifteen he had enlisted in the marines during World War I as a bugle boy. He was one of the youngest Americans to enter combat in that conflict. He is survived by his wife, Florence, and two daughters, Mary E. and Florence C.

—Correspondent B. LANIN