



*1957 NRHS Convention  
Roanoke, Virginia*

Bill Volkmer Was There



## *Roanoke, Virginia*

- Labor Day weekend was always the time of year for the National Railway Historical Society annual convention.
- In 1957 there was only one all steam railroad left in the country and the N&W had just received its first order of diesels.
- This was the very last major steam convention ever held. And it was a great one!



Hank Raudenbush writes:

Memories! I was there that year. Great ride in the gondola coming back on the VGN behind electric power! The first day, while people were still arriving, they had shuttle buses from the hotel to Shafers Crossing (N&W engine terminal). Lots of action there, and actually saw the "Jawn Henry" steam turbo go by. Most people stayed there but if you got back on the bus and went on to the VGN yard, they had a very nice, but poorly attended static display - the former passenger train, with a 4-6-2, a squarehead siderod electric, etc., every piece of equipment freshly painted and polished, and even a line of fresh ballast along the edge of each track.

Bill Volkmer writes: I was there too, Henry. Und I took pictures to boot!



NRHS- National Convention Roanoke, VA August 31-September 3, 1957 WDV Photos





*Friday, August 31, 1957*

Bus tour to Shafer's Crossing  
EH, Virginian EH and Blue  
Ridge Summit





**While we were touring the Virginian yard in Roanoke we sampled the new FM diesel power that had just taken over the railroad. The Virginian was 100% Fairbanks Morse in common with the Pittsburgh and West Virginia which was 99% FM.**



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**A recently retired Virginian "Berkshire" 2-8-4 first cousin to the NKP and C&O locomotives. Roanoke, VA August 31, 1957.**





**These simple articulated 2-6-6-6 behemoths were called "Allegheny" type on the Virginian. I never witnessed one in action.**



**The last Virginian varnish set was still on the property in 1957. An RPO car and a coach behind Pacific number 212.**





**Sure was nice of the Virginian to spot the locomotives in a separated state for ease of taking pictures. They even added fresh ballast for the occasion. Roanoke, VA August 31, 1957.**











**Brand new rectifier electric locomotives just delivered from GE. The older electrics had already been retired. Roanoke, VA August 31, 1957.**







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RAILWAY EXPRESS  
AGENCY INC.

VIRGINIAN

U.S. RAIL  
ROADWAY  
PORT OFFICE

VIRGINIAN





**A special train hauled early arriving fans to Starkey at Blue Ridge Summit and later fans showed up aboard a Roanoke Transit Brill bus having toured Shafers Crossing and the Virginian equipment display.**











**A double headed coal drag with Y 6bs front and rear is about to crest Blue Ridge Summit a few miles east of Roanoke, VA August 31, 1957. This was big steam's LAST STAND in America!**



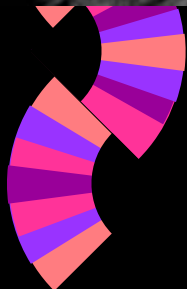






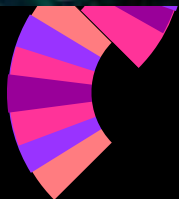
**The previous eastbound coal train's helper backs downgrade towards**







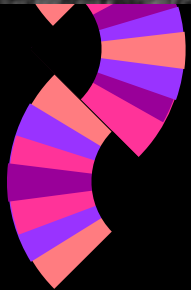














**Westbound Pocahontas drifts downgrade from Blue Ridge Summit into Roanoke. Mid afternoon, August 31, 1957. Steam passenger service was about to end. WDV Photo**







*Saturday September 1, 1957*

Roanoke to Matoka, WVA via N&W  
Matoka to Roanoke via Virginian



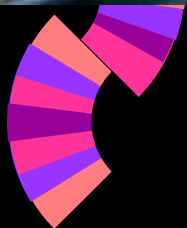


**Down by the station. Early in the morning. An 0-8-0 is about to add a couple of baggage cars to a westbound passenger train at Roanoke, VA September 1, 1957.**



**This is the only photo I could get of the Jawn Henry in action. I was on the opposite side of a cut of gons and only had time to climb INTO the gon in order to get the shot. Better than no shot at all. Bill Volkmer August 31, 1957 Roanoke,**









**Y6b 2156 returning lite from helper duty  
on Blue Ridge Summit August 31, 1957**

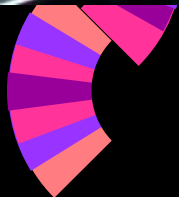






**Early morning westbound (or southbound) passenger train preparing to depart from Roanoke Station. The station was constructed only a year c**



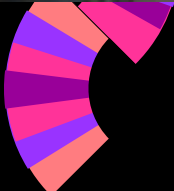


**Early morning westbound (or southbound) passenger train  
departing Roanoke passing the N&W General Office Building.  
September 1, 1957 WDV Photo**



**Early morning westbound (or southbound) passenger train  
departing Roanoke passing the N&W General Office Building.  
September 1, 1957 WDV Photo**





**Killing time at Roanoke depot waiting for the NRHS special to depart. This was my VERY first sighting of an N&W diesel locomotive --- EVER! September 1,**



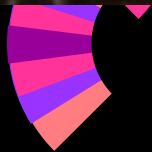


# FOAMERS IN HOG HEAVEN

**Back in 1957, when fantrips were hauled by REAL soft coal fired, cinder-belching N&W Y6s, only hardiest of souls donned goggles and soot-defying caps in order to savor the cool crisp Virginia air at 50 MPH. Photo taken by Bill Volkmer while standing in the vestibule of the rearmost coach. Trip operated Roanoke to Matoka, WVA via N&W and returned via Virginian electrified line.**



















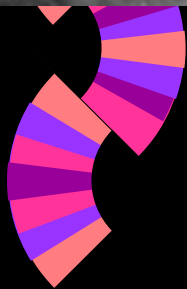
**The Y6b was used to shuffle the train around and up the steep grade onto the Virginian tracks at Matoka, WVa. September 1, 1957 WDV Photo**











**After dropping off the NRHS special train at Matoka, W Va for the Virginian to take over, the N&W 114 heads back east to Roanoke with a lone coach as a rider for the crew. September 1, 1957 WDV**








**Virginian rectifier electric 132 has picked up the train at the N&W interchange at Matoka, W VA. It will head eastbound to Roanoke. Captioned 1-1977 WDV Photo**







**Just as I was taking this photo the eastbound  
Powhattan Arrow roared underneath this trestle at  
Glen Lyn, VA September 1, 1957**











## *The Saturday night banquet...*

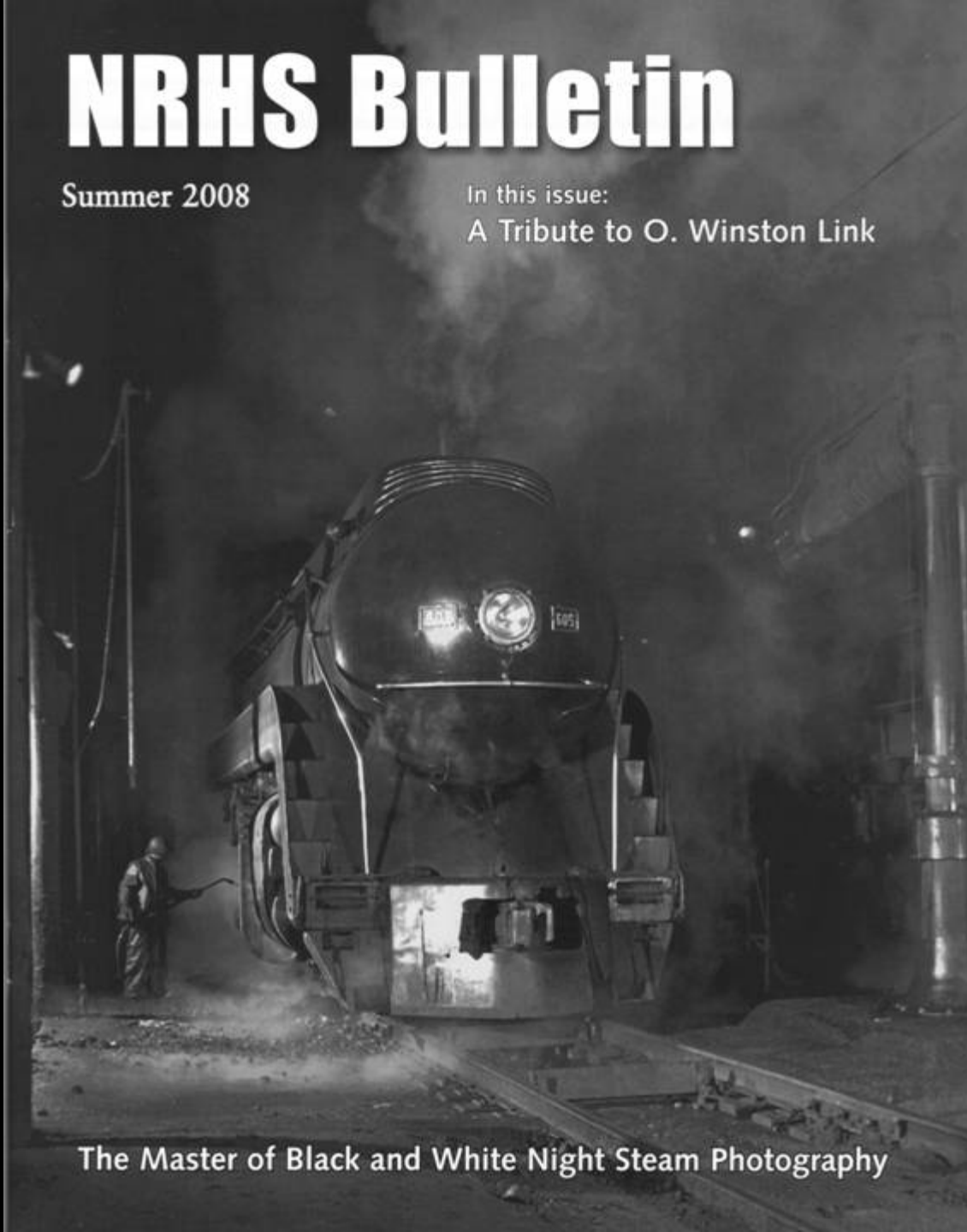
- Featured O. Winston Link
- Who was then in the process of megaphotographing the twilight of N&W Steam, indeed AMERICA's STEAM!

# NRHS Bulletin

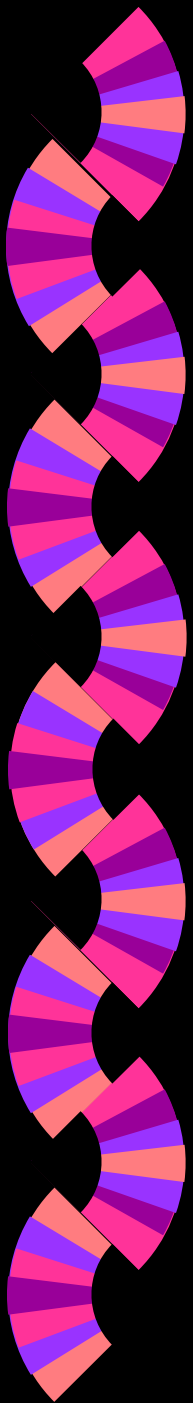
Summer 2008

In this issue:

A Tribute to O. Winston Link

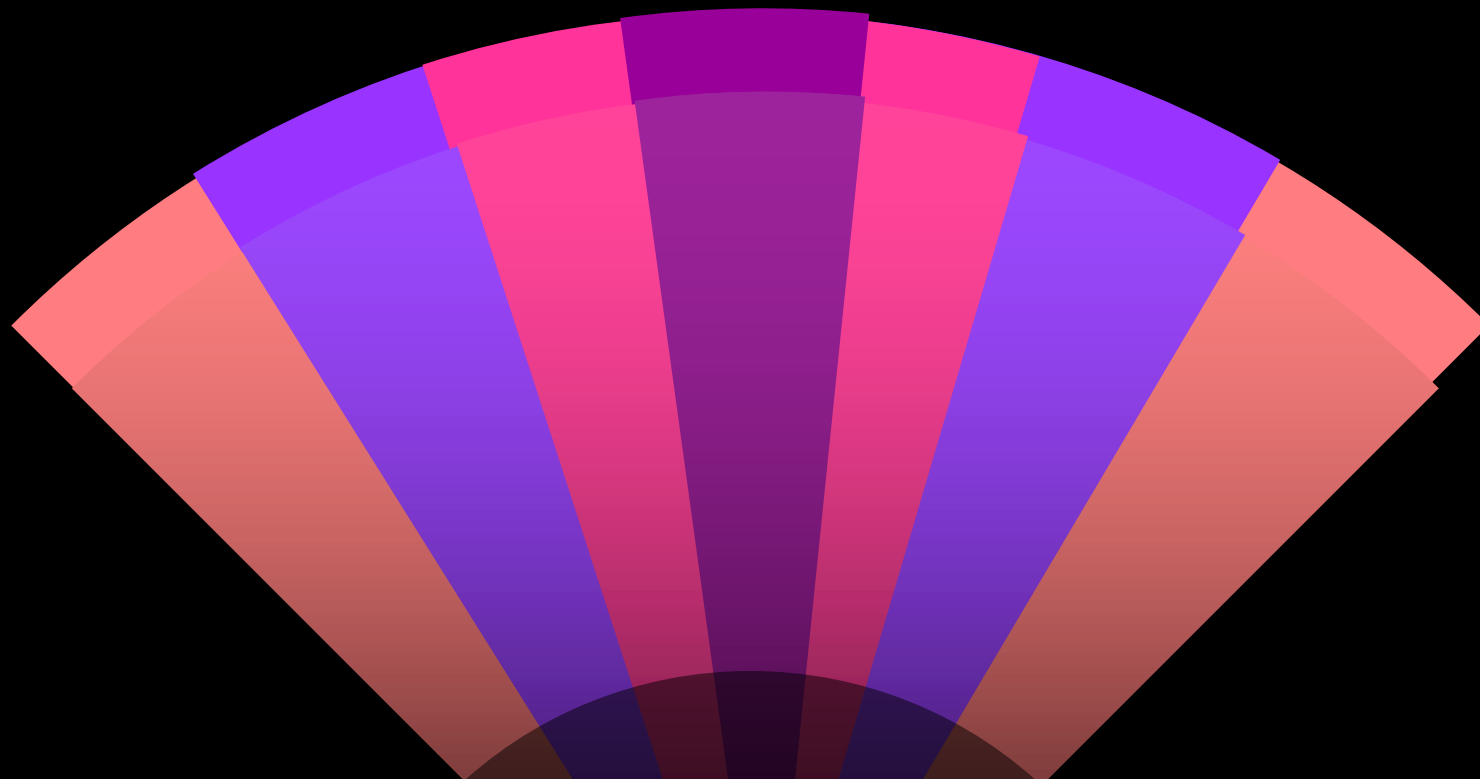


The Master of Black and White Night Steam Photography









*Sunday, September 2, 1957*

Roanoke to Bluefield, W VA

and return. 2-6-6-4 1239

powered.






**2-6-6-4 A Class articulated locomotive 1239 heads up the NRHS Special train at Roanoke, VA., destination Bluefield, W Va., September 1, 1957**



**NRHS Special at Bluefield, W  
VA September 2, 1957 WDV**





**Our destination today behind the A class 2-6-6-4 was Bluefield, West Virginia. More diesels, this time ALcos were spotted at the engine servicing pits. 0-8-0s still performed the switching duties at the station, however.**















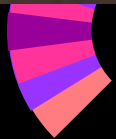
# *Labor Day - 1957*

Roanoke to Blacksburg and Return  
Third 4-8-0 added at  
Christiansburg



**Early morning photography at Roanoke was difficult because we were looking directly into the sun coming up in the east. September 2, 1957 NRHS special train behind 4-8-0s to Christiansburg and up the Blacksburg**



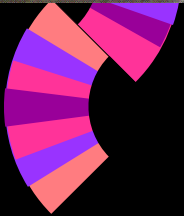












**475 leads between Roanoke and Christiansburg, VA. The 4-8-0 would finish out her life on the Strasburg Railroad in Pennsylvania. September 3, 1957 Bill**













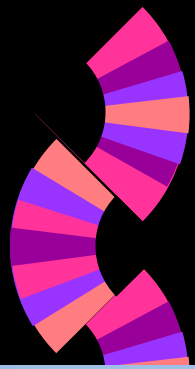












# *Epilogue*

## THEN AND NOW



**From Paradise (Roanoke, VA.) to Paradise, (PA) via Bristol, TN. The 1957 NRHS Convention in Roanoke featured N&W 475, the 4-8-0 that was made famous by O. Winton Link on the Abington Branch on an excursion to Blacksburg, VA. It was stuffed and mounted for a time in Bristol, VA and then went on to a second career on the Strasburg RR where it operates in Splendor today. Top right photo, Bill Volkmer**





# *The End*

- An Art Wheeler Production
- December 2010