

# Notes on Passenger Service to Midwestern Cities: 1942 –1969

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This paper is a supplement to “*Midwest Metamorphosis: The Decline, Fall, and—Sometimes—Revival of a Region’s Passenger Service*”, published in Railroad History 198 (Spring 2008). It offers technical perspective about computations that could not be included in the above manuscript due to the need for brevity.

*Midwest Metamorphosis* is based on analysis that William Vandervoort, Lauren Fischer and I conducted between June 2007 and May 2008. We collected information primarily from the *Official Guide of the Railways* for all intercity passenger stations in Midwestern cities having populations of 100,000 or more in 1942. We collected arrival and departure information for the following periods: June 1942, May 1956, November 1969, and April 1971.

We excluded from analysis all facilities in a metropolitan area that were not essentially “downtown” terminals. For example, we excluded Englewood Union Station in Chicago, Winton Place, Ohio, and Gary (Indiana) Union Station as well as many smaller stations, despite the fact that they boasted an extensive roster of trains well into the post-war era. We also collected information about daily train activities from the largest terminals outside the Midwest to allow for comparative analysis.

The information about train activity we collected, together with data about the populations of the region’s metropolitan area population, was organized into Microsoft Excel and SPSS data files. Much of our raw data for the 1942 and 1956 periods can be found at Mr. Vandervoort’s website: <http://hometown.aol.com/chirailfan/>

The analysis we conducted is generally straightforward. We considered only trains that operated on weekdays (excluding weekend-only runs). We excluded all trains operated by interurban lines as well as those which operated primarily to enhance mobility *within* a metropolitan area, such as suburban and commuter trains. Name trains are counted twice—one train in each direction.

## Methodological Issues

Among the methodological issues we confronted included:

1. The classification of trains that arrived at a terminal while being operated by one carrier and departed under the operation of another. For example, the westbound Empire Builder arrived in Minneapolis on CB&Q rail and departed on Great Northern rail prior to Amtrak (with the opposite hand-off occurring on the eastbound run). We counted this train as a single run in each direction, and generally classified it as being operated by the carrier that handled the train the longest distance. For example, the *City of Los Angeles* was classified as a Union Pacific train at Omaha, rather than as a C&NW or Milwaukee Road train.

2. Definition of suburban/commuter service. In a few instances, it was difficult to determine if a train should be classified as an intercity train or a suburban/commuter train. Our determination was ultimately based on the distance the train traveled and the timing of its schedule. Details about commuter trains can be found at <http://hometown.aol.com/chirailfan/>

3. Definition of “through” service. Only trains that passed through a metropolitan area in its entirety were counted as “through trains” at stations within that metropolitan area. For example, trains that originated in Minneapolis Great Northern Station, made a stop at St. Paul Union Station, and then traveled to Chicago were not counted as through trains for St. Paul, due to the fact that they did not originate outside the metropolitan area.

## Corrections and Clarifications

Since the article was submitted for publication, we have identified a need for these corrections and clarifications.

Footnote 1: The statement noting that the Midwest had ten of the 13 stations with 40 or more long-distance trains and five carriers is correct. However, Chicago should not have been included in Footnote 1.

Pg. 17. First sentence of Columbus section. Columbus ranked tied for 6<sup>th</sup> (not 5<sup>th</sup>) in daily train activity, as shown on the table on page 50. Furthermore, on page 56, it would be more accurate to describe Indianapolis as ranking tied for 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Additional footnote material

The following comments were excluded for reasons for brevity:

Footnote 2: Our analysis shows that the six largest stations in the Northeast lost more intercity trains between 1942 and 1969 than those in the Midwest, but the

Midwest's decline was substantially greater if only trains operating 100 miles or more are defined as "long distance." When this definition is used, for example, many trains on the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Boston & Maine, and the New York Central in the Northeastern U.S. are excluded.

Our analysis also shows that, between 1942 and 1969, the dozen largest stations of the Midwest lost 3.5 carriers, nearly twice as many carriers as the largest dozen terminals in the West and South--and six times as many as the largest terminals in the Northeast.

### Chicago

Pg. XX: In 1942, Chicago had about one long-distance train per 11,419 residents, less than half as many as Kansas City (one per 4,768 residents) and one-third less than St. Louis (8,769). For a variety of reasons, one would expect the largest cities to lag behind smaller ones on this basis. (Stations in the largest handled far more passengers *per train* than those in smaller cities).

Nevertheless, when commuter trains are included in per-capita estimates, Chicago has been truly unrivaled since the mid-1960s.

### St. Louis

Footnote 11. Washington Union Station had substantially more "long distance" trains than St. Louis Union Station in 1942, having 171 trains to SLUS' 156. The two stations were virtual equals when "long-distance" is defined as train operating at distances of 150 or more miles. However, SLUS had significantly more trains operating to destinations 250 miles or more away. An appreciable share of Washington's trains operated only to Harrisburg, Penn., Philadelphia, Penn. and Washington - Richmond, Virginia; only a handful of SLUS trains operated such short distances.

### Detroit

Footnote 16. The longevity of service on the C&O/Pere Marquette and Grand Truck to Fort Street and Brush Street, respectively, is noteworthy. Each carrier still operated half the number of trains to Detroit in 1969 as they did in 1942—a rarity among stations east of Chicago. Moreover, B&O trains had returned to Ft. Street station by the early 1960s. As a result, that station's daily activity fell at a rate much slower than that at Michigan Central Station between 1956 and 1969.

It is also interesting to note that Cincinnati had far more trains than Detroit in 1942 (112 vs. 98), but by 1969, Detroit had 34 to Cincinnati's 20.

### Cleveland

Footnote 17. It should be noted that the New York Central eliminated more trains in cities further east, including Buffalo and Albany, New York, as well as at Grand Central Station, than it did at Cleveland. Thus, while the decline of service to Cleveland was noteworthy, it was not atypical on that carrier's system.

### Milwaukee

Footnote 18. Metropolitan Milwaukee had only one train per 9,523 residents in 1942, the least of any "large city" (defined as a metropolitan areas having a population of 250,000 or more) west (in railroad terms) of Chicago. Among large Midwestern cities, only Chicago (11,419), Cleveland (12,656) and Detroit (23,427) had less service per capita.

In 1969, metropolitan Milwaukee still had one train per 19,758 residents in the metropolitan area, giving it the *most* service per capita of any large Midwestern city. One a per-capital basis, metropolitan Milwaukee now had more than five times as many trains as Cleveland and 50 percent more than St. Louis.

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