



Welcome to my presentation regarding railroad depot operations. Consider this: look at a bookshelf of rail-related books and publications. I'll wager that 60 percent of books focus upon motive power, 20 percent about a particular line's history, 10 percent are pretty "coffee table" general interest books for arm-chair reference or Father's Day gifts, while 9 percent touch upon railroad equipment—usually passenger cars. Maybe one percent of all railroad books show railroad structures—but how many explain precisely what a railroad agent, clerk, or operator did? For the next twenty minutes, I'll survey major activities, leaving approximately ten minutes for questions and comments.

Background picture: depot at Seven Mile Ford, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

- *Overview*
- *Functions*
 - Passenger service
 - Freight service
 - Carload freight at stations
 - Carload freight at private and “blind” spurs
 - Less-than-carload freight
 - Railway Express
 - Western Union
 - Railway operations
 - Other duties as assigned
- *Summary*

8069

There's much to cover, so let's move ahead. Following a brief overview, I'll examine major functions performed. At large stations, the agent and operator functions were performed by two people. As many clerks filled as were justified by station revenue filled out the staff. For the majority of small city and town railroad depots, agent and operator as well as clerical responsibilities were performed by one person, titled the “agent-operator.”

Background picture: N&W negative 8069, unidentified office with clerks at desks.

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Overview

“The agent should remember that at his station he is the Railway Company, and that public opinion regarding the Company in his community is very largely his responsibility. In addition to maintaining the highest efficiency at his station, he should see to it that he and his subordinates maintain pleasant and agreeable manners in meeting the public, and that all questions, even unreasonable questions, are answered with politeness and courtesy.”

This quote is from a 1922 Southern Railway **MANUAL OF RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF TICKET AGENTS** ... Effective June 1, 1922: “1. Courtesy. – A railroad is first of all a public servant. It follows that the success of a railroad as a business enterprise depends, in large measure, not only upon the efficiency of the transportation it affords, but upon the personal treatment which those doing business with the railroad receive at the hands of its officers and employees.”

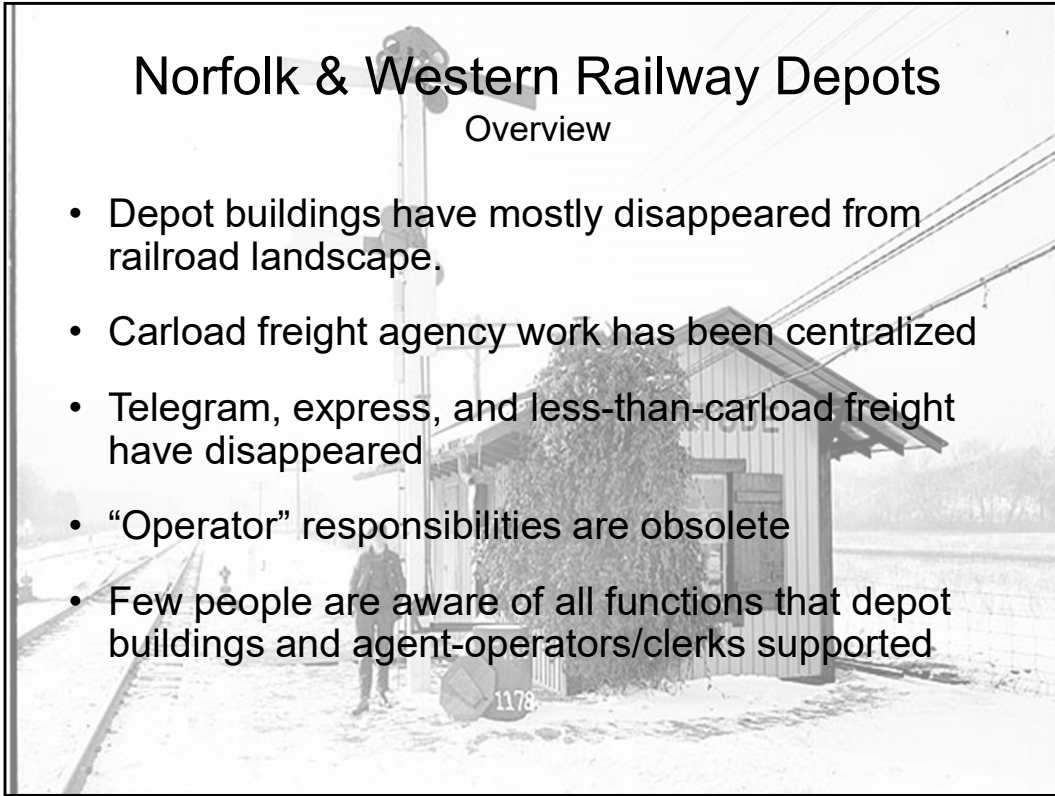
“The agent should remember that at his station he is the Railway Company, and that public opinion regarding the Company in his community is very largely his responsibility. In addition to maintaining the highest efficiency at his station, he should see to it that he and his subordinates maintain pleasant and agreeable manners in meeting the public, and that all questions, even unreasonable questions, are answered with politeness and courtesy.”

Background picture: depot at Stuarts Draft, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Overview

- Depot buildings have mostly disappeared from railroad landscape.
- Carload freight agency work has been centralized
- Telegram, express, and less-than-carload freight have disappeared
- “Operator” responsibilities are obsolete
- Few people are aware of all functions that depot buildings and agent-operators/clerks supported



The majority of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century railroad depot buildings have been razed. Although most people viewed them as passenger facilities and in some cities, the freight and passenger buildings were separate, they were actually multi-purposed. As usages disappeared, depots reached extinction.

Scarcer than depots is the documentation of a depot agent’s responsibilities. When a depot was open more than just during daylight hours on weekdays and Saturdays, the night trick person primarily performed only operator duties. The decline of depots occurred during four phases. First, as manual blocking was replaced by automatic block signal-operated supplemented by timetable and train order movements, depots were not needed every few miles along main lines for train operations. Second, centralized traffic control replaced automatic block signal territory, eliminating train order stations approximately every ten miles. Third, declining passenger services combined with the decline of Railway Express, Western Union, and less-than-carload freight, eliminated most stations. Finally, computerization of freight billing along with union agreement changes permitting train crew conversations with the dispatcher via radio was the death knell of any remaining depot agents.

Background picture: train order and block office at Solitude, Virginia

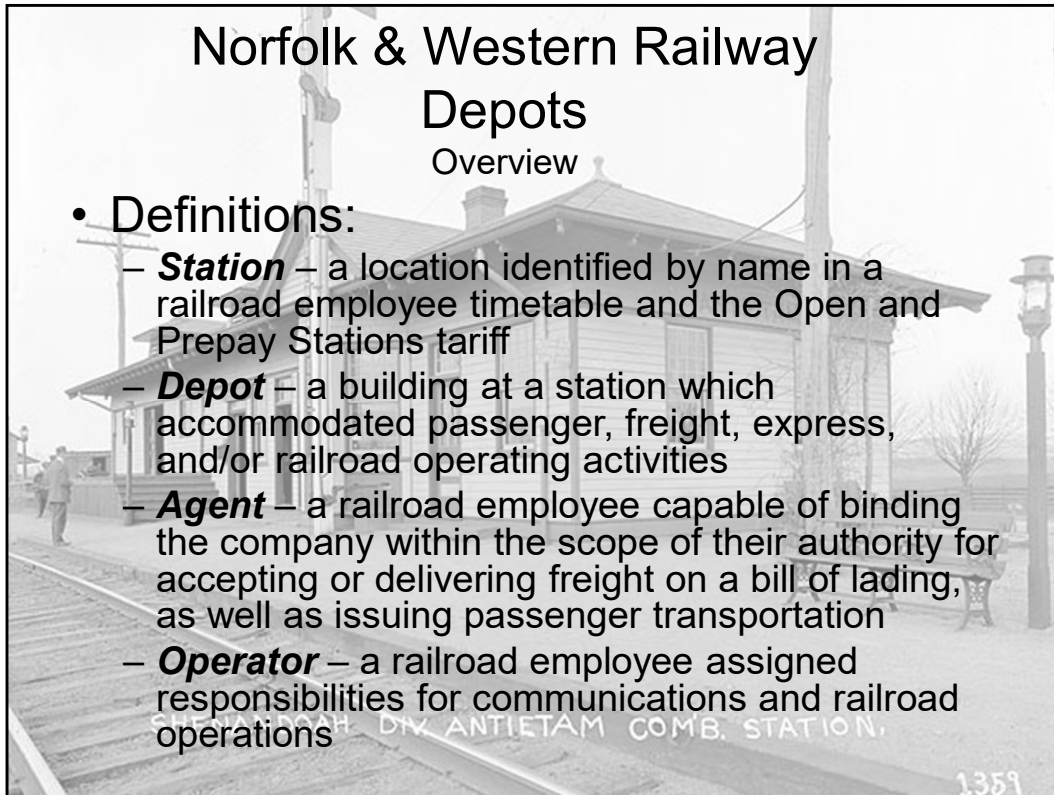
Norfolk & Western Railway

Depots

Overview

- **Definitions:**

- **Station** – a location identified by name in a railroad employee timetable and the Open and Prepay Stations tariff
- **Depot** – a building at a station which accommodated passenger, freight, express, and/or railroad operating activities
- **Agent** – a railroad employee capable of binding the company within the scope of their authority for accepting or delivering freight on a bill of lading, as well as issuing passenger transportation
- **Operator** – a railroad employee assigned responsibilities for communications and railroad operations



We'll cover a few definitions on this slide and the next to put everyone on a similar footing as we proceed through the rest of this overview. Railroads had specialized terminology, much of which is rapidly fading into history. An important distinction is made between "station" and "depot." Most people use the two interchangeably, but a station is a place while a depot is a structure located at a place.

Background picture: depot at Antietam, Maryland

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Overview (continued)

- **Definitions:**
 - **Clerk** – a railroad employee assigned clerical and agency responsibilities but without authority to bind the company on legal documents such as a bill of lading
 - **Lumper** – a person who performed manual labor in handling less-than-carload freight with the freight house or on the loading dock, sometimes hired by the agent and paid out of his/her own wages
 - **Baggage/express/mail Porter** - a person who performed manual labor in handling these articles, either as railroad employees or sometimes hired by the agent and paid out of his/her own wages

Only larger stations with significant passenger or less-than-carload freight traffic had personnel with these titles.

Background picture: depot at Ashby, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Overview (concluded)

- **Definitions:**

- ***Carload (CL) freight*** – a shipment which is paid based upon the utilization of a rail car
- ***Less-than-carload (LCL) freight*** – a shipment exceeding Railway Express size, weight, or classification limits or does not require expedited service, but is billed by piece and not by carload
- ***“Transportation”*** – a passenger ticket

My favorite definition here is “transportation,” as in a “passenger holds transportation” for travel.

Background picture: depot at Atkins, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Passenger service

- Provide route and schedule information
- Prepare rate quotes and issue tickets
 - System and connecting line rates from tariffs
 - Long-distance quotes requested from General Passenger Agent's office at Roanoke
- Update arrival-departure board
- Flag trains when requested
- Maintain passenger comfort in waiting room

SHENANDOAH DIV. BASIC FREIGHT STATION

Turning now to a series of slides depicting roles and responsibilities, these were usually performed by the agent or the agent-operator. At locations where there were separate staffing for the agent and the operator, the operator was primarily assigned to train operations and communications.

Background picture: depot at Basic, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Carload freight at stations

- Provide freight routing and schedule information
- Prepare rate quotes
 - Maintain file of system and connecting line tariffs for commodities handled at station
 - Request quotes from General Freight Agent's office at Roanoke for non-recurring shipments
- Issue bill of lading
- Collect funds and deposit at local bank or remit to the freight accounting bureau

If there was a separate clerk assignment –whether one or more– at a depot, the clerks usually took care of station accounting, tariff filings, and preparing correspondence for the agent's or agent-operator's signature.

Background picture: depot at Bentonville, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Carload freight at stations (concluded)

- Order equipment from car distributor
- Inspect damage
- Respond to loss or damage claims presented by a shipper
- Notify consignor of empty car availability
- Notify consignee of loaded car placement
- Prepare demurrage accounting and submit invoices to shippers for detention charges

Traffic management was far more complex prior to partial economic deregulation for railroads. Aside from quoting rates and preparing bills of lading, the arrangements for car loading/unloading and accounting comprised much of the average day. Loss or damage claims processing and preparing demurrage statements added to that workload.

Background picture: depot at Bluefield, West Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Carload freight at private and “blind” spurs

All of the activities for carload freight at the depot, plus additional responsibilities for assigned non-agency stations:

- Prepare a daily blind-siding report of cars at the non-agency location
- Prepare a daily private siding report
- Prepare car-spotting placement and pick-up for local freight crew

During later years when agent-operators owned their own vehicles, they were expected to visit non-agency public delivery tracks to confirm the presence of cars and their status. Prior to that era, agent-operators depended upon the blind siding and private delivery track reports provided by a local freight conductor. Messages to the local freight conductor that accompanied waybills provided car spotting or pick-up instructions. These were deposited in a box secured by a switch lock if the local freight serviced the station after agency hours.

A “blind siding” was a spur track with a turnout at only one end connecting it to a main line track. It was ordinarily a public delivery track and not a privately-owned spur that went onto a commercial property for exclusive use by the owner. These blind-sidings were “stations” on a railroad and often without a depot or any other structure. In the Open and Prepay Station tariff, they would be listed as a non-agency station and were usually limited to prepaid shipments.

Background picture: depot at Bristol, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Less-than-carload freight

- Receiving, weighing, and rating outbound shipments from public that exceed weight or dimensions of Railway Express, or did not require expedited service.
- Transferring outbound and inbound shipments to the LCL “peddler car” that traveled in a local freight on a specified schedule.
- Sent shipment arrival postal card notifications to consignee.

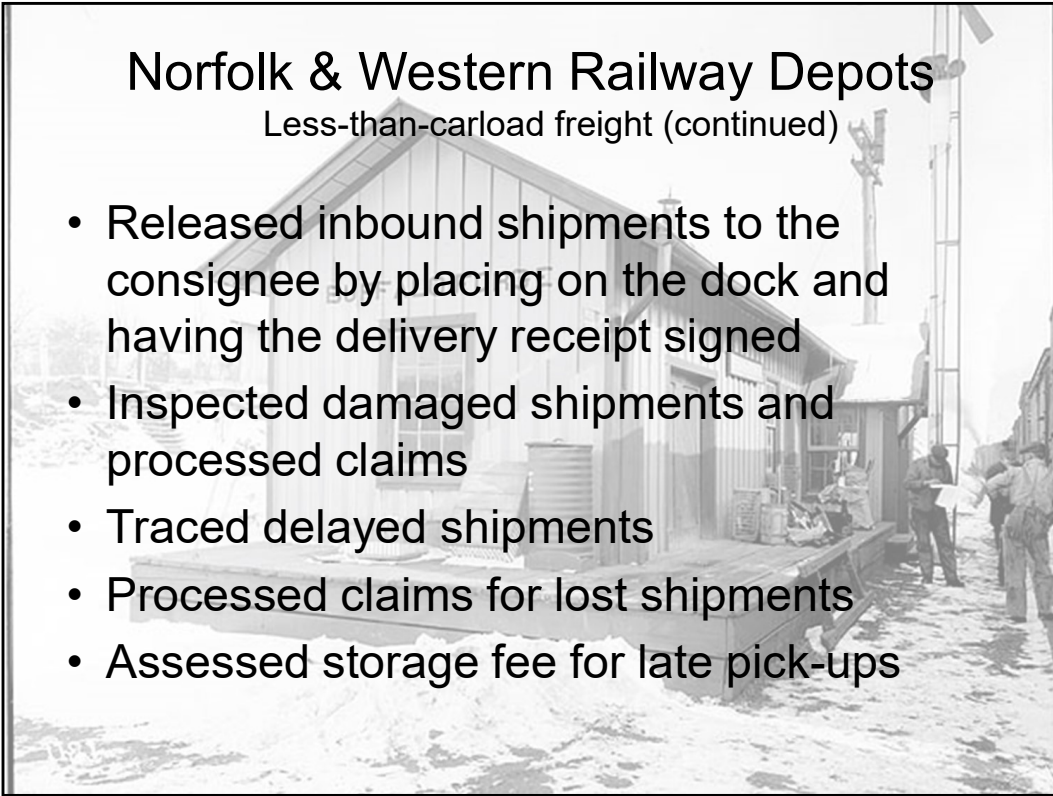
Less-than-carload (LCL) declined rapidly after World War II as less-than-truckload (LTL) carriers expanded operations along improved highways. The “freight room” or a separate “freight house” testified to the traffic volumes that once existed. Most machinery as well as household furnishings were crated as shipped via rail LCL prior to the second World War.

Background picture: depot at Buchanan, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Less-than-carload freight (continued)

- Released inbound shipments to the consignee by placing on the dock and having the delivery receipt signed
- Inspected damaged shipments and processed claims
- Traced delayed shipments
- Processed claims for lost shipments
- Assessed storage fee for late pick-ups



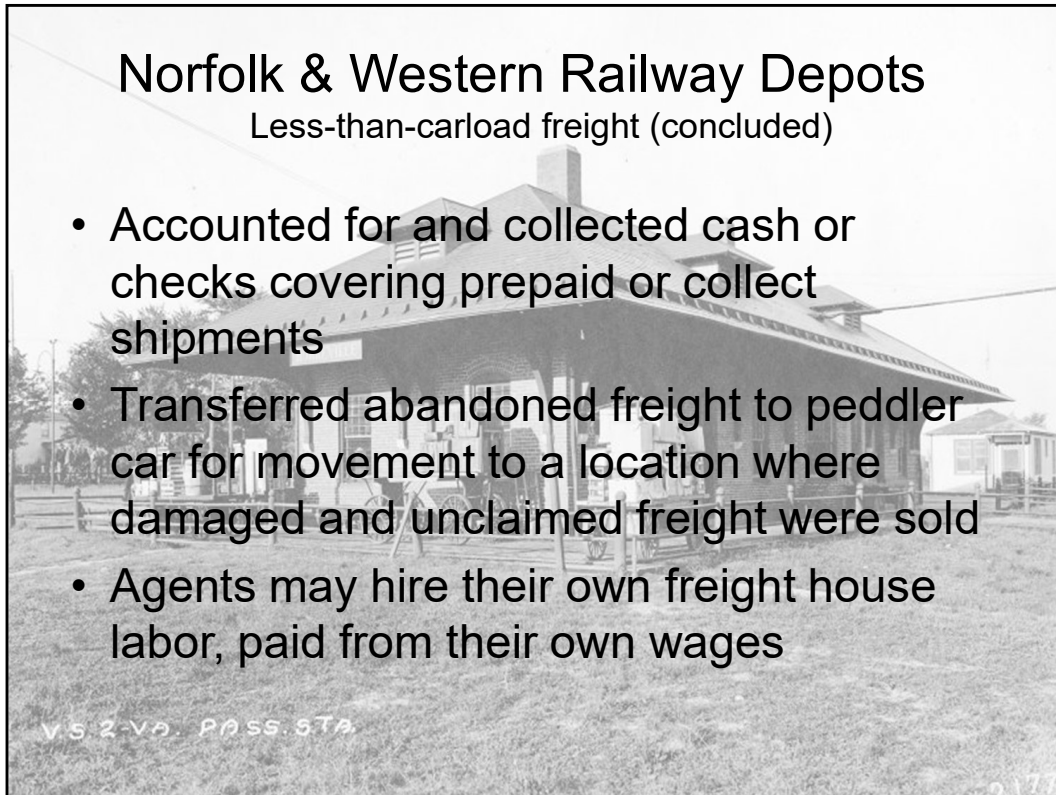
Many of the LCL procedures mirrored those for carload freight. LCL freight tended to be more prone to loss or damage because they were by-the-piece shipments instead of bulk commodity quantities. Consequently tracking, tracing, and loss/damage claims processing were often more time-consuming. As LCL traffic declined, my perception is that railroads were glad to see it disappear as a common carrier obligation. Even when branch-line passenger service disappeared, railroads had been required to continue the LCL and express service. The revenue contribution was insufficient for either activity to continue during and after the 1950s.

Background picture: depot at Buffalo Forge, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Less-than-carload freight (concluded)

- Accounted for and collected cash or checks covering prepaid or collect shipments
- Transferred abandoned freight to peddler car for movement to a location where damaged and unclaimed freight were sold
- Agents may hire their own freight house labor, paid from their own wages



Although hiring freight house labor was not approved by railroads, neither was it prohibited. Depending upon the agent's own physical capabilities, casual labor was hired at the agent's own expense.

Background picture: depot at Burkeville, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Railway Express

- Receiving, weighing, and rating outbound commodity shipments from public which complied with Railway Express shipping requirements and tariffs.
- Transferring inbound and outbound shipments to the Railway Express car that traveled in a local passenger train on a specified schedule, or via truck.
- Sent shipment arrival postal card notifications to consignee.

Railway Express paid an agent's commission for both inbound and outbound shipments. This was a significant portion of an agent's compensation.

Background picture: depot at Christiansburg, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Railway Express (continued)

- Released inbound shipments to the consignee by placing on the express countertop or door and having the delivery receipt signed
- Inspected damaged shipments and processed claims
- Traced delayed shipments
- Processed claims for lost shipments
- Assessed storage fee for late pick-ups

SHENANDOAH DIV. COLDSPRINGS COMB. STATION.

1189

Although the paperwork and forms used were for the Railway Express Agency, most of the underlying rating and accounting procedures were similar to the railroad's freight traffic.

Background picture: depot at Coldsprings, Virginia

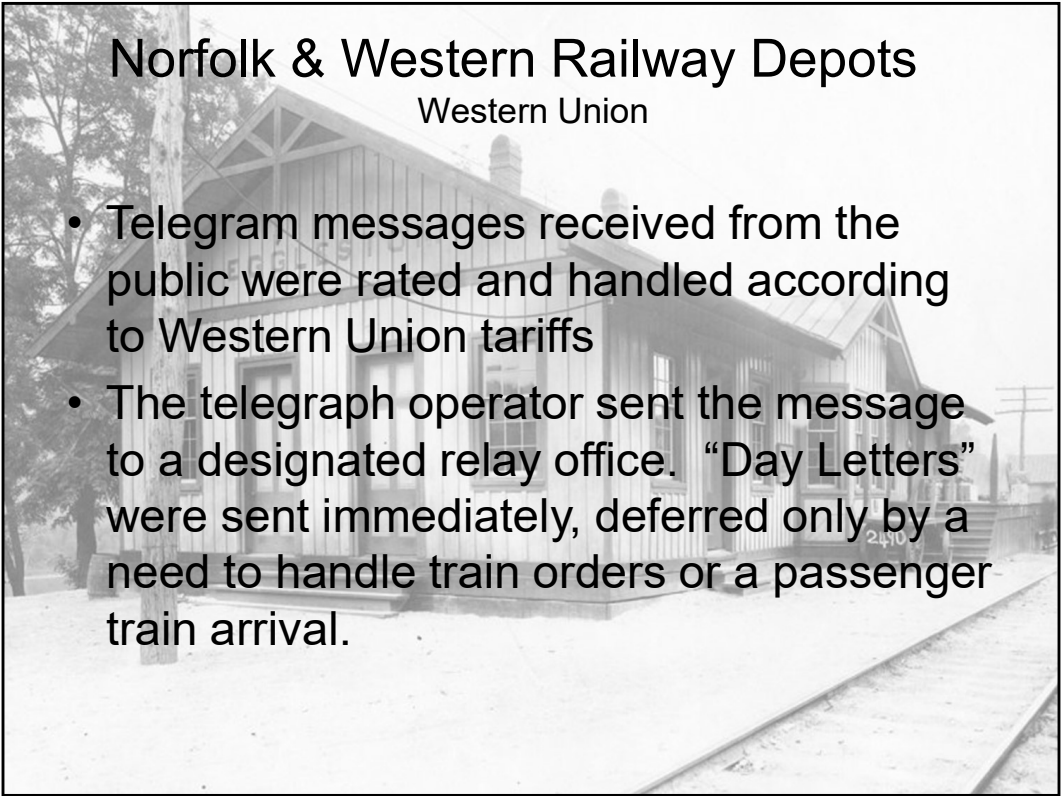
Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Railway Express (concluded)

- Accounted for and collected cash or checks covering prepaid or collect shipments
- Transferred abandoned freight to peddler car for movement to a location where damaged and unclaimed express shipments were sold
- Prepared monthly revenue accounting to receive the Railway Express commission

As I mentioned earlier, Railway Express commissions were a significant part of the railroad agent's income. Relief agents understood that the regular agent was entitled to the commission and that they were not to submit a revenue report. It has been said that the Railway Express commission occasionally exceeded the railroad compensation if the station handled substantial quantities of high-value shipments such as "fancy stock," which included race-horses.

Background picture: depot at Dublin, Virginia



Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Western Union

- Telegram messages received from the public were rated and handled according to Western Union tariffs
- The telegraph operator sent the message to a designated relay office. “Day Letters” were sent immediately, deferred only by a need to handle train orders or a passenger train arrival.

My personal understanding of Western Union traffic is limited. The company had suspended its telegram services at most railroad depots by the early 1970s.

While most people understand that the telegraph operations sent and received messages, few consider the accounting activities that were also required. Where there were more than one track at a station, the daytime agent-operator was responsible for submitting required reports to Western Union’s regional business office.

Western Union maintained the pole lines and communication lines on many railroads. The Western Union and railroad’s dispatcher, message, and block wires were on the lowest cross-arms. The railroad’s signal department was responsible for the power and signal lines on the upper cross-arms.

Background picture: depot at Eggleston, Virginia

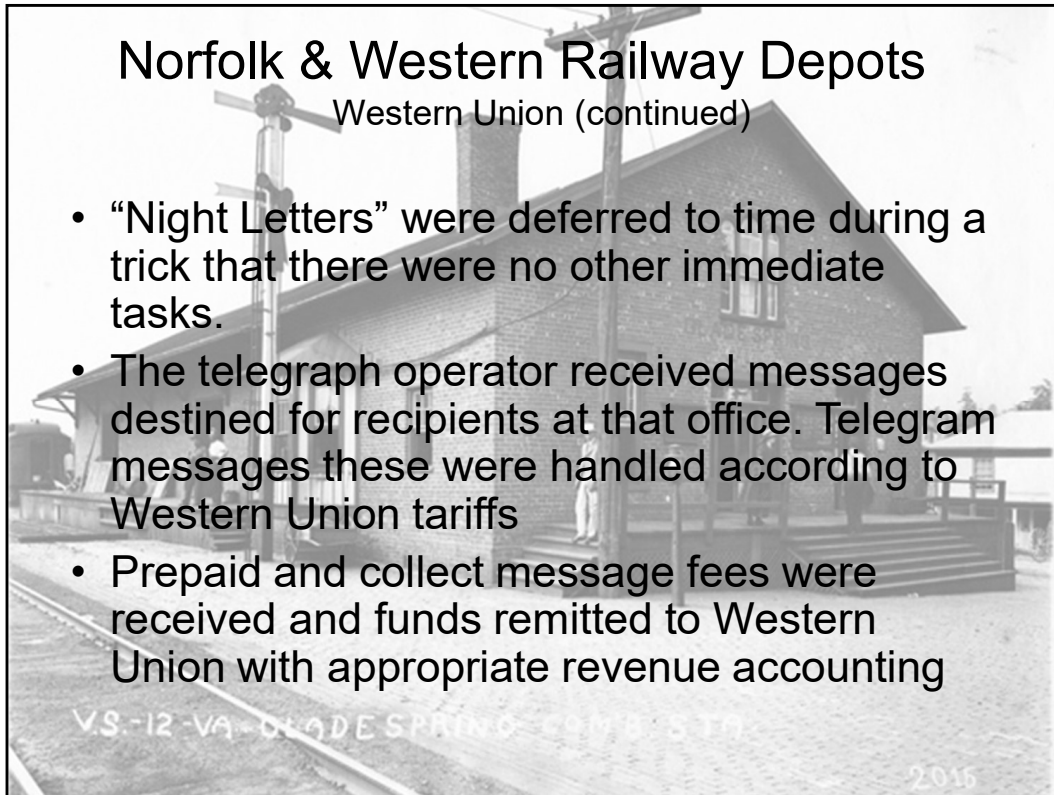
Chris Hausler provided these additional insights:

There were three basic telegram services. In order of priority they were the "full rate telegram", the classic 10 words or less for a basic rate, the "day letter," 50 words or less for a basic rate similar to the rate for the full rate telegram, and the "night letter", again a 50 word or less basic rate service but at less cost than the day letter. All three would accept more than the basic length in words but would of course charge extra. The actual tariffs for these services also depended on from where, to where, the telegrams were sent.

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Western Union (continued)

- “Night Letters” were deferred to time during a trick that there were no other immediate tasks.
- The telegraph operator received messages destined for recipients at that office. Telegram messages these were handled according to Western Union tariffs
- Prepaid and collect message fees were received and funds remitted to Western Union with appropriate revenue accounting



Background picture: depot at Glade Springs, Virginia

Chris Hausler insights (continued):

Although I think this varied over time, originally railroad telegraphers were paid a minor amount for telegrams they sent but not paid for telegrams they received. This was a major complaint of the railroad operators as the receiver in a small town had to manually deliver the telegrams (hopefully, however, getting a tip from the recipient :-)

It was expected that a railroad telegrapher would send a full rate telegram as soon as railroad business allowed. A day letter was to be sent as soon as it looked like there would be the time to send it without interfering with other railroad business but as soon as convenient and sometime that day. The telegraph company would try and deliver the full rate telegrams as soon as possible. Day letters were to be delivered sometime before the end of business that day if possible (send your day letters early in the day :-). Night letters were frequently held until the end of the business day or if it was a 24-hour station, left for the night operator to send when the wires were less busy. The telegraph company would endeavor to deliver them the next business day.

As I understand it, the deal between the Western Union and the railroads was that WU would install the telegraph system and do major maintenance and any necessary upgrades of the telegraph installation including providing the instruments in the railroad depots and dedicate some of the wires for exclusive railroad use. These wires would of course be used for OS and train order use as well as other railroad high priority business. The telegraph company got a nicely maintained ROW along which to install their wires and free and quick transport for their workers to do so. Minor maintenance and repair would be done by railroad linemen (I think this really started when the railroads started installing electric signaling systems and thus had to employ their own linemen). The big deal is that the telegraph company got a free telegraph operator in each railroad depot which was particularly important when the level of business in the area would not have supported a separate Western Union office in that area. The WU advertising phrase "Western Union Everywhere" was only possible because of this. That said some railroads built their own telegraph systems and even ran their own commercial operation, the B&O being one of them at least for a while. There was also more than one commercial telegraph company. Postal Telegraph had about 20% of the commercial telegram business up until they merged with WU in 1944 (WU allowed them to "live" so WU couldn't be accused of being a monopoly.

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Western Union (concluded)

- Telegram messages for town recipients at offices where there was no messenger were notified by phone that a message arrived. The agent may choose to deliver the message before or after their on-duty hours.
- Communicate with Western Union or railway's Wire Chief for line testing or instrument/wire difficulties

Background picture: depot at Glasgow, Virginia

Chris Hausler insights (continued):

The railroad operators would send any commercial telegrams handed to them to a relay office, likely one operated by Western Union as there was frequently a Western Union office somewhere on most railroad wires. If not, it would be sent to a railroad relay office which would then send it to Western Union. If there was a Western Union office in the area, telegrams for delivery would normally only be sent to the Western Union office, not the railroad depot. Sending a commercial telegram to its destination to be delivered would only be done to a railroad depot if that was the only choice in the area. Although a bother for the railroad operator, it is likely that the level of such business daily was light. If it became busy, Western Union would establish their own office in the area. A side benefit to the railroads is that by allowing their operators to send commercial telegrams they were improving the service they provided to their customers, frequently traveling salesmen and other businessmen, who would need to avail themselves of the telegraph for business purposes.

Although a whole separate topic, because of light activity, Western Union would connect Gill Selectors to the appropriate railroad wire so they didn't need to have an operator constantly monitoring all the railroad wires entering their relay offices. The railroad operator would key a special code (not Morse code) to operate the Gill selector and the selector would respond telling the operator that it had received his signal. It would also light a lamp and likely ring a bell in the WU office telling them that they were wanted on that wire for a telegram and they would then put an operator on that wire to transact that business. See this discussion by MTC technical maven Ed Trump:

<https://ngdiscussion.net/phorum/read.php?1,119839,119982> .



Are you all still awake? ;)

~~~~~  
Chris Hausler insights (concluded):

I've attached a picture showing the office calls on the Rochester Division of the Erie RR. As you can see there are Western Union offices at Rochester, Bath and Hammondsport on this line (the local railroad museum is now in the restored depot at Industry, NY and what remains of this branch is presently operated by the LA&L short line). I don't have a wire list for this branch and so don't know exactly how many wires and to where each ran but I suspect that any commercial telegrams handed to railroad operators on this line would be sent to the Rochester WU office. That said the list makes mention of the Susquehanna Division and that had quite a number of WU offices listed on that line.

In any case it is a fascinating and now mostly forgotten or even lost history.

73, Chris

| ROCHESTER DIVISION |                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| S.                 | See Susquehanna Division.             |
| CM.                | Campbell.                             |
| SN.                | Savona.                               |
| HA.                | Bath.                                 |
| BQ.                | do. W. U.                             |
| HF.                | Hammondsport, B. & H. R. R.,<br>W. U. |
| KX.                | Kanona.                               |
| AV.                | Avoca.                                |
| WA.                | Wallace.                              |
| RI.                | Cohocton.                             |
| DO.                | Atlanta.                              |
| AB.                | Wayland.                              |
| SW.                | Springwater.                          |
| NE.                | Conesus.                              |
| NA.                | Livonia.                              |
| GI.                | South Lima.                           |
| AZ.                | Conesus Lake Junction.                |
| QI.                | Lakeville.                            |
| HC.                | Avon.                                 |
| RU.                | Golah.                                |
| VE.                | Industry.                             |
| MB.                | West Henrietta.                       |
| RO.                | Mortimer.                             |
| RC.                | Rochester, Despatcher's Ofc.          |
| RH.                | do. W. U.                             |



The slide and the next cover agent-operator priorities. There were many –but when the dispatcher called, any other work was interrupted.

Background picture: depot at Green Cove, Virginia

~~~~~

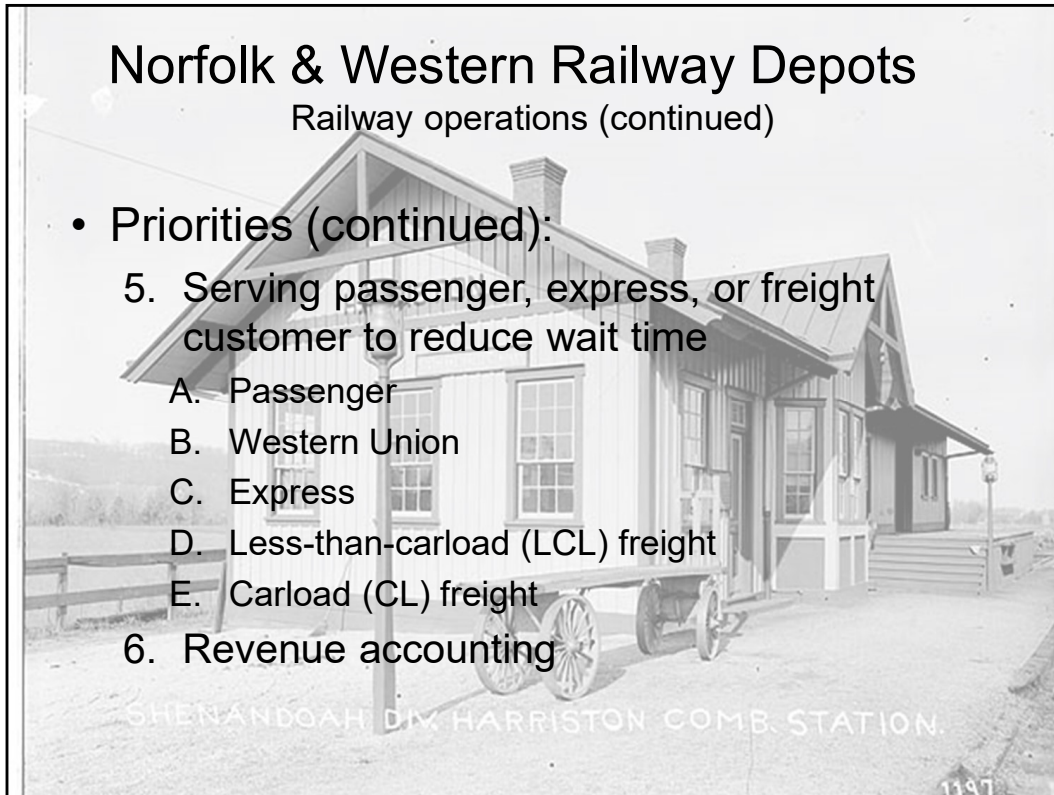
Additional telegram and express commission comment by Chris Hausler:

I honestly don't think that there was a great deal of money to be had by handling WU messages. Now the telegraph was important to some extra income. If someone wanted to say travel to Europe, once they took the train to a port city, they would need passage in a steamship to their destination. The local railroad agent would make all the arrangements by telegraph and deliver the tickets for the entire trip to the customer. He would get a commission from the steamship company for that portion of the travel arrangement. This has been reported by many former agents in the pages of "Dots & Dashes". But I don't know how often this would happen and doubt it was very frequently so probably not a big source of income. It is my understanding that the biggest possible source of extra income for station agents was from the handling of express shipments and sometimes this could exceed what they got from the railroad. Agents would seek out stations with a heavy express workload. That said, it was heavy labor so they did certainly earn this extra money.

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Railway operations (continued)

- **Priorities (continued):**
 5. **Serving passenger, express, or freight customer to reduce wait time**
 - A. Passenger
 - B. Western Union
 - C. Express
 - D. Less-than-carload (LCL) freight
 - E. Carload (CL) freight
 6. **Revenue accounting**



Accommodating the traveling public was generally an agent-operator's second priority, aside from inspecting passing trains. That was generally the only reason why a passenger was not immediately assisted.

Background picture: depot at Harriston, Virginia

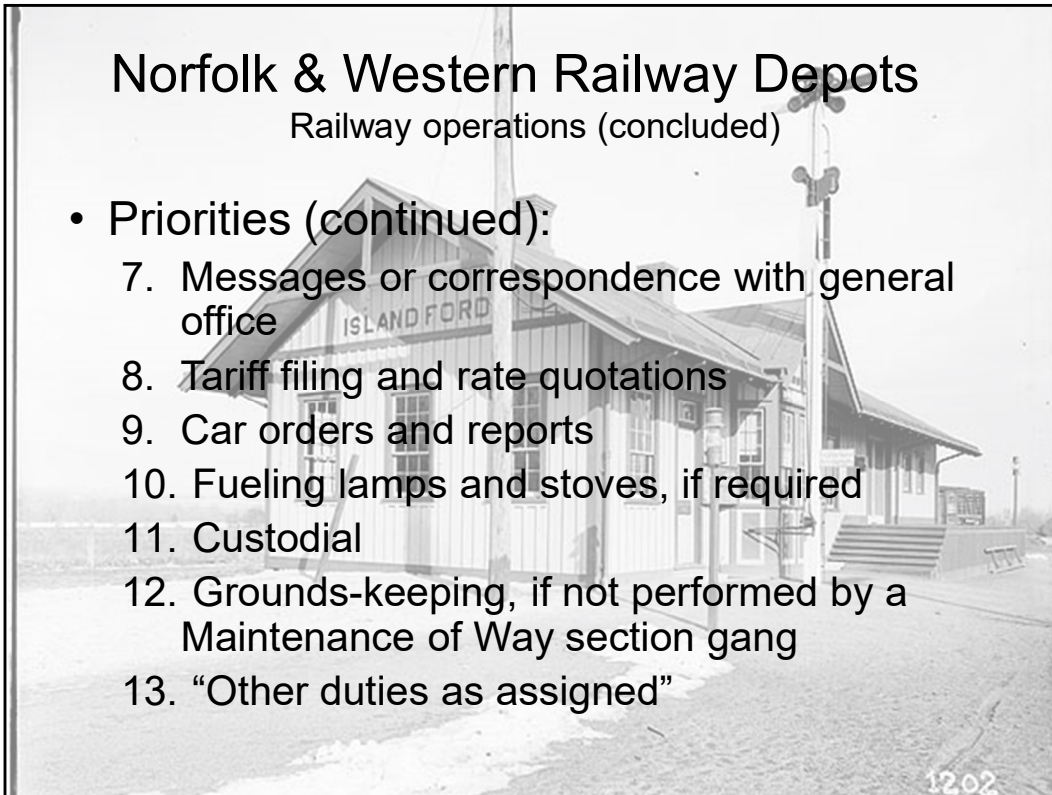
Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Railway operations (concluded)

- Priorities (continued):
 7. Messages or correspondence with general office
 8. Tariff filing and rate quotations
 9. Car orders and reports
 10. Fueling lamps and stoves, if required
 11. Custodial
 12. Grounds-keeping, if not performed by a Maintenance of Way section gang
 13. "Other duties as assigned"

...and the "other duties as assigned" were both varied and numerous!

Background picture: depot at Island Ford, Virginia



Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Other duties as assigned

- Involvement with community
 1. Promoting passenger and freight services
 2. Prospecting for new customers
 3. Cementing relationship with existing customers
 4. Resolving or elevating customer issues
 5. Awareness of local issues that may impact railway operating or business interests

In many instances, the agent lived in the community in which he worked. Thus, his job of promoting railroad interests was nearly continuous. The agent was the real-life face of the railroad to local citizens.

Background picture: depot at Hollins, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Other duties as assigned (continued)

- Prepare supplies order and send to company warehouse for receipt via the next scheduled supplies train
- Weekly deposit of cash at local bank or sending cash via registered RRB mail along with copies of station accounting records and cash reports
- Send company messages via message line if urgent or via RRB mail if they were not time-sensitive

SHENANDOAH DIV. LIMETON COMB. STA.

1338

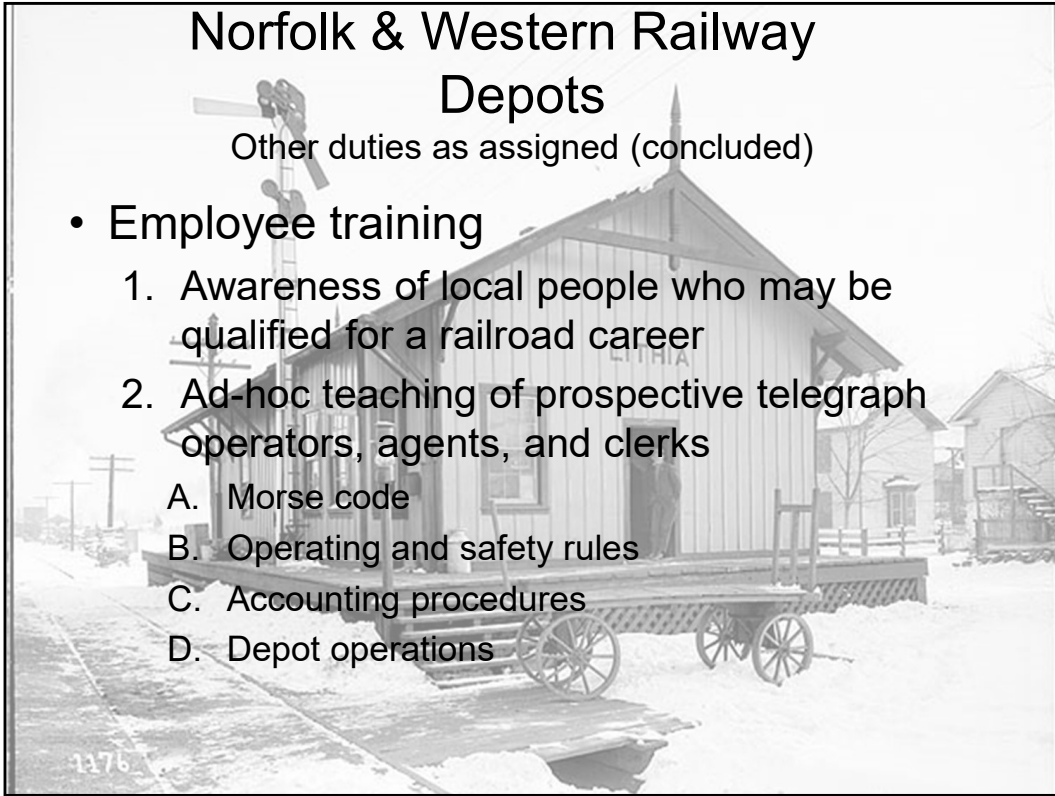
The supplies train schedule was sent to agents as a bulletin via Railroad Business (RRB) Mail by the N&W's Purchasing and Stores Department. The supplies train seems to have been operated semi-monthly or quarterly. Orders were sent by a required date and the items picked were delivered in the requested quantity. Some accountable paper such as draft forms or ticket stock were delivered as needed via registered RRB mail. Equipment or fixtures were delivered via baggage or LCL car.

Background picture: depot at Limeton, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Other duties as assigned (concluded)

- Employee training
 1. Awareness of local people who may be qualified for a railroad career
 2. Ad-hoc teaching of prospective telegraph operators, agents, and clerks
 - A. Morse code
 - B. Operating and safety rules
 - C. Accounting procedures
 - D. Depot operations



Union agreements provided for “posting pay,” during which a prospecting agent or operator was assigned to a depot for training by the incumbent agent-operator. However, agent-operators also informally trained local people, usually teenage males who were interested in a railroad career. The railroad neither encouraged or discouraged this practice during the early 20th Century, despite an operating rule prohibiting the unauthorized people in the agent’s office or in interlocking towers.

Background picture: depot at Lithia, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

A typical work-day - morning

- Unlock depot, turn on train order light, remove patch plugs on the message wire, and "GM" with station call sign to dispatcher
- Unlock office safe and count checks, coins, and currency and confirm against the previous business day's on-hand cash reports
- Pick up waybills for cars delivered in depot bills-box
- Prepare postal card car arrival notices for freight and express shipments
- Stop at post office to pick up/send mail and receive/sent "RRB" mail during day via local passenger train
- Update demurrage records and file waybill copies
- Prepare bills of lading for outbound carload, less-than-carload, or express shipments
- File tariff supplements that were received
- Pause at 12 noon for the time-pulse beat to re-set depot clock and watch
- Advise train dispatcher of significant weather changes when appropriate

The usual agent-operator's day-hours trick varied according to train schedules at the station, but roughly followed this sequence. Not all functions may have been performed on a single day.

Background picture: depot at Nace, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

A typical work-day - afternoon

- Obtain line-ups and track requests for maintenance forces when requested
- Inspect passing trains for defects as well as display of markers from platform
- Seal carload freight cars for dispatch
- Send next day's car order to car distributor via message line
- Send notification message of switching instructions for local freight to the operator at the office from which the local freight conductor would receive its initial clearance card
- Reconcile funds in office safe, prepare business day's on-hand cash reports and Form AD 400 balance sheet, and lock the safe
- Leave waybills for cars and local freight spotting instructions in depot bills-box
- "GN" with station call sign to dispatcher, insert patch plugs on message wire, turn off train order light, and lock depot

The agent was accountable for cash at the station, especially if operators were also working in the depot during other tricks. Therefore, the Form AD 400 sheet was an important record for the confirmation of funds at the beginning and at the end of each person's duty hours.

Background picture: depot at Max Meadows, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Summary

“For me, a good station agent was the master of the railroad. He was a genius in many ways.”

“Implementing and fulfilling those duties required probably a hundred ways and means to accomplish a complete, speedy, and accurate account.”

--Dennis Nauman, former N&W Agent Operator

SHENANDOAH DIV. SHENANDOAH PASS, STATION.

It's difficult to find a former N&W station agent-operator today. I've been fortunate to have known Dennis Nauman, who retired from a position in the Systems Operations Center. He reviewed a draft of this presentation and offered these comments in his May 24, 2014, letter.

Background picture: depot at Shenandoah, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Summary (continued)

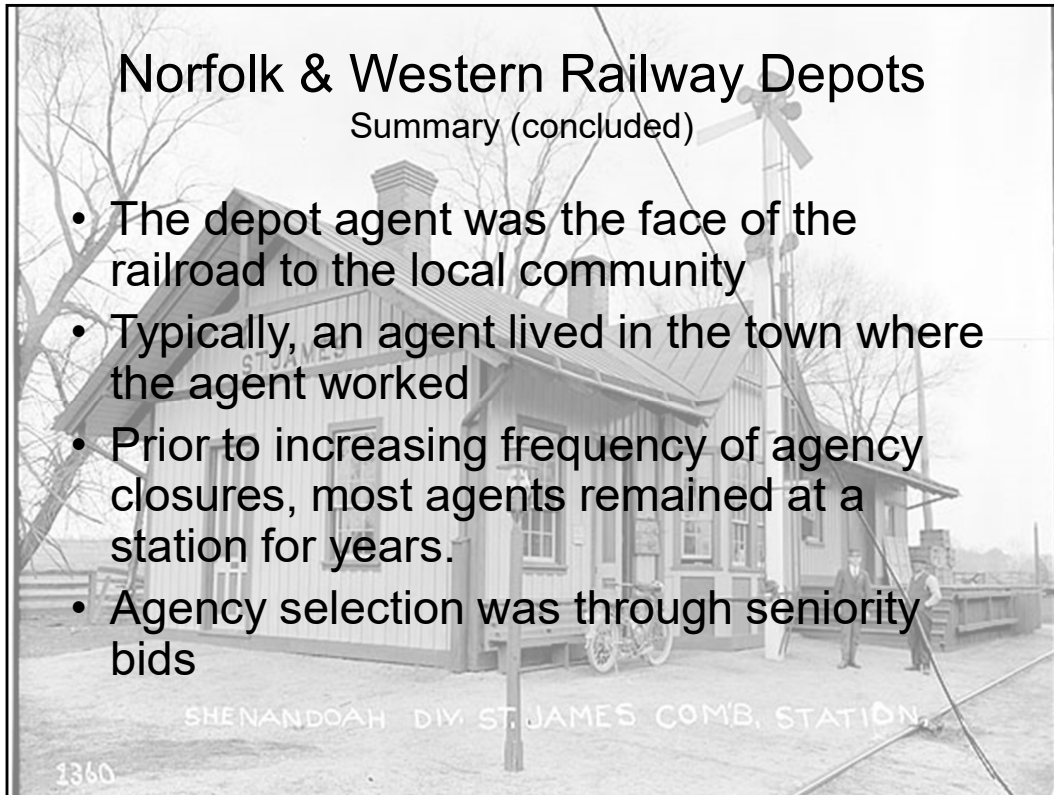
- Depot buildings were multi-functional and personnel were multi-tasking
- Priorities were railroad operations first, then passenger needs, express and telegram traffic, freight services, agency documentation, and building care
- Agents were expected to know operating rules, traffic management procedures, and communications

Background picture: depot at Meadowview, Virginia

Norfolk & Western Railway Depots

Summary (concluded)

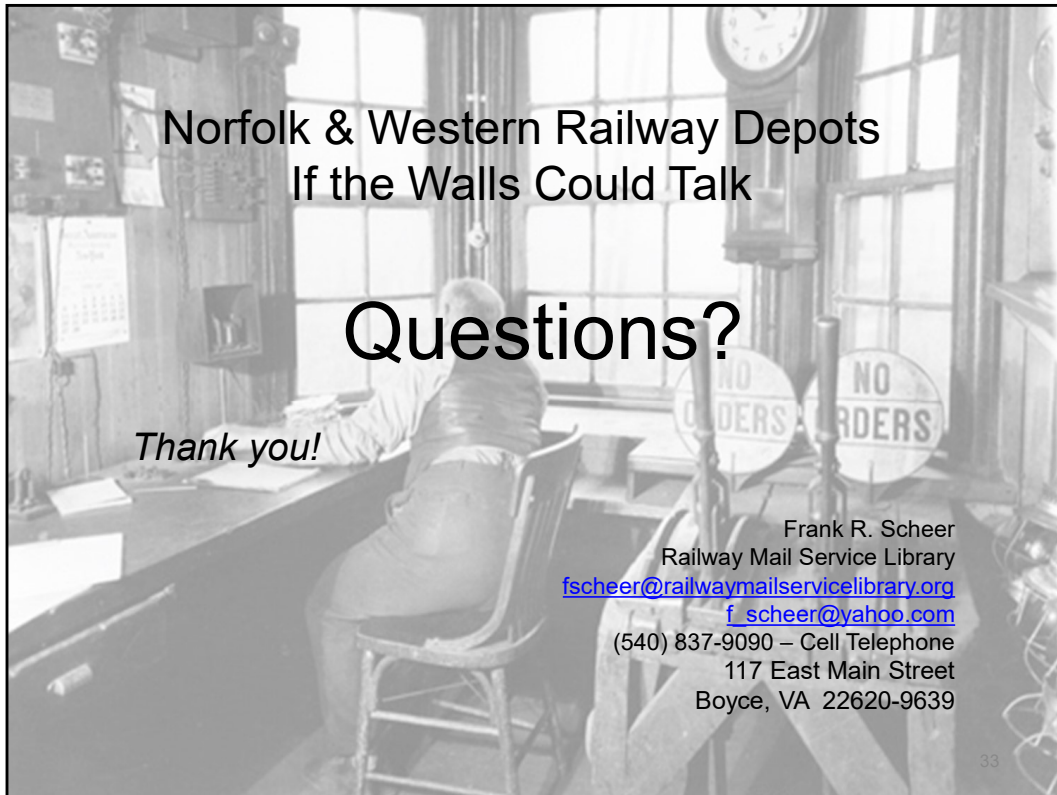
- The depot agent was the face of the railroad to the local community
- Typically, an agent lived in the town where the agent worked
- Prior to increasing frequency of agency closures, most agents remained at a station for years.
- Agency selection was through seniority bids



The agent, operator, agent-operator, and clerk in a community were well-respected and often considered as key individuals in the local business environment. While the information about passengers, freight, express, and messages were confidential, the local railroad personnel had a unique viewpoint about townspeople business and personal relationships. During the era that a railway depot was the portal to a city or town, they were knowledgeable about the community linkages as well as its comings and goings.

Depot personnel were less affected by temporary traffic declines that resulted in train crew furloughs. They also had at least as good wages as other white- or blue-collar jobs in major cities, and much higher than average take-home pay that most people in rural communities. The combination of lower exposure to lay-offs and middle-class income plus benefits such as paid vacation time and a pension, allowed them to live comfortable lives in their communities.

Background picture: depot at St. James, Maryland



I've enjoyed chatting with you this evening about depot functions. I hope this topic inspires each of you to mentally look inside a depot as you view period photographs and visualize the sometimes-hectic life within walls that could tell many stories. If you squint just enough, you may see this operator peering through the window for the approaching train.

Background picture: depot interior at an unknown N&W depot

Boyce Railway Depot Foundation



Norfolk & Western
Railway, 1913-1958



Shenandoah Division
Hagerstown District

BOYCE RAILWAY DEPOT FOUNDATION



The Boyce Railway Depot Foundation (BRDF) was chartered on January 20th, 2017. It is organized as a non-profit Virginia corporation for preservation of the historic Norfolk & Western Railway's 1913 train station building and pump house at Boyce, Virginia. The BRDF has received Internal Revenue Code 501(C)(3) non-profit status.

The chief focus during 2018 is developing a strong, capable membership base. Those who welcome leadership roles can be nominated by members to the Board of Directors. Officer positions will be filled from the Directors. Elections to the Board of Directors will be made during the second membership meeting at the depot planned for Sunday afternoon, October 14, 2018.

Annual membership dues are \$10, payable to the BOYCE RAILWAY DEPOT FOUNDATION. A life membership is available for \$250. Members and volunteers will initially support grounds-keeping and exterior building maintenance. The longer term vision is for the BRDF to lease the building and grounds, then arrange space rentals for special events and meetings as income sources for preservation efforts.

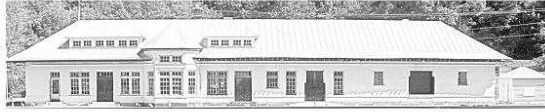
Come join us! Please write to:

BOYCE RAILWAY DEPOT FOUNDATION
brdf@railwaymailservice.library.org
117 EAST MAIN STREET
BOYCE VA 22620-9639

B.R.D. Foundation Established 2017

IRS 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Public Charity

- 120+ Members and growing.
- Volunteer opportunities do not require Boyce presence; there are many support activities that can be performed from home during available moments. A few examples are:
 - *Preparing grant requests*
 - *Maintaining the boycedepot.com website*
 - *Developing blogs or podcasts about Boyce depot history*
 - *Researching on-line newspapers between 1880s-1950s for articles mentioning Boyce depot*



BOYCE RAILWAY DEPOT FOUNDATION
N&W RAILWAY AND TOWN HISTORY - BUILDING PRESERVATION

<https://boycedepot.com/>
[(571) 379-3409 - TEXT MESSAGE
(540) 837-9090 - TELEPHONE
brdf@railwaymailservicefoundation.org - e-MAIL
117 EAST MAIN STREET
BOYCE VA 22620-9639

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your membership in the Boyce Railway Depot Foundation will support preservation and community use of the historic 1913 Norfolk & Western Railway station. Annual dues are \$10 and a life membership is \$250. Please provide the information below for the membership roster.

First, Middle Initial, Last Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Postal Code, Country: _____

Telephone Number: _____

eMail Address: _____

Donations are also invited. The Railway Mail Service Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity and donations or contributions are tax deductible as provided for and to the extent provided by law. Please check this box if your employer will match your donation: If the employer requires an invoice, please provide contact information.

Thank you very much for your interest. If you have questions, please call or write.

Sincerely yours,

Frank R. Scheer
Secretary-Treasurer

BRDF EIN: 30-0965189
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Virginia Corporation

Foundation Vision

Share the building's preserved grandeur and compelling history with residents and visitors as the Town of Boyce's enduring icon.

You're invited!

Ride the memory-train to the past:

- *Regular member - \$10*
- *Life member - \$250*
- *Tax-deductible donation of funds or artifacts.*
- *Volunteer assistance from your home with display projects.*