In July 1964, TRAINS MAGAZINE, devoted an issue to Southern’s Crescent Limited Luxury Train which ran from New York City to New Orleans.

In my opinion, this issue of TRAINS is the most comprehensive article that can be found in modern print.

In February, I contacted the Publisher of TRAINS to request permission to use the July 1964 issue for non-commercial purposes in my SR Digest. TRAINS graciously granted written permission with the condition that I add the following statement

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Sixteen pages on the Crescent Limited!
Room service at 60 miles an hour on "THE CRESCENT"

Luxurious streamlined train between NEW YORK and NEW ORLEANS via Washington, Atlanta, Montgomery

SURE you can travel faster, but are you really in that much of a rush to get there? Next time, take time to relax and have some fun along the way. Take The Crescent!

Whether you're traveling alone or with a group...whether on business or for pleasure...you'll enjoy a world of travel comfort aboard this popular streamlined through train. And you'll arrive rested and refreshed, in the heart of the city.

This fine train offers accommodations for every travel need: Bedrooms en suite, Bedrooms, Room-cites, Drawing Rooms and a Master Room with radio and shower. Reclining-seat coaches between Washington and Charlotte, Atlanta and New Orleans. Excellent dining and lounge facilities.

MAKE RESERVATIONS NOW! BUY ROUND-TRIP TICKETS AND SAVE!

SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM

Crescent

FOUR THOUSAND homeswept by the Crescent through north Georgia. RR photo.
From the “Vestibule” onward—

LIMITED

“a service second to none”

ARTHUR D. DUBIN

I. “THE management of the leading Southern System—The Richmond & Danville Railroad Company—has determined to inaugurate a service second to none in completeness and elegance of detail... and providing all the latest and best facilities for the comfort and enjoyment of its patrons.

“Therefore, daily, on and after the 4th of January 1891—fifty ushering in the New Year as a new era—the ‘WASHINGTON AND SOUTHWESTERN VESSELED LIMITED’ will start from under the shadow of the great white dome of the National Capitol, cross the wide stream of the stately Potomac, pass the historic spots where the best blood of the country was poured in its great civil strife, through the beautiful Piedmont section and in sight for hundreds of miles of the grove-clad Blue Ridge, by cotton and tobacco fields, forests, plantations and flourishing centers of industry; on to Atlanta, “Queen City of the New South.”

So declared a Richmond & Danville Railroad brochure of 1891.

From this historic beginning in 1891 developed the famed Crescent of today, operated between New York—Washington—Atlanta—New Orleans by the Pennsylvania Railroad—Southern Railway System—West Point Route—Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Daily the gleaming stainless-steel Crescent speeds through 10 states and the District of Columbia, through an area which is important industrially, productive agriculturally, rich in history and tradition, and unmatched for scenic beauty.
Magnificent and luxurious

THE predecessor of today’s Crescent was one of the early luxury trains in the United States when it was inaugurated in January 1891. Originally named the Washington & Southwestern Vestibuled Limited, it was commonly referred to as the R&D Limited, Nos. 37 and 38 of the Piedmont Air Line.

The first all-year train in the South to carry vestibuled equipment, it was advertised as “a magnificent train of Pullman Vestibuled Palaces, consisting of Drawing Room, Dining, Sleeping and Library Cars of the latest, most magnificent and luxurious designs, built expressly for this service and run daily.”

A so-called “extra fare” ($8 between Washington and Atlanta) included the sleeping car charge for a lower berth in the elegant new cars constructed by the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago.

The contract between Pullman and the Richmond & Danville, dated September 26, 1889, called for equipment “to be equal in construction and design to similar cars now in service upon the New York & Chicago Limited Train of the Pennsylvania Railroad.”

The Washington-Atlanta schedule was soon expanded to include through Pullman to New Orleans via Montgomery and Mobile over the rails of the Atlanta & West Point, the Western Railway of Alabama, and the Louisville & Nashville. Scheduled time for the 1,500-mile run from New York to New Orleans, in connection with the Pennsylvania’s Congressional Limited, was advertised as “40 hours, Unprecedented.” Because of the popularity of this service, the Washington & Southwestern Vestibuled Limited soon became a solid trail of through cars between New York and New Orleans.

Passengers soon shortened the jawbreaking title to the Yestibule, and many of them spent considerable time in walking from one car to another just to enjoy the then-new experience of being able to do so without having their hats blown away. The first dining cars to run between New York and Atlanta were operated on this train.

Operations of the Yestibule were continued after the Southern Railway Company was incorporated in 1894 by the pur-
WASHINGTON AND SOUTHWESTERN LIMITED

ELECTRIC LIGHTED THROUGH-OUT

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

MENUS were easy to read beneath electric lights.

Electric lighting was praised with the enthusiasm a later generation of travelers would heap upon air conditioning.


charters of the Richmond & Danville Railroad, but the train's lengthy title was shortened to Washington & Southwestern Limited when the vestibule became commonplace on long-distance trains.

After the turn of the century, additional through sleepers (for Tampa and Nashville) were added to the consist, and for the first time in the train's history, coaches were carried between New York and Atlanta.

Finally, after 15 years of operation as a solid train between New York and New Orleans, Nos. 37 and 38 were renamed in 1906 as the New York & New Orleans Limited, and re-equipped with new observation and club cars as "a year round Exclusive Pullman car train." Coast-to-coast passengers (in connection with the Southern Pacific Sunset Express via New Orleans) were actively solicited.

In 1906 the Pullman Works was rendered festive indeed by a lineup of new observation cars for the Southern Railway; ornate platform railings were topped by red and white awnings. Cars were tabbed for the New York & New Orleans Limited run.
ACLUS was delivered in 1918 as a combined baggage and dining car. Personnel aboard the Washington & Southwestern Vestibule Limited included a maid "to respond to the usual demands upon servants of this class," to quote a brochure.

MACUTA, a 13-section, 1-drawing-room sleeper delivered in August 1887 by Pullman, was as richly ornamented as one could ask.

COURTIER, one of three identical "vestibule library and observation" cars built in 1880 (others: Chevalier and Consort), exemplified what $15,000.00 would buy from Pullman in Benjamin Harrison's administration. Car contained 18 sections and a lounge, the latter complete with buffet and wicker chairs. Intricate carvings on the berth fronts alone must have consumed sizable share of its cost.
No finer train than this

In conjunction with the newly speeded-up schedule (37 hours 59 minutes), Train Speed Tables listing seconds per mile and miles per hour were furnished to passengers for train-shaking. Amost of them the table cautions that “although there are approximately 50 telegraph poles in a mile, they are not accurately spaced to indicate distance.” After July 1925 the Crescent was hauled between Atlanta.

ON APRIL 26, 1925, a new No. 38 of the Louisville & Nashville departed from Terminal Station in New Orleans at 10 a.m. northbound for New York City via Montgomery, Atlanta, and Washington over the L&N, West Point Route, Southern, and Pennsylvania railroads. The new service, named to honor the Crescent City of New Orleans, consisted of five complete sets of cars and locomotives valued at approximately $2 million dollars. Each train included an observation car, sleeping cars, dining car, and club car.

The operation of each train required 5 engine and train service men, 9 sleeping car attendants, and a dining car crew of 12—a total of 25 for each train, or 150 for the five.

The new Crescent was the first bona fide express-fare train operated in the South. The Louisville & Nashville modestly announced in its folder that “a reasonable extra fare (5c New Orleans-New York) will be charged on this train in view of the superior facilities.”

These superior facilities included a valet and a maid who “is in constant attendance to wait on ladies throughout the train. She will go to any section or room of any wearing passenger for such service as may be desired.”

And yet all this was not the last word. The Southern Railway News Bulletin of June 1925, describing the first Crescent, stated:

Additional comforts will be offered about September 1st when the entire new trains which are being built by the Pullman Company especially for the Crescent Limited are substituted for the cars now in service.
COACH 1307, delivered by Pullman in October 1900, was typical of such equipment that operated for brief periods on otherwise all-Pullman trains. Vestibules had become full width but doors were still narrow.

SAXONIA possessed a unique floor plan: 8 bedrooms, 1 drawing room, 3 staterooms. Car operated during winter season between New York and Allendale, S. C., the Newport of the South, in consist of posh Palm Limited.

DEERCOURT of 1906 was a 10-section observation; sister cars in this series were named Greensboro, Manassas, and Spartanburg.

No. 1454, an elegant example of a wooden club car, was built in 1926 for service on New York, Atlanta & New Orleans Limited.

Replacement for car above was all-steel club car 2107 built in 1917. Car weighed 132,500 pounds, was 70 feet long over-all.
and Washington by the Southern’s new Virginia-green and gold heavy Pacific Locomotives, each decorated with a gold crescent on the cylinders and the train’s name embossed on the tender. There is general agreement among locomotive fanciers that these handsome iron horses rank among the most beautiful of all time.

In October 1929 new Pullmans supplemented the 1925 equipment. All of the 1929 cars, together with some of the 1925 models, were newly painted in a green and gold livery to match the locomotives. Altogether, 35 Pullmans were decorated in the new colors.

The car side plates below the belt line, letterboard, and doors were painted Virginia green, a shade described as being the color of burnished gold. The piers and mullions between windows were a lighter sylvan green. All lettering and a stripe near the bottom of the side plate were genuine gold leaf.

All of the Pullman cars on the Limited were named to

**LADIES’ MAID**

was feature of new train.

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**CRESCENT LIMITED**

De Luxe
All Pullman Train
Between
New York & New Orleans

Pennsylvania Railroad
Southern Railway System
The West Point Route
Louisville & Nashville R.A.

Crescent Limited

There is no finer train than this claimed Crescent Limited’s publicists.

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**CRESCENT of 1925 apparently followed a gradeless route from New York to New Orleans judging by this map issued at the time.**

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Specially lettered Ps-1 Pacifics headed the Crescent. Great green and gold engines had 28-inch drivers, exerted 47,500 pounds tractive effort, were lovingly cared for by roundhouse forces. Sister 1663 is now on permanent display at Smithsonian.

WILLIAM NOUETHE, club car of 1923 named for an early governor of South Carolina, was painted Pullman green, contained movable chairs (below) in its lounge. Overhead fans were standard equipment at that time.

“honor the memories” of distinguished citizens of the Southern states through which the train traveled. At the request of the Southern Railway, the governors of these states nominated the “statesmen, soldiers, jurists and publicists” for whom the cars were to be designated.

Between 1932 and 1935, bedroom and private-section (enclosed) Pullman cars were added. In order to perpetuate such prominent Southern names as P. G. T. Beauregard and Henry W. Grady, the newer cars on the Crescent were constantly being renamed in a manner to confound the student of such esoteric matters.

On April 30, 1938, the train’s name was officially shortened to the Crescent; in 1941 the train first diesel power was received. Strikingly stiled in green and white, the new 4000-h.p. General Motors units hauled the train between Atlanta and Washington, where Pennsylvania GG1 electrics continued the trip to New York. Steam locomotive enthusiasts were saddened at the passing of the great Pacifics, but happily, one has been preserved, courtesy of the Southern and the Smithsonian Institution, in the nation’s capital.

At the start of World War II there were 48 U.S. Military posts and camps located on Southern Railway lines. Each generated an enormous amount of wartime traffic. Throughout the emergency the Crescent performed heroically.

Dining car No. 3933, Pullman built in 1924, specialized in Southern cuisine. Car was proudly advertised as being “of Oriental Limited type.”
FRANCOIS XAVIER MARTIN, named for famous Louisiana jurist, contained 10 sections and 2 drawing rooms, weighed 456,500 pounds. Car was completed for Crescent Limited on November 2, 1935, and was renamed W. W. Finley October 30, 1941.

ROBERT F. HOKE, 10-section, 2-drawing-room car of 1938, is shown in famous Virginia green and gold livery which train displayed from P&O Pacific to observation car. Sleeper was named in honor of Maj. Gen. Robert F. Hoke of the Confederate States Army.

HENRY W. GRADY, esteemed editor of the Atlanta Constitution and prophet of the "New South," was paid homage by 14-section Pullman delivered in 1929. "Pullman" was relegated to car ends as words "Crescent Limited" dominated central letterboard position.
WILLIAM RUFUS KING, with 8 sections, 1 drawing room, and 2 compartments, honored early U. S. Vice-President who was born in South Carolina. Sleeper was built in 1920 expressly for new edition of Crescent of that year and painted Virginia green and gold.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, named for author of Uncle Remus stories was built in 1923, refurbished for 1929 Crescent Limited. The observation-sleeper held 2 compartments, 2 dining rooms, observation lounge (right), and a ladies' lounge with bath and maid attendant. Clearly the grandest car in a grand train.

CRESCENT LIMITED

Big Four Pacific #947 of the Atlantic & West Penn, leaves No. 57, the Crescent Limited, through Hell, Penn., in 1928. R. H. Piers photo.
SOUTH of Montgomery, Ala., in 1941 the Crescent Limited covers ground behind the task of light U.S.R.A. Mountain-type 4-6-2 of the Louisville & Nashville. Baldwin-built L-1 has her cylinder heads and running boards silvered for the occasion.

RACING for Atlanta, the Crescent Limited is in charge of Western Railway of Alabama Pacific 394 on steel any roadmaster could take pride in. Lima 4-8-2 features a sawtooth stack with a light bulb affixed in front to ascertain density of smoke.

D. W. Bailey
ROLLING past waterplugs it no longer requires, eastbound Crescent slows for a stop at CoG crossing in Opelika, Ala., while running on Western Railway of Alabama Rails. The dieselized streamliner was photographed on July 12, 1952, at 11:30 a.m.

ROYAL ARCH is one of seven Royal cars built for Crescent and New Royal Palm service and owned by SE, Le&N, NYC, and West Point Route. They contained raised-end "Lookout Lounges." Three of the observations have been rebuilt into 11-bedroom cars.

DINING CAR NO. 3346, built by Budd entirely of stainless steel (and identified as such by fluted roof), seats 48 at its tables.
Crescent Limited

and radio. De luxe reclining-seat coaches are operated between Washington-Charlotte and Atlanta-New Orleans.

The Crescent is equipped with all the comforts of home. A beautifully decorated buffet-lounge car is delightful and friendly—the perfect place to read, chat, or listen to the radio.

Round-end observation-lounge cars, similar to the type built for the Twenty-first Century Limited, have been rebuilt into 11-bedroom cars which operate between New York and Atlanta. Altogether, four different types of Pullmans are operated in the train.

Southern cuisine and service combine to make dining a memorable experience. In addition, all passengers aboard the northbound Crescent are cordially invited to the hospitality hour in the dining car every day between 3 and 4 p.m. Complimentary orange juice or coffee is served.

The Washington-Sunset Route, coast-to-coast through the deep South and the romantic Southwest, via the Crescent and Southern Pacific Sunset, is advertised as "the most interesting Transcontinental Route."

Passengers are delighted with the new Crescent—streamlined, stainless steel on the outside, and soft upholstery, thick carpet and subdued colors on the inside. Persons along the line call it "a grand new train with a grand old name."

The author acknowledges his appreciation to the following for their generous assistance during preparation of this story: A. M. Yorke, Advertising; the President and General Manager, General Advertising, of the Southern Railway System; and Mrs. M. H. P. Williams, of Pullman-Standard.

Grand new train with a grand old name

A SHINING stainless-steel Crescent was delivered by Pullman-Standard in 1949. Each of the roads that operated the train contributed equipment from an $11.5-million-dollar order for 141 cars to streamline and renew the Crescent, the Southern, the Tennesseean, and the Royal Palm.

From diesel to private-room Pullman, this fine streamliner provides the latest in modern, comfortable, safe, all-weather transportation. A worthy successor to its famed predecessors, the present train offers accommodations to meet every travel need. Five kinds of private rooms are available—rooms; bedrooms (singly and en suite); drawing rooms; and the only master room in the South, complete with private shower

SOUTH of Mobile, Ala., 1964 b.g. rolls the Crescent through scarce green terrain on Louisville & Nashville. L&N photo.
A little Southern Extra

Louisville & Nashville “Royal Street” built for service on “The Crescent” still in service as a private car.

Above in Chicago in 2002; below in St. Louis in 2004.

The Southern Crescent: A History of Good Service

Above: Photo of Ps4 locomotive 1393 on a turntable from “Ties” magazine article on the “Southern Crescent.”

Below: Photo from Smithsonian Collection circa 1925.
ROANOKE VALLEY, with 14 roomettes and 4 double bedrooms, is one of 11 P-S-built Valley-series cars owned by the Southern.

ENOREE RIVER contains 10 roomettes and 6 double bedrooms; River-series cars are owned by S&H, West Point Route, L&N, FRR.

CRESCENT LIMITED

CRESCENT CITY is a buffet-lounge with 2 drawing rooms as well as a master room with shower. Sister cars: Crescent Harbor, Crescent Moon, and Crescent Shore. Lounge (right) has race mural.
"LOOKOUT LOUNGE" type of raised observation end is depicted in scene of Crescent racing away from camera behind diesel power.

PARKED at the bumper post in New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal, the Crescent loads passengers for Atlanta and New York. En route the silvery streamliner will move over L&N, West Point Route, SR, and PRR rails, be hauled by both diesels and electrics.