

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

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# Dixie Jets Narrow the Gap

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By Charles B. Castner

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# DIXIE JETS

New freight trains on swift schedules offer third-morning delivery to and from New York and cities in Central South

**I**MAGINE Manhattan and the Central South being moved closer together!

Distance-wise, of course, it's an impossibility, but time-wise, a pair of brand-new freight trains called the "Dixie Jets" are helping mightily to narrow the gap between cities in the Central South and New York. Inaugurated in early August, the Dixie Jets run between New Orleans, Birmingham and New York via the L. & N. and Pennsylvania railroads (L. & N. to Cincinnati; Pennsy there to New York). From the very first they have shaved hours off previous schedules.

Operated jointly by the two railroads, the Dixie Jets are providing Birmingham, Montgomery, Chattanooga, Memphis and Nashville-area shippers, as well as shippers in the Central South, with third-morning delivery in New York and other Eastern Seaboard cities. Similarly, on the southbound Dixie Jets, New York shippers now have third-morning delivery in the Central South, also swifter service into Mobile and New Orleans.

How fast are the Dixie Jets? Plenty

fast! But to appreciate how fast the new freights really are, and how dependable their schedules, let's examine a typical run, recorded in August, of the northbound Dixie Jet from New Orleans to Cincinnati and New York. On the L. & N., the trains also go by the timetable designation of No. 72, northbound, and No. 73, southbound.

On this particular run (which began on a Monday evening), No. 72 left our New Orleans-area yard at Gentilly at 10:55 p.m. Included in its consist were cars tagged "Pennsylvania R.R., Enola Yard." Enola Yard, near Harrisburg, Pa., is the Pennsylvania's "clearing house" for cars moving to and from New York and Eastern cities on the Dixie Jets. The farther north No. 72 went, more cars with identical destinations were added to its consist.

At 3:50 early Tuesday morning, No. 72 arrived at Sibert Yard, Mobile. It departed two hours later, at 5:45 a.m. Then,

at 11:38 a.m. that same morning, it rolled into our yard at Montgomery. While cars for Montgomery and connecting roads were switched off, more cars with New York and mid-East destinations were now added to the Cincinnati-bound cars that had arrived on No. 72 from New Orleans.

An important aspect of Dixie Jet operation is the method in which the trains are "blocked," or classified, in each terminal. When, for example, No. 72 left Montgomery, its consist read something like this: Cincinnati-bound cars (including ones destined for the Pennsy's Enola Yard) next to the locomotive, followed by Louisville- and Nashville-bound cars, or cars bound for connections at those cities; Birmingham-area cars, plus those for connecting roads at Birmingham, were next to the caboose. Such "blocking" or grouping of cars as to destination helps tremendously to expedite the Dixie Jets through terminal points.

Thus, when No. 72 arrived at Boyles Yard, near Birmingham, late Tuesday (Text continued on page 4)

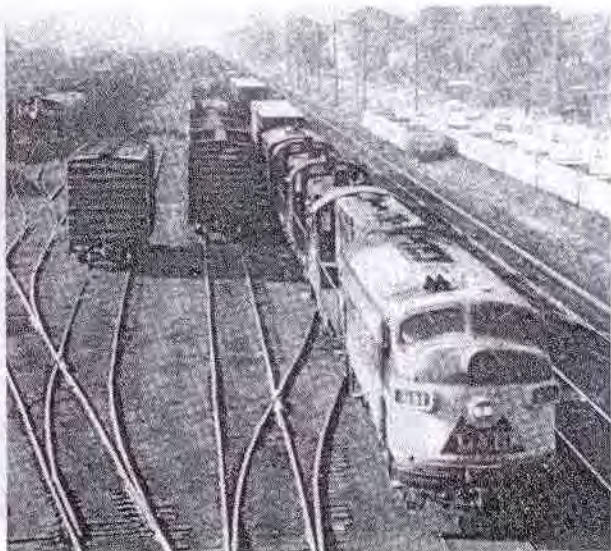
By *Charles B. Castner*

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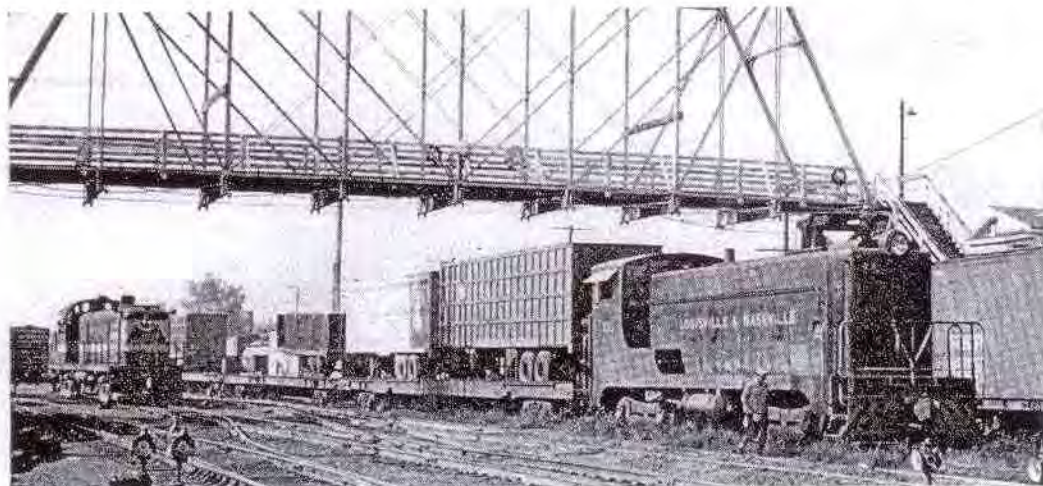
—Staff photo above by C. Norman Beasley—others by the author except as noted



Above right: Early morning sun lights up Dixie Jet's diesels as they ease to stop in South Louisville Yards. Above center: Behind four new GP-30's, which replaced other units at Louisville, Dixie Jet barrels toward Cincinnati. Far left: Broken line on map indicates route of Jets.

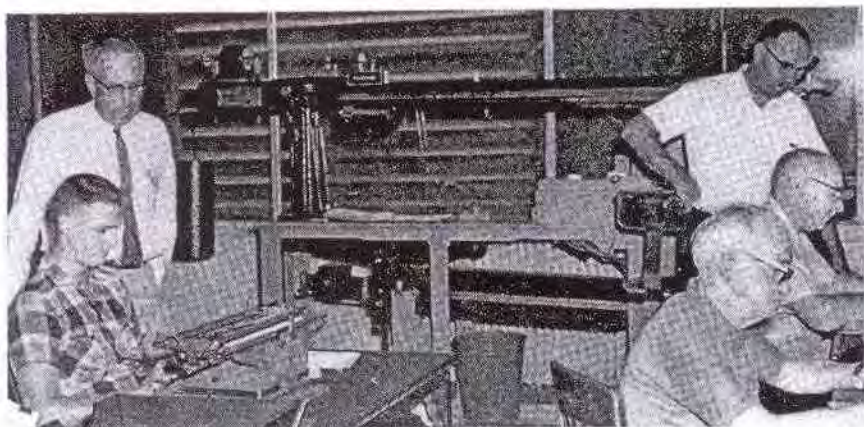
## Narrow the Gap

As soon as road units are cut off, switch engine at South Louisville Yard moves in to take off Louisville-bound piggyback cars. Same scene is repeated each day at terminals on route of Jets, as yard crews expedite hotshot freight through their yard. In less than an hour, No. 72 was again rolling toward Cincinnati.



"Hey, get a load of those new GP-30's," might have been the reaction of these M. of W. men as the northbound Dixie Jet canted to the newly "day-lighted" trackage near Independence, Ky. Tracks used to enter tunnel on same curve. Jet is just minutes away from DeCoursey Yard near Cincinnati.





At DeCoursey Yard Office, next to northbound hump, clerks prepare switch list that will be used to classify Dixie Jet's cars when they are humped. Standing, left to right, are J. S. Hinton, agent, DeCoursey, and J. A. McGinnis, rate clerk. Seated, left to right, are T. L. Boyer, bill clerk, Joe Hull, reconsigning clerk, and C. R. Oble, rate and coal weight clerk.

afternoon (its arrival actually reported at 5:05 p.m.), the Cincinnati, Louisville and Nashville cars—in that order from the engine—were inspected, then uncoupled from the rest of the train. Bypassing the Boyles hump yard, they moved directly to the northbound departure yard, where they were coupled to cars that had come earlier from the Birmingham-area and connecting railroads. Earlier that afternoon, those cars had been assembled, inspected, iced if needed, then moved to the northbound departure yard so that when No. 72 arrived, they could be quickly switched into the train without delay.

At 6:00 Tuesday afternoon, No. 72 might have been seen picking up speed

out of Boyles Yard. Exactly six hours and 25 minutes later, its diesels were easing to a stop in Nashville's Radnor Yard. Time: 12:25 a.m. Wednesday morning.

While cars for Nashville and beyond (Memphis and Evansville connecting trains, for example) were switched from the rear, the Cincinnati and beyond cars of No. 72 (a considerable number, by now) were moved around the Radnor hump and into the northbound departure yard. Again, as at Boyles, cars from Nashville and connecting trains from Memphis and Chattanooga had been earlier assembled, inspected and brought over to the northbound departure yard to await No. 72's arrival.

Just two hours after it had arrived at Radnor, No. 72 was again rolling, and of the 100 or so cars that now trailed the diesels, all but five were for Cincinnati and cities beyond. By 8:30 Wednesday morning, No. 72 had arrived in our South Louisville Yards. The five Louisville-bound cars on the front of the train were switched off, the train was inspected, and a car of perishables was cut in just ahead of the caboose. Four new GP-30 locomotives backed on.

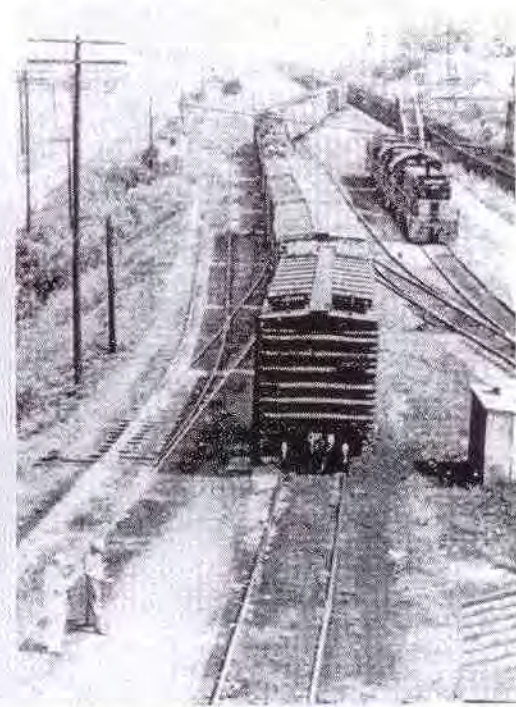
Then, at 9:45 a.m., Conductor W. E. Crittenden spoke into his train radio. "O.K. on the rear end. You can roll anytime you're ready!" Engineer G. D. Miller acknowledged the call by sounding two whistle blasts. In less time almost than it takes to say "Dixie Jet," the northbound Jet was moving, and underway for Cincinnati.

As soon as No. 72 left South Louisville, a train consist was sent by teletype to DeCoursey Yard, near Covington, Ky. From this consist, rate and reconsigning clerks in the yard office at DeCoursey

Traffic and transportation departments worked closely to set up operation of Dixie Jets. Discussing schedules for the new trains are, left to right, E. C. Patton, manager, freight service and equipment; A. R. Harkleroad, assistant manager, freight service and equipment; C. N. Wiggins, assistant general manager; S. P. Strickland, assistant chief transportation officer; and F. W. Kirchner, chief transportation officer.

—Staff photo by William C. Tayse.

At DeCoursey Yard, hump engine begins to shove entire train over north hump. Switchman W. E. Wiley stands ready to uncouple each car as it rolls over crest of hump. Train clerk Pat Swift checks switch list to verify consist, destinations of cars.



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As Switchman W. R. Adrian signals "highball" to Engineer R. Holsclaw (not shown), Conductor Ray Smith, with waybills in hand, and Head Brakeman T. C. Thumb prepare to board transfer cut at "Number 26," yard office at north end of classifica-

tion yard at DeCoursey. Fireman J. R. Berry is in cab of diesel. With cars for Pennsylvania Railroad's DJ-2—Dixie Jet on Pennsy rails—cut departs for Undercliff Yard in Cincinnati; will arrive there in plenty of time to make connecting train.

were able to literally classify No. 72's cars ahead of time on paper as to specific destinations through or beyond the Cincinnati gateway. Later, when No. 72 arrived at DeCoursey, this consist would be quickly checked against the conductor's waybills, then used by hump crews when they actually classified the train.

No. 72's arrival was noted at DeCoursey at 1:53, Wednesday afternoon. A special eye was cast by yard forces toward one group of cars destined for "Pennsylvania Railroad, Enola Yard." These cars, all bearing Manhattan or mid-East destinations, were scheduled for an early evening departure from Cincinnati on train DJ-2, No. 72's coun-

terpart on Pennsylvania rails. "DJ," of course, stood for "Dixie Jet!"

Out in DeCoursey Yard, a hump engine coupled on to No. 72, and at 2:35 p.m. began shoving its cars over the north hump. All cars for the Pennsylvania Railroad at Cincinnati—including cars for Enola Yard—were dispatched into tracks 12 and 13. By 3:30 p.m., No. 72's train had been completely classified, and by 5:00 p.m., an L. & N. transfer engine had "doubled over" (combined) the Pennsy-bound cars on tracks 12 and 13 and now had them rolling toward the Ohio River. Crossing the river via our bridge at Newport, Ky., the cut arrived at the Pennsylvania's Yard, in Cincinnati, at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, well before 6:30 p.m. "cut-off time," deadline for incoming connections.

Now a Pennsylvania switch engine went to work, making up DJ-2, Pennsy's

version of the Dixie Jet. Had our roving reporter stayed with the New York-bound cars from L. & N.'s No. 72, he would have recorded their departure from Undercliff Yard that Wednesday evening at 8:30, their passage through Pitcairn Yard (Pittsburgh) at 7:10 Thursday morning, and their arrival via DJ-2 at Enola Yard, Harrisburg, Pa., that afternoon at three o'clock. Exactly 12 hours and 15 minutes later, at 4:15 Friday morning, the New York-bound cars of DJ-2 (and our No. 72) arrived at Harsimus Cove, Pennsy's yard for Manhattan. Delivery of these cars to their consignees later that morning was virtually guaranteed!

To get the Dixie Jets over the railroad—and to offer shippers the dependable, "on-time" service—the efforts and skills of many railroaders are needed. Main-line engine and train crews, yard and switching crews, inspectors, yard clerical forces, dispatchers and operators, round-house forces—are among the many L. & N.'ers who participate in the successful operation of the Dixie Jets, which, in fact, have already set several records in their rapid progress through many Dixie Line terminals. The traffic and transportation departments of both the L. & N. and Pennsylvania worked closely together in the planning and scheduling of the new trains.

Declared one L. & N. transportation department officer, "We're tickled pink at the performance of the Dixie Jets. We feel that the new trains will offer our traffic men a new tool in the selling of L. & N. service." And, what's been shipper reaction to the Dixie Jets? Already, the traffic department of the L. & N. has received requests like this from dozens of shippers: "If at all possible, put my cars on the Dixie Jet!"



Cars from No. 72 roll through retarders, then fan out in classification yard. Cars for Pennsylvania Railroad and DJ-2, Dixie Jet's counterpart on Pennsy, go to tracks 12, 13. Swift, efficient handling of Dixie Jets by yard forces at DeCoursey and at other L. & N. terminals help give trains consistent, on-time performance.