

CHICAGO DIVISION MAIN LINE RELOCATION

By Ed Spodobalski

In 1980 Conrail completed a major line relocation project of its Chicago Division Main Lines in the Gary-East Chicago, Indiana area. The program included extensive track changes and necessitated the building of a new connection between the former PRR and NYC main lines. As a result of the relocation project, the former PRR main line from CLARKE JCT to LAKE JCT, approximately 6 miles, was abandoned. In addition to these changes, the B&O lines were also significantly affected. Two new connections had to be built and a portion of its Main Line abandoned.

The present track configuration of Conrail's lines in the Gary-East Chicago area is a result of several track modifications dating back to the Penn-Central era in 1968 and culminating with the 1980 Chicago Division Main Line Relocation Project.

Since the trackage of the former NYC and PRR are the focal point of this article, it is they which will be discussed most thoroughly. In 1968, the Gary-East Chicago-Indiana region was literally criss-crossed by the many railroads of the area. For the most part, the main lines of the NYC and Pennsy paralleled each other from Gary (Clarke Jct.) for the entire length into Chicago; the PRR passenger traffic entering Chicago Union Station (CUS) and the Central's varnish calling on LaSalle St. Station. Throw in the B&O's main line, and its Chicago step-child, the B&O C.T., plus the N&W (old Wabash), the IHB, EJ&E, and the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal which passed underneath the lines of the PRR, NYC and B&O with the help of lift-bridges and that pretty much sums up the situation in the Gary-East Chicago area.

The only problem was that all of the railroads and the ship canal were trying to go in different directions in approximately the same 6 mile stretch of real estate, resulting in an abundance of crossings at grade protected by manned interlocking towers and 5 lift bridges that permitted shipping to pass under the railroads, which always were a constant source of anxiety for the carriers. In 1968, there was no CTC or TCS in service on any of the railroads in the area, and operations were run by current of traffic and train-orders.

With the advent of the Penn-Central merger in February, 1968, it is only logical that the first major track reduction would occur on the PC, which was the downgrading of the NYC Buffalo-Chicago Main Line from MS to LaSalle St. Station in October, 1968. As mentioned, both the PRR and NYC mains were parallel; it was not in the PC's best interest to maintain two main lines in such close proximity. This was made possible by construction of the "Lake Branch" con-

nection from MS tower on the Central side to the newly designated station LAKE JCT on the PRR side, where a Block Station with operator on duty continuously was established. The new connection permitting NYC passenger traffic to run the PRR side into Chicago was initially single track, the second track not being put in service until 1972; the switches at LAKE JCT were all hand operated and were in charge of the operator at LAKE JCT.

By 1970 MS tower had been abandoned and was made a controlled point (CP) from the dispatchers office, where the Chicago Division CTC project was still in its embryonic stages. At about the same time LAKE JCT was made a CP from the dispatchers office and the temporary block station abolished. From May 1971 to September 1972, the remainder of the old NYC line west from CP MS had been abandoned in piece-meal fashion, including JN and CR interlockings; so all that remained at CP MS was the B&O CT crossing. At this time the Lake Branch from CP MS to CP LAKE JCT. had been double tracked, finally eliminating the bottleneck caused by the single track.

The period from 1972 to 1979 saw very little change on the Penn-Central trackage in the Gary-East Chicago area, and the transition from Penn-Central to Conrail in April, 1976, was carried out without any noticeable effects in the area. The only significant modification was in October, 1976, when Conrail implemented a regional wide renaming program of stations, towers, interlockings on its Cleveland, Toledo, Ft. Wayne, and Chicago Divisions. Specifically as applied to the Chicago Division in the Gary-East Chicago zone was as follows; on the Main Line Buffalo-Chicago; NE renamed NERO, HC renamed HICK, MS renamed CP 505, while on the PRR line, CP LAKE JCT. was redesignated CP 451.

The most extensive relocation of Conrail lines occurred during 1979-80. This relocation was the result of the reconstruction of Indiana State Route 912, (Cline Ave.), which was to occupy the site on which the old PRR and B&O

mains located; in conjunction land development for low income housing by Urban Renewal programs would acquire the land of the former PRR in the Indiana Harbor area. The modifications and new construction entailed by these programs were as follows:

1. Retire Main Line Pittsburgh-Chicago (PRR) from CLARKE JCT to LAKE JCT.
2. Retire IHB Crossing, IHB Canal, Whiting interlockings associated switches and signals.

3. Construct new interlocking CP BUFF remote from NERO, construct new main track from CP BUFF to B&O Crossing.
4. Construct double track connection from CLARKE JCT. to CP BUFF.
5. Rebuild B&O Crossing interlocking, abandon B&O main from B&O Crossing to NERO, construct new B&O connections at HICK and B&O Crossing.
6. Construct third main track from CP BUFF to HICK.
7. Redesignate portion of Main Line Buffalo-Chicago between CP BUFF and CP 505, and LAKE BRANCH from CP 505 to CP LAKE JCT. to Main Line Pittsburgh-Chicago and designate new mile posts accordingly.
8. Redesignate B&O Crossing to CP 447, and CP 505 to CP 450.

Almost immediately after construction CP BUFF was redesignated to CP 446 in accordance with former NYC practice of naming CP's to comply with the milepost it was closest to, and this was the only minor change that was made to the original Relocation Program. By mid 1980, the major portion of the Relocation Program was nearing completion and the former PRR Main Line Pittsburgh-Chicago was 'officially' declared out of service from CLARKE JCT to CP 451, (LAKE JCT), on February 10, 1980. A short segment of the old PRR line would remain in service from LAKE JCT. eastward to Riley Road yard to provide facilities for local industries.

For the remainder of 1980 Conrail continued to upgrade the signal and interlocking facilities from CLARKE JCT. to CP 451, (LAKE JCT.), which included the installation of TCS on all main tracks, and adding new signals and switches to the Indiana Harbor Belt RR connections at HICK and CP 447. In March, 1981, the Chicago Division Main Line Relocation Project was announced as being completed, and since that time the facilities have remained essentially the same as when constructed. This project certainly has to be one of the most extensive carried out by Conrail and also by the B&O whose trains now move over Conrail between HICK and NERO.

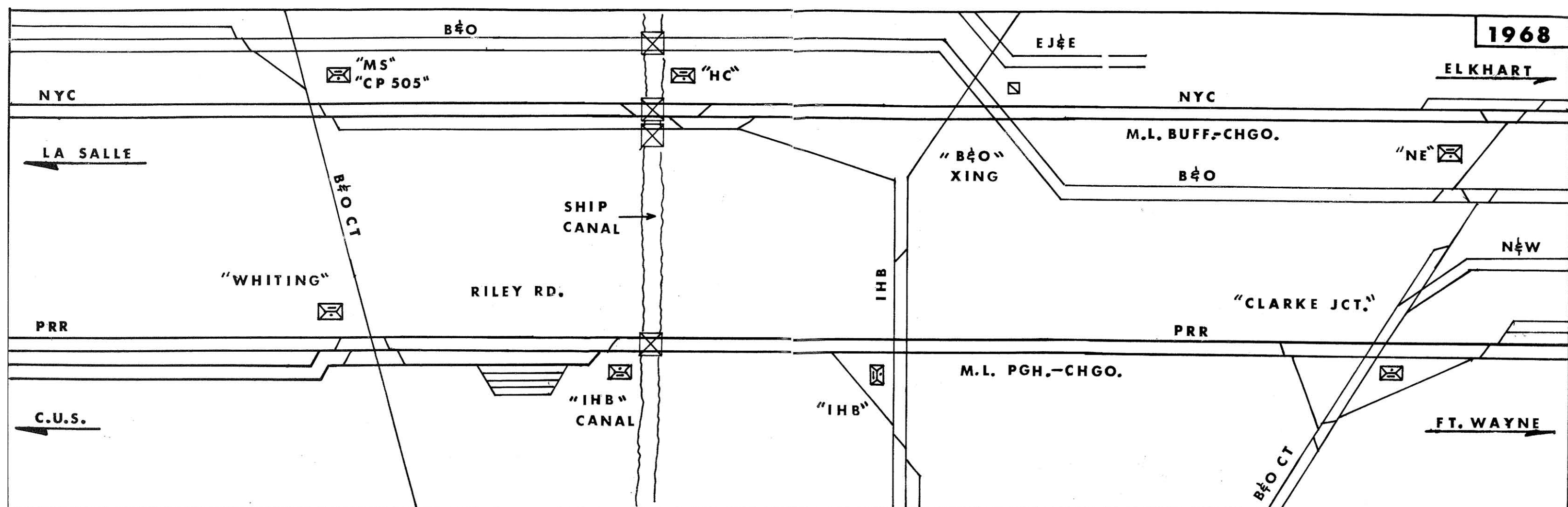
Since the original design of the Relocation Project was done in the mid 1970's, traffic patterns have changed drastically on Conrail. The majority of traffic now moves over the former NYC side via Elkhart Yard which is Conrail's principal classification point on its Western Region. On the PRR side east from CLARKE JCT. via Ft. Wayne through freight traffic is almost non-existent. The PRR line still sees AMTRAKS # 40/41 The **Broadway Limited**, but little else; the Chicago Mail Trains #8/9, and Trail Vans TV-1, 2, 11, and 12, plus other symbol hotshots all are routed via Elkhart Yard over the NYC to Cleveland before returning to PRR rails. The PRR line from Colson to Chicago via Ft. Wayne is now essentially a single track railroad since Conrail has

agreed to maintain one track in safe condition to permit the **Broadway Limited** to run at passenger speed, but when and if the **Broadway** is rerouted, almost certainly the line via Ft. Wayne will be relegated to a Branch or Sec'y status with a low speed limit of perhaps 30 or 40 mph. These new freight routing patterns of Conrail's are almost certain to have an effect on the facilities of the Chicago Division main line in the Gary-East Chicago area, especially CLARKE JCT. which is a Conrail maintained and operated tower. With the low level of traffic moving over the Pittsburgh-Chicago side, CLARKE JCT. is a likely candidate for abandonment or being made remote from the dispatchers office.

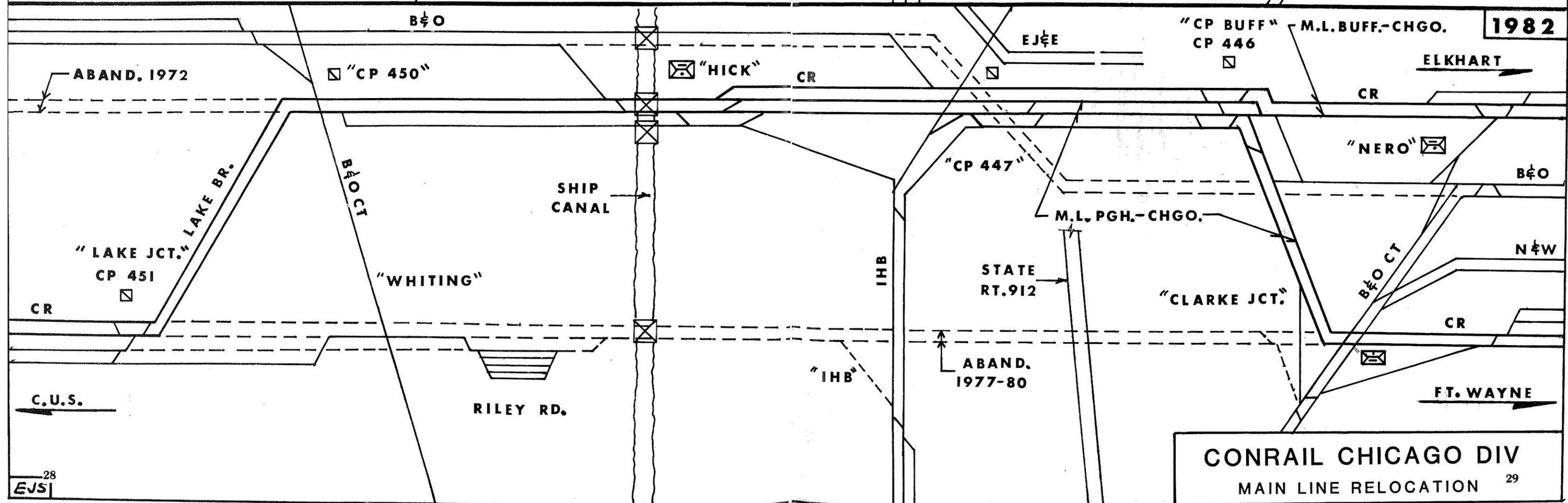
Included with this article are several maps and station pages which the author hopes will aid the unfamiliar reader. The main map shows in the top portion the area in question in 1968 just prior to the Penn-Central merger; while the lower portion shows the present (1982) arrangement as a result of the many changes and realignments brought about by the 1980 Relocation Project.

The accompanying station pages show the PRR and NYC as they were in 1968, at the time of the merger and the Conrail pages are for the 1981-82 period showing the present status of Conrail's Main Lines on the Chicago Division.

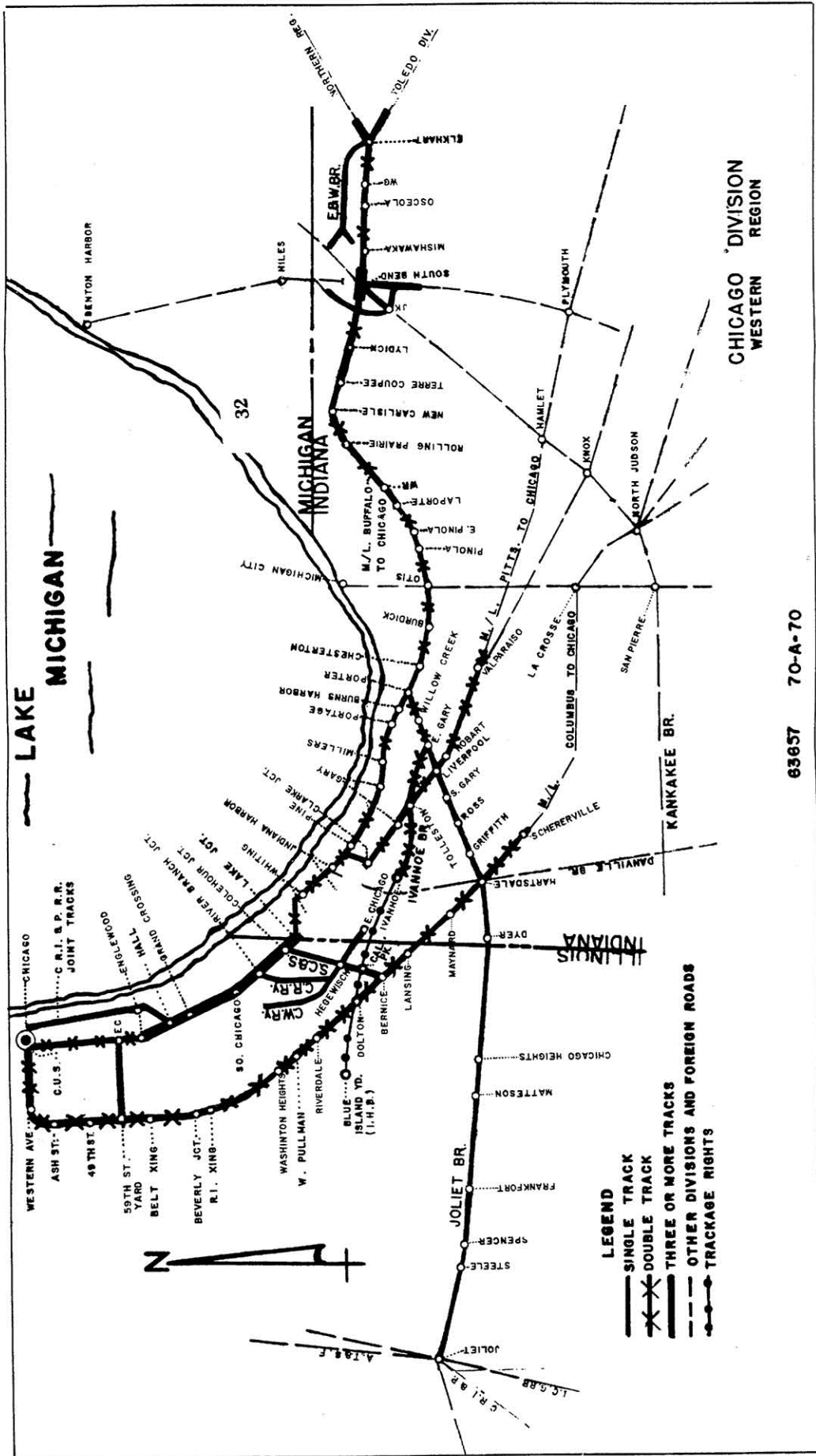
1968



1982



CONRAIL CHICAGO DIV
 MAIN LINE RELOCATION



63657 70-A-70

CHICAGO and VICINITY

Scale of Miles



LEGEND

- Conrail Lines
- Conrail Subsidiary Lines
- ▬ Trackage Rights
- ▨ Light Density Lines
- Other Railroads



PRR 1968

NYC 1968

MAIN LINE PITTSBURGH TO CHICAGO								
Interlocking	Interlocking Station	Block Station and Train Order Office	STATIONS	Distance from Pittsburgh	Sidings Assigned Direction Car Capacity 50 ft. Cars			Note
					East	West	Both	
X	X	X	COLUMBIA CITY	338.7				
X	X	X	VANDALE	339.2		174		
			WEST VANDALE—R-Vandale	341.1	175			
			PIERCETON	350.6				
			WINONA LAKE	357.1				
X	X	X	WARSAW (PC)	358.7				
X	X	X	WEST WARSAW—R-Warsaw	359.7		157		
			SELBY	361.5				
			ETNA GREEN	369.3				
			BOURBON	373.0				
X	X	X	PLYMOUTH (N & W—PC Crossing)	383.9		224		
X	X	X	WEST PLYMOUTH—R-Plymouth	385.3	224			
X	X	X	HAMLET (PC)	387.9		122		
X	X	X	HANNA (C. & O.)	408.6				
X	X	X	EAST WANATAH—R-Wanatah	413.2		157		
X	X	X	WANATAH (MONON)	414.9	146			
			DIVISION POST (Ft. Wayne Div.)	423.0				
			DIVISION POST (Chi. Division)	423.0				
			VALPARAISO	424.1				
X	X		GRAND TRUNK (G. T. W.)	426.9				
			WHEELER	430.7				
X	X	X	EAST BART—R-Bart	433.0		117		
X	X	X	BART (E. J. & E.)	434.4	117			
			HOBART	434.5				
X	X		LIVERPOOL (PC)	437.4				
			VIRGINIA STREET	439.9				
			BROADWAY (GARY)	440.4				
X	X		TOLLESTON (PC)	441.8				
			GARY	442.9				
X	X	X	CLARKE—R-Clarke Jct.	443.8			149	
X	X	X	CLARKE JCT. (B. & O. C. T.)	445.7				
			BUFFINGTON	446.3				
			CLINE AVE.	447.4				
X	X	X	INDIANA HARBOR (I. H. B.)	448.1				
X	X	X	INDIANA HARBOR CANAL	448.5				
			MAHONING	448.9				
			STANDARD	450.6				
X	X	X	WHITING (B. & O. C. T.)	450.8	183			
			ROBY	452.1				
			COLEHOUR YARD OFFICE	453.1				
			STATE LINE	453.3				
X	X	X	COLEHOUR JCT.—R-River Br. Jct.	453.7				
X	X	X	RIVER BRANCH JCT.	454.7				
X	X	X	ENGLEWOOD (C. R. I. & P.)	460.8				
			EC	461.3				
			58TH STREET (Sig. Bridge)	461.6				
			55TH STREET YARD OFFICE	462.0				
X	X		40TH STREET	463.8				
			22ND STREET	466.0				
X	X		ALTON JCT. (C. & W. I.—I. C.)	466.2				
X	X	X	SOUTH BRANCH BRIDGE	466.2				
X	X		ROOSEVELT ROAD (C. U. S.)	467.0				
X	X		CHICAGO (C. U. S.)	467.8				

The direction from Pittsburgh to Chicago is westward.

Colehour Jct. in service for SC&S and Track No. 3 only.

EC in service for tracks No. 3 and No. 4 only.

40th Street in service for Track No. 3 only.

NOTE—Train order offices other than block stations are in service as follows:

Chicago Union Station, GB—Telegraph Office (Continuously).

Interlocking and Block Stations in service part-time as follows:

Station	Hours in service
Forest	8.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. Daily except Saturday and Sunday

MAIN LINE—BUFFALO TO CHICAGO (WESTERN DIVISION)									
Interlocking	Interlocking Station	Block Station and Train Order Office	Block-Limit Station	STATIONS	Distance from Buffalo	Sidings Assigned Direction Car Capacity 50 ft. Cars			Note
						East	West	Both	
				TOLEDO (Lake Reg.)	288.3				
				DIVISION POST (Western Div.)	421.1			544	
X				B (R-BC)	421.5				
X				ELKHART	421.6				5
X				AKLAND AVE. (R-BC)	422.2			368	
X				CP 21ST ST. (R-BC)	422.5			South Side	
X	X	X		BC (S)	424.3				1
X	X	X		CP WG (R-BC)	426.4				
				OSCEOLA	427.1				
				MISHAWAKA	432.7				
				SOUTH BEND	436.7				
X	X	X	X-C	HF (G.T.W. & Nor. Dist. Connect. Crossing)	436.9				
				LYDICK	443.7				
				TERRE COUPEE	448.4		113		
				NEW CARLISLE	450.1				
				ROLLING PRAIRIE	456.4				
X				WR (N.&W. Crossing) (R-JD)	462.4				
X	X	X	X-C	LAPORTE	463.4		36	232	
X	X	X	X-C	JD (C. & O. Crossing)	463.8			232	2
				EAST PINOLA (R-JD)	466.6				
				PINOLA	467.5				
X	X	X	X-C	OTIS (Monon Crossing)	473.4				3
				BURDICK	476.8				
				CHESTERTON	481.1			95/95 100 N & 91S	
				PORTER	482.0				
X	X	X	X-C	PO (Ivanhoe Branch Crossing)	482.2				4
				BURNS HARBOR	485.7			210	
X	X	X	X-C	MILLERS (R-PO)	481.0			120	
				GARY	496.0			30	
				PINE	499.3			140	
X	X	X	X-C	NE	500.1				
				B. & O. CROSSING (I.H.B. and B. & O. Crossing) (R-HC)	502.7				
X	X	X	X-C	INDIANA HARBOR	502.8				
				HC	503.2				
				WHITING	505.4				
X	X	X	X-C	MS (B&O CT Crossing)	505.7				
				STATE LINE (Ind.-Ill.)	508.2				
X	X	X	X-C	CR (R-JN)	509.5				
				JN	513.9				
				ENGLEWOOD	515.5				
				DIVISION POST (Western Div.)	515.6				
				61ST STREET (PC-C.R.I. & P. Joint)	515.6				
				CHICAGO J Office	522.2				

The direction from Toledo to Chicago is westward.

NOTE 1. No train order signal in service. See Special Instruction 1083-D1, page 56.

NOTE 2. Controlled siding located on south or west side.

NOTE 3. After train or engine has passed approach signal permitting it to proceed and is delayed it must proceed at restricted speed, expecting to find the home signal in stop position.

NOTE 4. PORTER—(Freight Office only) Open 7.01 P.M. to 3.01 A.M. daily. 7.01 A.M. to 3.01 P.M. daily.

NOTE 5. No train order signal in service. See special Instruction 1083-A1, page 55.

Interlocking, Block, Train Order Office and Block-Limit Stations in service part-time as follows:

Station	Hours in service
Elkhart	9.00 A.M. to 6.00 P.M. daily except Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

CONRAIL 1982

Revised 3-7-82 (202)

MAIN LINE — BUFFALO TO CHICAGO (CHICAGO DIVISION)

Interlocking	Interlocking Station	Block Station & Train Order Station	Block Limit Station	STATIONS	Distance from Buffalo	Siding Direction, E,W,N,S, or Both & Length in Feet OR DETECTOR READOUTS:	Note
				DIVISION POST	420.1		
X				CP 421	421.5	S-Hart	
				ELKHART	421.6		
X				OAKLAND AVE.	422.2	R-Hart	
X				CP 423	422.5	S-Hart	
		X★		HART (S) (Located in Elkhart Yard)			
X				CP 426	426.4	S-Hart	
				HB&DE E&W 1&2	426.6		
				OSCEOLA	427.1		
				DE E&W 1&2	431.1		
				MISHAWAKA	432.7		
X	X	X★		BEND (GTW & Nipco Secondary Track)	436.9		
				SOUTH BEND	438.5		
				HB&DE E&W 1&2	441.9		
				LYDICK	443.7		
				ETHIC	446.3		
				TERRE COUPEE	448.4		
				NEW CARLISLE	450.1		
				HB&DE E&W 1&2	453.2		
				ROLLING PRAIRIE	456.4		
				DE E&W 1&2	458.8		
X				WIRE (N&W Crsg.)	462.4	R-Judd	
				LAPORTE	463.4		
X	X	X	★	JUDD (S) (C&O Crsg.)	463.8		
X				CP 460	466.6	S-Judd	
				PINOLA	467.5		
				DE E&W 1&2	468.7		
				OTIS	473.4		
				BURDICK	476.8		
				HB&DE E&W 1&2	477.6		
				CHESTERTON	481.1		
X	X	X★		PORTER (S) (Ivanhoe Br.-M.L. Michigan Div.)	482.2		
				CP 483	484.5	S-Porter	
				BURNS HARBOR	485.7		
				DE E&W 1&2	487.0		
X				CP 491	491.0	S-Porter	
				DE E&W 1&2	495.3		
X				GARY	496.0		
X				CP 497	497.1	S-Nero	
X				PINE	498.1		
X	X	X★		NERO	500.1	S	
X				CP 446 (Junction M.L. Pgh. to Chgo)	501.0	S-Nero	

The direction from CP 421 to Chicago Union Station is Westward.

- Note 1. Train Order Office only. No Train Order Signal in service.
 Note 2. Controlled siding adjacent to No. 2 track.
 Note 3. Control siding adjacent to No. 1 track.
 Note 4. In service for No. 2 track only.
 Note 5. In service for controlled siding only.
 Note 6. Train Order Signal in service for westward trains only.

CONRAIL 1982

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MAIN LINE—PITTSBURGH TO CHICAGO

Interlocking	Interlocking Station	Block and Train Order Station	Block Limit Station	STATIONS	Distance from Pittsburgh	Siding Direction E, W, N, S or Both & Length in Feet	Note
X				PITTSBURGH (Central Reg.)			
				CP COLSAN (Youngstown Div.-Central Reg.)		R-Youngstown	
					200.5		
X				DIVISION POST (Chicago Div.)	423.0		
				VALPARAISO	424.1		
X				GRAND TRUNK (GTW Crsg.)			
				R-GTW Dispatch Battlecreek, Mich.	426.9		
X				WHEELER	430.7		
X	P	P★		EBONY	433.0	R-Bart	W6475
X				BART (EJ&E Crsg.)	434.4		
X				HOBART	434.5		
				VIRGINIA STREET	439.9		
				BROADWAY	440.4		
X				TOLLESTON (Ivanhoe Br. Crsg.)			
				R-Train Dispatchers Office	441.8		
				GARY	442.9		
X				DUNES	443.8	R-Clarke Jct.	B8540
X	X	X★		CLARKE JCT. (B&OCT Crsg.)	445.7		
X				CP 446	446.7	S-Nero	
X				CP 447 (IHB Crsg.)	447.9	S-Hick	
X	X	X★		INDIANA HARBOR	448.0		
X				HICK (Mvble. Brdg.) (IHB)	448.5		
X				CP 450 (B&OCT Crsg.)	450.9		
				WHITING	451.1		
X				CP 451	451.5		
				ROBY	452.1		
				COLEHOUR YARD OFFICE	453.1		
X				STATE LINE (Ind.-Ill.)	453.3		
				COLEHOUR JCT. (SC&S Br.)			
				R-Train Dispatchers Office	453.7		4
X				CP 455 (Mvble Brdg.)			
				R-Train Dispatchers Office	454.7		
X				CP 459	458.8	R-Train Dispatchers Office	
X	X			PARK MANOR YARD OFFICE	459.9		
				ENGLEWOOD (CRI&P Crsg.)	460.8		4
				ECHO (E.C.L. Sec. Track)	461.3		
				58TH STREET	461.6		
				55TH STREET YARD OFFICE	462.0		
X				40TH STREET	463.8	R-C&WI Dispatch	2
X	X			ALTON JCT. (ICG Crsg.)	466.1		
X	X	X		SOUTH BRANCH BRIDGE (Mvble Brdg.)	466.2		
				SOUTH BRANCH BRIDGE (CUS Joint Trks.)	466.2		
				CHICAGO UNION STATION	467.8		3

The direction from Pittsburgh to Chicago is westward.

- NOTE 1. Colehour Jct. Int. in service for SC&S Branch, Track No. 3 and Colehour Running Track.
 NOTE 2. 40th Street in service for No. 3 Secondary Track only.
 NOTE 3. GB-Train Order Office, located in Chicago Union Station, open daily except closed Saturday 11:59 P.M. to 6:59 A.M. Sunday.
 NOTE 4. Train Order and Manual Block Signal for movements against the current of traffic on No. 4 Track controlled by Train Dispr. Office.

Interlocking, Block, Train Order and Block-Limit Stations in service part-time as follows:

Station	Hours in Service
Estry	8:00 A.M. to 12:00 midnight Monday. 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Tuesday thru Saturday. Closed Sunday and holidays.
Hamlet	When opened by Train Order or Bulletin Order.
Bart	7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Daily, Except Sunday.
Wanatah	7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Daily, except Sunday.