

= Capitol Limited (B & O train) =

The Capitol Limited was an American passenger train run by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad , originally between New York City and Grand Central Station in Chicago , Illinois via Union Station , Washington , D. C. and Pittsburgh . For almost 48 years , it was the B & O 's flagship passenger train , noted for personalized service and innovation . At the time of its discontinuation on May 1 , 1971 , when Amtrak took over most rail passenger service in the U.S. , the Capitol Limited operated between Washington and Chicago .

= = History = =

The Capitol Limited was inaugurated on May 12 , 1923 , as an all @-@ Pullman sleeping car train running from Pennsylvania Station in New York City to Chicago , via Washington , D. C. Once west of the Pennsy 's Newark station in New Jersey , the train used the Lehigh Valley and Reading Railroad as far as Philadelphia , where it reached B & O 's own rails to Chicago . It was designed to compete against the luxury trains of the rival Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central Railroad . Although the B & O 's longer route put it at a competitive disadvantage in New York for time @-@ sensitive travelers , the B & O offered such luxuries in the 1920s as onboard secretaries , barbers , manicures , and valets . The Capitol 's " Martha Washington " -series dining cars were particularly noted for their Chesapeake Bay cuisine , served in ornate cars with leaded glass windows , glass chandeliers , and colonial @-@ style furnishings . The Capitol Limited derived much of its passenger traffic from businessmen and government officials travelling between Washington and the midwest .

On September 1 , 1926 , the Pennsylvania Railroad terminated its contract with the B & O , which had permitted the latter to use the " Pennsy 's " Hudson River tunnels and Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan . Thereafter , the Capitol Limited , along with all other B & O passenger trains to New York , operated over the Jersey Central 's main line from the connection with the Reading in Bound Brook into its Jersey City terminal , where passengers were then transferred to buses that met the train right on the platform . These buses were ferried across the Hudson River into Manhattan , where they proceeded to various " stations " including the Vanderbilt Hotel , Wanamaker 's , Columbus Circle , and Rockefeller Center , as well as Brooklyn .

In 1938 , the B & O dieselized the train after purchasing two sets of the new EA and EB locomotives from General Motors ' Electro Motive Corporation . The B & O was heavily in debt during the Depression and could not afford to buy new equipment , so it rebuilt its old heavyweight passenger cars into streamlined ones when the diesels were introduced in 1938 , making the Capitol Limited the first dieselized streamlined train in the eastern U.S. By September , 1940 , the through sleeping cars operating to New York were all streamlined . For the aesthetic features of the train the B & O turned to renowned industrial designer Otto Kuhler who turned the Cap , as it was affectionately known , into a regal operation complete with a stunning royal blue , silver , and gold pin @-@ striping livery (a paint scheme that would become one of the all @-@ time classics of the streamliner era) .

= = Route and equipment = =

Following the end of World War II , the B & O and the Santa Fe railway launched through sleeping car service between Washington , D.C. and Los Angeles on the Capitol Limited and the Santa Fe 's Chief . In February , 1956 , the Capitol Limited departed Jersey City at 12 : 45 p.m. as train # 5 . As an express , all @-@ Pullman sleeping car train , the Capitol Limited made limited stops along its 991 @-@ mile (1 @,@ 595 km) route to Chicago . See the table at right for a list of all station stops (major cities are highlighted in blue and Jersey City bus / ferry connections are in yellow) .

Eastbound , the train departed Chicago at 4 : 30 p.m. as train # 6 . This scheduled departure was timed so that travelers riding western railroads such as the Santa Fe , Chicago and North Western Railway , or the Burlington could readily connect for an eastward journey on B & O 's deluxe train .

During the height of train travel in the 1920s , the Capitol Limited occasionally ran in multiple sections , although never as frequently or extensively as the competing Pennsylvania Railroad 's Broadway Limited and New York Central Railroad 's 20th Century Limited .

The B & O was the first railroad to introduce air conditioning on its trains , beginning with the Columbian in 1931 , followed by the Capitol Limited on May 22 , 1932 , well ahead of its competitors . This innovation received favorable comment nationwide by the news media .

The Capitol Limited received streamlined heavyweight sleeping and dining cars in 1938 . A typical consist included the following : baggage @-@ dormitory , 8 @-@ section 1 @-@ drawing room 1 @-@ compartment sleeping car , dining car , three to four 8 @-@ section 5 @-@ double bedroom sleeping cars , 14 @-@ section sleeping car , two 12 @-@ section 1 @-@ drawing room sleeping cars , and a sleeper @-@ buffet @-@ lounge with a drawing room and three compartments . In 1941 these cars were augmented by several lightweight 10 @-@ roomette 5 @-@ bedroom sleeping cars .

By the early 1950s , the B & O had combined through cars for the Capitol Limited , the Columbian (# 25) , and the Ambassador (# 19) into one train between New York and Washington . Beyond Washington , the three trains then operated separately , with several additional Washington ? Chicago Pullman sleeping cars added to the Capitol Limited , along with a twin @-@ unit dining car , two Strata @-@ Dome dome cars , club car , and a flat @-@ end observation car .

The B & O re @-@ equipped the Capitol Limited with new , streamlined sleeping cars in 1950 and 1954 , including the new duplex @-@ roomette type . The Pullmans were named after rivers and lakes along the train 's route , such as " Cacapon " and " Wawasee " . Dome cars " Moonlight Dome " and " Starlight Dome " , having sleeping compartments on their lower levels , were added on January 8 , 1951 . A twin @-@ unit dining car seating 64 passengers at a time was obtained from the New York Central in 1957 .

= = Decline and final run = =

The Capitol Limited , in common with most name trains in the U.S. by the mid @-@ 1950s , suffered steadily declining patronage as the traveling public abandoned trains in favor of airplanes and the automobile . The B & O gave up on competing with the Pennsylvania Railroad into New York , discontinuing all passenger service north of Baltimore on April 26 , 1958 . Thereafter , the Capitol Limited operated between Washington and Chicago as a through train , with a few cars originating in Baltimore until 1966 . Other B & O passenger trains were combined with the Capitol Limited : the Ambassador to Detroit and the formerly all @-@ coach Columbian to Chicago . The combined train in the early 1960s had as many as 22 cars pulled by five locomotives .

To stem the loss of passengers and resulting deficits , the B & O in the early 1960s offered reduced mid @-@ week fares , auto shipment for passengers (similar in concept to the Auto Train) , and onboard movies , to attract more passengers . The train was marginally profitable , when mail and express revenue was included .

The loss in 1967 of mail and express contracts , which by then accounted for almost 70 percent of total passenger train revenue for the B & O , severely affected the B & O 's passenger service . The Post Office Department 's cancellation of its mail contract for the Capitol Limited and other trains on October 28 , 1967 , was the death knell . Many passenger trains were dropped and the consist of the Capitol Limited was considerably reduced . B & O discontinued all long @-@ distance train service to Baltimore 's Camden Station . Between October , 1966 , and April , 1971 , a connecting RDC operated between Baltimore and Washington , D.C. , as train # 105 . By June , 1969 , two E diesel electric engines pulled a train of : 1 baggage , 1 sleeper (10 / 6) , 1 diner / lounge , 1 dome coach , and four coaches .

With the advent of Amtrak on May 1 , 1971 , the Capitol Limited was discontinued by the B & O , along with all of its other passenger trains (except for local commuter services) . For the final run of the old Capitol Limited on April 29 , 1971 , the B & O ran the entire trainset from Baltimore 's Camden Station , including the dome car . The B & O printed special commemorative tickets and returned its bottled Deer Park spring water and B & O 's signature , " all @-@ you @-@ can @-@

eat " giant salad bowls to the final run 's dining car , some of the Capitol Limited ' s amenities from more prosperous times . A 31 @-@ year veteran dining car waiter on the last run of the Capitol Limited recalled to a Baltimore Sun reporter that , " all the vegetables we served were freshly cooked on board ? no frozen or canned food at all . "

At its inception , Amtrak did not continue any of the B & O 's former passenger train routes , and the Capitol Limited ended its 48 @-@ year run on the B & O. After a lapse of ten years , Amtrak revived Washington ? Chicago service using the same B & O tracks (now CSX Transportation) between Washington and Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania , for the Amtrak Capitol Limited .