

= Royal Blue (train) =

The Royal Blue was the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B & O) ' s flagship passenger train between New York City and Washington , D.C. , in the United States , beginning in 1890 . The Baltimore @-@ based B & O also used the name between 1890 and 1917 for its improved passenger service between New York and Washington launched in the 1890s , collectively dubbed the Royal Blue Line . Using variants such as the Royal Limited and Royal Special for individual Royal Blue trains , the B & O operated the service in partnership with the Reading Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey . Principal intermediate cities served were Philadelphia , Wilmington , and Baltimore . Later , as Europe reeled from the carnage of World War I and connotations of European royalty fell into disfavor , the B & O discreetly omitted the sobriquet Royal Blue Line from its New York passenger service and the Royal Blue disappeared from B & O timetables . Beginning in 1917 , former Royal Blue Line trains were renamed : the Royal Limited (inaugurated on May 15 , 1898) , for example , became the National Limited , continuing west from Washington to St. Louis via Cincinnati . During the Depression , the B & O hearkened back to the halcyon pre @-@ World War I era when it launched a re @-@ christened Royal Blue train between New York and Washington in 1935 . The B & O finally discontinued passenger service north of Baltimore on April 26 , 1958 , and the Royal Blue faded into history .

Railroad historian Herbert Harwood said , in his seminal history of the service , " First conceived in late Victorian times to promote a new railroad line ... it was indeed one of the most memorable images in the transportation business , an inspired blend of majesty and mystique ... Royal Blue Line ... Royal Blue Trains ... the Royal Blue all meant different things at different times . But essentially they all symbolized one thing : the B & O ' s regal route . " Between the 1890s and World War I , the B & O ' s six daily Royal Blue trains providing service between New York and Washington were noted for their luxury , elegant appearance , and speed . The car interiors were paneled in mahogany , had fully enclosed vestibules (instead of open platforms , still widely in use at the time on U.S. railroads) , then @-@ modern heating and lighting , and leaded glass windows . The car exteriors were painted a deep " Royal Saxony blue " color with gold leaf trim .

The B & O ' s use of electrification instead of steam power in a Baltimore tunnel on the Royal Blue Line , beginning in 1895 , marked the first use of electric locomotives by an American railroad and presaged the dawn of practical alternatives to steam power in the 20th century . Spurred by intense competition from the formidable Pennsylvania Railroad , the dominant railroad in the lucrative New York ? Washington market since the 1880s , the Royal Blue in its mid @-@ 1930s reincarnation was noted for a number of technological innovations , including streamlining and the first non @-@ articulated diesel locomotive on a passenger train in the U.S. , a harbinger of the steam locomotive ' s eventual demise .

= = History = =

= = = 1880s ? 1918 = = =

Prior to 1884 , the B & O and the Philadelphia @-@ based Pennsylvania Railroad both used the independent Philadelphia , Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad (PW & B) between Baltimore , Maryland , and Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , for their New York ? Washington freight and passenger trains . In 1881 , the Pennsylvania Railroad purchased a controlling interest in the PW & B , and in 1884 it denied the B & O further use of the PW & B to reach Philadelphia .

The B & O then built a new line from Baltimore to connect to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in Philadelphia , completed in 1886 . The B & O ' s passenger trains then used the Reading ' s tracks northward from Philadelphia to Bound Brook , New Jersey , where the Jersey Central ' s rails were used to reach the Communipaw Terminal in Jersey City connecting to ferry for a twelve @-@ minute crossing of the Hudson River to Manhattan .

The new route presented problems in Baltimore , because a ferry boat was necessary to cross the

harbor between Locust Point and Canton to connect with the B & O 's Washington Branch . The solution was the Baltimore Belt Line , which included a 1 @. @ 4 @- @ mile (2 @. @ 3 km) long tunnel under Howard Street in downtown Baltimore . Work began on the tunnel in 1891 and was completed on May 1 , 1895 , when the first train traversed the tunnel . To avoid smoke problems from steam engines working upgrade in the long tunnel under the middle of Baltimore , the B & O pioneered the first mainline electrification of a U.S. railroad , installing an overhead third rail system in the tunnel and its approaches . An electric locomotive first pulled a Royal Blue train through the Howard Street tunnel on June 27 , 1895 .

The project also included the construction of B & O 's second passenger terminal in Baltimore , Mount Royal Station , at the north end of the Howard Street tunnel in the fashionable Bolton Hill neighborhood . Designed by Baltimore architect E. Francis Baldwin in a blend of modified Romanesque and Renaissance styling , the station was built of Maryland granite trimmed with Indiana limestone , with a red tile roof and landmark 150 @- @ foot (46 m) clocktower . The station 's interior featured marble mosaic flooring , a fireplace , and rocking chairs . It opened the following year on September 1 , 1896 . " It was considered , " said the Baltimore Sun , " the most splendid station in the country built and used by only one railroad . " That evaluation was shared by railroad historian Lucius Beebe , who proclaimed Mount Royal " one of the celebrated railroad stations of the world , ranking in renown with Euston Station , London , scene of so many of Sherlock Holmes ' departures , the Gare du Nord in Paris , and the feudal fortress of the Pennsylvania [Railroad] at Broad Street , Philadelphia " .

Even before the Baltimore Belt Line project was finished , the B & O launched its Royal Blue service on July 31 , 1890 . Powered by 4 @- @ 6 @- @ 0 steam locomotives having exceptionally large 78 @- @ inch (198 cm) diameter driving wheels for speed , the Royal Blue trains occasionally reached 90 mph (145 km / h) . After the Baltimore Belt Line project was completed , travel time between New York and Washington was reduced to five hours , compared to nine hours in the late 1860s .

The trains were noted for their elegance and luxury . The parlor cars ' ceilings and upholstery were covered in royal blue , and the dining cars Queen and Waldorf , panelled in mahogany , featured elaborate cuisine such as terrapin and canvasback prepared by French @- @ trained chefs . A Railway Age magazine article of the time reporting on the Royal Blue called it " the climax in railway car building " .

== = 1918 ? 1920s == =

As a result of the U.S. entry into World War I and resulting congestion on the nation 's railroads , the wartime U.S. Railroad Administration (USRA) ordered the Pennsylvania Railroad to permit B & O passenger trains to use its Hudson River tunnels and Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan , beginning April 28 , 1918 , eliminating the B & O 's need for the ferry connection from Jersey City . Following the end of World War I , the Pennsylvania Railroad continued to allow B & O passenger trains to use Pennsylvania Station for another eight years . On September 1 , 1926 , the Pennsylvania Railroad terminated its contract with the B & O , and the latter 's trains reverted to the use of the Jersey Central 's Jersey City terminal . Passengers were then transferred to buses that met the train right on the platform . These buses were ferried across the Hudson River into Manhattan and Brooklyn , where they proceeded to various " stations " around the city on four different routes , including the Vanderbilt Hotel , Wanamaker 's , Columbus Circle , and Rockefeller Center . B & O 's busiest Royal Blue bus terminal at 42nd street in Manhattan opened on December 17 , 1928 . Connected to Grand Central Terminal by an underground concourse , it was trimmed in marble and furnished with Art Deco lighting fixtures and leather sofas . This arrangement would continue until the eventual demise of the Royal Blue in 1958 .

== = 1930s ? 1940s == =

As the 1930s dawned , the B & O 's New York passenger service faced two significant competitive disadvantages , compared to the Pennsylvania Railroad . First , the B & O lacked direct access to

Manhattan , resulting in slower overall travel time . Second , the Pennsylvania 's move in the early 1930s to replace steam power with modern , smokeless electric service along its entire New York ? Washington mainline was met with enthusiastic public approval . The B & O responded by introducing Diesel locomotives , air conditioning , and streamlining on its New York trains . On June 24 , 1935 , the B & O inaugurated the first lightweight , streamlined train in the eastern U.S. , when it began operating a re @-@ christened Royal Blue train between Washington and New York . In 1937 the B & O partially Dieselized the train with locomotive # 50 , buying the first of the new E @-@ Series road Diesel locomotives from General Motors ' Electro Motive Company . Previously , early experiments with internal combustion engines to replace steam in railroad applications included short , articulated trainsets (such as Burlington 's Pioneer Zephyr and Union Pacific 's M @-@ 10000) , double @-@ head sets of " boxcab " locomotives (developed by EMC) used to power the 1936 version of the AT & SF (Santa Fe) Super Chief , and the cab / booster unit combinations developed with Union Pacific 's M @-@ 10002 and M @-@ 10003 - M @-@ 10006 trainsets . The E units took the most advanced developments of Diesel locomotive technology and made them available to all operators using the consists of their choice . The earliest adopters of the new E units demonstrated the improved flexibility , efficiency and reduced maintenance costs of Diesel power in daily service compared to steam and gave impetus to the Dieselization of the railroad industry .

Recalling the past glamor of the 1890s Royal Blue Line , the B & O introduced its Martha Washington @-@ series dining cars , which were particularly noted for their fresh Chesapeake Bay cuisine , served on Dresden china in ornate cars with glass chandeliers and colonial @-@ style furnishings . The B & O 's manager of dining car services said his department 's objective was " ... to be hospitable to our patrons in all respects ? to make them feel the comfort , convenience and homelike atmosphere of our accommodations as soon as they step on our trains . " Dining car specialties included oysters and Chesapeake Bay fish served with cornmeal muffins . B & O president Daniel Willard personally sampled his dining cars ' cuisine while traveling about the line , and recognized particularly pleasing meals with letters of appreciation and autographed pictures given to the dining car chefs .

The B & O was not entirely satisfied with the ride quality of the lightweight Royal Blue train , however , and replaced it on April 25 , 1937 , with streamlined , refurbished heavyweight equipment , painted light gray and royal blue with gold striping , designed by Otto Kuhler . The B & O conveyed the displaced trainset to the Alton Railroad , where it ran as the Abraham Lincoln for decades . The train was pulled by the streamlined Diesel locomotive , B & O # 51 , of the 3 @,@ 600 h.p. EMC EA / EB model built by Electro Motive Company . Praised for its beauty and handsome profile , this first streamlined production model Diesel " dazzled the press and public " , said one magazine writer of the groundbreaking locomotive 's introduction . Kuhler also streamlined one of B & O 's 4 @-@ 6 @-@ 2 " Pacific " steam locomotives for use on the Royal Blue . Its bullet @-@ shaped shroud became an iconic image for the Royal Blue and was modeled for years by American Flyer . Time magazine , in reporting on the precarious financial condition of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and other Depression @-@ ravaged rail lines in 1937 , referred to the B & O 's " swashbuckling " Royal Blue streamliner launched that year as having " symbolize [d] the new era in railroading ... "

President of the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt was a frequent passenger on the B & O 's Royal Blue Line during his time in office (1933 ? 1945) , when he traveled between Washington and his family home in Hyde Park , New York . A special presidential train from Washington used the regular B & O ? Reading ? Jersey Central route to Jersey City , continuing on the New York Central Railroad 's West Shore Line along the Hudson River to Highland , New York (opposite Poughkeepsie) , where the President was met by automobile .

Along with most other rail passenger services in the U.S. during World War II , the Royal Blue enjoyed a surge in passenger traffic between 1942 and 1945 as volume doubled to 1 @.@ 2 million passengers annually on B & O 's eight daily New York ? Washington trains . Following the end of the war , however , passenger volumes soon dropped below prewar levels and the B & O discontinued one of its daily New York ? Washington trains . In addition to its flagship Royal Blue , six other B & O passenger trains continued to serve New York until April 1958 : the Metropolitan

Special , Capitol Limited , National Limited , Diplomat , Marylander , and Shenandoah .

= = = 1950s and the end = = =

Although all of B & O 's Washington ? Jersey City passenger trains had been fully dieselized by September 28 , 1947 , no new passenger cars were built for the Royal Blue in the postwar period . The refurbished 8 @-@ car 1937 Royal Blue trainset continued in operation to the end . The overwhelming market dominance of the Pennsylvania Railroad was evident when it introduced the 18 @-@ car stainless steel Morning Congressional and Afternoon Congressional streamliners in 1952 . By the late 1950s , most U.S. passenger trains suffered a steep decline in patronage as the traveling public abandoned trains in favor of airplanes and automobiles , utilizing improved Interstate Highways . The Royal Blue was no exception , as operating deficits approached \$ 5 million annually and passenger volume declined by almost half between 1946 and 1957 . Amidst the downward trend , the Royal Blue Line briefly recaptured the regal splendor of its early years on October 21 , 1957 , when Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip travelled on the B & O from Washington to New York .

As financial losses mounted , the B & O finally ceded the New York ? Washington market to the Pennsylvania Railroad altogether , discontinuing all passenger service north of Baltimore on Saturday , April 26 , 1958 , and bringing the venerable Royal Blue to an end . As the engineer was about to ease the locomotive 's throttle open for the Royal Blue 's final departure from Washington Union Station at 3 : 45 p.m. , the event was covered in a trainside remote broadcast by Edward R. Murrow on a CBS network See It Now television special . The train 's 7 : 49 p.m. arrival at Jersey City Terminal was met by news reporters from The New York Times , the New York Post , Life magazine and The Saturday Evening Post , on hand to cover the legendary Royal Blue 's demise . In an editorial the next day , the Baltimore Sun lamented the end of the Royal Blue , saying it " may have been one of the most famous named trains in history " .

The New York Times , in a front page article accompanied by a photograph of train engineer Michael Goodnight bidding farewell to a 7 @-@ year old passenger , said " It was a sad and simple story yesterday as the nation 's oldest railroad discontinued its crack Royal Blue and its five other passenger trains ... end [ing] sixty @-@ eight years of continuous through service , operated in a gentlemanly fashion ... a kind of ante @-@ bellum , gracious way of life ... and the reputation for very special service . "

Mount Royal Station continued as the eastern terminus of B & O 's passenger service until June 30 , 1961 , when it closed permanently as a rail passenger facility . It was one of thirteen Baltimore buildings selected in 1959 for the Historic American Buildings Survey . The building and trainshed were subsequently acquired by the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in 1964 and are preserved as examples of late 19th century industrial architecture .

= = Schedule and equipment = =

In the 1890s ? 1910s period , the Royal Limited operated in both directions simultaneously , with 3 p.m. departures in New York and Washington , arriving at its destination five hours later , at 8 p.m. By the 1930s , travel time between Jersey City and Washington was reduced to four hours . From 1935 to the end of service in 1958 , the Royal Blue made a daily round trip , departing New York in the morning and returning from Washington in the evening . According to the Official Guide of February , 1956 , the Royal Blue operated on the following schedule as train # 27 (unconditional stops highlighted in blue , bus connections in yellow) :

Eastbound , the train departed Washington at 3 : 45 p.m. as train # 28 , arriving at Jersey City 7 : 40 p.m.

Between 1937 and 1958 , the Royal Blue was equipped with air @-@ conditioned coaches , parlor cars with private drawing rooms , a lounge car for coach passengers , a full dining car serving complete meals , and a flat @-@ end observation car with a " cafe @-@ lounge " bringing up the rear of the train . Beginning in mid @-@ August 1947 , onboard telephone service was provided ,

making the B & O (along with the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central Railroad) one of the first three railroads in the U.S. to offer telephone service on its trains , using a forerunner of cell phone technology .