

We invite you to become a member, and here are a few reasons to join!

A subscription to the *Nickel Plate Road Magazine* (four great issues per year.)

Members-Only monthly e-list newsletter

Members-Only *Nickel Plate Road Modelers' Notebook*

Access to the NKPHTS website members' area

Membership in the online Yahoo NKPHTS member forum

A growing list of programs and services for NKPHTS members

The NKPHTS Annual Convention

The opportunity to join local chapters and build new friendships

The knowledge that you are helping to preserve the history of the Nickel Plate and predecessor railroads.

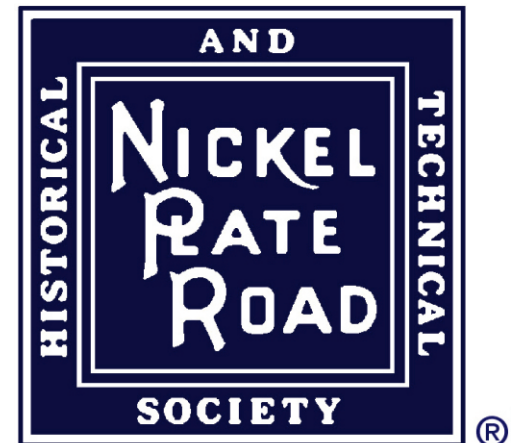
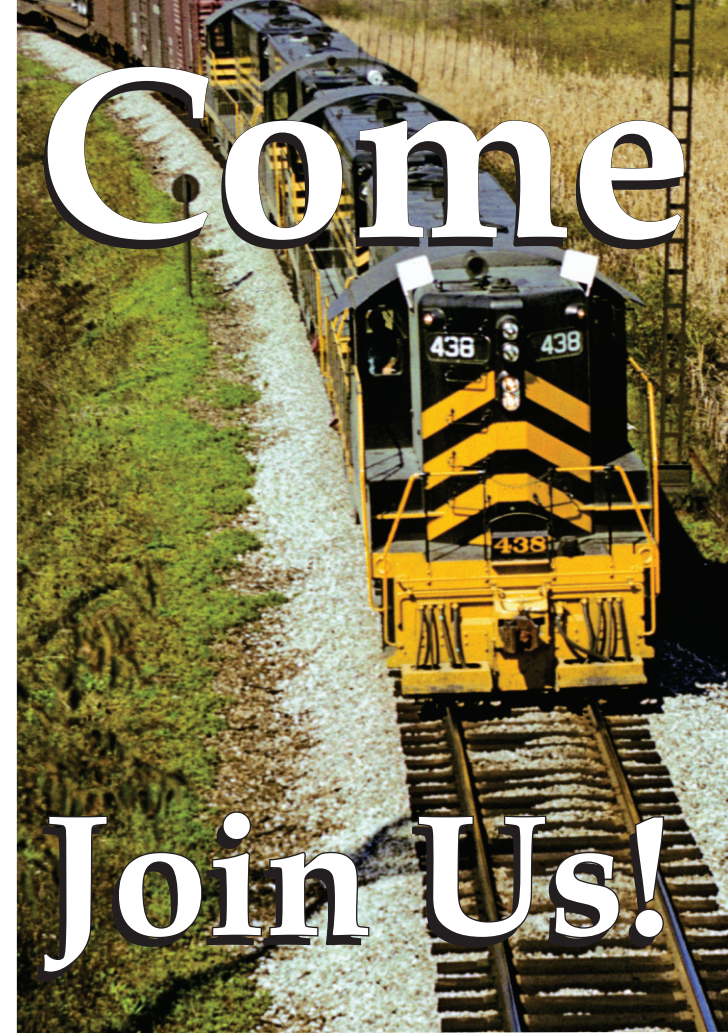
Help us with this worthwhile, nostalgic and historical pursuit.



Dinner at an NKPHTS Convention

To become a member, visit our website: nkphts.org, and click on the membership page where you will find all necessary forms, payment options and additional information.

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Welcome to the Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society.

The Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society, Inc. is one of the oldest railroad historical organizations in the country. The Society was founded in 1966 for the purpose of obtaining, preserving, and disseminating information and material related to the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad Company, commonly known as the Nickel Plate Road, and its predecessor, constituent, and affiliated railroads.

Today we are a 501(c)(3) organization of over 900 members including authors, historians, photographers, railroad employees and officials, model railroaders, and rail fans of all interests.



The Society provides each member with the quarterly *Nickel Plate Road Magazine* and two eZines, the *Nickel Plate Road Modelers' Notebook* (3 issues,) now available to the public, and the monthly NKPHTS E-List Newsletter. We publish an annual calendar, hold an annual convention, and support various NKP preservation projects.

Please join us in celebrating the life and preserving the memory of a truly great railroad - the Nickel Plate Road.



Train trip at an NKP Convention

The New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad A brief History of a Great Railroad

The New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad was conceived as a line that would connect its namesake cities and was organized in 1881 by a group headed by George Seney, president of the Metropolitan National Bank in New York. After the corporation was formed and investors were secured, work began on the line connecting Chicago and Buffalo. The line was built without debt, and the first train ran on it in October of 1882. During its construction, the line was given high praise for its trackage and related work, thus earning it the nickname "the Nickel Plated Railroad." The name stuck and the railroad was known as the Nickel Plate Road until it passed out of existence in 1964.

The line was seen as a direct competitor to the greater New York Central System and was quickly bought by and came under the control of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern. It remained under their control until 1916 when it was purchased by the Van Sweringen brothers to gain access to the greater Cleveland area for a traction line they owned. The Vans soon realized that railroading was much more profitable than their real estate holdings and became major players in the railroad industry.

The Nickel Plate grew considerably in size in July of 1922 when it added the properties of the Lake Erie & Western, a line running from Sandusky, Ohio, to Peoria, Illinois. Two weeks later, the NKP also added the Toledo, St. Louis & Western, the Clover Leaf, to their system. Some forty years after its start, the Nickel Plate finally had a route to St. Louis and its western connections.

The Nickel Plate developed the reputation of quickly moving freight along its system and adopted the motto of "High Speed

Service." But it wasn't just a slogan; crack trains from Chicago and St. Louis raced across the relatively flat terrain of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, delivering perishable freight to Buffalo for ultimate delivery to New York and other points along the East Coast. Their Alco- and Lima-built Berkshire locomotives were in a class of their own during both the depths of the Depression and the super demands of wartime traffic in the early 1940s.

To supplement its revenue stream, the Nickel Plate added the former Wheeling & Lake Erie to its system in 1949. This line, which connected Toledo, Ohio, with Wheeling, West Virginia, gave the NKP access to the rich coal fields of eastern Ohio and the heavy steel industry along the Ohio River, providing a steady source of income. At its peak, the Nickel Plate had over 2,170 miles of trackage connecting Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Ft. Wayne, Peoria, St. Louis, Chicago and Wheeling.



During the 1950s, railroads began to merge with one another to create greater operating efficiencies and competitive advantages. The pending merger of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central System would be a competitive disaster for the Nickel Plate, so a likely suitor for the line was sought. The Norfolk & Western had recently merged with the Virginian Railway and was looking for access into the Midwest States; the Nickel Plate was ideally suited for this and merger talks began. Other railroads seeing the handwriting on the wall actively sought inclusion into the new system under consideration. After a four year long process and countless regulatory and other hearings, the merger was finally approved and on October 16, 1964, the NKP along with the Akron, Canton & Youngstown, the Pittsburgh & West Virginia, the Wabash and the previously added Virginian Railway became part of the greater Norfolk & Western system. Thus ended the history of a great railroad, the Nickel Plate Road.