

Carolina Conductor



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Monthly Newsletter of the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association

Preserving the Past Active in the Present Planning for the Future

Web Site: hubcityrrmuseum.org

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Association & Hub City RR Museum

Hub City Railroad Museum and SOU Rwy Caboose #X3115:

Spartanburg Amtrak Station

298 Magnolia Street

Spartanburg, SC 29301-2330

Wednesday 10-2 & Saturday 10-2

Meeting Site:

Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church

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Fountain Inn, SC 29644

Third Friday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

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Articles can be submitted anytime.

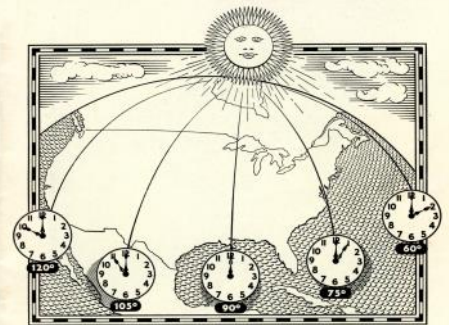
Day of Two Noons

FOREWORD

For nearly a century the American railroads, large and small, have been working together with a view to providing the public with the best possible transportation service. Their cooperative effort has included the standardization of gauge and equipment, the adoption of a uniform code of operating rules, a uniform plan for the interchange of freight cars, joint rates and fares, and numerous other arrangements without which there could be no through schedules, billings or services.

The story of the adoption by the railroads of Standard Time, told in the following pages, strikingly illustrates the benefits of cooperative action on the part of the railway industry. Although the lives and habits of people everywhere are regulated by Standard Time, few persons are aware that it was through the joint efforts of the American railroads, working together to improve their services, that this orderly method of reckoning and keeping time was introduced more than two-thirds of a century ago.

The Day of Two Noons



by Carlton J. Corliss

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS
Transportation Building, Washington 6, D. C.

The work of standardization and coordination of railway operations which began many years ago is carried on today through various branches of the Association of American Railroads. Railroad men are constantly working together on scores of research and standardization projects involving equipment, materials and methods-all for the purpose of effecting economies and increasing the efficiency and safety of railway operations.

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Museum Happenings

CSX 250th Birthday Paint Schemes



CSX Corp. today unveiled two commemorative locomotives celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States, highlighting the railroad's enduring role in building the nation's economy.

"Freight railroads have powered American growth and prosperity for more than two centuries," said Steve Angel, president and chief executive officer of CSX. "From the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, one of CSX's predecessors and the nation's first common carrier, to today's CSX system, rail remains essential to the U.S. economy. These locomotives celebrate that unique American legacy and the people who made it possible."

The locomotives—numbered 250 and 2026—were painted at CSX's Waycross, Georgia, facility. Both are modernized, high-horsepower CM44AH units designed for efficient, reliable mainline service. Each locomotive features a distinct design. Unit 250 celebrates America's anniversary year with a bold Stars and Stripes theme, while Unit 2026 features the American bald eagle and the phrase "United We Stand," emphasizing national strength and unity.

Flag unit
#250.



Eagle unit
#2026.

Wanted—Articles for the Carolina Conductor

Submit an article of 200 words or more with some photos and captions and see them in print. Every one of us has some unique railroad experience that would

THE DAY OF TWO NOONS

by Carlton J. Corliss

Yes, there really was "a day of two noon's!" This phenomenon occurred November 18, 1883, when the railroads introduced Standard Time throughout the United States. The time between noon's varied from 1 to 50 minutes, depending upon the distance between local sun time or local railroad time and the new Standard Time. The story is told here in detail.



Precision Railroading

Modern railroading is precision railroading. There was a time when fractions of minutes, or even whole minutes, were given little notice in railroading,

but modern railroading counts seconds as well as minutes.

The remarkable performance of the American railroads in operating many thousands of passenger and freight trains daily, with precision and safety, has been fittingly characterized as a "miracle of human accomplishment." This great transportation machine functions so smoothly and so efficiently hour after hour, day after day, despite darkness, storm and other hazards, that most of us are likely to accept good railway service as we do the rising and setting of the sun or the procession of the seasons. It is only when something happens to interrupt railway service that we are brought to realize what a vital part the railroads play in our everyday lives.

Imagine what would happen if the train dispatcher, the man in the signal tower, the conductor, the locomotive engineer, the switchman and every other person connected with the railroads were suddenly to be deprived of their timepieces or other means of telling the time of day and were compelled to operate the trains without aid of clocks or watches. The chaos and confusion that would inevitably result would be nothing short of calamitous.

Confusion Before Standardization

There are many persons now living who recall the period when railway operations were in a state of confusion due to the lack of a uniform time standard. Prior to the adoption of Standard Time on November 18, 1883, the only "time" that existed in this country was local time. Commonly called "sun time," which was based upon the transit of the sun across the meridian, and which varied in the latitude of Boston, Chicago, and Salt Lake City approximately one minute for every thirteen miles, or one second for every 1,140 feet of longitude.

In Washington, D. C., there is a difference of 7 seconds between sun-time at the Capitol Dome and sun-time at the Lincoln Memorial. Sun-time at the eastern and western extremes of Chicago differs by about 67 seconds. It differs about 30 seconds between the two ends of the San Francisco-Oakland Bridge.

So, of course, such a thing as true local or sun-time was never observed at all points in the country. This would have led to unending confusion, because the longitudinal variation is constant. Moreover, owing to the eccentricity of the earth's orbit, there is a seasonal variation of several minutes, so that exact

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sun-time at a given point on the earth's surface in January will not correspond to exact sun-time at the same location in April or August or November.

But each of numerous cities or towns adopted a time standard which was based upon mean local sun-time at the city hall or some other designated location. Many another city or town adopted the time standard of one of its railroads or of the principal city in its area. Each railroad adopted the time standard of its home city or of some other important city on its lines.

For instance, the Pennsylvania Railroad in the East used Philadelphia time, which was 5 minutes slower than New York time and 5 minutes faster than Baltimore time.

The Baltimore & Ohio used Baltimore time for trains running out of Baltimore, Columbus time for trains in Ohio, Vincennes time for trains running west of Cincinnati, and it scheduled some of its trains under New York time, Philadelphia time and Chicago time. The Michigan Central Railroad operated its trains on Detroit time.

In the Chicago district the New York Central and the Pennsylvania used Columbus time which was 6 minutes faster than Cincinnati time and 19 minutes faster than Chicago time. Generally speaking, the railroads running westward and southward from Chicago used Chicago time; those running westward from St. Louis used St. Louis time.

When it was noon in Chicago it was 12:31 in Pittsburgh; 12:24 in Cleveland; 12:17 in Toledo; 12:13 in Cincinnati; 12:09 in Louisville; 12:07 in Indianapolis; 11:50 in St. Louis; 11:48 in Dubuque; 11:39 in St. Paul; and 11:27 in Omaha.

The Union Pacific Railroad operated its trains by at least six different time standards-based on sun-time at Omaha, Jefferson City, St. Joseph, Denver, Laramie, and Salt Lake City.

The Chicago Tribune listed 27 local times in Michigan, 38 in Wisconsin, 27 in Illinois and 23 in Indiana.

There is no telling how many different "local times" there were in the United States prior to the adoption of Standard Time, but we do know that there were at least 68 different times used by the railroads, and according to one authority, there were, a few years prior to 1883, something like 100 different times in use by the railroads of this country.

Multiplicity of Times

A traveler going from Maine to California, if anxious to have correct railroad time, was obliged to change his watch some twenty times during the jour-



Efficient train dispatching depends on accurate time pieces.

ney!

In the railroad station in Buffalo, there were three clocks—one set to New York time, by which the New York Central Railroad operated; one set to Columbus time, by which the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern and other railroads were operated; and the other set to local Buffalo time.

The situation was even worse in Pittsburgh, where there were six different time standards for the arrival and departure of trains.

In Kansas City each of the leading jewelers furnished his own "standard time;" and no two of these standards agreed. Sometimes the range was as much as twenty minutes. Each jeweler took his own readings. He had his own customers who set their watches by his regulator and were willing to wager on the correctness of his time. According to one account, "the people of Kansas City never did have accurate information on the arrival and departure of trains, except such as was gained by going to the edge of the hill and looking down on the railway station." The situation became so notorious that Professor H. S. Pritchett, an astronomer of note then connected with Washington University in St. Louis, was called upon to untangle the mess. On his recommendation, the problem was solved by the city's adoption of a time ball system.

These time balls, now almost forgotten, were a great institution in their time. Each day at official noon at a particular location, a large ball, sometimes three or four feet in diameter, so as to be visible for several miles, was dropped from a lofty mast. As the ball fell, the people-watching from many vantage points-adjusted their timepieces to noon, and thus everyone in the city was provided with uniform time.

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In the larger cities, thousands of persons watched the time balls daily. Scientists wrote learned papers about them, argued about the best diameter or weight and height of the mast, and whether the ball should start falling at noon or reach the bottom at noon.

Of course, with such multiplicity of time standards throughout the country, passengers and shippers, and railway officers and employees who were responsible for the operation of trains, the sale of tickets and the making of schedules, were confused and bewildered. Mistakes and errors were frequent and sometimes disastrous.

According to the New York Herald, "The confusion of time standards was the source of unceasing annoyance and trouble."

Proposals for a uniform time system were not new. As early as 1828, Sir John Herschel was urging the standardization of time in England. On December 6, 1848, partly as a result of his efforts, Greenwich mean time became the standard time of England, Scotland and Wales. One of the early advocates of standardization in the United States was

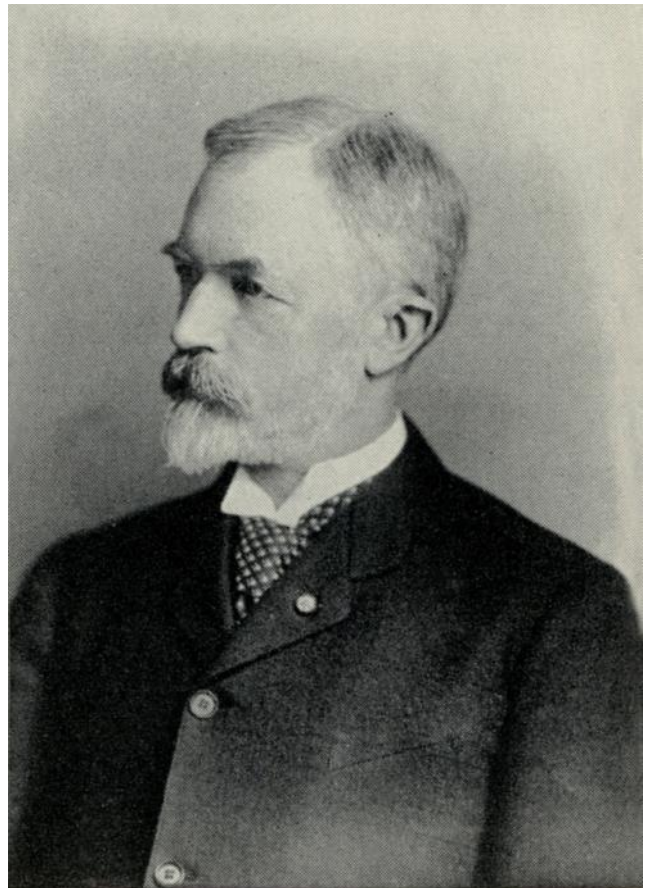
Professor C. F. Dowd, of Saratoga, New York, who in 1869 proposed dividing the country into time zones somewhat similar to what we have today. Professor Dowd spent much time and energy in his efforts to obtain public approval of his plan. In 1878, Sir Sanford Fleming, chief engineer of the Government Railways of Canada, proposed a 24-hour time standard. Professor Cleveland Abbe, Dr. Thomas Hill, and other scientific men advocated a uniform standard of time in one form or another.

Standard Time Adopted

Like Mark Twain's observation that there had been a great deal of talk about the weather, but nothing had ever been done about it, nothing ever came of these proposals until the railroads took the matter in hand. The railroad movement may be said to have had its beginning in May 1872, when an association of railway officers, a forerunner of the Association of American Railroads, held its first meeting at the old Southern Hotel in St. Louis. This was a meeting of railroad superintendents who called for the purpose of arranging summer passenger train schedules. At the St. Louis meeting a permanent organization

was formed which became successively the Time-Table Convention, the General Time Convention, the American Railway Association, and, finally, the Association of American Railroads.

For many years the secretary of the General Time Convention and the American Railway Association was William F. Allen: managing editor of the Official Guide of the Railways. In his capacity as Secretary of the General Time Convention, Allen worked unceasingly for the adoption of Standard Time. In the waiting room of Union Station, in Washington, there is a large bronze tablet which gives Allen the credit which is due him for his part in that very important achievement. Possibly another tablet would be appropriate—this one on the site of the once-famous old Grand Pacific Hotel, in Chicago—to commemorate the General Time Convention



William F. Allen.

of October 11, 1883, which definitely adopted Standard Time.

The plan they adopted provided for five time zones: one, to be known as Intercolonial Time, in the Eastern provinces of Canada, and four in the United States, to be known as Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific times. The four United States zones were based upon mean sun-time on the 75th, 90th, 105th and 120th meridians west of Greenwich. These four meridians are approximately on the longitudes of Philadelphia, Memphis, Denver and Fresno. Having voted overwhelmingly for the adoption of the plan, the convention, through Secretary Allen, issued a notice, directing that all railway clocks governing the operation of trains throughout the United States be set to the new standard at exactly 12 o'clock noon, Sunday, November 18, 1883.

Detailed instructions and recommendations were issued, giving the exact changes which were necessary for the many railroad companies to adjust their clocks and watches to the new standard, and similar information was furnished by public officials of cities throughout the country. It was realized that the success of the plan would depend largely upon the cooperation of cities and towns in adopting the new time locally, and this was stressed by the General Time Convention and by railway publications. Newspapers and local public officials enthusiastically approved of the change, and only here and there was opposition encountered.

Public Reaction to Change

Change, whether for the better or not, is always repugnant to some persons. The greatest time-jump in all history was that from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. This change was adopted in all Catholic countries in 1582, though it was not accepted by the English-speaking countries of the world until 1752 when the 3rd of September became the 14th of September.

There were those in this country who felt that, by the adoption of Standard Time, they were being robbed of some of their daylight, or that they were being compelled to reckon time "contrary to nature."

Newspaper accounts and editorial comments during the period immediately preceding and following the adoption of Standard Time reveal that the public attitude toward the change ranged from enthusiastic approval to belligerent opposition. Some editors discussed it humorously; others accepted it without criti-

cism. The Indianapolis Sentinel for November 21, 1883, had this to say:

The Railroad Convention, recently in session, determined among other things to have the clocks and watches in the United States set, run and regulated to suit the convenience of their particular branch of business. It was a bold stroke. To regulate the time of this Empire Republic of the World is an undertaking of magnificent proportions. Railroad time is to be the time of the future. The Sun is no longer to boss the job. People- 55,000,000 of them-must eat, sleep and work as well as travel by railroad time. It is a revolt, a rebellion. The sun will be requested to rise and set by railroad time. The planets must, in the future, make their circuits by such timetables as railroad magnates arrange.

People will have to marry by railroad time and die by railroad time. Ministers will be required to preach by railroad time-banks will open and close by railroad time-in fact, the Railroad Convention has taken charge of the time business, and the people may as well set about adjusting their affairs in accordance with its decree.... We presume the sun, moon and stars will make an attempt to ignore the orders of the Railroad Convention, but they, too, will have to give in at last.

Opposition Encountered

A news dispatch appearing in the Chicago Tribune a few days before the change reported that the people of Cincinnati favored the retention for general purposes of local time. A dispatch from Rockford, Ill., two days before the time set for the change, said: "The time here is taken from the Rockford Watch Company, and they are opposed to the change, as are the majority of their customers."

An officer of the United States Coast Survey, writing in Science Magazine said, "All ordinary business everywhere must be forever conducted on local mean solar time, and we may rightly ask the railroad companies to give in their timetables for public use the mean local time for the departure and arrival of trains."

Webb C. Ball, founder of the Ball Railway Time Service, related that many citizens were so in the habit of observing "sun-time" that they bitterly resented the change. "In one place," Ball said, "I visited a venerable local literary character-who flourished his hickory cane over my head, saying, 'Damn old Vanderbilt's time! We want God's time! The Vanderbilts

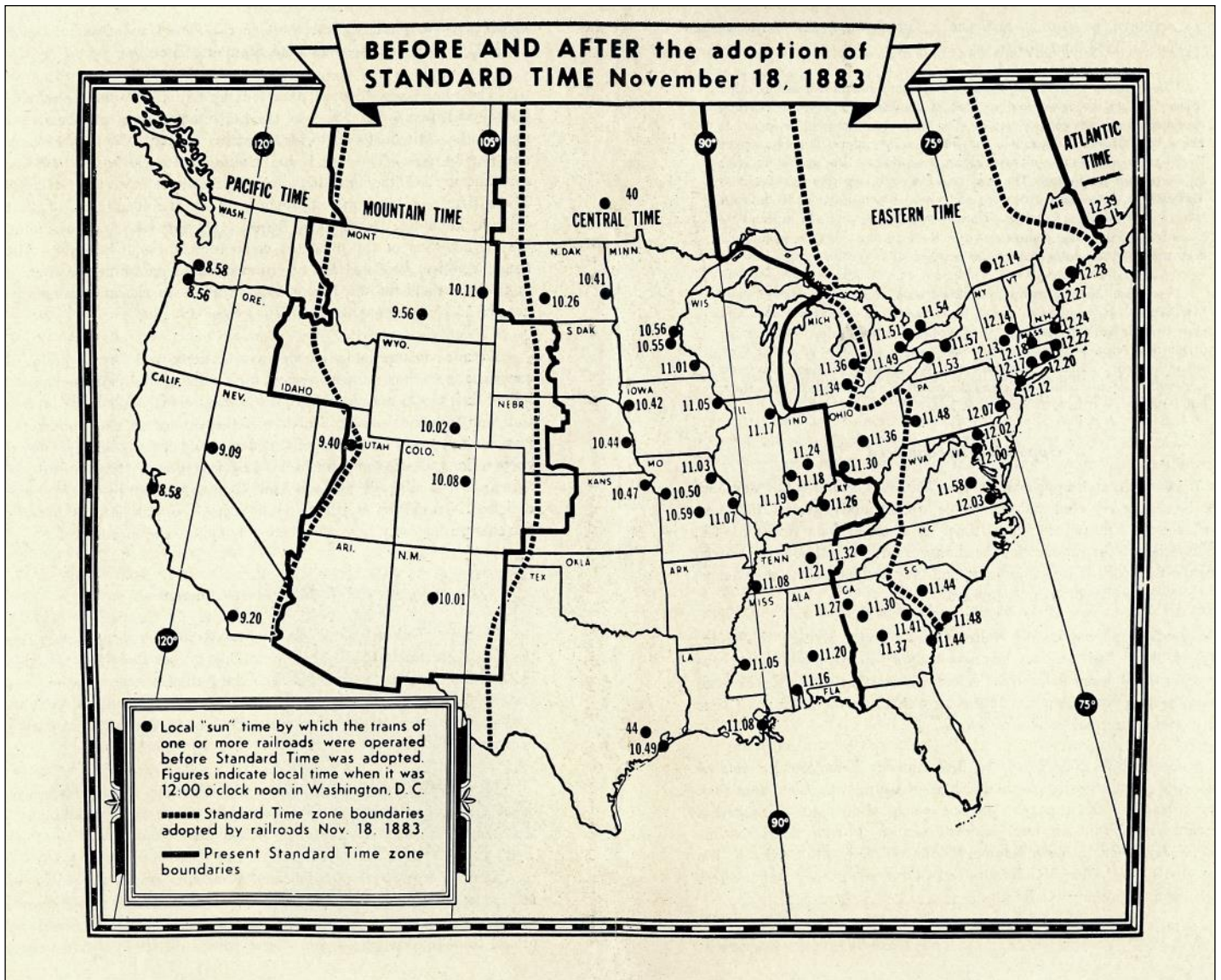
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cannot run me if they run the rest of the country, by Jehosephat!"

And there were persons who felt that the railroads or the watch makers were trying to put something over on them for selfish reasons. On the day following the change of time, the New York Herald contained an interesting article which said in part: Of course, no good comes along in this selfish and ungrateful world without having its motives suspected. And some people were unkind enough to believe that the whole affair was a mean and sordid device of the watch-makers. It is notorious that scores of people have never managed to arrange the operations of a watch yet without putting it out of order, and everyone knows that a timepiece once sent to the watchmaker for re-

pairs is irretrievably ruined and spends the rest of its days passing between his hands and those of its owner. It was but natural, then, to suppose that an alteration of time which would necessitate the setting of thousands of watches, and their subsequent subjection to the malignant arts of the watchmaker, was only a gigantic scheme of plunder contrived in his interest.

Five days before Standard Time was to go into effect, the Attorney General of the United States issued an edict that government departments had no right to adopt railroad time until authorized to do so by Congress. However, this edict did not prevent the railroads from putting Standard Time into effect. But apparently the Attorney General could not or would not believe they would do so, for a few hours after



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Standard Time went into effect, he went to the railway station to take the train for Philadelphia and was astonished to find that he was 8 minutes too late.

November 18, 1883, was called "the day of two noon's" by reason of the fact that in the eastern part of each time zone there was a noon based upon sun-time; then clocks and watches were set back from one to thirty minutes to the new Standard Time, so that there was another noon when Standard Time in the community reached 12:00 o'clock. If the community used railroad time, the difference in many instances was more than 29 minutes. For instance, in eastern Georgia where Savannah time was used, there was a 44-minute gap between the old and new time.

Humorous Comments

According to the New York Herald, "Those in the eastern half of the zone are, as it were, living a little of their lives over again but those on the other side are thrown, some of them as much as half an hour, into the future". And New Yorkers noted with a chuckle that they had cheated old Father Time out of 240 seconds!

To quote from the New York Herald, "*Had there been stretched across the continent yesterday a line of clocks extending from the extreme eastern part of Maine to the extreme western point on the Pacific Coast, and had each clock sounded an alarm at the hour of noon, local time, there would have been a continuous ringing from the East to the West lasting three and a quarter hours*".

Tomorrow all clocks from eastern Maine to Buffalo and Pittsburgh on the west will strike in unison, and all clocks throughout the nation will hereafter strike in unison on the hour.

The man who goes to church in New York today will

hug himself with delight to find that the noon service has been curtailed to the extent of nearly four minutes, while every old maid on Beacon Hill, in Boston, will rejoice tonight to discover that she is younger by almost 16 minutes.

On the morning following the adoption of Standard Time, the Herald said, "Yesterday numbers of persons were thrown into a condition of frenzy by the discovery that their watches did not tally with indicators and indulged in blasphemous and vituperative expressions before they recalled the chronological convulsions of the day. Full many a being dashed into a railway depot with fire in his eye and dyspepsia in his aspect only to find that he had run himself out of breath without reason and had minutes to spare."

Naturally, those who had the event of the day in their minds, talked about it. Preachers made it a theme in their pulpits. People joked about it; people fibbed about it; and altogether it afforded such food for Sunday gossip as is only offered by something that goes beyond the public pursuits of men and enters into their private lives as part of themselves.

In a nationwide time, change such as this, the railroads had no previous experience. The adjustment called for careful planning and preparation and the greatest of care and watchfulness by railroad men. Specific orders were issued on every division, instructing every officer and every employee as to what should be done in making the change. Train crews on line were instructed in every instance as to what change to make in their watches. Members of each crew were also instructed to check their watches with the telegraph operator upon arrival at the next scheduled stop.

Conclusion next month!



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