



Model Railroad Hobbyist | September 2019 | #115

JONAS H. NILENDER

looks in depth at a train that both Southern and Norfolk & Western fans can model ...

THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY/NORFOLK & WESTERN RAN the Tennessean as a secondary streamliner between Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tennessee. This train became Southern's third entry into the Washington-Memphis market and quite clearly ran as a secondary train when compared to the likes of the Crescent or the Southerner.

The Southern shepherded the train from Washington to Lynchburg, Virginia, where the N&W took over to Bristol,



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1. Postcard showing the attractive Tennessean green, white, and yellow paint scheme. *From Wikipedia*

THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY'S TENNESSEAN | 2

Tennessee. There, the Southern took over the train again and brought it into Memphis. The train first ran in 1941 and continued until 1968, though service had steeply declined by then, as it had for all streamliners.

The Tennessean never stood out as a particularly fast train – it only averaged a little less than forty miles per hour either way – but, for many years, it provided a direct link between Memphis, Washington, and points to the north.

Because both N&W and Southern operated it, this train provides modeling opportunities for modelers of both railways.



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Historical consist notes

The railroad painted the cars of the Tennessean a plain silver with “Southern” lettering. They painted the motive power more elaborately: Southern diesels which handled this service had an attractive green and white scheme with yellow stripes, as can be seen in [1].

Car Type	Number	Assignment
Baggage-Mail (60' Rolling Post Office (RPO) Section)	1700-1701	Washington-Chattanooga
Baggage-Mail Storage	1750-1751	Washington-Chattanooga
Baggage-Mail (30' RPO Section)	1725-1726	Chattanooga-Memphis
Baggage/Dormitory/22-seat Coach	703-705	Washington-Memphis
52-seat partitioned Coach	903-905	Washington-Chattanooga
56-seat Coach	806-814	Washington-Chattanooga
48-seat Diner	3303-3304	Washington-Chattanooga
56-seat Coach	806-814	Washington-Memphis
56-seat Coach	806-814	Washington-Memphis
Tavern/Lounge/ Observation (flat rear end)	1150-1152	Washington-Memphis
10-3 Sleeper (Pullman-Owned)		New York-Memphis
12-1 Sleeper (Pullman-Owned)		Bristol-Nashville
12-1 Sleeper (Pullman-Owned)		Chattanooga-Memphis

Table 1. According to Wayner (see sources at the end of this article), the 10-3 (10 section, 3 double bedroom) sleepers assigned to the Tennessean were Villa Heights, Villa Nova, and Villa Verde. The 12-1 (12 section, 1 drawing room) sleepers assigned were Brentwood, Dahlonga, Knickerbocker, and Puritan.

The train, when inaugurated, included all-lightweight cars except for the heavyweight sleepers at the rear. Like many Southeastern roads, the Tennessean featured a partitioned coach in order to comply with Jim Crow segregation laws. As these laws were phased out in the late '50s, so were the partitioned coaches.

The heavyweight sleepers included in the consist were painted an aluminum color to match the rest of the sleek train. They were also 'shadow lined': a treatment was applied to the side of the car to imitate the fluted sides of the streamlined cars. After World War II, the heavy-weight sleepers were replaced with lightweights, with configurations such as 10 roomette-6 double bedroom, 14 roomette-4 double bedroom and 10 section-1 drawing room-2 compartment. A Budd 34-seat coach/bar/lounge replaced the original observation car in the late '40s. After May 1944, a third baggage-mail car with a 60' railway post office section was provided

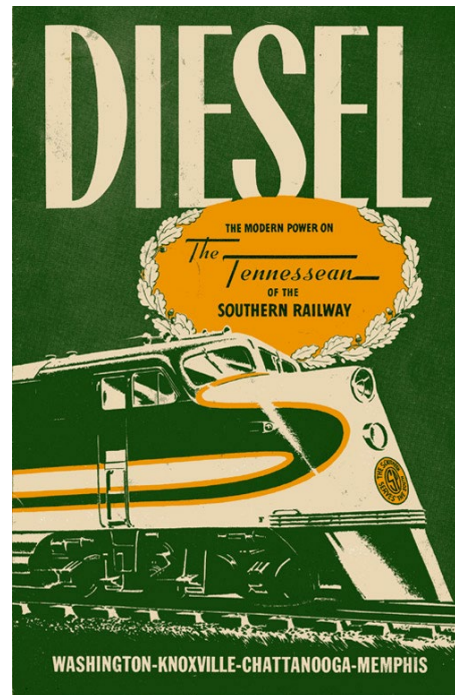
for expanded RPO service to Memphis and Chattanooga. It is unknown if this car operated between Memphis and Chattanooga alone, or if the car was added to the train to allow through service from Washington to Memphis.

In any event, if you are modeling the Tennessean after 1944, consider having at least two baggage-mail cars with 60' RPO sections between Washington and Memphis if you have the space.

More information on car assignments is available from Mike Condren's Tennessean web page at condrenrails.com/MRP/Tennessean/Tennessean.htm.

Historical power notes

The Southern Railway had one of their attractive Ps-4 4-6-2 Pacific locomotives streamlined for service with the Tennessean between Washington and Monroe, Virginia.



2. An EMD brochure describing the E-unit prominently featured its use on Southern's Tennessean.

However, Southern was an early adopter of diesel power so this locomotive, #1380, was not on the Tennessean for very long. It went to the Washington-Atlanta pool after being retired from Tennessean service; it retained its streamlining to the end of its service life.

Over Norfolk & Western rails, the famous class J streamlined 4-8-4 locomotives handled the Tennessean to Bristol, where a Southern diesel would take over.

This could be an E-unit, an Alco DL-109 or an Alco PA



3. The Tennessean at a stop in Johnson City, Tennessee. This appears to be a publicity run of the train since no head-end cars are present and the train didn't stop in Johnson City normally.

unit. When the entire service was dieselized, these locomotives could be seen anywhere on the Southern portion of the route, though it seems that the E-unit was the most common power for the train.

The Tennessean would be an excellent subject for any modeler of the Southern or Norfolk & Western in Tennessee or Virginia. One idea would be to model Lynchburg, Virginia, a town which had three major railroads running through downtown: the Norfolk & Western, the Chesapeake & Ohio, and the Southern.

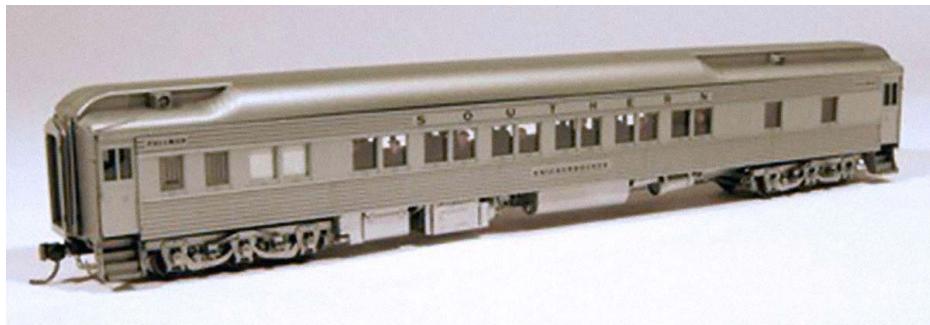
Lynchburg was where the Tennessean was handed off to the Norfolk & Western, so it would provide an opportunity to showcase both the tuscan and gold of the N&W and the Virginia green of the Southern. The same idea could be used to model Bristol, Tennessee, if you are pressed for space or uninterested in the C&O.

If you are modeling Knoxville, Chattanooga, Memphis, or Washington, D.C., then adding the Tennessean to your operating session would be as simple as finding or building the appropriate cars, power, and fitting it into your timetable.

Similarly, any points on the Tennessean's route could see it pass through once an operating session.

Cars

Models of cars for modeling the Tennessean are indexed below [Table 2]. All Union Station Products sides are offered in multiple scales, including HO, N, S and O, making it easier to model the train in those scales. Union Station Products also



4. An HO scale Atlas-Branchline model of the Pullman 12-1 sleeper 'Knickerbocker' as used on the Tennessean. The car has been painted silver and 'shadow lined' to match the rest of the train. Photo by Worthopedia



5. Streamlined Ps-4 Pacific #1380 was a rare example of streamlined steam on the normally conservative Southern railway. This locomotive retained its streamlining until it was scrapped in 1953. Photo by Heath Nicks

offers core kits for convenience when ordering, though not in N scale to the author's knowledge.

Besides the cars listed, Union Station Products, as part as #9621-030, offers car sides for the Budd 34-seat coach/bar/lounge car which replaced the original observation car in the Tennessean consist in the late '40s.

The author has not been able to ascertain exactly what numbers these cars carried, though they were numbered from at least #950 to at least #955. Furthermore, car sides are offered for Southern 10-6 and 14-4 cars as #4140F and #4153C, respectively. Finally, Walther's and Atlas-Branchline both offered a 10-1-2 heavyweight sleeper which can also be used on the Tennessean.

The author has not been able to ascertain names or road numbers for these sleepers with relation to the Tennessean, or if later heavyweight 10-1-2 sleepers were also 'shadow lined.'

The power you use on the Tennessean will depend on the period and location you're modeling. The majority of the train on Southern rails was powered by diesels. In HO scale, Broadway Limited offers an EMD E6 unit painted in appropriate colors for the Tennessean with product #BLI-3272.

Car	Manufacturer
#1700-1701 Baggage-Mail	NKP Car Co. 'Southern Baggage/Mail 85' USP #7462
#1750-1751 Baggage-Mail Storage	USP #7463
#1725-1726 Baggage-Mail	USP #7461
#703-705 Baggage/Dormitory/22-seat Coach	USP #7455
#903-905 52-seat Partitioned Coach	USP #7456
#806-814 56-seat Coach	USP #7457 (incorrectly listed as 52-seat)
#3303-3304 48-seat Diner	USP #7458
#1150-1152 Tavern/Lounge/Observation	USP #7460
10-3 Sleeper	NKP Car Co. 'Pullman 10/3 Villa Series'
12-1 Sleeper	Atlas Branchline #B5300* NKP Car Co. Pullman 12 section / 1 DWG RM Walther's #932-10001*

Table 2. Model car directory, HO scale. Manufacturer links:

Atlas – shop.atlasrr.com/c-1097-ho-branchline-passenger-car-kits.aspx

NKP – NKP Car Co., nkpcarco.com

USP – Union Station Products, unionstationproducts.com

Walthers – walthers.com/pullman-heavyweight-12-1-sleeper-ready-to-run-pullman

The same unit is offered in N scale as product number #BLI-1664. Bachmann currently produces a Southern E7 unit in appropriate colors as product #66602.

The Alco DL-109 was also seen in service on the Tennessean. Walthers Mainline series offered a DL-109 in appropriate Southern colors as product #910-9106, though it is now discontinued.

The same product was offered by Walther's in N scale as product #929-50207. The Alco PA, which was also seen on this

service, was offered in N scale by Con-Cor as product #1-202020. Con-Cor also offered dummy A and B units in the same colors.

If your interest is steam, the Southern streamlined 4-6-2 #1380 has only been offered in brass, to the author's knowledge.

Precision Scale Co. made a very limited 200-unit production run of the locomotive in HO scale in the 1990s, and these units go for around \$1,000 on the second-hand market (PSC also made an 8-car set of prototypically correct Tennessean cars, but these are so rare that they have not been listed in the cars section).

The N&W J class is readily available from Broadway Limited Imports as product #BLI-2551. In N scale, Bachmann makes the

J-class as product #82153. Bachmann also made an HO scale version though it is no longer produced.

Operations

The Tennessean offers a good operating potential for medium and larger size layouts. Like all streamliners, it takes a good amount of space to faithfully recreate the Tennessean. It



6. An Alco DL-109 handles an eastbound Tennessean out of Memphis. Southern used a variety of diesels on their passenger trains, providing modeling opportunities for fans of both EMD and Alco. *Photo by Phil Gosney*

would be difficult to recreate the whole train in larger scales on all but the largest layouts.

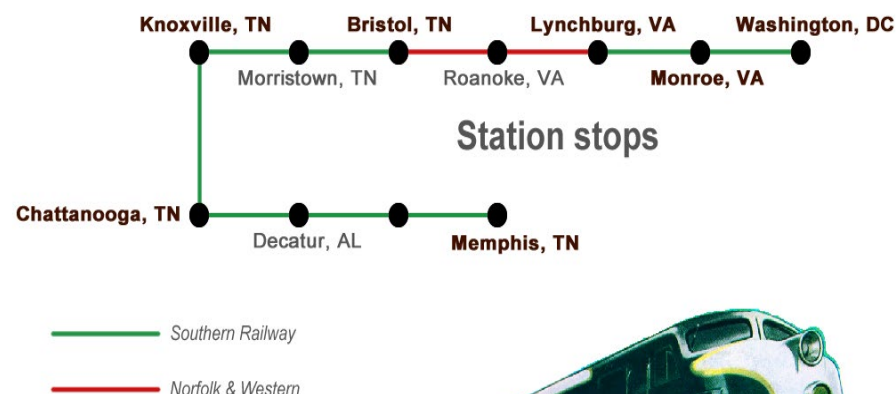
Consist length can vary based on specific layout characteristics, but generally it will take at least seven or eight cars to recreate the character of the Tennessean. A suggested consist might include:

The Tennessean

Created by Jonas Nilender

#45 Westbound

#46 Eastbound



7. A large amount of operating activity on the Tennessean took place at Chattanooga and Knoxville. This means that if you're not modeling the terminuses of this train, these two locations make good candidates, as well as Bristol and Lynchburg, as mentioned earlier. The Southern diesel image is from a Tennessean brochure. Note that only station stops are shown.

1. At least one baggage-mail car: #1700-1701 60' baggage-RPO if before Chattanooga, and #1725-1726 30' if after Chattanooga
2. #703-705 baggage/dormitory/22-seat coach
3. #903-905 52-seat partitioned coach
4. #3303-3304 48-seat diner
5. #806-814 56-seat coach
6. #1150-1152 tavern/lounge/observation
7. One or two sleepers: heavyweight if 1940s, lightweight afterwards

These are only suggestions, of course.

In general, when modeling the Tennessean, you should strive to include at least some head-end cars, a handful of coaches (including possibly the partitioned coach, to establish this as a southern train in the time of Jim Crow), the diner in the middle of the train, and the unique tavern/lounge/observation car.

Sleepers should round out the end of the train to allow more operating potential enroute. If you are modeling in N scale or have more space in larger scales, you can recreate the complete train as it is not overly large. It may take a while to construct each of the cars from side kits, however, especially in N scale.

The Tennessean

Southern Railway and Norfolk & Western Railway

Station stop notes:

Washington, D.C.: At Washington, Train 45 connected with PRR trains 101 and 107 on a daily basis. Train 101 was a

sleeper train and carried a through sleeper from New York to Memphis, while 107 was a coach-only train.

Train 46 connected with PRR train 108 on a daily basis, and train 160 every day except Sunday. Train 108 was a sleeper train and handled a through sleeper from Memphis, while train 160 was a coach train. Train 198 connected with Southern train 46 on Sundays.

Monroe: Streamlined 4-6-2 #1380 was taken off the train at Monroe, Virginia, and replaced by a Southern diesel.

Lynchburg: At Lynchburg, the train was transferred to N&W power.



8. A Norfolk & Western J class 4-8-4 handles the Tennessean around a bend. The Tennessean's routing was somewhat unusual for a joint train but was similar to that of other Southern trains like the Birmingham Special. *Photo by Phil Gosney*

Bristol: In Bristol, the Tennessean was transferred back to Southern diesels.

Knoxville: Inconvenient train times at Knoxville (the train passed through in the middle of the night) resulted in a 12-1, then 10-1-2 sleeper being added to the train in 1944. This sleeper operated between Memphis and Knoxville, set out by #46 and picked up by #45.

Chattanooga: Originally, dining car service was only provided between Washington and Chattanooga. In 1946, this was shortened to a Washington-Knoxville service. Before 1946, #46 would set out its dining car here and #45 would pick it up on its way east. After 1946, the same operation would take place at Knoxville.

One 60' RPO/baggage car was set out here and replaced with a 30' RPO/baggage car.

The shortest sleeper service on the Tennessean was between Chattanooga and Memphis. This was originally a 12-1 sleeper, then a 10-1-2 in 1950, followed by an 8-1-restaurant-lounge car in 1951. A sleeper was picked up by #46 and set out by #45 here.

A through sleeper from Bristol to Nashville via Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis (NC&StL) train #3 and #4 was set out at Nashville from the inauguration of the train. This car was later extended to operate Washington-Nashville and was originally a 12-1 sleeper until being replaced by a 10-1-2 in 1951.

Memphis: #45 terminated in Memphis and stayed until the evening, when it returned in the other direction as #46.

As mentioned before, a good idea for an entire layout would be Lynchburg, Virginia, which saw three major railroads running right through downtown, and several trains a day, including the Tennessean.

If you model anywhere else along the Tennessean's line, including the terminuses at Washington and Memphis, then the Tennessean can still form a part of your timetable. Reference the operation diagram above for ideas about operating potential on the Tennessean's route.

Like many streamliners, the days of the Tennessean are long past, but recreating the majesty of this train may be easier than you think. 

FLAT-END OBSERVATIONS: A SOLUTION TO A COMMON PROBLEM

Like many things, observation cars were more popular with railfans than they were with the railroads.

It was difficult to provide facilities for turning the cars at each end of the line, time-consuming to turn them, and it was impossible to run traditional open-ended or boat-tailed observations in the middle of a train. Few passengers wished to jump from the swaying platform of one car to the vestibule of another while rattling along at 70 miles per hour!

A solution found in the lightweight car era was the flat-end observation car. Rather than the traditional boat-tail featured on many popular streamliners, such as the 20th Century Limited and the Broadway Limited, the flat-end observation car could be switched into the train at any location.

This was also a boon for observation cars which featured a tavern, since passengers were more likely to purchase a drink if the tavern was next to the dining car. The dining car

FLAT-END OBSERVATIONS: A SOLUTION TO A COMMON PROBLEM *CONTINUED ...*

was usually in the middle of the train, meaning a traditional observation car could not fulfill this niche.

Flat-end observations often occupied their familiar place at the end of the train, though, providing a place to look out the windows as the scenery rolled past. Their much-increased convenience compared to boat-tailed observation cars meant that they were used by many roads.

On the Tennessean, the flat-end observation car was used to allow sleepers to be switched in and out of the consist enroute.

Some cars, like those for the *Tennessean*, were purpose-built to be flat-ended. Other cars were converted from boat-tailed observations by squaring off the end.



9. Tavern/observation/lounge #1150, a flat-end observation car used on the *Tennessean*. Photo by Phil Gosney

Some roads, like the Denver & Rio Grande Western, simply added a housing to a traditional observation car that allowed a diaphragm to be run to the next car in the train, thus fulfilling the role – if not the appearance – of a flat-ended observation car.

Adding a flat-ended observation car is a good kitbashing project and adds interest to your passenger trains. It also allows you to run an observation car in a feeder train that doesn't have to be switched to place the observation car on the end of the train, thus allowing you to get away with having both a flat-ended and boat-tailed observation in the same train.

For tips on kitbashing a flat-ended observation car, see George Drury's Model Railroader article, April 1979, Page 84. ■



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Sources

All information on manufacturer's products was obtained directly from the manufacturer's websites where possible.

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JONAS NILENDER



Jonas started in the hobby at a young age by watching "Thomas the Tank Engine" and visiting various model railroads. He lost interest in modeling for several years but came back to it recently.

Jonas' hobby interests are very passenger-based and include building passenger cars and operating passenger trains from the transition era.

Outside of the hobby, Jonas likes drawing, writing, theater, and singing. He goes to North Carolina State University and is studying for a degree in Mechanical Engineering. ■