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Date: 12/11/21 21:11

BB Double (NKP and PRR) Paired Track Operations Into Buffalo, NYAuthor: [inrdjlg](#)

Does anyone here have any information or reminiscences about operations on the BB Double?

At least 45 years ago, *Trains Magazine* ran an article about the Buffalo Terminal, the trackage that included EL, N&W, and C&O that was based at the old Bison Yard when it was a hump yard. All of these years since, I've been fascinated with the former Nickel Plate Road's approach into Buffalo, as well as NKP's Buffalo facilities. (Remember, due to EL labor opposition, NKP never reached Bison Yard until after the N&W merger in October, 1964. NKP mostly got by using its own Buffalo Junction Yard, also sometimes known as Abbott Road Yard, not to be confused with a DL&W yard of the same name, and Tifft Street.

The current winter 2021 issue of *Classic Trains* has managed to keep the fire burning with George C. Cory's splendid, October, 1952, photo of an NKP westbound freight at Athol Springs, New York, behind Berkshire 777. The second track next to the train is not a passing siding, but rather PRR's Chataqua Branch, which ran from Oil City, Pennsylvania, to Buffalo.

From NKP Buffalo Division and Cleveland Division Timetable No. 180, effective Sunday, October 27, 1957, at 12:01 a.m., Special Instructions governing operations of BB Double: "NKP and PRR main tracks between FY Block Station and BM Tower will be operated as double track. All trains and engines moving over BB Double will move with the current of traffic by block signals whose indications will supersede the superiority of trains." BM Tower, located at Brocton, New York, was where the PRR and NKP lines went their separate ways.

John Rehor's *Nickel Plate Story* included a photo of the eastbound home signals at BM Tower, a bracket mast affair with NKP color lights on the left mast and a PRR position light on the right mast. Rehor's caption noted that BM was the east end of CTC on the Nickel Plate and the beginning of double track, manual block operation from there into Buffalo.

Timetable No. 180 seems to contradict itself, having stated that trains would move with the current traffic by block signals, but also stating that "Manual Block System rules in effect only between Plate (MP 39.5) and FY Block Station (MP 3.0) on eastward main track and in effect only between FY Block Station and Silver Creek (MP 31.5) on westward main track." (Parentheses are my own.)

The timetable also lists several other interlockings between FY and BM: GB at MP 6.3, where the NKP crossed EL's Buffalo & Southwestern Branch; Lake View at MP 14.4, opened only from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Angola at MP 21.6; the aforementioned Silver Creek at milepost 31.5, and AK Tower at milepost 40.5. BM Tower at Brocton was located at milepost 49.0.

It appears that NKP may have been running a total of two passenger trains and about 15 freights a day at the time, but I'm not sure how many trains PRR was running over its Chataqua Branch by then, thereby contributing to the traffic density on the BB Double. Can anyone confirm what I'm trying to grasp and understand, namely that this stretch of double track was being operated as manual block? Did or did it not have any intermediate block signals, other than perhaps distant signals to manned interlockings?

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Date: 12/12/21 06:45

Re: BB Double (NKP and PRR) Paired Track Operations Into Buffalo,

Author: [halfmoonharold](#)

It was indeed manual block, the signals were lined by the operators at the block stations. N&W installed CTC in about 1972, according to the timetables I have. A good source for this line is the PRR book Triumph VII (Northern Region), by Roberts and Messer. It has pics of depots and home signals. I have found pictures online by googling. I added a crop of one. Also, the NKPHTS magazine had an article detailing a typical day on this territory. I think it was in the 1990's, but I haven't been able to find my copy. The home signals were a mix of semaphores and color light types. The manual block color light signals were distinctive in that NKP used two horizontal red lights on the bottom head, instead of one as on the CTC signals (see attached pic.) The Morning Sun NKP books also have a few pics.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 12/12/21 07:11 by halfmoonharold.



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Date: 12/12/21 18:10

Re: BB Double (NKP and PRR) Paired Track Operations Into Buffalo,
Author: [inrdjlg](#)

Thanks for the information, Halfmoonherald. I've got a couple of Morning Sun NKP books at the apartment, will have to go check them out again.

One of them is a Trackside-series book about the Buffalo area and includes two photos taken at GB crossing in Blasdell. One is of a northbound EL freight crossing the double track PRR/NKP main, probably PC/N&W by then. One can tell, and the photo caption points out, that the PRR/PC main is out of service and rusted, while the NKP/N&W main is shiny. The second photo shows N&W train MB-96 running left-handed on the NKP/N&W main, with the PRR/PC main once again out of service. In the distance, one can see that the eastbound home signal for GB, protecting the eastbound main, has been turned sideways, rendering it out of service as well.

I would suggest that perhaps N&W was forced to install CTC in 1972 when it became clear that PC planned to abandon the Chataqua Branch.

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