



The STORY of the 1947 - 1949

FREEDOM TRAIN

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THE 1947 - 1949 FREEDOM TRAIN LOCOMOTIVE

Powered by a diesel in the age of steam, the success of the train's ALCO PA motive power in a sustained and demanding assignment demonstrated the adaptability of the diesel to all conditions of track, gradient and curvature, as well as vagaries of climate and weather. The PA demonstrated its availability to handle the assignment on demand, with no need to wait for a huge boiler to attain operating pressure. And it passed by the steam locomotive's water tanks and coaling tipples with no more than a blast from its air horn.

With an assignment that received constant attention from the media and the public, the role of the train's locomotive was scrutinized by management and stockholders of dozens of America's railroads. The Freedom Train inadvertently played a role in hastening dieselization and the demise of mainline steam simply by setting a highly visible example of the capability of its motive power.

The Freedom Train's PA probably holds the record for "most kissed" locomotive of all time. During the train's display date in Brooklyn, New York and the usual lengthy wait in line to go aboard, about four thousand high school girls planted big imprints of red lipstick on the engine through the day, causing the white stripe between the red and blue stripes to temporarily disappear! Or so they say.

The PA locomotive proudly carried number 1776 and was named the "Spirit of 1776." It carried ALCO builder's number 74696 and a construction date of August 1947.

Text by Mr. Larry Wines.

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