



Pullman Standards

SAFETY
COMFORT
SERVICE
PROGRESS

A PIONEER'S

CENTENNIAL



George Mortimer Pullman.

1831 - 1931



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CENTENNIAL

G. M. Pullman



THE PULLMAN COMPANY
CHICAGO

GEORGE MORTIMER PULLMAN



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THIS year, 1931, brings the centennial of George Mortimer Pullman: born at Brocton, N. Y., March 3, 1831; died at Chicago, October 19, 1897. To the developments which made the American railroad system the world's foremost transportation facility, he contributed a lifetime of effort, a genius for finance, organization and management; and, yet more important, a vision and an idea. The unique place he made for himself among nineteenth century industrial leaders is attested by the fact that his name appears in the dictionaries of twenty languages as a noun connoting the utmost of safety, comfort and luxury in land transportation vehicles.

PULLMAN'S BIRTH was almost coincident with that of the American railway. Five months earlier, the first regular rail passenger service had been inaugurated on the Charleston & Hamburg Railroad, in South Carolina; and by the time he was two years old that railroad of 137 miles was rated the most extensive in the world. Then, and long afterward, railroads provided chiefly passenger service. There was little freight, and it moved by sea, inland waterways or overland cartage.

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The country was in a feverish canal building boom; lakes and rivers were alive with steamboats.

PULLMAN'S FAME was based on his perfection of the sleeping car and his plan of running cars long distances over connecting railroads. Though he did not build the earliest sleeping car, his inventions and development of it and its operating methods won him recognition as the real founder of sleeping car service. His contribution was in so revolutionizing and perfecting it that railroads had to unify their operations in order to give the long distance service which travelers began to demand. Thus making railroads the supreme passenger facility, he really inaugurated the system through which they later became the freight carriers. His idea gave first impetus to combination of small railroads into greater; and the present-day program of consolidating them all into a few super-systems is but a logical projection. Because of these wider significations, the Pullman centenary has an especial interest.

GEORGE MORTIMER PULLMAN was third of ten children of James Lewis Pullman, native of Rhode Island. The elder Pullman was a mechanic



mechanic, builder, inventor of some methods still employed in moving buildings, which the son learned. Young George went to school until he was fourteen; later worked at Albion, N. Y. When he was twenty-two his father died. While he was at Albion, the state, widening the Erie Canal, had to move many buildings,

ings, and he offered for contracts. He was successful, made \$6,000 profits, and moved on to Chicago where a wide area of streets and buildings was to be raised from its swampy foundation. Again he got contracts, raising streets and buildings without interrupting business; and at the end his little fortune totaled \$20,000.

MEANWHILE, the sleeping car idea had come to him; back in his earlier Albion days, when he had ridden in one of the old-time sleepers, without any facilities of a real sleeping car. Why not, he asked himself, a convertible car, coach by day, sleeper by night; mattresses, springs, bedding—and sleep? The idea never left him and now he returned to it. From the Chicago & Alton road he got two day coaches which in 1858 and 1859 he remodeled into sleepers, the first being historic *No. 9*. It was slightly more than half the present length; wood, save for wheels and axles; roof flat and so low a tall man might bump his head; a wood-burning stove at each end; lighted with candles; a scanty toilet room; open wash room with tin basin and water tank. Seats had no springs. Crude beyond imagining, *No. 9* contained the rudiments of the folding upper berth and was the most luxuri-

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ous railway vehicle yet. September 1, 1859, this car made its first trip, Bloomington to Chicago. Later, Lincoln and many other notables rode in it.

But times were hard, the civil war threatening, and presently sleepers were taken off because of the government's need to move troops and munitions. Pullman went into other business, for a time making his home in Colorado, where he met his future wife. But by 1864, back in Chicago, he was again at his project, determined to produce a car completely reflecting his ideal; and in the famous *Pioneer*, first sleeper approaching the modern manner, he did it.

BUILT IN CHICAGO, the *Pioneer's* cost was \$20,000; no predecessor had cost over \$4,500. Longer, wider, higher, it was done in handsome woods, upholsteries, plate glass, burnished metals, with drawing rooms and sections; had ample toilet arrangements; comfortable mattresses, blankets, sheets, lavatory linen—every luxury. At one bound the early crudities burst into the modern elegancies.

Railroad men admired, but also scoffed: "Too wide for station platforms; too high for bridges."

¶ "Then

"Then change the platforms and bridges," insisted Pullman. It was too large an order; nobody could use his car, and his fortunes were near collapse. Then a strange twist of fate saved him.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN was shot April 14, 1865, and his remains were moved in state from Washing-

ton to Springfield, Ill. His home state wished to do special homage, and Pullman's new car was used on the train from Chicago to Springfield for the funeral party. Accordingly, bridges and platforms were hurriedly altered; and the *Pioneer* received its dedication as a participant in the solemn pageant.

Thus the *Pioneer* became celebrated, and was put in service on the Alton. A little later General Grant traveled to his old Galena home, and other roads made alterations so that the *Pioneer* might be used. So Pullman courageously proceeded to build more cars, to be owned jointly by him and the railroads. One railroad wanted them but feared the public would not pay the higher rate necessary.

¶ "Yes

"Yes it will," insisted Pullman; "put both cars on at the different rates, and find out." It was done; the public flocked into the Pullmans, and the old cheaper cars were taken off.

Pullman was put to it to finance the Aladdin-like development. Pullman's Palace Car Company was formed in 1867. From it has grown the entire Pullman system of manu-

facturing and operation. For a time cars were built in railroad and other shops; then plants were established in Detroit, Elmira, N. Y., and Wilmington, Del.

THE CARS early attracted European attention, and in 1873 the Midland Railway of England contracted for Pullman Palace Car service. The cars, built in Detroit, caused much furor in Europe and presently the Pullman corporation of England was serving the important railroads there. The King of Italy helped arrange a Pullman route from the English Channel through France, Switzerland and Italy to Brindisi, at the heel of the Italian boot. Under American management,



HISTORIC "No. 9"

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ment, this was a European marvel. Years afterward, because of his engrossments at home, Pullman sold his European interests to English capitalists.

The European excursion was only an incident, however. At home competition was keen among sleeping car companies; and various railroads operated their own sleepers. There was much litigation over patents, desperate struggles for advantageous operating contracts. As the stoutest battler, best financier, most efficient purveyor of that personal service so vital in this business, Pullman gradually fought to the top, absorbing competitors until in 1899, the Pullman Company by taking over the Wagner Sleeping Car Company, held substantially the entire field. This however was not consummated until after the deaths of both Pullman and Wagner. Those doughty combatants had long considered consolidation; but rivalry prevented it until they were both out of the picture.

THERE were some dramatic moments. At one period Wagner secured an exclusive contract with the New York Central. To lose that access to New York City would be calamity to Pullman. But with characteristic resourcefulness he hurried to New York and formed



MR. PULLMAN EXPLAINS

formed an alliance with Jay Gould, controlling the Erie. The Erie did not then reach Chicago, but Pullman proposed to link up with two other roads for through service. True, the Erie was six-foot gauge; the suggested connections standard gauge; but Pullman's plan was to change car trucks where the two gauges met. It was actually done, and so skillfully

skillfully that passengers hardly realized it. The new route, making much capital of Pullman service, became a real factor in Chicago-New York traffic.

FROM the beginnings with old No. 9 to his last day, Pullman tirelessly worked for improvement of cars, service, methods. Safety always came first, so powerful steel underframes lessened the danger of accidents and pointed the way to all-steel construction. The vestibule, including anti-telescoping construction at car ends, was a Pullman invention; one of the world's great safety devices. Pre-Pullman cars had four or eight wheels; he gave them twelve. He found cars without springs and gave them the best; abolished the flickering candle in favor of oil lamps, followed these with gas, and, after prolonged and expensive experiments, adapted electric lighting to car use. Finding cars with flat roofs and no ventilation, he gave them the raised upper deck and scientific ventilation. Car stoves, desperately dangerous, were followed by hot water heating, this by steam; finally came vapor heat. Cars grew longer, higher, more spacious; arrangements, fittings, furnishings, constantly improved in design and style. Organization, discipline, service,

service, were always in process of improvement. As long-distance travel developed, dining cars were needed—and Pullman produced them.

Gradually joint-ownership with railways was superseded, the Pullman Company becoming sole owner and operator of the sleepers, while the railroads took over the dining cars.

IN 1880 Pullman set about to build a great industrial center south of Chicago. Acquiring over 3,600 acres, he laid out a model plant and town; paved streets, constructed water, sewer and lighting systems, platted parks and athletic fields. In consultation with architects, landscape specialists and engineers, he supervised every detail. It was to be not only a show town, but the most attractive living community for industrial workers. A theatre, hotel, shops, library, schools, churches, homes by hundreds. At its height of development under Pullman ownership the town had about 12,000 inhabitants. It was the apple of its founder's eye, representing sincere purpose of social service; the subject of surveys by economists and sociologists. But the town's distinctive character barely outlived its founder. Soon after his death the Illinois

Illinois courts held that the Pullman Company had exceeded its charter powers, and required it to dispose of property not used for industrial purposes.

With the transfer of manufacturing to Pullman, the Company expanded the building of all kinds of railway cars. In the next fifty years it turned out over 41,000 passenger train cars and 312,000 freight cars!

FOLLOWING the crash of 1893, manufacturing fell off; contracts were taken at a loss; the limited work was distributed equitably, but wage reductions came. Among employes there was disaffection, and a strike. American Railway Union members refused to handle Pullman cars; rioting followed; President Cleveland intervened to move the mails; and the affair became a *cause celebre* in American industrial relations.

Outside his own Company Mr. Pullman had extensive business interests. He helped build the Northern Pacific and West Shore railroads, and New York's first Elevated, and was a Union Pacific director. His loyalty to Chicago was intense; he was the largest individual contributor to the World's Fair of 1893.

From Pullman's Palace Car Company has grown the present Pullman corporate system

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of manufacturing and operation headed by Pullman Inc. The acquisition by The Pullman Company of the Haskell & Barker Car Company of Michigan City, Ind., in 1922 was the first major manufacturing expansion, followed in 1930 by the absorption of the Standard Steel Car Corporation and the Osgood Bradley Car Corporation. Today Pullman interests have plants at Pullman, Hammond, Ind., Michigan City, Ind., Butler, Pa., Ellwood City, Pa., Worcester, Mass., Richmond, Va., Baltimore, Md., St. Paul, Minn., Birmingham, Ala., Houston, Tex., and New Orleans, La., in addition to plants in Europe and South America. For the maintenance and operation of its 9,000 cars The Pullman Company maintains repair shops at Calumet (Chicago), Wilmington, Del., Richmond, Cal., St. Louis, Atlanta, and Buffalo.

IN 1867 Mr. Pullman married Harriet Sanger. Their home, 1729 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, and summer establishments at Long Branch, N. J., and Castle Rest, in the Thousand Islands, were centers of notable hospitality, entertaining presidents, ambassadors, foreign dignitaries, statesmen and important people in all walks of life.

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Of the four Pullman children, Florence became the wife of Frank O. Lowden, war governor of Illinois; Harriet is now Mrs. Arthur F. Schermerhorn, of New York; twin sons, George and Sanger, have been dead many years.

As a memorial to his parents Mr. Pullman built a beautiful church at Albion, N. Y. Always liberal in civic and philanthropic causes, when he died in 1897 his largest bequest aside from those to relatives was of \$1,200,000, now grown to about \$3,000,000, which established the Pullman Free School of Manual Training, with these purposes:

That the children of those associated with him in the town of Pullman and its enterprises might be trained in the ideals of clean living, good citizenship and industrial efficiency, which were his own inspiration and through which alone the workman may hope to attain his true development.