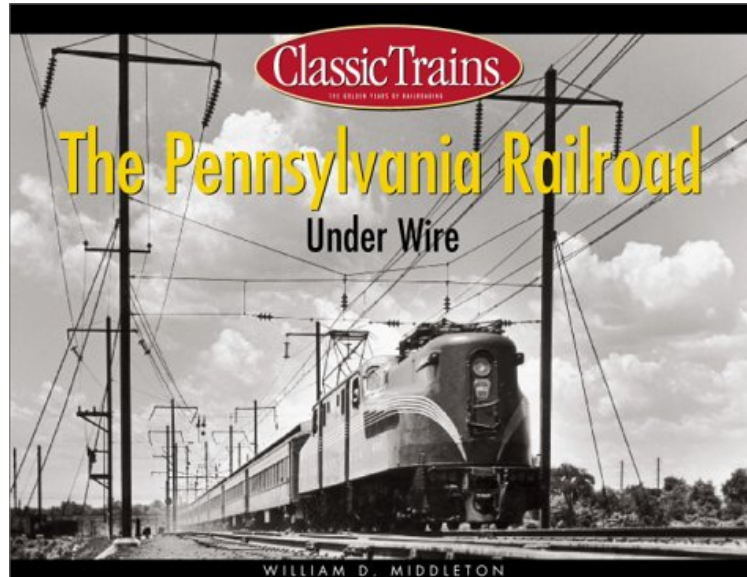


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## The Pennsylvania Railroad Under Wire (Golden Years of Railroading)

William D. Middleton

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Early in the 20th century the PRR tried electric power for its trains. First was the New York terminal area, where tunnels precluded steam locomotives; a direct current (DC) 650-volt third rail powered PRR locomotives (and LIRR passenger cars). The system was put into service in 1910.The next area to be electrified was the Philadelphia terminal area, where PRR officials decided to use overhead lines to supply power to the suburban trains running out of Broad Street Station. Unlike the New York terminal system, overhead wires would carry 11,000-volt 25-Hertz alternating current (AC) power, the system used for all future installations. In 1915, electrification of the line from Philadelphia to Paoli, Pennsylvania was completed. Other Philadelphia lines electrified were the Chestnut Hill Branch (1918), White Marsh (1924), West Chester (1928), the main line to Wilmington, Delaware, and in 1930 the Schuylkill Branch to Norristown, along with the rest of the main line to Trenton. In January 1933, through main-line service between New York and Philadelphia/Wilmington/Paoli was placed in operation. The first test run of an electric train between Philadelphia and Washington occurred on January 28, 1935. On February 1 the Congressional Limiteds in both

directions were the first trains in regular electric operation between New York and Washington, drawn by the first of the GG1-type locomotives. All regular passenger trains between these cities were electrified by March 15.