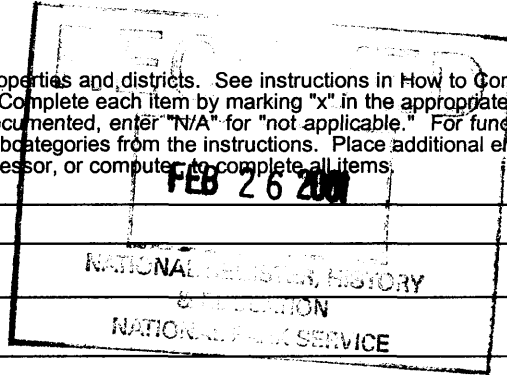


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.



1. Name of Property

historic name Seaboard Air Line Lounge Car (#6603)

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 747 South Dixie Highway n/a  not for publication

city or town Boca Raton n/a  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Palm Beach code 099 zip code 33432

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Janet Ayler Harkness 2/15/2001  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 4.5.01  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Florida's Historic Railroad Resources

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: rail-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress  
Recreation and Culture: Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Streamlined Moderne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation n/a  
walls Metal: stainless steel  
roof Metal: stainless steel  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Transportation
- Architecture
- Engineering
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1947  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1947  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Budd, Edward G. Company  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository  
\_\_\_\_\_  
# \_\_\_\_\_

Seaboard Air Line Lounge Car  
Name of Property

Palm Beach Co., FL  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	9	0	8	6	0	2	9	1	3	7	3	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet G. Murphy/Consultant and Barbara E. Mattick/Deputy SHPO for Survey & Registration

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 2001

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Boca Raton Historical Society

street & number 71 North Federal Highway telephone 561-395-6766

city or town Boca Raton state FL zip code 33432-3919

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **SEABOARD AIR LINE LOUNGE CAR  
Boca Raton, Palm Beach Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

The Seaboard Air Line (SAL) Observational Lounge Car (#6603) was built by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company as a Moderne streamline round-end observation lounge car for SAL's popular east coast route between New York and Florida. Ordered by SAL in April 1945, the lounge car was built at Budd Company's Red Lion plant in Pennsylvania in 1947 and delivered to SAL that same year. The observational lounge car is being nominated under the Florida Historic Railroad Resources Multiple Property Submission cover as Associated Property Type F.3 Railroad Structures: *Rolling Stock*.

**SETTING**

The SAL observational lounge car is located at 747 South Dixie Highway on the site of the historic Boca Raton F.E.C. Railway Depot property (NR 1980). The lounge car is situated on tracks immediately south of the depot and is attached to the north end of a 1947 dining car. The train cars are a prominent component of the depot complex and are highly visible from the street (Photo 1).

**DESCRIPTION**

The observational lounge car is a lightweight streamliner built for high speed travel (Photos 2 and 3). It measures 85' in length, 9' 3" in width and 13' 6" in height, and weighs 122,610 pounds. The car features a lightweight, stainless steel underframe, upper frame and body bolster, and has cast steel four-wheel trucks with 36" diameter wheels, and W. A. B. Company air brakes (Photos 4 and 5). Other parts include a stainless steel anti-telescoping device, a Waugh twin cushion-type WM-6-GG draft gear, a type H tightlock coupler, Hyatt journal boxes, 4-Houdaille shock absorbers, friction type side brakes, and a N.B. Company peacock-type 800-L hand brake. The original heating system was manufactured by the Fulton Sylphon Company, the lighting system was 110 volt, the motor generator was a GE 25 kw 134 volt, and the batteries were Edison A-12-H 88 cell. Axel driven generators provided the power to the electrical and air conditioning systems. The heat and hot water worked off a large steam boiler in the diesel locomotive (Appendix 1).

The exterior of the observational lounge car is a sleek stainless steel surface with fluting along its upper and lower body. This fluting emphasizes the car's horizontal composition and Moderne streamline style. The rounded end, though punctuated by an added diaphragm, further adds to the streamline form, reflecting speed and efficiency (Photo 6). The large picture windows pierce the middle of the body forming a horizontal row that also begins to wrap the round end of the train. The under carriage of the car features the cast steel, four-wheel trucks and much of the mechanical equipment.

This observational lounge car has a seating capacity of fifty-eight persons, twenty-four in the observational lounge section and thirty-four in the tavern section (Photos 7, 8 and 9). Some of the original

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Section number 7 Page 2 **SEABOARD AIR LINE LOUNGE CAR  
Boca Raton, Palm Beach Co., FL**

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amenities included a sleek curved bar, a hostess room, a desk, a magazine rack, lockers and radio speakers (Photo 10). The tavern area had curved seating with round pedestal cocktail tables and rolled and pleated seats, and the front of the bar featured a nautical theme design made of cut linoleum (Photos 8 and 9). The interior finish is sound deadened aluminum paneling and formica. The flooring is wood covered with linoleum. The windows vary in size, yet they are all double sash, rectangular shaped, fixed windows positioned horizontally. The two sash are parallel to each other with air space in between to allow for changes in outside pressure and temperature. The interior of the lounge car was designed by Budd Company architects with some alterations by SAL's designer, Mrs. Brown. The curved bar, hostess room, lockers, radio speakers, and curved seating structures remain intact.

Original interior mechanical features of the car included a Frigidaire electro mechanical air conditioning system, fan driven exhaust ventilators, stonefelt, cork and fiberglass insulation, vapor air operated doors, an air pressure water system, two 150 gallon water tanks, one folding water basin and toilet, and an ice cube maker. Original light fixtures were fitted with heavy glass magnifying lenses to help amplify the fluorescent bulb output (Photos 11 and 12). Heat was provided through heating tubes covered with stainless steel running along the bottom of the car's walls. Side hatch doors in the lower section of the bar area provided access for loading bar supplies. Most of these systems and features remain, though many are in need of repair in order to operate properly.

In 1967, the round-end observational lounge car was sent to SAL's Portsmouth, Virginia railroad shop to have a diaphragm added to the round-end (Photos 6 and 13). Most railroads had come to regret their investment in round-end observation cars since they could only function properly at the end of the train. Cars coupled on were isolated because there was no vestibule or diaphragm, thus an extra switching move was necessary wherever cars were added to the train. For this reason, few round-end observation cars were built after 1950, or those that were came equipped with end diaphragms. Square-end observation cars, much like the earlier sun-parlor cars, came into favor. These mid-train observation cars could be placed anywhere in the train. Older round-end observation cars, like the Seaboard Air Line #6603, were either retired or rebuilt.

The observational lounge car was used by AMTRAK from 1971 until it was retired in 1977. The car was then purchased by CSX Railroad with intentions of turning it into a private executive car. This did not take place, and in 1987 CSX donated the car to the Boca Raton Historical Society for use as an educational element supplementing their historic 1929 railroad depot. A complete renovation of the lounge car is planned over the next year. At this time, the lounge car will be rehabilitated to its original appearance on both the interior and exterior. The diaphragm will be removed at this time in order to restore the original round-end observational lounge.

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Boca Raton , Palm Beach Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

The Seaboard Air Line observational lounge car is significant at the state level under **Criteria A and C** in the areas of **Transportation and Architecture/Engineering** as a rare survivor among the once-numerous Moderne streamline train cars that operated in the United States. The car is a good example of a streamline railway car built for highspeed transportation between New York and Florida. The lounge car was built by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company, the premier builder of rolling stock streamliners from the 1930s through the 1950s. Innovative design was important to the Budd Company, and this was demonstrated by their commissioning of noted architect Paul Philippe Cret and his associate John Harbeson as designers for their streamliners. Only five other observation lounge cars series #6600-6605 were produced by the Budd Company, and very few of these cars are known to exist. It is the only car of its type located in the State of Florida, and likely the southeastern United States. The observational lounge car is being nominated under the Multiple Property Submission cover for Florida's Historic Railroad Resources and is associated with the historic context VII. World War II and the Late-1940s, 1942-1949.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The railroad had a profound influence on the development of Florida, helping to advance the state from a wilderness into one of the leading tourist and agricultural regions of the country. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were a time of great expansion and consolidation in Florida's railroad industry. Track mileage increased from 518 miles in 1880 to 3,234 miles in 1900, and nearly 250 railroad companies had been consolidated into five primary systems that served the state, one of those being SAL. Railroads continued to expand during the Progressive era and World War I, pushing further into Florida where new towns were developing and older towns celebrated the arrival of the railroad. The Florida Land Boom of the 1920s was another time of railroad expansion in Florida with mileage reaching 8,220 by 1928, up from 5,930 a decade earlier. In addition, 650,000 persons arrived in the state by train in 1925 alone. The most aggressive expansion was the SAL's 205-mile extension from Coleman in the central part of the state to West Palm Beach and then south another 100 miles to Miami and Homestead. With this expansion, SAL operated 1,713 miles of track in Florida and was the only railroad serving both of the state's coasts. The collapse of the Florida Land Boom and the onset of the Great Depression sent several of the railroad companies, including SAL, into bankruptcy and receivership. However, by the 1940s, the railroad market began to rebound. World War II lifted the nation out of the depression and the flood of wartime traffic brought an era of prosperity to America's railroads. Following the war, the railroads struggled to retain passenger service. To renew emphasis on train travel, several railway companies, including SAL, bought new stainless steel streamline train sets with improved technology and amenities for the passengers.<sup>1</sup> Although some companies dropped their passenger service, SAL's New York to Florida train service continued to thrive into the 1970s, with cars sold out during the winter season and much of the year.

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**Boca Raton , Palm Beach Co., FL**

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*History of Seaboard Air Line*

The Seaboard Air Line Railroad was formed through assemblage of scattered existing nineteenth century railway lines in 1900 by John Skelton Williams of Richmond, Virginia.<sup>2</sup> Williams was the first president of SAL and later became the assistant U.S. Secretary of the Treasury under William G. McAdoo in the Wilson administration. When organized in 1900, the railroad had a mainline between Portsmouth, Virginia and Atlanta, Georgia with various feeder lines. Williams, a banker with financial support of J. William Middendorf of the Baltimore banking firm of Middendorf, Oliver & Company, had accomplished this feat by acquiring four existing railway companies and securing charters to build tracks to connect their operations. From its beginning, the company pursued a policy of expansionism and by the 1920s, SAL became recognized as an important railroad with popular routes between New York City and Miami, Florida. Much of the acquisition and expansion was under the ownership and direction of the Warfield's of Baltimore, who had taken control of SAL in 1908-09 (Appendix 2). Throughout its history, SAL enjoyed a fine reputation of fast, dependable, friendly service and had an important array of operations and equipment.<sup>3</sup>

SAL was a late-comer in many of the territories that it served and it was wedged between the double-tracked Southern Railway and Atlantic Coast Line. Being located between these two strong competitors dictated that SAL be innovative to gain its share of both freight and passenger traffic in its territory. This caused it to be on the cutting edge of new ideas not only for the area it served, but in many cases for the railroad industry as a whole. In several instances it was on the leading edge of steam power in the United States, though it was also early to dieselize its locomotives.<sup>4</sup>

SAL's president from 1918 - 1927, S. Davies Warfield, an ardent proponent of the Southeast, recognized the great impact of the 1920s Florida Land Boom and set about expanding SAL to serve the greatest area of Florida's growing real estate market. The Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) had almost no competition along Florida's east coast and had begun making sizable profits during the 1920s. In 1924, Warfield organized a line to build a 204-mile extension from Coleman, near Leesburg, to West Palm Beach. According to annual reports, this line had been considered as early as 1913 but plans were shelved with the outbreak of World War I. With Florida's boom in full swing, construction proceeded rapidly and in only nine months the 204 miles were completed, arriving in West Palm Beach in January 1925. This effort utilized every kind of machinery suitable for the work and the track-laying gang set a record by laying 8,317 feet of mainline track with 100-pound rail in one day. This new mainline route enabled greater numbers of visitors to arrive during the height of the boom. On February 1, 1925, *The Palm Beach Times* reported that visitors to the Palm Beaches were arriving as fast as 10 trains per day.<sup>5</sup> Hotels overflowed with speculators and investors. From West Palm Beach, SAL pushed south, and by early 1927, it reached Miami and Homestead. The significance of this Coleman to Homestead extension should be noted as it was the last mainline built anywhere in the United States. The tracks were west and parallel to the FEC tracks.<sup>6</sup> These new routes, combined with several other routes SAL built on Florida's



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west coast and in central Florida locations in the mid 1920s enabled SAL to rightfully claim to have the only cross-Florida routes.<sup>7</sup>

The Florida Land Boom collapsed in late 1926 and significantly affected the railroads serving the state. Like SAL, Henry Flagler's FEC Railway also geared up to serve Florida's incredible land boom period, but unlike SAL, it relied almost solely on the Florida economy and when the boom ended, FEC Railway became the only railroad in the country unable to pay even the interest on its indebtedness. On December 23, 1930, in the midst of the Great Depression, SAL was forced into receivership. Though some blamed SAL's major expansion in Florida as the cause sending the company into receivership, such major carriers as the Missouri Pacific, Frisco, Cotton Belt, Wabash, Erie, New Haven, Milwaukee Road, Rock Island, etc., also ended up in bankruptcy courts, and these lines had little or no dependence on the economic conditions of Florida.<sup>8</sup>

Despite being in receivership, SAL was still able to operate. They were also able to dispose of many of their unprofitable lines, while continuing their relationships with the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad for use of their mainline tracks between Richmond, Virginia, and New York City.<sup>9</sup> During this period, SAL was quick to grasp the desire of the public for such comforts as air conditioning and reclining seats, and in the early 1930s it began to equip its mainline trains with these features. In its December 1933 Public Timetable, SAL's *Orange Blossom Special* was advertised as the "Longest Distance Air Conditioned Train in the World" when it entered winter service to Florida. In November 1934, its major mainline trains to Florida were advertised as "The Only Air Conditioned Trains in the South."

In 1934, four years after going into receivership, SAL's operating deficit continued. Despite gloomy numbers, passenger revenues had been on the increase until 1938, when they also began to decline. Paradoxically, it was the lack of income that spurred SAL to spend more on improvements. In the fall of 1938, SAL acquired nine diesel passenger units. The justification for the purchase was the expected reduction in operating expenses due to the efficiency of diesels. The shortening of schedules made possible by the units' ability to maintain higher sustained speeds with less maintenance also allowed for expansion of service.<sup>10</sup> In early 1939, SAL introduced the streamlined *Silver Meteor* and it proved to be an immediate success. That year the New York World's Fair was publicized as the "Fair of Tomorrow" and to fair goers, the *Silver Meteor* was advertised as the "Train of Tomorrow."<sup>11</sup> In addition to better trains, centralized traffic control was installed on all principal lines, and roadbed and track structure was improved.

At the close of World War II, the SAL really came of age. It emerged from receivership on August 1, 1946, with Legh R. Powell, Jr. as president and 3858 miles of mainline track in addition to leased lines. With loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation of the federal government, the road was able to build a modernization program and revenues from the busy war years lifted the road back into profitability. SAL was in good shape and consistently improved its track, signaling and equipment, but it did it with a conservative plan under which it had learned to operate during its receivership. The result was a fine reputation for service

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and fast and dependable schedules for both passenger and freight trains that became the company's hallmark. SAL's position was bolstered by industrial development in the South and heavy traffic in phosphate rock - nearly one-fifth of SAL's tonnage - used in the production of fertilizer.<sup>12</sup> SAL continued to promote and operate its passenger trains in a first class manner while many other railroads had relegated passenger trains to secondary status. Time proved the cross-Florida extension into West Palm Beach, Miami, and Homestead a profitable investment. When FEC dropped its passenger service, the SAL purchased all of FEC's lightweight passenger cars with the exception of its sleepers. From the late 1940s through the 1960s, SAL's freight and passenger revenues as well as net profits continued to grow and bypassed many of its competitors.

In 1959, SAL and the Atlantic Coast Line proposed a merger. After nearly eight years and many court battles, SAL was finally allowed by the courts to merge with Atlantic Coast Line in 1967. The name of the merged company was the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company. The merger of these former arch rivals created a highly efficient transportation along the East coast and through the heart of the South, derived largely from eliminating duplicate lines and terminals.<sup>13</sup>

*The Silver Meteor Train*

As the Depression years waned, SAL needed to attract riders back to the rails. SAL had never ceased trying to fill its trains, and in 1938 they decided they needed to do something dramatic to improve their image and attract more passengers. A streamliner between New York and Miami became their solution. SAL used Sante Fe's streamliner *El Capitan* as their model. The Budd-built, five-car, luxury coach had been a success since beginning service between Chicago and Los Angeles in February 1938. The success in attracting new riders was accomplished by providing a "luxury" coach train at an affordable price. After conducting extensive inquiries of other railroads operating streamliners, SAL decided to purchase an experimental train set. On October 12, 1938 they contracted with the Budd Company, the premier builder of streamliner coaches, to build their new streamliner. As soon as the engineering aspects were completed, the project was turned over to Budd's talented architects, Paul Cret and John Harbeson.<sup>14</sup>

While the streamliner was taking shape, SAL sought to generate publicity by conducting a "Name this Train Contest." There was great response and the prize was shared by 30 winners who suggested the name *Silver Meteor*. The train was completed in late January 1939 and on February 1<sup>st</sup>, the public was invited to tour the train while on exhibition at Penn Station in New York City. Visitors found Florida decorations at the concourse gate along with a number of dignitaries who would be taking the inaugural ride. The train consisted of five cars; a 22-seat baggage dormitory chair car designated to carry the "colored" passengers, two 60-seat spacious coaches, a chair-tavern car seating 30 coach passengers and 30 non-revenue lounge seats, and a twelve-table diner with full kitchen. The *Silver Meteor* left the following day on its inaugural run to Florida, fulfilling its promise of luxury travel to its passengers. Upon arrival in Miami on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Silver Meteor* was mobbed by admiring crowds. The following day the *Silver Meteor* departed Miami for New York,

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arriving there on February 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>15</sup> Originally, the train operated on a six-day cycle: it would make a round trip between New York and Miami and then make a round trip between New York and St. Petersburg. A short time later, a larger train set was used and a split would take place in Wildwood with one train traveling to Florida's east coast and one train traveling to Florida's west coast.

While SAL's New York to Florida *Silver Meteor* routes were consistently sold out, even during the off season, competitors FEC and Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) were caught off guard. Passengers flocked to the new SAL train and newspapers criticized the other lines for their outdated equipment and the service they provided. This ultimately forced FEC and ACL into the market for new equipment. Without hesitation they both went with the new stainless steel streamline cars.

With the *Silver Meteor* quickly repaying the investment, and with competitors FEC and ACL finalizing plans for streamliners of their own, SAL decided to meet the competition by purchasing two additional consists to the original *Silver Meteor*. These trains remained extremely popular, with customer responses indicating that 95 percent or more of the passengers enjoyed the ride, the amenities and the service. Due to its great popularity, SAL decided to add seven cars to the consist of the *Silver Meteor*, including a round-end observational lounge car, sleepers and coaches with more room.

In late 1942, the Office of Defense Transportation, a government agency overseeing the railroads, took steps to deal with the unprecedented demand on the Florida carriers. The *Silver Meteor* was expanded to help meet this demand, adding the *Advance Silver Meteor*. From 1942-1944, the government was moving nearly a million men a month. Added to this was an increase in business travel, people riding trains to conserve their automobile tires and gas, and the still impressive seasonal Florida tourist trade. Due to this great demand, SAL sold everything, including lounge seats as revenue space, with travel reaching record highs.<sup>16</sup>

Through the war years, SAL's wise investment in the *Silver Meteor* trains paid off. The initial commitment to lightweight streamliners had been a risk, but fortunately the public demand for the *Silver Meteor* seemed insatiable.<sup>17</sup> The war had brought higher revenues than the road could ever have imagined in both freight and passenger service. Net revenues from February 1939 to March 1945 for the *Silver Meteor* were nearly \$23 million. When the war ended in 1945, SAL had laid the groundwork for a successful future. The future, however, meant new cars to replace some of the cars that had been worn down during the war years. Many streamlined cars built and advertised to last 25 years were being demoted to second runs after just seven.

To replace them, SAL placed a large order for coaches, diners, baggage dormitories, and observation lounge cars with the Budd Company in April 1945. One of these was the Observational Lounge Car #6603. Wear and tear was one reason for the upgrades, competition from automobiles and airplanes, and advanced technology were others. Another concern was public relations. Wartime passengers forced to ride the rails due to gas rationing had suffered at the hands of over burdened trains.<sup>18</sup>

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Ordering the equipment was the easy part. Waiting for delivery was often challenging. The main culprit causing the delays was the shortage of materials and engineering changes. Large orders from several companies coupled with a lack of standardization and the demand for custom cars added to the delays. While waiting for their new cars, SAL used what it had on hand to field a full complement of trains. By July 1947 , all of the coaches, diners, baggage dorms and observational lounge cars had been delivered to SAL.

Despite the inauguration of new streamliners, passenger revenues for 1947 dropped 25 percent. More people were using their cars, military traffic was down and the airlines were increasing their competition. SAL's ridership, however, picked up in 1948 and continued to increase through much of the 1950s. Overall, the number of passengers carried was up 200 percent over 1940 levels. The *Silver Meteor*, with its high speed travel and luxury amenities, such as the observational lounge car, became SAL's most popular and highest revenue train. It was their flagship train that remained virtually sold out in any season. Though many railroads significantly reduced or curtailed their passenger service altogether, SAL's *Silver Meteor* trains remained popular and profitable because, unlike with many other carriers, passengers had not abandoned the Florida trains. Instead, aggressive marketing, including off-season hotel packages, ensured SAL trains a steady stream of the best customers - long-haul passengers. Another reason was the fact that SAL was traditionally indulgent of their passenger trains, understanding their value as public relations tools.<sup>19</sup>

The *Silver Meteor* and observational lounge car #6603 remained SAL's flagship through the 1950s and even through their merger with ACL in 1967. When the trains became part of newly formed AMTRAK in 1971, AMTRAK retained the *Silver Meteor* trains and several are still running today.

*Lounge Cars*

The SAL observational lounge car was a popular component of SAL's streamliner train service operating between New York and Florida. It was composed of a twenty-four seat observational lounge section and a thirty-four seat tavern area with a full bar. Its sleek interior and exterior design and advanced mechanical systems were very popular with the traveling public and helped revitalize passenger service after World War II. However, despite their popularity, lounge cars were not found on every train and every railroad. They were a relatively rare class of car even compared with sleepers, and they never represented more than 2.5 percent of the total passenger car fleet.<sup>20</sup>

In 1887 the luxury train was introduced. A luxury train was a unified series of cars designed to serve travelers' needs in the same way that a hotel or transatlantic liner did. It was a single establishment with the cars linked by diaphragms and vestibules, allowing the passengers to walk safely through the entire train. These new trains were faster, more exclusive and cost more. It became the function of the lounge car to provide an inviting destination for passengers who were walking around, a club room where anyone might sit. Comfortable chairs and side tables were the customary furnishings. Because they were nonrevenue cars, full

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lounge cars were rare. The seats were not sold; they were free to all passengers who had bought space elsewhere on the train. The return of alcoholic drinks in 1933 led in many cases to part of the lounge car being converted into a tavern area with a bar. The quiet of the original lounge car gave way to a more tavern-like conviviality.<sup>21</sup> SAL's 1947 observational lounge car was built as a combination observational lounge and bar area separated by the hostess room. The hostess was in charge of arranging entertainment for the passengers, which often consisted of organizing various card games.

The observation platform was another attraction that became an expected part of the lounge car. The observation platform came to the lounge car after first appearing on private or office cars, though no observational lounge cars were in service before the coming of the luxury trains in the late 1880s. Open-platform observations continued to be built until about 1930, but their popularity had begun to wane some years earlier. It was argued that they were uncomfortable and unsafe, and it was considered wasteful since it was so often unusable. The solution was to enclose the end platform, and in 1909 the sun parlor or solarium car was developed.<sup>22</sup>

In the late 1930s - 1940s style-conscious age of streamlining, the observation car's appearance experienced a radical change. The open-platform style was considered obsolete, while its blunt-end counter part, the sun parlor, was dismissed as unattractive. The observation lounge car became the main form where a designer could display his talents. The observation end could be molded into many shapes. The basic bullet or swallowtail configuration became the most popular. This form had been used some thirty-five years earlier by F. U. Adams. Adams' streamliner was a wooden prototype, but its appearance was very similar to those created by the aeroflow school. SAL's 1947 observational lounge car had the rounded swallowtail end with a very aerodynamic streamline appearance.<sup>23</sup>

The lounge car fulfilled the railways' promise of luxurious travel. Although not everyone could afford traveling on a train with an observational lounge car, the lounge car did bring the more distinguished comforts of the private car within the budget of the middle-class traveler.

*Streamline Moderne*

Streamline Moderne represents the later development of the Moderne style (1930s -early 1950s), the period when the emphasis on streamlined industrial products passed into architecture and structures for transportation, including airplanes, automobiles, ocean liners and trains. The idea of streamlining derived from scientific observations of movement. Designers were interested in shapes that encountered minimum resistance when in motion, reflecting speed and efficiency that soon became symbols of modernity.<sup>24</sup> The airplane, with aerodynamically contoured forms, was the most important stimulus for this changed aesthetic, but other transportation machines, such as the torpedo-shaped dirigible and ocean liners with sleek hulls also provided stimulus for the design. Trains and automobiles moved away from boxy assemblage of parts to more cohesive

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monocoque forms.<sup>25</sup> And along the roadways, service stations, gas pumps, bus stations, movie theaters, car dealerships, motels and diners took on the accelerated characteristics of the Moderne streamline style.

Technological change also made possible the appearance of the rounded, contoured, streamlined shape. New body die-pressing machines capable of creating more complex and modeled forms, and new materials such as stainless steel and polished flatsheet aluminum came on the market. The need to stimulate the economy further promoted the idea of yearly changes, thereby placing the industrial designer in a position of great influence.<sup>26</sup>

The American entry to the streamlined rail age came on May 26, 1934, with the Budd Company built *Zephyr*. The train traveled at a top speed of 112 mph from Denver to Chicago in order to appear as the grand finale of the *Century of Progress Exposition*'s railroad pageant, "Wings of a Century." Crowds poured from the stands to mob the train, which had cut 13 hours off the trip from Denver to Chicago.<sup>27</sup>

The railroad industry in the 1920s and early 1930s had a reputation of being resistant to change. However, with passenger revenues down by one-third in the early 1930s (due mainly to the Depression and increased automobile and airplane travel), some train builders, such as the Budd Company, saw the need for new tactics, an appeal of romance and glamour, to bring back passengers. By the early 1940s, railroads with new streamline cars reported significant increases in passengers due mostly to the new, faster, and more comfortable streamlined trains. These streamliners remained popular and continued to be built through the 1940s and early 1950s. In fact, SAL's 1947 observational lounge car continued to serve as one of the most preferred cars on the SAL's popular *Silver Meteor* New York to Florida trains (1947-1971), and later on AMTRAK's New York to Florida trains (1971-1977).

*Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company*

In 1912, Edward G. Budd started the company in Philadelphia with 13 employees and \$100,000 in capitalization, three-fourths of which he himself had supplied. He challenged the wood-fabricating establishment of his day, the carriage makers and carpenters by working for the adoption of all-steel automobile bodies.<sup>28</sup> In the late 1920s, Budd had become infatuated with stainless steel, a noncorrosive very high-strength material suitable for both framing and skin covering. The one problem with stainless steel was joining - regular welding made it lose its strength and noncorrosive qualities, and riveting damaged its edges. That was so until a Budd Company engineer, Col. E.J.W. Ragsdale, invented and patented a scientific electric welding process for stainless steel.<sup>29</sup> One of the Budd Company's great accomplishments in the industry was this patented "Shot-Weld" technology which allowed for the level of fabrication necessary to construct a rail car without damaging the somewhat brittle stainless alloys then available. This permitted the Budd Company to use stainless steel for the entire structure not just a "pretty skin" over a mild steel body as competitors Pullman and American Car & Foundry ultimately did.

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In 1934, the Budd Company pioneered the production of a much lighter type of locomotive-hauled passenger car. These light weight cars had load-bearing sides of welded corrugated stainless steel. The earlier riveted sides and clerestory roof were replaced by a sleek, bright car, 85' long with large picture windows, riding on two four-wheeled trucks. The weight came down significantly, despite the fitting of air-conditioning, reclining seats, electric ice coolers and other amenities. Budd's Hunting Park Avenue plant in Philadelphia built the pioneer *Zephyr*, an entire three-car train weighing no more than an ordinary Pullman car. It was the first train powered by a locomotive diesel engine and attained a speed of 112 mph. Prior to World War II the Hunting Park Avenue shops rolled out families of gleaming *Zephyrs*, *Rockets*, *Silver Meteors*, *Champions*, and *El Capitans* for various railroads. All of these were stainless steel cars that could travel at high speeds.<sup>30</sup>

The design of the *Zephyr* drew upon the earlier Budd Company experiments but went far beyond them in its merging of contemporary aeronautical theory and function. The man most responsible for the design of the *Zephyr* was the chief designer of Budd's high-tensile division, Albert Dean, a graduate of M.I.T.'s aeronautical engineering program. He was assisted by his brother, Walter Dean, a mechanical engineer with aviation design experience. Also assisting was the noted Philadelphia architect Paul Philippe Cret and his associate John Harbeson, who designed the interiors and made suggestions for the exterior, including the raised horizontal fluting, or speed lines, in the stainless steel cars. The Cret-Harbeson interiors were modern luxury with silk drapes, spun aluminum and stainless steel seat and table bases, Formica tops, Agosote paneled ceilings, and indirect flush-mounted lighting.<sup>31</sup> Due to the great success of these cars, Cret and Harbeson were called on numerous times to direct the interior designs of Budd Company built passenger cars.

The higher speeds of new trains had brought a need for improved braking. The Budd Company pioneered the railway disk brake just before World War II. Disk brakes eliminated the undesirable characteristics of iron-on iron wheel-tread brakes and provided smoother, more efficient stopping. After the war, a high percentage of railroads adopted this major innovation for mainline passenger trains.<sup>32</sup>

To a great extent, Budd's designs brought about the revival in rail car construction in the post depression era. When SAL's Budd-built *Silver Meteor* began service in 1939-1940, and competitors FEC and ACL railways were caught off guard as passengers flocked to the new SAL trains, newspapers railed at the other lines for outdated equipment and the service they provided. This ultimately forced the FEC and the ACL into the market for new equipment. Without hesitation they both went with the new stainless cars.

During the war, Budd turned out huge quantities of military equipment. After the war they immediately returned to building train cars due to the large number of orders from railroads returning to their pre-war freight and passenger service. In many respects, the Budd Company had its finest hour from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. There were great technological advances during the war that the Budd Company was able to apply to their new train cars. The Moderne streamlined exterior styling remained much the same, but the trains'

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structure and inner technological mechanisms greatly surpassed pre-war trains. SAL's 1947 observational lounge car was part of the *Silver Meteor* family and possessed both the style and advanced mechanical systems of the Budd Company's most exemplary cars. The Budd Company continued to build trains for several decades, and in the 1970s they helped revitalize the national rail passenger system by supplying AMTRAK with modern Amfleet cars.

*Paul Philippe Cret*

Born in France in 1876, Paul Philippe Cret began his formal architectural training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in his native city of Lyons and subsequently won a scholarship to the Paris Ecole des Beaux Arts as a French Government Fellow (1898-1903). In 1903 he came to the United States to accept the position of assistant professor of architectural design at the University of Pennsylvania where he remained on faculty until 1937. After leaving the University of Pennsylvania, he formed an architectural firm as primary partner with associates John F. Harbeson, William J. Hough, Roy F. Larson, and William H. Livingston.

Cret's professional career was divided between scholarship and the design of many acclaimed buildings and structures.<sup>33</sup> Among his best known architectural works are the Pan American Union Building, the Federal Reserve Board buildings, and the Folger Shakespearean Library in Washington, D.C., the Detroit Institute of Art, the University of Texas Library and other campus buildings, the Valley Forge Memorial Arch, the Delaware River Bridge at Philadelphia, and the Hall of Science Building for the Century of Progress. A classicist by instinct and training, Paul Cret was also called a realist who saw no incompatibility between his rationalization and his desire to create beauty. Throughout his career he won numerous honors and awards and in 1938 the American Institute of Architects presented him its highest reward, the Gold Medal.

In the 1930s and 1940s Cret frequently worked on engineering projects for private companies in addition to consulting jobs for the U.S. Army Engineer Office at Pittsburgh. He also worked with well-known engineers on power generating stations and with Budd Company constructors of streamlined trains, often in collaboration with John Harbeson.<sup>34</sup> The University of Pennsylvania's Paul Philippe Cret Papers contain several letters of correspondence between Paul Cret and the Edward G. Budd Company discussing designs for the trains as well as one sketch of a train car interior. One of the most interesting letters was written by Edward G. Budd to Mr. Paul P. Cret dated March 4, 1939. The letter states,

"Our Mr. Pond has come in from the West and tells me he had a long conversation with Mr. Albert Kahn of Detroit, who is one of those architects for whom we have great respect. Mr Kahn has ridden the Denver *Zephyr* recently and was most emphatic in his praise of it, not only for its good riding and comfortable qualities, but for the artistic treatment on the inside. He inquired who the artist was, and after some difficulty found it was Paul Cret. To use his own words, he said he 'took off his hat' when he was told of



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your connection with the train and expressed the opinion it was just the treatment he thought was correct. I am happy to be able to pass such a comment to you.”<sup>35</sup>

The Cret-Harbeson train work was so popular that the Budd Company continued to use their designs for their future streamline train cars. Though the furniture and decorations have been removed from the observational lounge car here nominated, the sleek curved structural forms and interior plan that Cret and Harbeson designed for Budd Company streamliners remain.

*Conclusion*

The Seaboard Air Line observational lounge car is a rare survivor among the once-numerous Moderne streamline train cars that operated in the United States since the mid-1930s. The car is a good example of a streamline railway car built for highspeed transportation between New York and Florida. The lounge car was built by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company, the premier builder of rolling stock streamliners from the 1930s through the 1950s. Innovative design was important to the Budd Company, and this was demonstrated by their commissioning of noted architects Paul Philippe Cret and his associate John Harbeson as designers for their streamliners. Only five other observation lounge cars series #6600-6605 were produced by the Budd Company, and very few of these cars are known to exist. It is the only car of its type located in the State of Florida, and likely the southeastern United States. Although much of the car's interior furnishings and decorations are missing, the mechanical equipment and interior and exterior structural features remain intact. The owners have located furniture and decorations from similar scrapped Budd Company designed cars and plan to use them in the rehabilitation of the cars. The owners also have a photograph of the original interior that can be used to replicate the interior decoration that is not found (Appendix 3). In addition, the owners have documentation of the rounded end that can be used to remove the diaphragm and restore the rounded end observational section. The rehabilitation should be completed and the car in working order by mid-2002. The observational lounge car will then become an important educational component of the historic Boca Raton Railroad Depot complex.

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1. Much of this historic context paragraph is a summary taken from the Florida Historic Railroad Resources National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Listing Nomination.

2. Robert W. Mann, Rails 'Neath the Palms. Burbank, California: Darwin Publications, 1983. p. 155.

3. Albert M. Langley, Jr., W. Forrest Beckum, Jr., and C. Ronnie Tidwell, Seaboard Airline Railway Album. North Augusta, South Carolina: Union Station Publishing, 1988. Pp. 2.

4. Langley, Beckum, Tidwell, 2.

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5. The Palm Beach Times, February 1, 1925.
6. The original SAL tracks in southeast Florida are those that AMTRAK uses today near Interstate 95.
7. Richard E. Prince, Seaboard Air Line Railway Steam Boats, Locomotives and History. Green River: Richard Prince, 1969.
8. Langley, Beckum, Tidwell, 2.
9. The Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac's mainline was used between Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C. and the Pennsylvania Railroad's mainline was used between Washington D.C. and New York City.
10. Joseph M. Welsh, By Streamliner New York to Florida, Andover New Jersey: Andover Junction Press, 1994, 18.
11. Langley, Beckum, Tidwell, 3.
12. George H Drury, The Historical Guide to North American Railroads: Histories, Figures and Features of More Than 160 Railroads Abandoned or Merged since 1930. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Kalmbach Publishing Company, 1985. P.300.
13. Langley, Beckum, Tidwell, 3.; Drury, 300.
14. Joseph M Welsh. By Streamliner New York to Florida. Andover, New Jersey: Andover Junction Publications, 1994, 20.
15. Welsh, 22.
16. Welsh, 33.
17. Welsh, 33.
18. Welsh, 69.
19. Welsh, 94.
20. John H. White, Jr., The American Railroad Passenger Car, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, 304
21. White, 304-306.
22. White, 306.
23. White, 308.

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24. Nicholas N. Patrucios, Building Marvelous Miami, Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1994, 97.

25. Richard Guy Wilson, The Machine Age in America, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986, 55.

26. Wilson, 56.

27. Wilson, 136.

28. Freeman Hubbard, Encyclopedia of North American Railroading. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981, 42.

29. Wilson, 138.

30. Hubbard, 42.

31. Wilson, 139.

32. Hubbard, 42.

33. In addition to those buildings and structures listed, Cret's principal works include the Indianapolis's Central Public Library and Herron Art Institute, Philadelphia's Federal Reserve Bank, Rodin Museum, and Poplar Street Housing Project, Washington's Central Heating Plant, the County Building at Hartford, Connecticut, the stadium for Brown University, the Chemistry Building for the University of Pennsylvania, and several buildings at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. Cret's work also includes several European battle monuments, a number of notable bridges in Philadelphia, Washington, and Harrisburg, and in collaboration with other architects, several Federal buildings. His residential work is not widely known, but he has done a number of noteworthy houses. In the late 1930s through the mid 1940s, Cret worked on many engineering projects. As a consultant for the U.S. Army Engineer Office in Pittsburgh, Cret assisted in the designs of the Emsworth Dam for the Ohio River, the Tygard River Reservoir Dam in West Virginia, and the Montgomery Dam on the Ohio. Beginning in 1938, Cret was also a consultant to the U.S. Navy Department. And as noted previously, Cret worked with well-known engineers on power generation stations, and with constructors of streamlined trains.

34. Maxine Bloch, ed., Current Biography 1942, New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1942, 165-167.

35. Paul Philippe Cret Papers, University of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Collection, Folder 120.

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        . Streamliner Cars: The Budd Company. Volume VI. Godfrey, Illinois: RPC Publications, 1984.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary is limited to the dimensions of the lounge car itself.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The Seaboard Air Line Lounge Car is an intact structure.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

All Photographs are of :

Seaboard Air Line Lounge Car  
Boca Raton, Palm Beach County, Florida

1. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car and Dining Car, looking southwest  
Photo: 1 of 13
  
2. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, looking southwest  
Photo: 2 of 13
  
3. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, looking northwest  
Photo: 3 of 13
  
4. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, looking northeast  
Photo: 4 of 13
  
5. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car and Dining Car, looking southeast  
Photo: 5 of 13

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6. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car diaphragm, looking south  
Photo: 6 of 13
7. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior observation lounge section, looking north  
Photo: 7 of 13
8. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior lounge section, looking north  
Photo: 8 of 13
9. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior lounge section, looking south  
Photo: 9 of 13
10. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior bar, looking north  
Photo: 10 of 13
11. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior, original light fixtures  
Photo: 11 of 13



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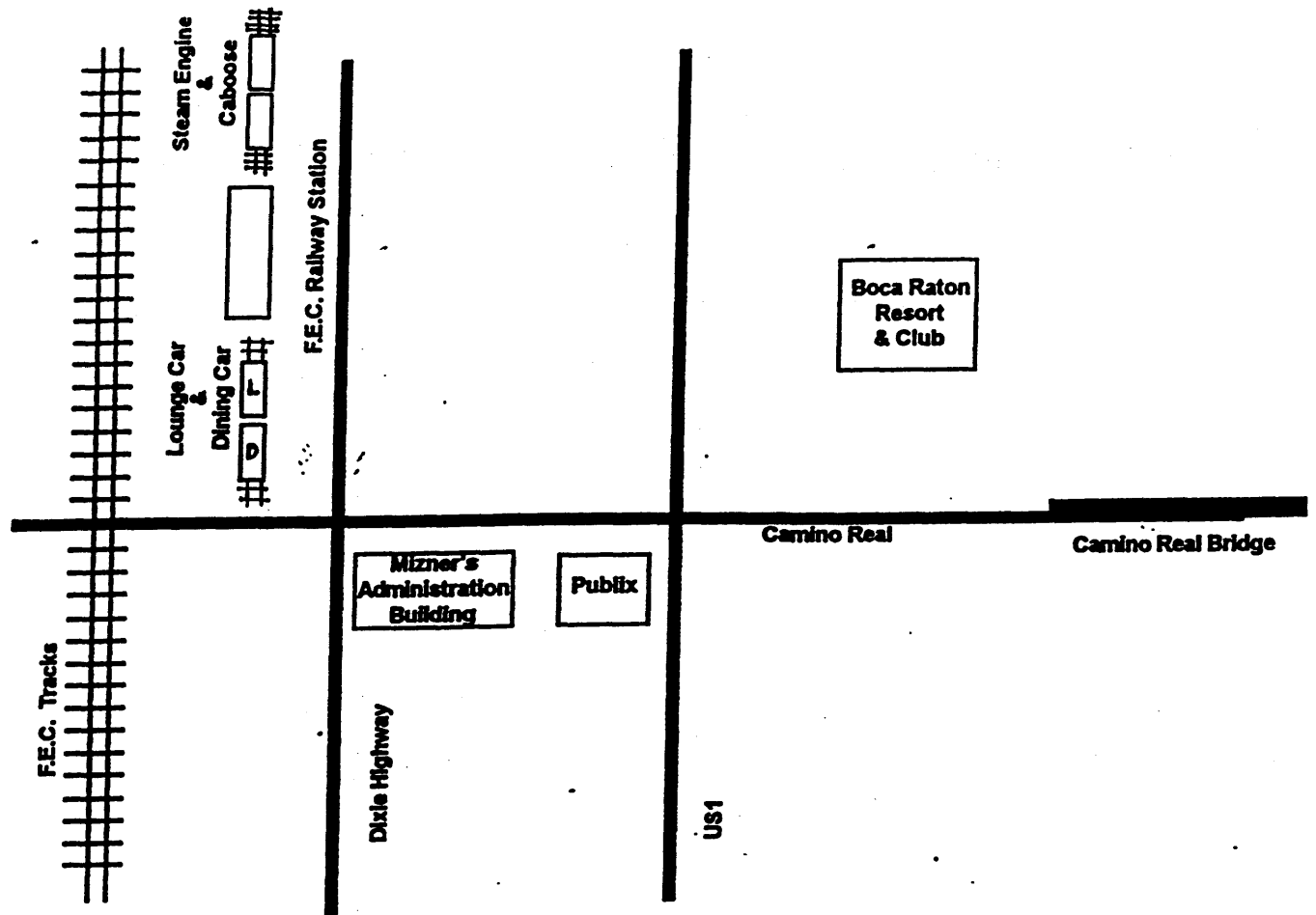
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12. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior, original light fixture over bar  
Photo: 12 of 13

13. Photographer: Janet G. Murphy  
Date: August 2000  
Negative Filed: Janet G. Murphy & Associates, Inc.  
View Of: Lounge Car, interior, rounded end of observational lounge section  
Photo: 13 of 13

**ENDNOTES**

# Boca Raton Historical Society's Train Cars & Camino Real, Boca Raton Florida

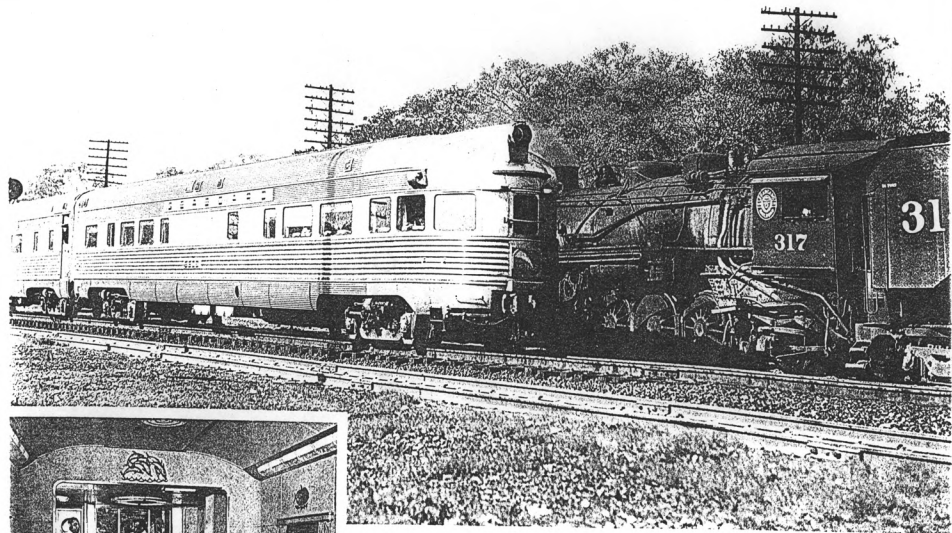


L = Lounge Car

D = Dining Car







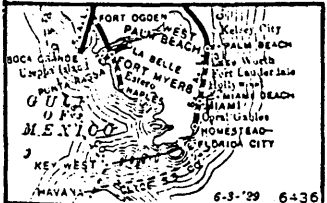
Appendix 3

At left, interior of bar and lounge area

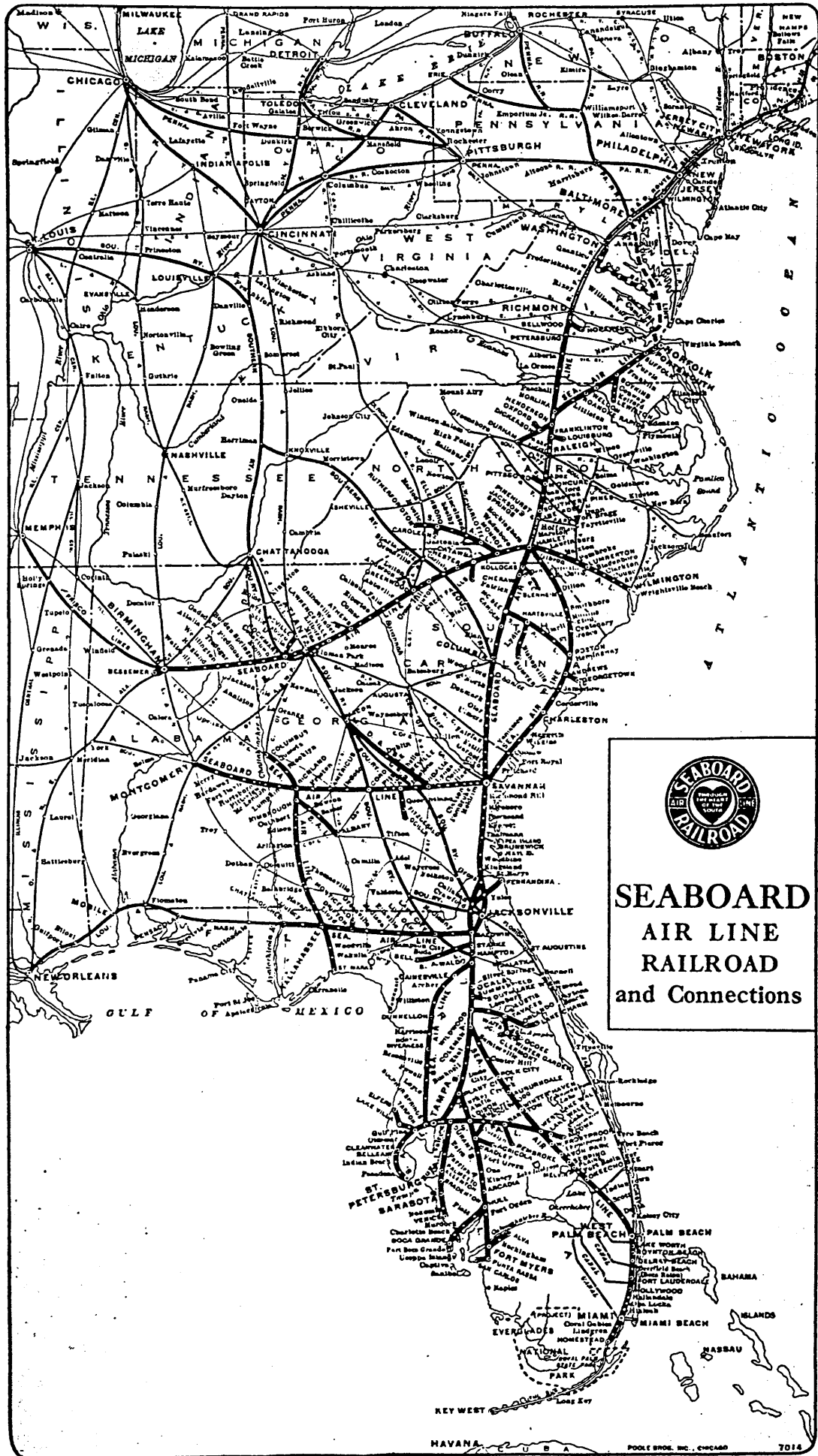
SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILROAD - 1929



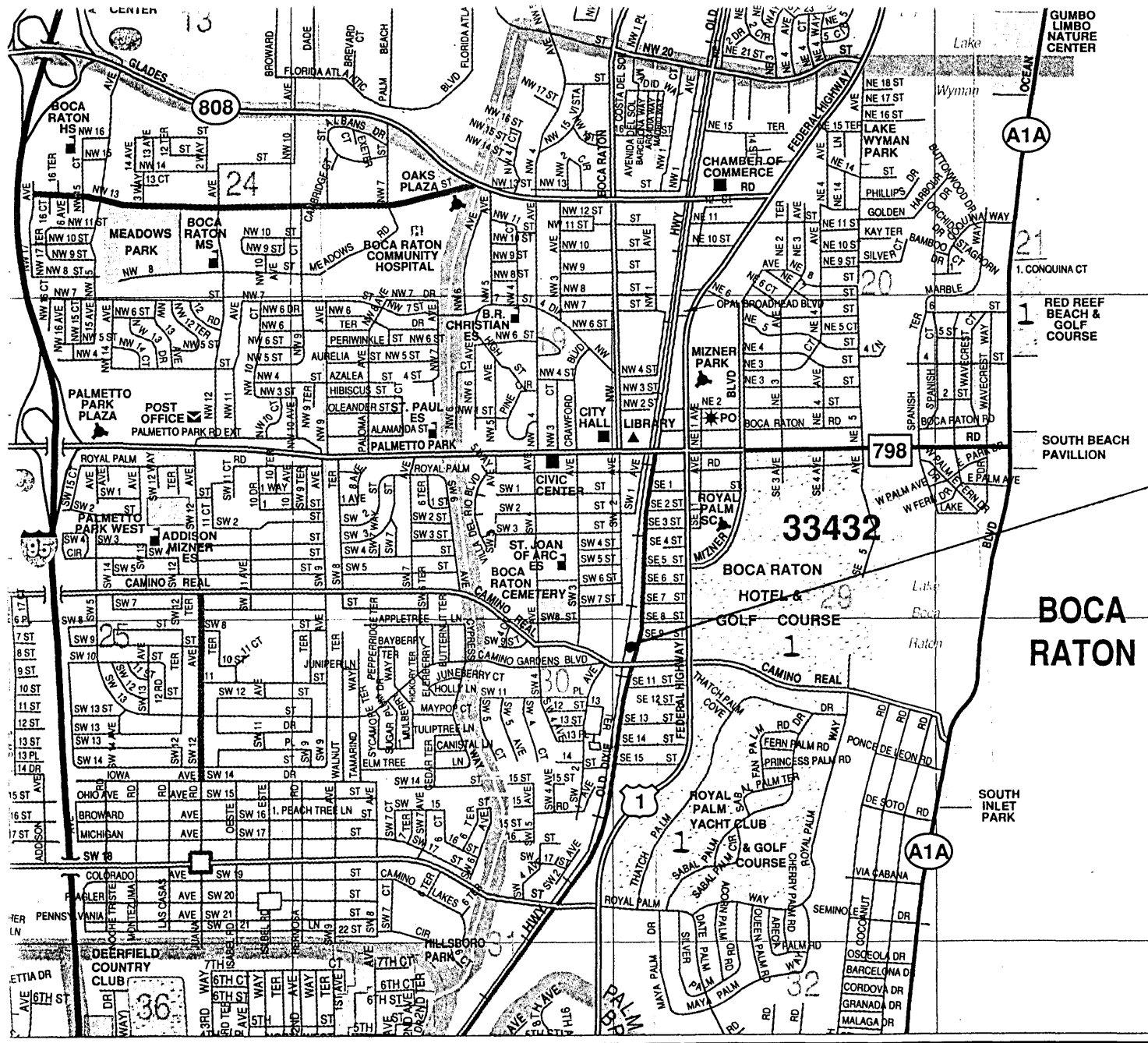
**SEABOARD**  
AIR LINE RAILWAY  
*All Florida Route*



SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILROAD — 1949



**SEABOARD**  
AIR LINE  
RAILROAD  
and Connections

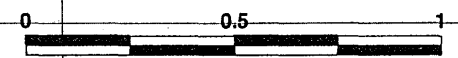
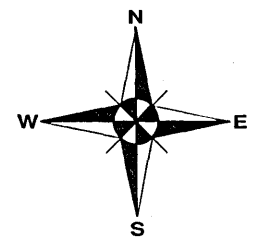


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