



RAILROAD REPORT

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Bachmann Industries Pennsylvania RR GG1

A superb blend of streamlining and art-deco.

One of the most collected engines in all scales are without doubt the Pennsylvania Railroad GG1. First produced in the early 1930s by General Electric and the Pennsylvania RR's Altoona Works, a total of 139 GG1s were built. In service for over 50 years, the last GG1 was retired by New Jersey Transit in 1983. The GG1s were noted throughout the northeast for their style and speed. The GG1s appeared in many feature length films and are probably most famous for pulling the funeral trains of Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy. During my youth, when collecting was in its height, GG1s were in high demand in O-scale.

The GG1 we are looking at this month is the N-scale version from Bachmann Industries. What is even better than the included DCC is that it has the SoundTraxx sound system already installed. Just the other day while cleaning out the dungeon I came across a sound unit I designed for my O-scale layout some 25 years ago. About the size of a brick, it was placed in the middle of the layout and was slaved to the voltage applied to the train thus making the universal steam chug-a-chug. It might have been bulky, but the kids loved it, and it added tremendously to our enjoyment of the model railroad hobby.

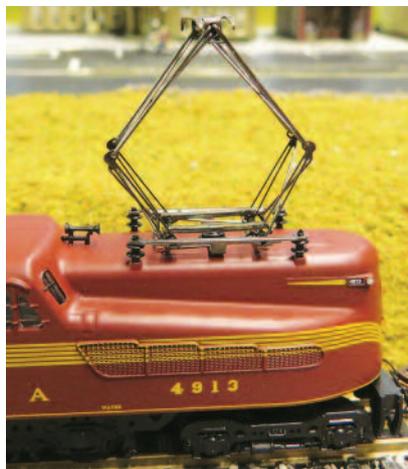
How things have changed over the years; any enthusiast will agree that DCC, lighting and sound in N-scale is the Holy Grail of model railroading. But I'm getting way ahead of myself. To start the Pennsylvania RR GG1 is packaged like all Bachmann locomotives in that it sits in a molded clear plastic clam shell, which is then

contained in a crystal plastic container. Not only does this prevent damage during shipping and handling, but it allows for a potential buyer to get a complete look at the locomotive without opening the container.

Once removed from its packaging one can only be awestruck at the minute details of the GG1 locomotive. The 12-wheel drive trucks have been duplicated to perfection, the unique Pennsylvania RR color is spot-on and the five flowing yellow stripes have been applied without a trace of bleed. The twin pantographs are lightly sprung and with the addition of overhead catenary lines and minor internal modification they can be made fully functional. Even the bars across the cab's windows, something of an addition reflecting a more modern and unfortunate era, have been properly duplicated.

The shell removes easily and a quick look under the hood reveals the Dual Flywheel motor and 12 wheel drive that are mounted to a heavy die cast metal chassis. While it may have just a tad less power than the full-scale's 12-385 hp traction motors—one for each of the 12 drive wheels—it's more than up to the job. The full length Printed Circuit Board that contains the sound driver, DCC and LED lighting is mounted above the motor and drive. To complete the SoundTraxx sound system there is a very small speaker mounted on the forward part of the circuit board.

The Bachmann GG1 incorporates all new tooling. The locomotive is over four inches long and designed for 11.25 inch or larger radius track. Even though the full-scale GG1 was



The Bachman version of the GG1 includes lightly sprung pantographs that can be made fully functional with the addition of overhead catenary cables and a couple of simple wire connections under the shell.



The details on the GG1 are truly impressive. The unique color of the Pennsylvania RR locomotives has been duplicated to perfection and all of the markings, including the complicated striping, has been applied with absolutely no fade or bleed.



The heart of the locomotive is a circuit board that is mounted on top of the drivetrain and runs the full length of the locomotive. The board not only contains the DCC circuits for superb scale-like operation, but also the SoundTraxx sound system and even a tiny speaker.

articulated, allowing the loco to travel on tight curves, that simply isn't practical with a model locomotive of this size. Soft white LED directional headlights that can be dimmed are part of the running features and like all Bachmann Trains, E-Z Mate Mark II couplers round out the package. As in all DCC engines, out of the box the Bachmann GG1 is pre-programmed as device number three. By switching the programming on a Bachmann DCC E-Z Control to #3 it was time to test the loco on the N-scale build.

When the GG1 was placed on the rails, it couldn't help but be noticed that exactly like the full-scale GG1, the N-scale version looks fast even when it's not moving. In its day the GG1 had a superb blend of streamlining and the art-deco look which was so popular at the time the locomotive was designed. It's no wonder why models of the GG1 were, and still are, in high demand.

As was expected the locomotive ran great. Acceleration along with braking was appropriately slow but steady with

absolutely no jerking. There really isn't a forward or reverse with the GG1. To that end, the headlamps engage with the direction the loco is travelling. The sound system is amazing and it's the icing on the cake. Start up, horns, bells, compressed air release and running sounds were all great. The preset default volume was just right and fit the operational scene.

The full-scale GG1 not only handled passenger cars for a short time; it also had a role as a freight hauler. A number of them were converted for slightly higher horsepower while at the same time shedding some of the needs of a passenger train such as heat. It really doesn't make a difference what the customer has as his layout's theme; the GG1 can fill both roles.

The Bachmann GG1 with all its features is a welcome addition to any layout. The DCC and SoundTraxx functionality combined with the ease of use will make every purchaser happy and therefore a satisfied and most importantly a return customer. **HM**



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