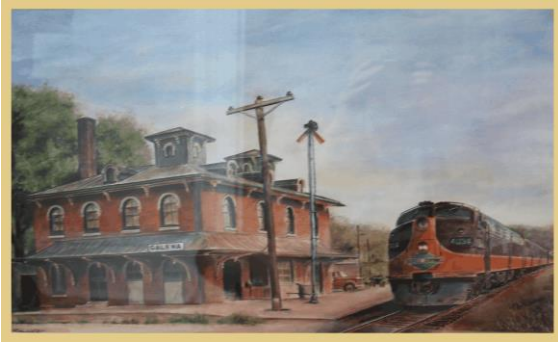


## THINK HOPE TO REALITY.

In response to the earlier blurb in the Ride the Rail newsletter noting the renovations of the historic Galena, Illinois depot, Mark Robinson shared his painting of the depot with the Illinois Central Land O'Corn diesel-powered passenger train. Mark noted the hope his painting might again become a reality. Thanks to Mark for sharing his picture as it was a beautiful addition to the newsletter.



Mark's painting triggered reflections on the Land O'Corn passenger train and the Illinois Central's service from Chicago across northwest Illinois and north-central Iowa. Diesel

power was added to the Land O'Corn shortly after the end of World War II. In checking a time table for the Illinois Central system, a schedule effective September 28, 1947 a "new diesel streamliner " in service was touted.

Somewhat surprising was learning that the Land O'Corn made the trip from Waterloo to Chicago in five and one-half hours, perhaps the surprise due to the proposed schedule for a restored Black Hawk that projected times of five hours and ten minutes to five hours and forty-two minutes, depending on the final route selected. The 1947 schedule showed the Land O'Corn leaving Waterloo at 6:45 a.m. and arriving in Chicago at 12:15 p.m. The westbound Land O'Corn shaved five minutes off the trip, leaving Chicago at 4:30 p.m. and being in Waterloo at 9:55 o'clock. Stops along the route included Genoa, Rockford, Freeport, Galena, Dubuque, Manchester, Independence and Waterloo. In 1947, The Hawkeye and The Iowan provided Chicago to Sioux City roundtrip service each day, with a spur from Cherokee, Iowa to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In addition, The Sinnissippi provided one trip from Chicago to Freeport and back.

Reflections on the Land O'Corn reminded of the Burlington Zephyr trains serving the area that made the Chicago to Minneapolis trip going the distance in six hours and twenty minutes. The CBQ Zephyr boasted the fastest passenger train in the world at the time, that being the trip from East Dubuque to Prairie du Chein, Wisconsin running along the Mississippi River.



One suspects two factors that are major contributors to reduced schedules of today. One major component is certainly the neglect of the roadbeds that enforce the slower speeds today. The other is the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that sided with freight carriers and voided the congressional ruling giving passenger trains priority. The latter action has especially confounded schedules for Amtrak long-distance trains like the California Zephyr and the Southwest Chief, both of which serve Illinois and Iowa.

The public's desire for convenient, safe, environmental friendly and efficient trains is evident by the response to Ride the Rail's online survey and petition to restore the Black Hawk. With survey responses with support in the high 90's and positive responses to the petition there are many who share artist Mark's hope that the dream of the Land O'Corn becomes reality. One would also hope the schedule of 70 years earlier might be possible with infrastructure improvements and new equipment.