



Norfolk & Western: Steam's Last Stand

Mallory Hope Ferrell

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11x8.5 horizontal format, cloth with dust jacket, 320 pages. "As most major railroads made the transition to diesels during the early 1950s, railfan photographers flocked to places like Blue Ridge and C'burg Grade to capture the smoking action. The 15 years following the end of WWII were the golden years of N&W steam. "When the fire of the last steamer was dropped in Williamson, WV shortly after midnight on the morning of May 7, 1960, these glory days ended. Many of us directed our attention and cameras elsewhere. The thrilling sight of a Y6b and an A class blasting upgrade with a hundred loaded hoppers was, sadly, over. "Following mergers and renaming, N&W steam enjoyed a brief reprieve in 1982-1994 with the return of two famed locomotives. While it lasted, those who had missed the "Grand Show" were treated to a sampling of what it was like, courtesy of J-class 4-8-4 Number 611 and articulated Class A 2-6-6-4 Number 1218. Both were among the over 400 steam engines constructed at Roanoke Shops over the 70 year period of 1883-1953. "This tome is a personal pictorial of the final decades of smoking steam action on the Norfolk and Western. It is a photographic study of guts, grime and power as everything from small consolidations and "Mollies" to husky double-headed 2-8-8-2s moved coal trains to Tidewater and the Midwest. "This is also the story of a railroad that took pride in its passenger service, be it a Pacific powered three car local on the "Cinch Valley" run, a single combine behind a branchline mixed, or a streamstyled Tuscan Red J pulling a matched consist on a name train - the N&W had class. It's departure time, as the conductor calls out "Aaaaalllll A-Board", so sit back for an exciting ride. This was Steam's Last Stand."- Mallory Hope Ferrell

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