

Ottawa Central 1854, an ex-CP RS-18, is seen working over the CN interchange at Coteau Junction, Quebec, on February 23, 2008.



# GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN:

## Remembering ALCo and the Montreal Locomotive Works

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**I**n North American railfan circles, there are numerous names that stand out regarding the manufacturing of locomotives. But could it be that one stands out more than the rest? And would that name be the American Locomotive Company, also known as ALCo?

There aren't many locomotive manufacturers that survived for long after making the transition from building steam locomotives to diesels, but ALCo was among those who did. Many of their locomotives can still be found in active service to this day and are still an enduring favourite of railfans. To this day, fans of ALCos are known affectionately as "ALCo-holics".

Formed in 1901, American Locomotive Company was the result of an amalgamation of several locomotive manufacturers. In 1904, it acquired control of the Locomotive & Machine Company of Montreal, which later became Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW), in order to avoid protective customs tariffs. Completing ALCo's creation was its

purchase of the Rogers Locomotive Works in 1905. In 1924, ALCo, in conjunction with General Electric and Ingersoll-Rand, produced a commercially successful diesel switcher locomotive for the Central Railroad of New Jersey which saw service until 1957. This unit is not to be confused with Canadian National's famous 9000-9001, which was North America's first diesel-electric passenger locomotive built by Westinghouse, Canadian Locomotive Co., Baldwin and Commonwealth Steel Co.

While remaining allied with GE for electrical components, in 1929, ALCo bought out the McIntosh & Seymour Diesel Engine Company. Thus, the ALCo most of us are familiar with was finally created. This partnership allowed ALCo to lead in the production of locomotives until the 1930s when General Motors – Electro Motive Division (GM-EMD) took the lead with its aggressive marketing and advertising. Additionally, during the Second World War, the War Production Board allocated construction of switchers to ALCo while EMD was assigned to build road units. From this arrangement, EMD got a lead that ALCo was never able to overcome.

ALCo produced its last steam locomotives in 1948. MLW continued to produce steam into the 1950s, but commenced producing diesel-electric locomotives to ALCo's design in 1949. These were mainly switchers but road freight and passenger units followed in 1951.

Concerned over what ALCo's lack of success in the development of the 244 engine was doing to their reputation, GE dissolved their partnership with ALCo in 1953 and set out to develop their own locomotive. Over the years this developed into the "Universal" line of locomotives, which placed GE in the number two position in locomotive construction. In 1964, Worthington bought out ALCo, which included MLW. With the market slowing down after the big push by North American railroads to dieselise, ALCo-Worthington's introduction of the



▶ CN RSC-18 1777 idles at the Halifax, Nova Scotia, passenger station awaiting its next assignment in the summer of 1982. When originally assigned to the Halifax area, a number of RS-18s were equipped with 'A1A' trucks in order to allow them to travel on light rail branch lines.

◀ Ex-CP M-630 4563 stands at Farnham, Quebec, in September 2007. The unit belongs to the Canadian Railway Museum at St. Constant, Quebec, and was heading to McAdam, New Brunswick, for a CPR pensioners' reunion.