FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Susan Shoup
814/865-1327

March 19, 2001

Editors:
Author is available for interview. Call for additional information and media copies of the book.

Set Up Running
THE LIFE OF A PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD ENGINEMAN, 1904-1949

University Park, PA—Set Up Running tells the story of Oscar P. Orr, a Pennsylvania Railroad locomotive engineer. Orr operated steam-powered freight and passenger trains throughout Central Pennsylvania and South Central New York. From 1904 to 1949, Orr sat at the controls of many famous steam locomotives, moving trains loaded with coal, perishables, and other freight. On his routes he encountered virtually every situation that a locomotive engineer of the era could expect to see.

Oscar’s son, John W. Orr, tells the story of his father’s life and 45-year career.

“One of my earliest recollections involves the railroad, a plaintive whistle, and my mother stating that my father would soon be home,” said John Orr. “And it wasn’t long before that large man, clad in blue overalls, came through the door with his travel bag, which he promptly set on the kitchen floor so he could pick me up. There was a strange smell on his overclothes, but it was not offensive, and it was one that I later learned belonged to a steam engine. So from very early in my life I developed an avid interest in the steam engine.”

Oscar’s career began at the Central Steam Heating Plant in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Orr operated nearly every kind of steam locomotive that the Pennsylvania Railroad owned, from yard switching to transfer trains, work trains, local and hot shot freights, milk-

-more-
run and first class passenger trains. During his career, he worked from the bottom of the roster to the top position, number one in seniority.

The Pennsylvania Railroad ran one of the largest and most efficiently run Class I railroads in the nation. The book explains how the “Company,” as the employees called it, introduced, tested and refined classic steam locomotives.

Rich with vivid detail, *Set Up Running*, includes stories about Orr’s first encounter with an automobile along the right-of-way, train operation in a blizzard, and the difficulties of stopping a trainload of tank cars loaded with oil. It provides specific information both about the daily routine of a railroad engineer and about steam locomotives.

**THE AUTHOR**

John W. Orr graduated from Penn State University in 1949. He lives in Ralston, Pennsylvania.