

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

P.O. Box 632 Meadville, PA 16335

FALL 2015

Newsletter of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Volume 10 Number 2

VALLEY EXPRESS

The History of Stony Point - Part Two

When the Atlantic and Great Western arrived in the area we call Stony Point today, it was just a single track, 6 foot broad gauge railroad with trains of 10 to 15 cars long passing through the vicinity. Then, after twelve years of operation, the A & GW was reorganized in March 1880 as the New York, Pennsylvania & Ohio, or the NYPANO as it was known to the locals. Three months after the reorganization, the railroad converted from broad gauge to 4 feet 8 ½ inches standard gauge, the dimension used by all major North American railroads today. In May of 1883 the NYPANO was leased to the New York, Lake Erie and Western, which reorganized into the Erie Railroad in November 1895. In 1896, the Erie Railroad bought the NYPANO outright.

The intent of the Erie Railroad was to become a major railroad to compete with the likes of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern, the Baltimore & Ohio, and the Pennsylvania Railroad in the markets between Chicago and New York. In order to do this, the Erie had to invest in placing capacity in its trackage. Operating longer trains meant placement of additional, longer passing sidings, so sometime then, around 1900, the railroad built an eastbound and westbound passing track at Stony Point, beginning east of Townline Road and extending west just short of Calvin Road. In addition, an interlocking tower, with telegraph call letters SA, was placed at the west end of the sidings, along with a water tank to service the steam engine tenders. Heavier, more powerful steam engines began to ply the rails with much longer trains of which the people of Stony Point had never seen before. The Erie Railroad was serious about making the railroad successful.

But, success came with a cost. Soon the Erie found the railroad, being single track from Meadville to Greenville, was not as fluid as was needed to move tonnage. Stony Point (elev. 1286') was at the top of the divide between the French Creek Basin at Meadville (elev. 1083') and the Shenango River Basin at Greenville (elev. 945').

The climb in either direction was long and hard, and often required double-heading of engines to move the tonnage over the hill. So the Erie Railroad's Underwood Administration, looking for a solution to this problem, worked out an agreement with the Bessemer and Lake

Local Rail Activity

Deerefield Farm Services

In the Spring 2015 edition of the *Valley Express*, a 7000 foot loop of rail, with a 400 foot industrial track, was being built at the Keystone Industrial Park for a new tenant. It is now known that the new tenant is Deerefield Farm Services of Deerefield, Ohio. The new tenant will be building a grain elevator and will have covered hoppers brought in. There is reportedly a snag in the tonnage rating of a bridge in Sharon, PA, and may not be able to handle these cars.

- *Meadville Tribune, Railfan & Railroad*

Lake Shore Railway Historical Society

Acquisition of PRR signal

The Lake Shore Railway Historical Society in North East, PA has acquired a former Pennsylvania Railroad position light signal from the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad, after the B&P downgraded their former trackage to "dark" territory.

- *Railfan & Railroad*

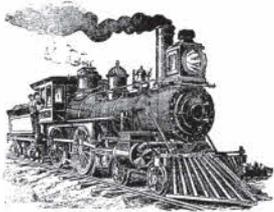
Youngstown Steel Heritage Museum to Loan ALCO S2 to Lake Shore

According to Rick Rowlands, president of the Youngstown Steel Heritage Museum, one of two surviving ALCO S2s that worked at the U.S. Steel's McDonald (Ohio) Works and then the McDonald Steel Co. at the same plant, will be restored to operation and loaned to the Lake Shore Railway Historical Society on a temporary basis. The switcher, #777 was originally U.S. Steel McDonald Works #73. The other S2 is being used for parts for the #777. If enough parts are left over, Mr. Rowlands informed the editor that some cab parts could make their way to the Erie RR #518 of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society. This locomotive was originally U.S. Steel-McDonald Works #70, but has not run since 1982.

- *Rick Rowlands, Carl Timko*



(continued on page 5)



From the Stationmaster's Office

My message this issue was going to be about what is happening with the display site and other projects in the works. It was also going to be about us needing new and younger members. This all changed when we were informed that one of our own had passed away.

Larry Johnson, a member of the board of directors for six years, passed away on Saturday, September 12 at the age of 75. Larry hadn't been in good health recently, and we realized he wasn't getting better because of the number of meetings he missed.

Larry served in the U.S. Navy, then became employed by the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad. He retired in 2002 after serving as a trainman, conductor, train dispatcher, and chief dispatcher. Larry also was the docent at the Johnson-Shaw Stereoscopic Museum in Meadville. Larry will be missed for his humor, his railroad stories, his friendship. It will be tough knowing he won't be physically at our meetings. But I am sure his spirit will be there to guide us.



Goodbye, Larry. You've earned your rest.

Bernie Hanmore

CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Weber Electrical Supply
- Staples Copy & Print
- Lloyd's Rental & Sales
- Crawford County Historical Society
- Western New York & PA RR
- Susi Building Supplies
- US Bronze Foundry & Machine
- AC & J Railroad, Jefferson, OH
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
- David P. Miller Family
- Industrial Truck & Crane
- Anderson Enterprises
- Specialty Fabrications & Powder Coating
- Bob Bingham family
- Bill McComas Family
- Scott Royer
- Ed Fine
- Carl Timko Family
- Jan Grayson / Perfect Coat
- Tom Collard Family
- Ed Cronin Family
- Seco/Warwick (Sheet Metal)
- Jack Sheetz Family
- D & M Tool
- Hafer Trucking

There's lots more information as well as interesting photos and stories on our website!
Check it out at www.fcvrhs.org



French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the
French Creek Valley Railroad
Historical Society

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French Creek Valley Express is published Spring and Fall. Those wishing to submit material must do so no later than 30 days prior to publication, i.e. by April 1st or October 1st. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity. Queries must include full name, address, and daytime phone number or e-mail address. Individual membership dues are \$20.00/year, family membership dues are \$35.00/year (\$1.00 for juniors to 18 years) for the period July 1- Jun 30. New member dues received after January 1 are good through the following full year period. Support from local businesses is welcomed: Gold, Silver and Bronze levels at \$500.00, \$250.00, and \$100.00, respectively, are available.

Tom E. Dailey Foundation Grant Application

The secretary of the FCVRRHS completed an application in June, for a grant from the Tom E. Dailey Foundation under the category of railroad heritage. The secretary was notified on the afternoon of August 20, that a decision would be made by the evening of August 22, as to whether the FCVRRHS was awarded a grant of any size. On Saturday evening, August 21, the Dailey Foundation notified us that we did not receive any grant money, but were informed that the FCVRRHS could certainly try again. With that in mind, the FCVRRHS will try again in late September. The grant application was for funding the B&LE boxcar restoration project.

-Carl Timko

Committee Reports to the Members

Property & Equipment

Progress is being made with the Erie Railroad ALCO S2 #518. Over the spring and summer the cab was freshened up with a coat of black paint. Then several of the FCVRRHS work crew members painted the hand rails yellow, with John Snyder finishing up by painting the rear cab grab irons and the steps in the front of the #518.

The track panel extension at the display site was installed by WNYF Railroad crews on June 9. The next day, a FCVRRHS crew consisting of Tom Collard, Terry Martin, Bill McComas, and Tom Stewart spread a load of ballast that was delivered by Kebert's.

A WNYF Railroad crew led by track supervisor Rob Gilliland moved the #518 ahead with a front loader and a chain, with Terry Martin manning the handbrakes. Several other FCVRRHS members were on hand to witness the event.

Several plates of sheet metal were welded to fix the cab sides by Stan Niwa with some assistance from Jack Sheets. On August 27, a crew made up of Jack Sheets, Ed Cronin, John Snyder, and Stan Niwa conducted some more work on the #518. Stan had more welding to do, while Jack, Ed, and John rented a steam jenny

from Lloyd's Rentals to steam clean the S2's trucks.

At the August meeting, it was decided that the lettering of the #518 likely won't happen until Spring of 2016.

The wait is still on, as of September 26, for the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad wooden boxcar to arrive. Industrial Truck and Crane has had some problems with their trailer and needed to repair the trailer to haul the boxcar. Another problem is coordinating the schedule with the Lake Shore Railway Historical Society, as their summer hours are now over, and most of the members are only available on the weekends. The current status is that ITC will provide the crane and Daily Express would haul the boxcar, with another trucking company bringing the trucks off of the boxcar.

The Erie Lackawanna caboose #C356 has a fresh coat of paint on the inside. Jack Sheets led that project. Replacing the steps for the visitors were the next project for the caboose. They were installed shortly before the ELHS convention, which took place in Cambridge Springs on September 18th through the 20th. The caboose was open only on the 20th, but received six guests, including Ted Trewer, our newest member.

John Nagurney is looking into the procedures to acquire the Smock property in Pomona Park. It is hoped that the FCVRRHS can acquire the property so that the Pennsylvania Railroad tool car can be displayed and used there.

-Jack Sheets & John Nagurney

Our Museum

The annual meeting was held at the Cambridge Springs trolley station on Monday, August 10, 2015. The fifty-five guests that attended first heard from President Ed Cronin. He presented the three projects that are underway. Establishing a museum in Meadville, the movable exhibit project, and the restoration of the trolley station. The museum building project has been put on hold until a clear opportunity arises to purchase the building at 789

Bessemer St. The movable exhibits are exhibits that are rotated in schools. Seven cabinets have been constructed, with two already in schools. The other five are awaiting exhibits to be placed inside.

The work on the trolley station is being done by volunteers, including the students of Rod Frazier's electrical occupations class. So far, opera lights have been added, along with HDMI wiring for audio/visual equipment, renovation of the bathroom, added overhead lights in the back room and ticket office, fabricated storm windows, installed a new HVAC system, added an attic floor and lighting, with planned concrete work outside the station. Also two stoves have been refurbished along with a trolley bell donated by Mr. Dale Docter.

Three awards were given this year. The Volunteer of the Year is Rod Frazier, while his students were chosen as Partner of the Year. The new award of Historian of the Year was given to Anne Stewart, formerly of the Crawford County Historical Society. The award will henceforth be named in her honor.

Speaking at the event was Ken Springirth, trolley and railroad book author. Ken's lecture was about how the Cambridge Springs trolley station was at one time a transportation gateway to the big cities. He also showed how the trolleys began and how cities around the world today are installing light rail systems.

-Ed Cronin



History & Archives

Members of the committee met with Scott Ladner to go over his photos of the Erie Railroad. Twenty-eight photographs were selected to produce calendars for 2016 and 2017. Captions will be written by Dennis Mead and forwarded to Mike Vickey of Vickey Graphics, the photos have been sent so he can make up the best balance of photos for each calendar. Mike should have a sample ready to be approved by the October membership meeting.

-Denny Mead

Special Events & Programs

Now that the ELHS convention is over, the next local show would be the Erie Train Show at Rainbow Gardens, Waldameer Park in Erie. The show will be Sunday, November 1st. It is expected that Ken Springirth will be there to sell and sign his books. The French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society will have a table there to sell shirts and books, give out information, and talk with friends who make the trip. So come up and see us at the show.

One or two of the events listed in the Calendar of Events on the back page may have already taken place by the time this is published. These events have been noted in the "Second Section", the secondary newsletter based on the minutes of the monthly meetings. Only members receive the "Second Section".

- Ed Cronin

Membership



Larry Johnson

The FCVRRHS lost a valuable member of our organization. Larry Johnson passed away on Saturday, September 12 at the age of 75. Larry had been a director since 2009. Larry was employed by the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad for 36 years until he retired in 2002. He served as trainman, conductor, train dispatcher, and chief dispatcher. He also was a docent at the Johnson-Shaw Stereoscopic Museum. Larry leaves behind his wife Rosalee, his son and daughter, and many friends. So long, Larry, we will miss you.

New Members

The organization gained three new members recently. Chris Myers, Bob Moyers, and Ted Trewer. Ted signed up at the ELHS convention in Cambridge Springs. Welcome aboard, Chris, Bob and Ted!

- Carl Timko

Public Relations & Education

The Erie Lackawanna Historical Society Annual Meeting is in the books, and the event was well attended. There were 75 paid individuals that listened to the symposiums all day Saturday, September 19th. The guest speaker for the evening dinner was Carl Belke of the WNY&P RR, and after his talk Mike Connor of the ELHS presented three appreciation awards to Mr. Belke, Randy Dettmer, and our own Carl Timko. Our own vendor table was manned by both Carl and Vanessa, and Al Reibel filled in at the breaktimes. Sales were very brisk, with shirts and books doing very well. Thanks goes out to Carl, Vanessa and Al for all the help and time they gave to the event, and to Pete Gifford for his symposium talk about the Atlantic & Great Western.

In addition, thanks also goes to Jack Sheets, as well as John Snyder for opening the caboose for visiting on Sunday. Six people stopped and toured the site at Pomona Park.

The next event to place on your calendar is the Fall Train Show at Rainbow Gardens, Waldameer Park, Erie. Hope to see you there.

- Dennis Mead

Model Railroad

This committee has been relatively inactive lately. Mostly due to the other projects currently underway, such as the #518 and B&LE boxcar, and the trolley station projects. It is also partly due to the model railroad club ceasing and the lack of hobby stores in the region. Recent hobby store closings include Tom's Train Terminal and Amer's of Boardman, Ohio. But, we still have the large HO layout that is usually on display during the November and December

holidays. The layout will need to be freshened up if no major work needs to be done. It is this editor's opinion that the committee be kept active, as many members and potential members are interested in model railroading, and may be the reason they join or do not join.

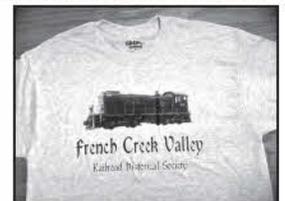
- Carl Timko

Budget & Finance

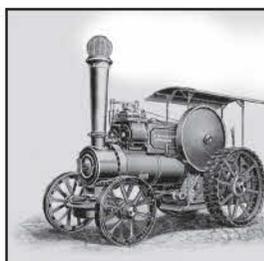
Merchandise sales have been doing very well, thanks to the ELHS convention and the caboose being open for one day. Also, thanks to Jack selling the books on his route. The books are doing so well that the ELHS is interested in buying a quantity to sell on their website and at shows. A deal with the ELHS for the remaining books after the convention fell through at the last minute. Still, they are interested. The shirts also were moving well at the convention. The most popular shirts were the caboose shirts. Pete Gifford dropped off five of his books and sold three, plus we received an application for new membership.

- Vanessa Timko

FCVRRHS adult tee shirts - \$17



FCVRRHS polo shirt adult sizes -\$20



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Local Rail Activity

(continued from page 1)

During Carl Belke's lecture on the current and future operations of the WNYP Railroad, he revealed that the WNYP may have a new Meadville yard engine. WNYP and its parent company, Livonia Avon & Lakeville are planning to rebuild RS3m #506. It has been out of service for quite a while. The #506 is under the LAL roster, and was formerly on the Tioga Central. It was originally Delaware & Hudson #4112, then D&H bicentennial #1776, then D&H #506. It was built by ALCO in September 1952.



Livonia Avon & Lakeville RS3m #506
Soon to be running on the WNYP-WNYP

It so far has had its radiators recored, the MU system repaired, and is now receiving ditch lights, an alerter system, event recorders and window glazing. After all the repair work is done, it will receive the company black and yellow paint scheme. Mr. Belke also mentioned another locomotive, an ALCO C430, formerly New York Susquehanna & Western #3006 will be repaired soon and renumbered #433. This locomotive has not run in ten years.

- Carl Belke & Carl Timko



Bill Burt speaking at the ELHS convention



According to C. L. Siebert, Jr.

...the trolley body that now serves as part of JD's Taphouse, on Baldwin St., in Meadville, was built in 1913. A story in the Meadville Tribune had the date as 1915. The trolley #104, originally named "Edinmere" and was numbered as #104 at the same time, was built at Niles Car and Manufacturing Co. in Niles, Ohio along with its sister that currently sits in Edinboro as the Crossroads Diner. The #104 was built as a full coach configuration, while the #103 (the Crossroads Diner body) was built as a combine. Both cars were built in the same year, and were 51 feet long.

The original paint scheme for the Northwestern Pennsylvania Railway was dark green with yellow striping at the windows. The above information is from the book "Northwestern Pennsylvania Railway" by C.L. Siebert, Jr.

The photo that the Tribune had of the #104 in 1939 shows that it was cut in two for the entrance. The last run for #104 could have been on a 1926 summer day when #104 and four other cars went to Conneaut Lake Park. This was the only time Mr. Siebert saw the #104 run since he saw it dead in storage in Meadville in 1925. It is unclear when the trolley was purchased for use as a diner. It later became a bar.

(editor's note: Although the owners, Dan and Michelle Perrine are refurbishing the interior, it is not advisable for our junior members to enter the bar.)

(continued from page 1)

Erie Railroad to run westbound freight trains over the Meadville Branch to Shermansville, then south on the Bessemer mainline to Shenango where the trains returned onto the Erie trackage. But, by the early 1930's, the combination of



Photo by Bill McComas

Dennis Mead delivering a lecture on Stony Point at the Conneaut Lake Area Historical Society meeting on August 17

lower traffic from the declining economic times, plus bigger, more powerful engines and the introduction of Centralized Traffic Control on the Erie, reduced the need for this arrangement. The Bessemer trackage rights agreement were maintained, though, allowing a detour route for the Erie/EL during times of trackwork or derailments, until the Meadville Branch was removed in 1977.

Changes were coming to Stony Point, though, as we will explain in the next edition of the *Valley Express*.

-Dennis Mead

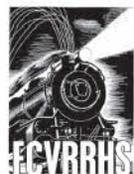


BREAKING NEWS!

It seems the long wait is over for the B&LE boxcar to be transported from North East to Meadville. Tuesday, October 13 has been set for the crews of Industrial Truck and Crane, Daily's Express, and Hall's Excavating to converge near the Lake Shore Railway Historical Society. ITC will load and unload the boxcar, Daily's will transport it and Hall's will transport the trucks. The boxcar, once numbered #A205 for the B&LE, is being loaned to the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society for display at Pomona Park in Meadville.

- Jack Sheets





French Creek Valley
Railroad Historical Society
P.O. Box 632
Meadville, PA 16335



The
B & LE
Boxcar

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society
Program & Events Schedule
Fall 2015 - Winter 2016

October 3,4
Great Berea Train Show
Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds
Berea, OH Sat. 10-5; Sun.11-4

October 17
Railfanning Day
Painesville RR Museum
Painesville, OH 10-5

October 31
Building a Model Railroad
Lakeland Community College
Kirtland, OH 9-2 *Free admission*

November 1
Erie Train Show
Rainbow Gardens-Waldameer Pk.
Erie, PA 10-4

November 7,8
Greenberg's Train/Toy Show
Monroeville Convention Center
Monroeville,PA 10-4

December 20
Christmas Toy/Train Show
Lakeland Community College
Kirtland, OH 10-3:30

March 19, 20
Railfest 2016
Lakeland Community College
Kirtland, OH 10-4



LIONS CONQUERING BLINDNESS

SIGHTFIRST



We Serve