



\$1.00



VALLEY EXPRESS



The Trolleys of Crawford County *(Concluded)*

(In the Spring Newsletter we learned of the late 1800's to early 1900's competition for business between trolley and steam as well as the strategies to co-exist. In this issue we will see that competition remained fierce although the trolley business gradually faded from the scene with arrival of the automobile and demands of WW-I)

In March of 1911 the Meadville city line and the Linesville line were reorganized into the Northwestern Electric Company. Then in 1912 it was rumored that the Northwestern was to purchase the Meadville and Cambridge Springs and the Erie Traction. Suggestions were even made by the president of the Northwestern to revive the Meadville to Titusville route, while at the same time the Titusville Traction was trying to start construction from Cambridge using the old A&GW grade. Finally, in November of 1912, the Northwestern took control of the Cambridge and Edinboro lines.

In 1912 while the Northwestern was consolidating the lines radiating from Meadville, the Erie Railroad was rebuilding their mainline east of Meadville to Cambridge Springs. Changes included lowering the tracks in Venango by 13 feet, while raising them by 12 feet through Saegertown. Although this resulted in physical changes to the traction line, it also brought proposals from the Northwestern of buying the former A&GW right-of-way between Cambridge Springs and Meadville. The route was much better than what the Northwestern followed, both in grade and protection from drifting snow. Besides, it was a shorter route, but the idea was never followed up. Later on it was explained by management that the real strategy of the purchase of the line was to prevent Titusville Traction from obtaining the route. An interesting note to this thought: the Northwestern later revived the idea of building on the A&GW Titusville route to reach Titusville. But World War One kept the project from happening because steel rail was simply not available during that time.

The last project on the Northwestern was the construction of the cut-off connecting the Edinboro line directly to the Venango line. Built in 1917, this route featured direct service now between Erie and Meadville (the Edinboro and Venango lines did not connect requiring passengers to change cars) and featured a wye junction known as Blystone's, which gave service to Cambridge Springs. In Cambridge a new station was built on the west side of the Erie tracks, and still sits on that site today. Construction of the cut-off later allowed removal of the original line from Venango to Cambridge, as well as portions of the Edinboro line to Siverlings Corners.

(continued on page 5)



A Busy Cambridge Springs Trolley Station in 1915. Looking north (east on the Erie Railroad schedule) showing the station with some interurban cars at the end of the branch line. The Erie Railroad depot is on the right of the picture. The steeple in the background behind the telephone pole is the former Cambridge Springs High School.

Local Update

The GE work force in Erie is still in shock per the management move to Chicago and pending layoff of 950 hourly paid workers, in preparation for the move to Fort Worth, TX.

FCVRRHS vice president Denny Mead has given up his duties working as engineer of the tourist train at the Erie Zoo. He recently held an open house at his home to show off his garden railroad.



From the Stationmaster's Office

The 518 is really taking shape since the main frame was transferred to Meadville last fall. Our members have generously volunteered to reassemble the many parts that were brought separately to Meadville for welding, painting, powder coating or straightening. New parts such as air tanks, horn, bell and worn metal have also been provided. We are blessed to have the many contributors who have freely provided such parts and services. We extend a big thank-you to all these members and providers. Now Scott has painted the engine and we hope to replace windows before winter arrives.



Lake Shore Railway Historical Society of North East, PA has graciously offered to lend us a former B & LE boxcar to complement the 518 engine and caboose at Pomona Park. Several trucking firms are being considered to haul the unit, no longer roadworthy, to Meadville. The boxcar will require renewing perhaps 10% of the wood material, which should keep us busy for sometime. The Combo car donated by the WNYP is still awaiting our action and remains parked beneath Smock Bridge within sight of Pomona Park, courtesy of the Railroad.

We look forward to establishing an annual excursion run to Corry, Franklin, or other areas, hopefully on an annual or more frequent basis, which will allow an affordable insurance rate. Interest in such excursions has always been high and should insure a strong following among Route 6 tourists and retirees.

I look forward to reestablishing our model train layout display this Christmas season in the Downtown Mall or other suitable site to entertain shoppers and train buffs and to promote our cause.

I hope to see the completion of these projects in the near future and welcome suggestions from area residents. If you would like to get involved, why not join us at our monthly meetings, held on the third Thursday at the US Bronze on Brakeshoe Road off Rte 6 in north Meadville at 6:20 PM.

Bernie Hanmore

CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Weber Electrical Supply
- Staples Copy & Print
- Lloyd's Rental & Sales
- Crawford County Historical Society
- Tom's Train Terminal
- Western New York & PA RR
- Susi Building Supplies
- US Bronze Foundry & Machine
- AC & J Railroad, Jefferson, OH
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
- Specialty Fabrications & Powder Coating
- Bob Bingham family
- Bill McComas Family
- Carl Timko Family
- Jan Grayson / Perfect Coat
- Tom Collard Family
- Ed Cronin Family
- Seco/Warwick (Sheet Metal)
- Jack Sheetz Family
- Anderson Enterprises
- 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.fcrrhs.org



French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the
French Creek Valley Railroad
Historical Society

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Carl Timko - Secretary
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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.

Budget and Finance

We continually monitor our financial situation with regard to our current and future projects. The Board makes decisions on what projects have priority and which will be delayed. Fortunately many of our members have assisted us with donations to help with the restoration of Erie #518 and preparing the site for the new (to us) B&LE box car. Fiscal year-to-date expenses have included new number board covers for 518, welding supplies, P.O. Box rental and sales tax on calendars sold.

As always, if you can spare a few dollars to help with specific projects it will be greatly appreciated.

-Ed Cronin

Membership

We have had only minimal activity in new memberships but we have seen a number of renewals. Anyone desiring to join us modelers, railroaders and local historians should contact me at blebuddy@yahoo.com or make an effort to attend a membership meeting - held the third Thursday of every month at US Bronze on Brakeshoe Road off Route 6 in north Meadville.

Membership dues for juniors (18 years and under) were increased from \$1.00 to \$5.00.

-Carl Timko

Our Museum

The museum committees are hard at work:

- Our Site/Building Committee is preparing a strategic master plan which will include the cost of all items for the proposed 24,000 square foot building, as well as the cost of the exhibits. Once that is completed we will break the project down into phases.

- We will be meeting with an exhibit designer, a museum space planner, and an architect soon to help with the strategic master plan.

- At the August FCV meeting we discussed possible railroad exhibits.

- The Finance Committee is renegotiating the land agreement for the proposed museum site to give us control of the property and billboard for the next 10 years.

- The Membership Committee is adding new members and preparing the next newsletter.

- The Museum Board is hoping to have the Cambridge Springs Trolley Station deeded over to us by the end of this year.

- The Museum Board is working with FCV Board to begin excursion trains in 2014. We have been in contact with the WNY & PRR as well as Scott Symans - owner of Viscoze #6 - an 0-4-0 steam locomotive.

- The Exhibit Committee has the first display case built except for the glass and will be finishing the first moveable exhibit that goes in it later this year.

- We have received a 300-plus milk bottle collection from the James Roha Family. Some of the collection will be put on display at the Johnson-Shaw Stereoscopic Museum.

-Ed Cronin



Model Railroad

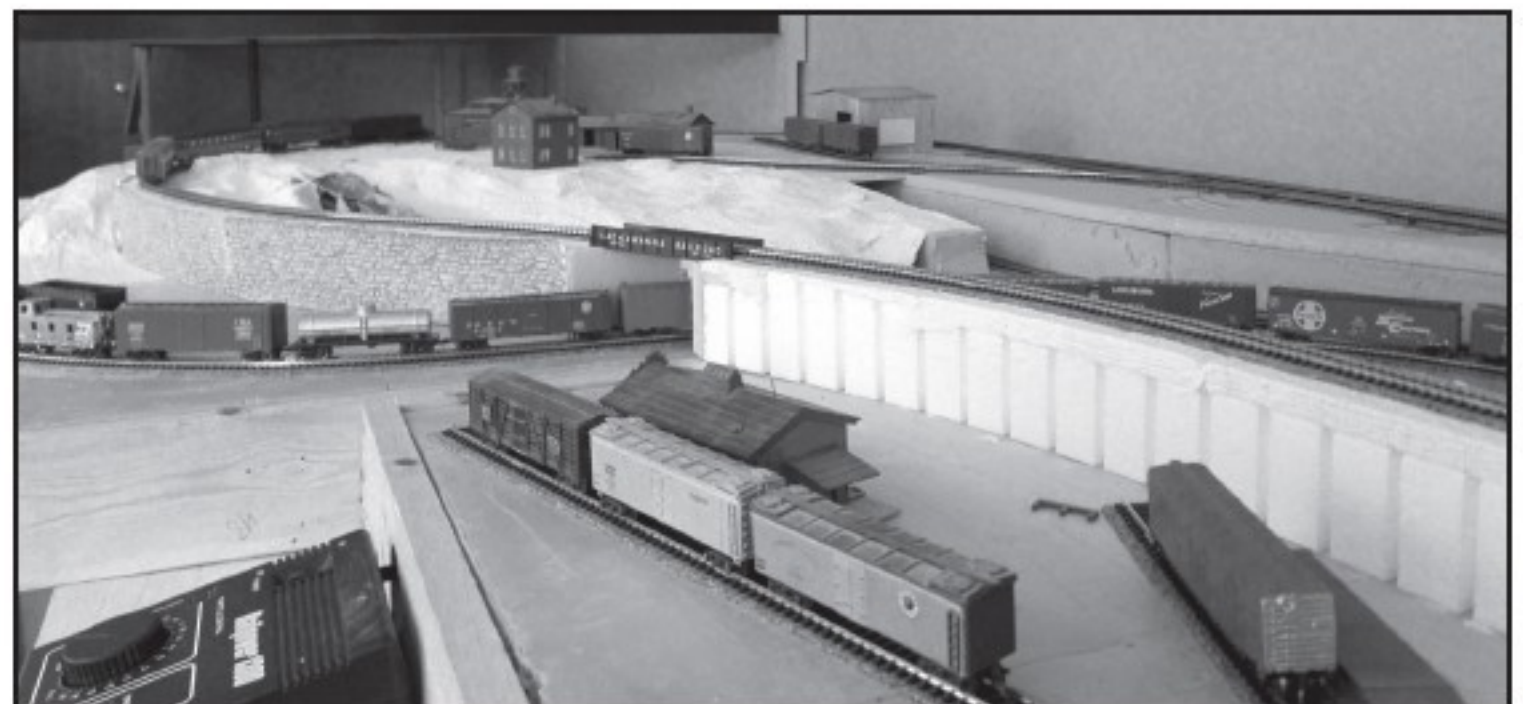
This has been an interesting summer and early fall. The French Creek Model Railroaders have been busy but not necessarily building

the club layouts. The HO group has been visiting model railroads in the area and developing new ideas for the club. Some of the same guys have been working on the Alco S-2 with a scale of 12 inches equals 1 foot. The N Scalers have half of their bench work completed and have begun laying track. In fact, in late August they operated their first train on a 20-foot section of track. The TT- Scalers have a much smaller layout, designed so that visitors can see this rare scale in action. Both the upper and lower loops are in operation and they are now working on industrial side tracks and starting to build scenery.

Many new products are being released this year by old and new manufacturers, including the new WNYP Alcos from Bowser. Walthers and Atlas are taking advance reservations on locomotives and cars, as is Broadway Limited Imports, just to name a few. There is even a new ready to run SW 1200- a switcher coming in TT Scale. This represents the first new American prototype in decades.

DCC continues to explode in the HO and N Scale markets. The next generation of model railroaders will likely ask: "What was DC operation?" And when you explain it to them they will undoubtedly give you a funny look and ask how you could possibly run locomotives without decoders. Actually, now that I am running DCC I ask myself the same question.

-Tom Collard



Start of scenery construction on the TT Scale layout - Shops@thebank, Park Ave.



Special Events / Programs

The Lake Shore Railway Historical Society recently hosted a FCVRRHS monthly meeting at their Station in North East, PA. While there we had opportunity to view the 105-year old boxcar the Lake Shore folks have offered to loan us on a long term basis. We enjoyed some serious train watching while conducting our meeting - some six trains per hour - as well as scoping out the bountiful collection of engines and cars, including the 25-year-old NS D8-32B diesel from NS's Roanoke Shop.

We plan to reintroduce our HO Scale layout to the community per a Christmas display either in the Downtown Mall or other location in the Meadville or Conneaut Lake area.

Our Museum planners have determined that excursion trains could be lucrative to the club if run on three weekends (Saturday and Sunday) during the summer and early fall. The Visitors Center has offered to arrange reservations for visitors.

-Bernie Hanmore & Ed Cronin

History & Archives

The Heritage Center Museum Board hopes to have the Cambridge Springs Trolley Station deeded over to them this year. The site would provide a potential meeting venue for local Boy Scout meetings and possible excursion run starting points, as well as semi permanent model train layout spot and storage area.

-Bernie Hanmore & Ed Cronin

Public Relations

There is not much to report here. The caboose has not been

available for viewing due to the reconstruction of 518, limiting any contact with the public. The coming Rainbow Gardens Show in Erie on November 3 should help reconnect with our regular followers, in addition to bringing in some additional revenue for the Society. Hopefully, the 2014 calendars will be available for selling at that time.

We continue to study a plan to offer model railroad clinics to those interested in the coming future. We currently have several ideas for future clinics, and we are always open to suggestions from modelers for subjects they would like to see discussed. Let Tom Collard know of any suggestions the next time you visit his hobby shop (See page 6).

-Dennis Mead

Property & Equipment

If you haven't seen the Alco S2 518 lately, you may be surprised at the improvements made since the engine was first brought over from Jefferson, OH last fall. The hood, hood doors, air tanks, battery boxes, rear steps, and hand rails have been reinstalled and a rusted out metal strip across the rear of the engine has been replaced, courtesy of Stan Niwa. Also, the topside radiator exhaust fan cover restoration was donated by Specialty Fabricators & Powder Coat (SFPC) as a favor to Jack Sheets. The bell, re-railers, and 5D45 doors have been installed, and Jack is in the process of duplicating an antenna, while Jon and Nate Clark successfully detailed and installed the two side light-up signs on the nose.



Alco 518 being spray painted by Scott with aid from John



The Alco S2 518 prior to painting



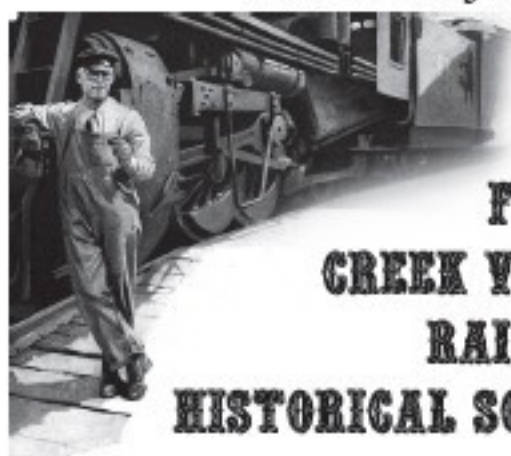


Damaged Rear Coupler on the 518

Scott Royer, a CSX Engineer who currently hauls automobiles from Toledo to New Castle, PA, earlier saved the day by bringing his grinder to help smooth and close the mismatched hood doors, and has now spray painted the 518. We are very grateful to Scott and helpers Denny, John and Bill. Also, we are grateful to member Stan Niwa, assisted by John Snyder, for replacing the rusted out metal strip across the rear of the cab. Metal has also been provided to replace the worn strip on the lower left side of the cab. Stan also made a quick fix of the damaged rear coupler with assistance from Ed Cronin, and Tom Stewart. You tell me - what would we do without these guys, eh?

Signs by Renee donated a plaque identifying the coal tower concrete chunk adjacent the 518.

-Al Reibel & Jack Sheets



**FRENCH
CREEK VALLEY
RAILROAD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

(continued from page 1)

By the 1920's the motor vehicle and paved highways were making a mark on the Northwestern's operations. In October of 1923 the company was sold to the Venango Public Service Corporation, a subsidiary of Penn Public Service Corporation located in Johnstown, PA. Fires and financial woes began to hurt the operations of the traction company. Abandonment of some city routes had already begun, and by 1922 only three cars were needed to service the city routes. Then by January 31, 1927 the last car had run from Linesville, with the tracks from Harmonsburg to Linesville being pulled up shortly after that. Labor Day 1927 saw the remaining city car lines cease operations, replaced by buses of the Penn Public Motor Transportation Company.

During May of 1928 the Northwestern filed for abandonment of the Conneaut Lake route, and at the same time requested abandonment of the main line to Erie. Both received permission, and the last car to Conneaut Lake happened on July 31 of that year. Shortly after that the main line saw its last car operate to Erie on September 30, 1928. The days of traction were over in Crawford County.

Titusville Traction Company

Beginning in 1898 as the Titusville Electric Traction Company, the company had built trackage throughout Titusville proper, as well as extensions east to Pleasantville in Venango County. It also had an interesting extension to Tryonville, following the PRR line north through Hydetown. As we know from the history of the Northwestern Electric, the Titusville Traction, as it was known after 1914, had grand visions of extending to Cambridge Springs and connecting with the lines going to Erie. But the PRR stood in their way for a seamless connection to the northwest. The PRR would

not allow the Titusville Traction to cross their steam railroad at Hydetown. So, rather than build an expensive bridge, the Titusville Traction simply built the line to a point in Hydetown where the Trolley would stop and the passengers exit the car, cross the



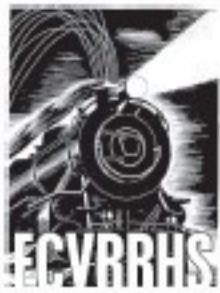
Silent echoes inside an abandoned trolley

PRR tracks and reload onto a waiting trolley to continue. In August 1917 it was reported that the PRR and the traction line had arranged an agreement that would have the PRR change their route through Hydetown, thus allowing abandonment of 6 grade crossings. The work was estimated to take two years to complete, at which time the PRR and the traction company would partner to build a trolley line to Cambridge Springs. This would then allow quick service to Erie and Meadville.

As hard as the Titusville Traction tried to go to Cambridge Springs, they never succeeded and in 1924 the line was shut down forever.

Though the trolley operations in Northwestern Pennsylvania have disappeared, reminders remain throughout the county. Electric sub-station structures and former passenger / freight stations still dot the countryside. Even several of the abutments and bridges, along with abandoned right-of-way can still be seen along the county highways. As for the trolley cars themselves, only a couple survive. One well known car sits at the Edinboro Crossroads Dinor, while another is part of a popular tavern on Baldwin Street Extension.

-Dennis Mead



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

Alco S2 #518



Program & Events Schedule - Fall 2013

Sunday, October 27 (10am - 3pm)

Beaver-Lawrence Railway H.S. Fall Fling Train Show
Vanport VFD Social Hall • 435 Jefferson Street • Vanport, PA
Admission: \$4 (Children under 12 Free)

Sunday, November 3 (10am - 4pm)

Erie Railroadiana & Model Train Show
Rainbow Gardens - Waldameer Park, Erie, PA
Admission: \$4 (Seniors and Students 12-18 - \$3)

Sunday, November 10 (10am - 4pm)

Greater Wayne County Train & Toy Sale
Buckeye Event Ctr. • 624 Henry St. • Dalton, OH
Admission: \$5 (Children under 12 Free)

Saturday, November 16 (10am - 3pm)

Train Collectors of America
At the former EL Train Station • Jamestown, NY
Adults: \$5

Sunday, November 24 (10am - 3pm)

Beaver County Model Train & Toy Sale
1495 Old Broadhead Rd. • Monaca, PA
Admission: \$5 (Under 12 Free)

Sunday, November 24 (10am - 4pm)

Kittanning Train & Toy Show
Kittanning Twp Vol. Fire Hall
13126 St. Rt. 422 • Kittanning, PA
Admission: \$3 (Under 12 Free)

Sunday, December 1 (10am - 4pm)

Firelands Model Train & Toy Show
Erie Co. Fairgrounds • 3110 Columbus Ave. • Sandusky, OH
Admission: \$5 (Under 18 Free)

Sunday, December 8 (10am - 3pm)

Massillon Train & Toy Show
Massillon Knights of Columbus Hall
988 Cherry Road NW • Massillon, OH
Admission: \$5 (Under 12 Free)



A Berkshire engine chugs by on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway

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