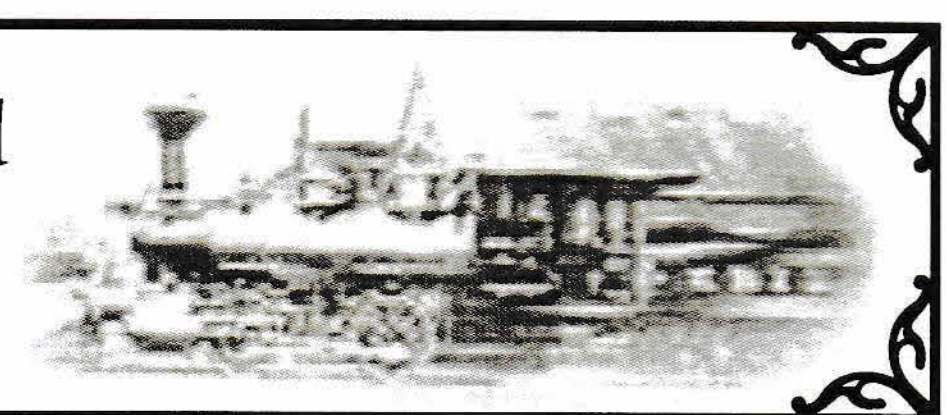


French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

P.O. Box 632 Meadville, PA 16335



FALL 2021

Newsletter of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Volume 16 Number 2

VALLEY EXPRESS

Meadville Railroad Depot Has "Soft" Opening

by Carl Timko

The public got three days to view the renovations of the Meadville Railroad Depot on Labor Day weekend. The doors opened on Saturday, September 4 with many railfans, history buffs and the curious streaming through the south door. Trolley and railroad author Ken Springirth was present to sell and sign his books. He was impressed enough to come back on Sunday. The sales counter also opened to those looking for apparel or souvenirs. Sales were brisk and donations were many. Thank you to all who made purchases or donations. Every little bit helps.

Displays included a diesel locomotive brass bell that was refurbished by Terry Martin, two illuminated switch signals, a case with model locomotives, a model truck collection, a couple of passenger conductor uniforms, and other railroadiana.

Renovations will continue with the goal of being ready to open for our Christmas layout display and show by the holiday season, complete with two or three model railroad layouts. No dates have been set yet, but it is expected to run to at least Christmas Eve.



Trolley and railroad book author Ken Springirth entertaining customers at the Depot "Soft" Opening Sept. 4.

-Dan Pfeiffer photo, edited by Carl Timko



Bernie and Lori Hanmore talking with visitors.

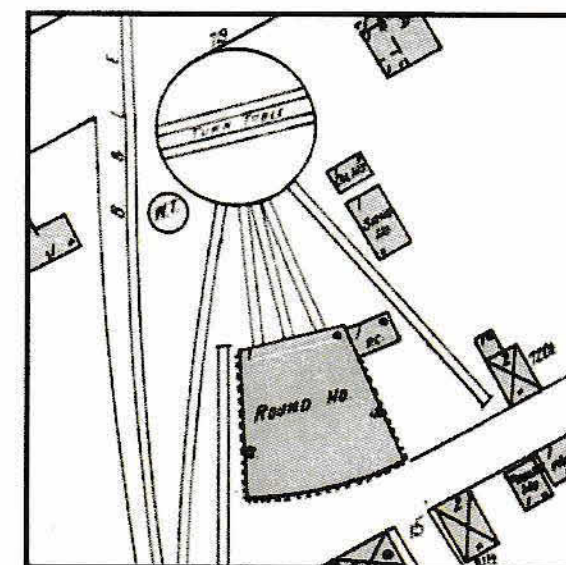
-Dan Pfeiffer photo, edited by Carl Timko

History of the Meadville Railway - Part 2

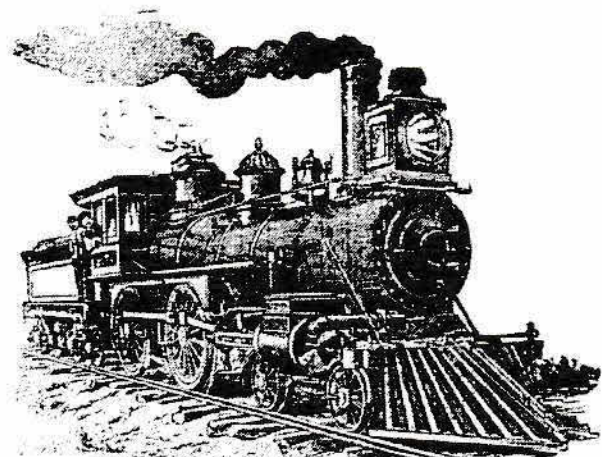
by Carl Timko

Meadville Railway had several railroad structures of note along the way. First, of course, is the passenger depot, err... station according to Pennsy mandates, in Meadville, Evansburg, Shermansville, and one already in use for the Erie & Pittsburgh in Linesville that was built in 1875. Stations were not more than shanties at West Union, Watson Run, and West Vernon. Other structures were the engine facility in Kerrtown, which consisted of a brick one-story, three stall roundhouse, a turntable (twice installed) with 5 tracks. One track was the lead into the yard, another was a siding that went as far as the front edge of the roundhouse. There were three tracks into the roundhouse and another track leading from the turntable to along side the sand house and extending to the length of the roundhouse on the east side. Dimensions are not known for the turntable. It was known the first one was not big enough for the engines that were to use it, necessitating the replacement. Also at the facility were a one-story oil house, a one-story sand house, and a water tower. It is unknown of what material the water tower was constructed, but a good bet is it was made of wood. The engine house and turntable were gone by 1922, as referenced by the 1922 Meadville Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The other buildings were made of brick with slate or metal roofs with coped walls. This is according to the Sanborn map legend. The stations were of wood construction and likely had metal roofs.

(continued on page 5)

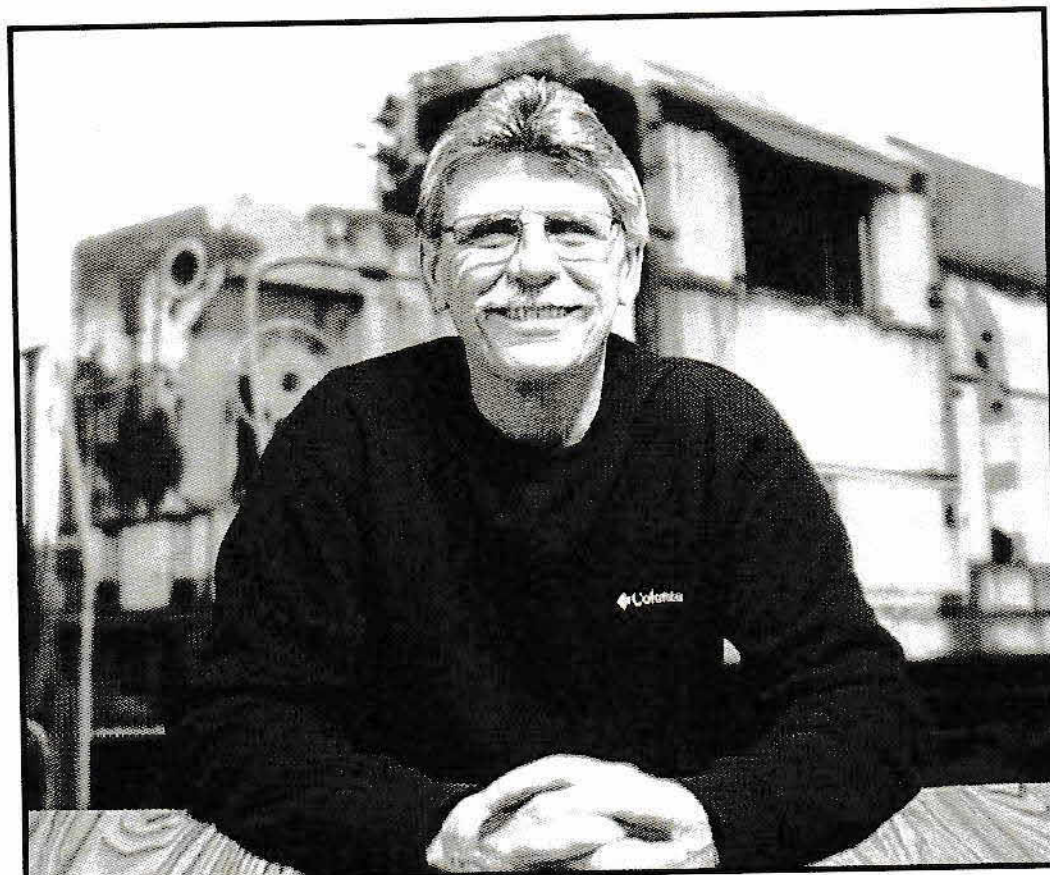


1912 Sanborn Map of the Meadville Railway (MCL&L in 1912) engine facilities at Kerrtown, PA. Turntable next to Hope St., water tower to left and below turntable. Oil house, sand house to right and below turntable, and the roundhouse.



From the Stationmaster's Office

EXCITING NEWS! By the time this issue arrives at your mailbox, we will have had a "soft" opening! It was scheduled for September 4 through the 6th, the Labor Day weekend. We were open for tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. The excitement actually started a bit early with a couple of group tours on Thursday, August 26 and filming by Armstrong Cable for their channel. Two of our glass cases were filled with merchandise while the vertical



glass cases housed displays. Plans for a model railroad layout were being formulated while finishing touches to the main room were being done days before the opening. The members that came to help were quite busy; as one member mentioned, it looked very much like a production line.

The previous issue of the *Valley Express* showed photos of the interior a year or two ago and now. Even since the last issue, remarkable progress has been made. The flooring was installed, the base trim has been installed, glass cases have been brought in, cleaned up and placed. As of this writing, the depot looks bare, but railroad artifacts will be brought in which will make the place look more like the museum that it now is. Many thanks go to all who have helped throughout the renovation. Without you this could not have happened. Thank you to all who have donated to make this mutual dream possible. But, we are not done with renovating yet. We may have the main room done, but the storage room is pretty much just getting started. We can use all the help we can get to make the museum a main attraction to railroaders and tourists alike.

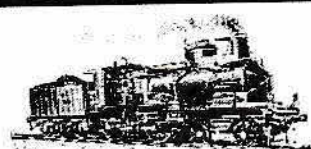
Bernie Hanmore

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This Special List is continued on Page 5!

Check out our website at www.fcrrhs.org



French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the
French Creek Valley Railroad
Historical Society

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Memberships:

\$20 individual; \$35 family;
\$5 student under 18

The corporate Gold, Silver, and Bronze memberships and Lifetime memberships have been eliminated.

All members with lifetime memberships will not lose them.

History & Archives

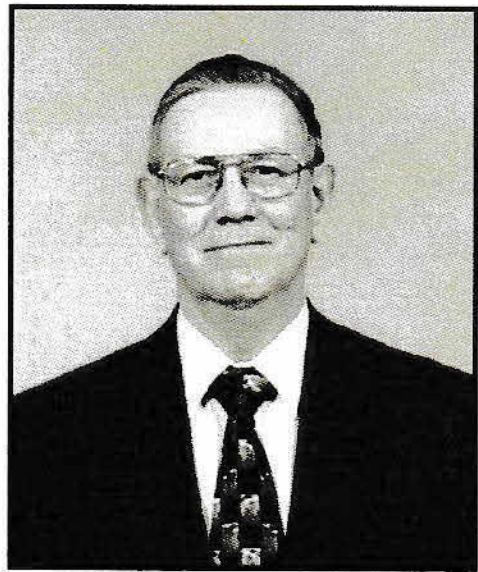
Now that the museum is taking shape, material donations have been coming in fairly steadily. We thank all the donors who thought enough of us to care for their collections. Thanks to the Greenville Railroad Park for their donations of bound volumes of magazines. They needed room, and we can use these for reference.

Special thanks to Scott Woods for lending this editor material relating to the lead story in the Spring 2021 *Valley Express*. The information contained within is invaluable in writing the story.

- Carl Timko

Membership

The French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society lost a valued member since the last issue. James Garfield passed away May 16, 2021 at the age of 78. Jim graduated from Saegertown High School in 1961. He served in the Navy during the Vietnam War. He became a union



James Garfield

carpenter with local 556. He also was a self-employed carpenter and also worked at Meadville Medical Center for 17 years as a facility engineer.

The Robert Waid Funeral Home handled the arrangements. Family and friends were received at his viewing on May 20, along with military honors provided by VFW 2006 of Meadville.

A celebration of life event was held at the Meadville Railroad Depot on June 25, one of the first events to be held in the depot.

Memorials could be made to the FCVRRHS in lieu of flowers.

Our thoughts and prayers to Jim's wife, Nancy, and to his family and friends.

Clear track ahead, Jim.

- Robert Waid Funeral Home,
and Carl Timko

Despite the pandemic, membership in the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society continues to grow. Between the last issue of *Valley Express* and the

beginning of September, the following have enrolled as new members: Brad Colwell, Randy Kareha, Mike and Mary Marley, Brian Miller, Linda Sheets, and Larry Weigel.

We received new members Glen and Dorothy Cutshall, Judy Schumacker, and Gary Svetz over the Labor Day weekend soft opening. Welcome aboard and **BLOW THE WHISTLE!**

Several patrons at the "Soft Opening" received a membership application, so there are potential new memberships arriving soon. We are confident that many more will join when the 2021 holiday layout display begins. Members can help the cause by mentioning to friends, family and acquaintances that are interested in supporting the FCVRRHS or just may be interested in trains, that memberships are \$20 per adult, \$35 for a family and \$5 for students under the age of 18.

-Scott Ladner, Membership Chair, VP,
and Carl Timko



FCVRRHS members James Saulsbery, Richard Roberts, and Arden Hibbard converse during the "Soft Opening" of the Meadville Railroad Depot on Sept. 4, 2021

- Dan Pfeiffer photo

Model Railroading

Garden railroaders have some resources, though, very few, after Kalmbach Publishing dropped *Garden Railways Magazine* in its printed format.

Your editor recently came across *Garden Railroading News* on the interwebs. The current online copy consists of forty-two pages, with ads. The July/August 2021 issue lists in its table of contents, *News and Products*, *Club Corner*, *Letters (to the editor)*, *Specials (Features)*, that include stories on two layouts and an article on on-demand railroading. Also listed are articles on building a tap-lounge passenger car, rebuilding a PIKO Clean Machine, the dwarf Chinese elm tree, and an article on

the anatomy of doors.

There is also a column that may help the modeler decide when to replace the track and car wheels. The online magazine is free, plus one can download back issues. Any garden railroader would do well to check out this magazine at www.GRNews.org.

- Carl Timko

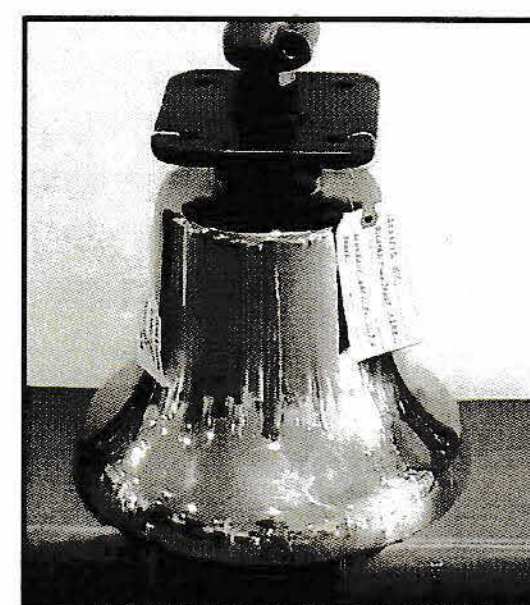
Museum

At the present time, our recent donations should fund the completion of the interior of the Meadville Railroad Depot. Phase III will begin next spring and will include finishing and repainting the Depot exterior, new skirting, parking lot refreshing including parking stop blocks, and the installation of air conditioning units in both HVAC systems.

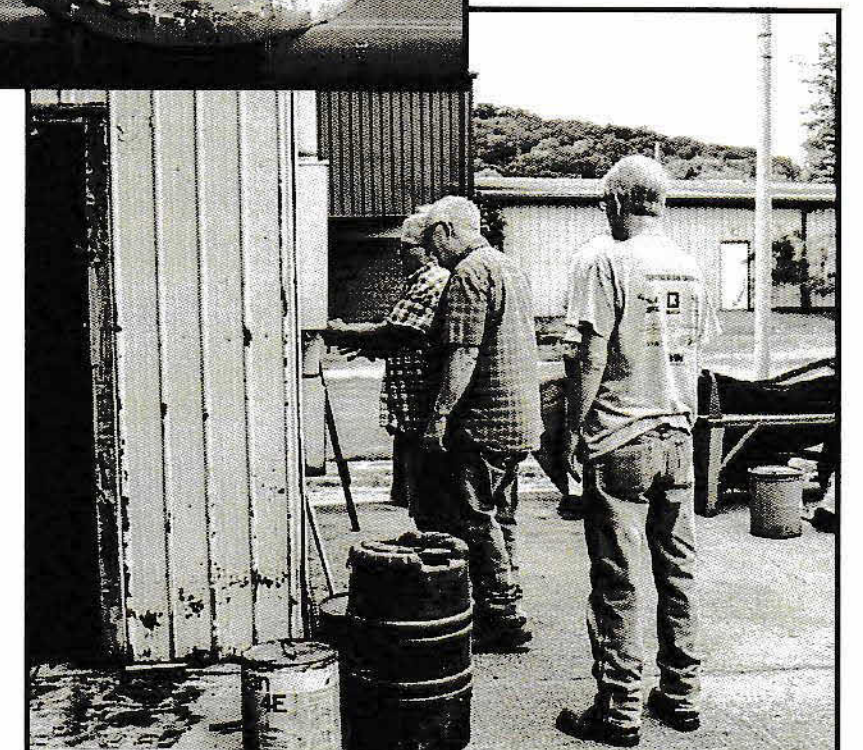
The FCVRRHS did especially well this year with the Crawford Gives fundraiser managed by the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation conducted on August 30 and 31. We raised over \$25,000.00 in donations. The match pool, funded by Acutec Precision Aerospace, Armstrong, First Choice Settlements of Pennsylvania LLC, Northwest Trust Services, and Palmiero Toyota, added another 8% to our donations for a total of over \$27,500!

Strong participation in the October, 2021 Palmiero Give Back Program, by all of our members, will help fund Phase III.

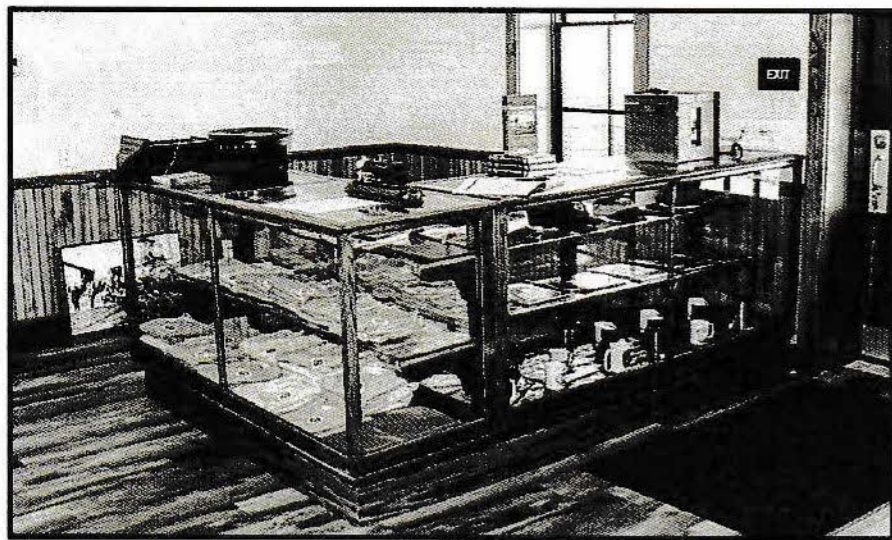
- Ed Cronin



Bell from a diesel locomotive, on display at the Meadville Railroad Depot.
- Carl Timko



Crew inspecting the exterior of the depot. September 9, 2021 - Dan Pfeiffer photo



Merchandise cases set up for "Soft Opening" at Meadville Railroad Depot
- Dan Pfeiffer photo

Property and Equipment

With the majority of the members' focus being on the renovation of the museum, there hasn't been a lot of activity at the display site. An Allegheny College class, taught by new member Brian Miller, had planned to come down to the display site to view the equipment. The status of the pandemic is pretty much the driving factor.

As yet, the Conrail (ex- Delaware Lackawanna & Western) snowplow is still waiting for the window glass that is to replace the current glass or coverings.

- Carl Timko

Public Relations & Education

Carl Timko will be narrating the history of the Meadville Railroad Depot and the FCVRRHS on October 5 via a Zoom virtual meeting with the Allegheny College students of Brian Miller. Last year, Carl had shared the history of the depot and the organization with Brian's Allegheny College class. This year was to be an on-site learning experience during the soft opening, but the pandemic is not going away anytime soon, so a safer way to teach is with a virtual meeting.

The FCVRRHS and the depot were the subjects of news and media coverage during the soft opening thanks to the Meadville Tribune, Cool 101.7 (WMVL-FM) and an Erie television station, along with our own Facebook site. To view updates and photos of the renovation of the depot, go to www.Facebook.com, then search for French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society.

- Carl Timko

Special Events & Programs

The FCVRRHS is planning to have our holiday model layouts running this year. There will be a new layout built, plus the layout from the Meadville Railroad Club will be on-site along with the G scale Polar

Express and possibly the trolley. A specific date hasn't been chosen as yet. Somewhere between the day after Thanksgiving and December first is the best guess for the opening day.

There are several model train shows in the surrounding area (between Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh). Most are listed on page 6 of this issue. There will be many club layout shows during the holiday season as well, however, none are listed in this issue, but members will be notified in the event they are announced. If you go to any of them, please practice safe distancing, wear a mask to stay safe and keep all those you meet safe as well.

- Carl Timko

On The Side Track

The Youngstown Steel Heritage Foundation has announced that the former Conrail SDP45 #6670 (nee-Erie Lackawanna #3639), which was purchased three years ago, may be up for sale. The organization could not raise the funds to transport it to the museum in Struthers, OH. The 20 cylinder diesel-electric locomotive still has its prime mover, but is missing its generator, air compressor, and steam generator, among other parts. It is still sitting in Norfolk, VA.

-Chris Manning,

Youngstown Steel Heritage Foundation

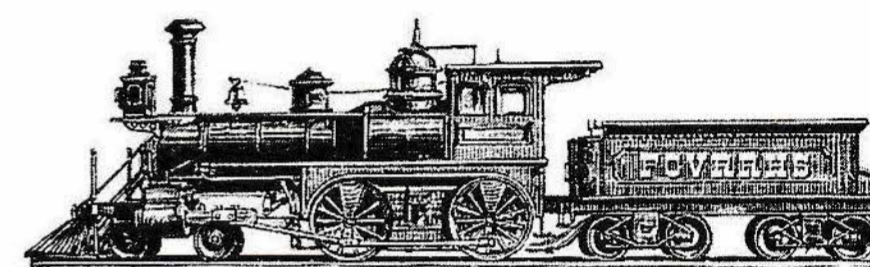


Youngstown Steel Heritage Foundation's ex-Conrail SDP45 #6670, as it sits in Norfolk, VA. - screenshot from YSHF video.

Three members of the FCVRRHS are participating in the filming of Len and Patti Brown's documentary, *Engineering Tragedy: The Ashtabula Train Disaster*. Nate Clark and Vanessa and Carl Timko are extras in the film and have had several roles each. The film is about the bridge collapse on the evening of December 29, 1876 on the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern in Ashtabula,

Ohio. For more information, visit their Facebook site by searching for Engineering Tragedy. There is a video tour of what extras had to do before and during the filming on July 23, 2021. You may see a couple of familiar faces. When you get on the Engineering Tragedy Facebook site, look for a video by Patti Brown titled "Check Out This Video on What it is Like to Show Up to be an Extra". There are more videos to view, including a green screen shot of rescuers with lanterns, and another video of the same film shot, but with the scenery placed over the green screen. After filming in Columbus, Ohio, plans are to shoot some scenes at the Pymatuning Dam in Jamestown, PA.

- Carl Timko

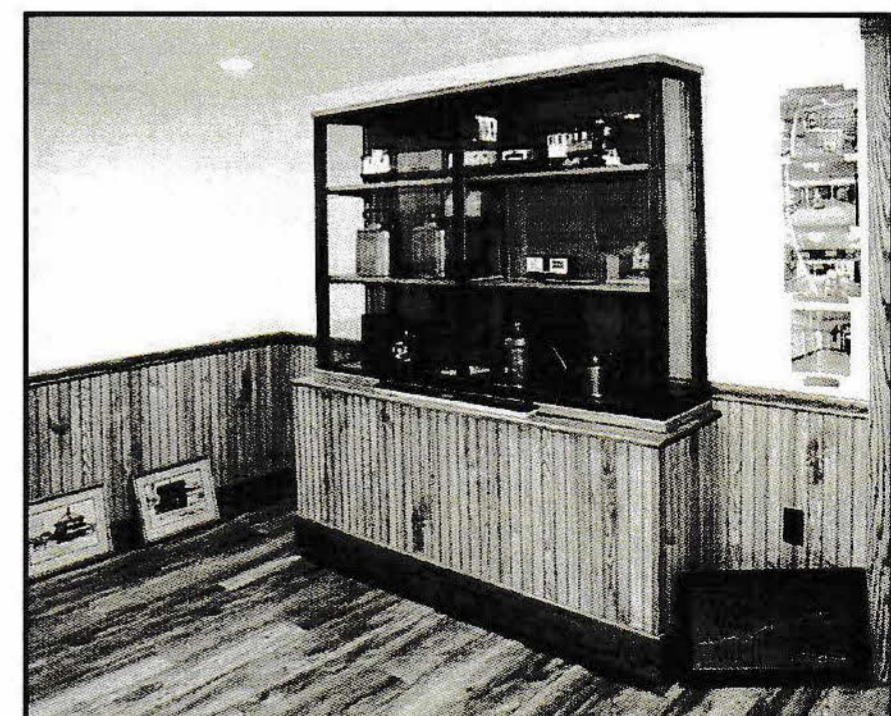


The Youngstown Steel Heritage Foundation is planning to open an operating narrow gauge steel mill railroad in the Spring of 2022 featuring narrow gauge steam locomotive.

- Rick Rowlands, Nick Ozorak



Linda Sheets (left) and Casey Pfeiffer (right) chatting with two unidentified visitors in the kitchenette of the Meadville Railroad Depot. September 4, 2021. - Dan Pfeiffer photo



Display case with a number of railroad and model railroad artifacts at the Meadville Railroad Depot - September 2, 2021. This display case was rebuilt and assembled only days before the "Soft Opening" of the depot/museum of September 4, 2021

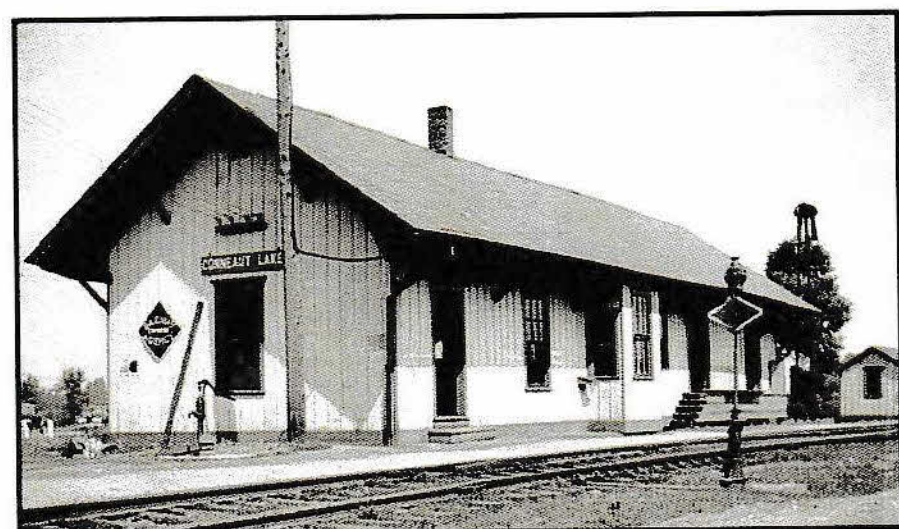
- Dan Pfeiffer photo

Meadville Railway History

(continued from page 1)

The Meadville station was built in 1881, having been completed after the opening of the Meadville Railway. But it was not as it is now. The northern 50 feet of the building was added by the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad around 1907. Also, the western addition was likely added when it became a farm and garden store.

The Evansburg/Conneaut Lake station was a one-story wood framed building, 24 feet, 3 inches wide and 52 feet 6 inches long, with a composite roof, and a 3 foot by 7 ½ foot bay. It had a platform that was 8 feet wide and 20 feet long. The 1153 foot siding had a capacity for 17 cars. Evansburg also had the Ice House, which facilitated the storage and distribution of large blocks of ice for commercial and residential purposes. Ice was cut from the waters of the adjacent Conneaut Lake.



Conneaut Lake station, July 1941. It was 60 years old at the time of the photo.

- courtesy of Greenville Railroad Park.

There eventually was a passenger station at Shermansville. An article in the November 25, 1881 edition of the *Conneautville Courier* noted that the passenger business at Shermansville was better than at any other station on the Meadville Railway and that should entitle Shermansville to a station house. It is mentioned that when the Shermansville station was closed, it was moved to Meadville Junction. If this is fact, the Shermansville station was likely built between 1882 and 1884.

The locomotives that traversed the Meadville Railway have been a puzzle. We know that the successor, Meadville & Linesville Railway, had three locomotives, all 4-4-0s. Since the Erie & Pittsburgh Railroad operated the Meadville Railway, it is

likely that the locomotives were supplied by the E&P and/or the Pennsylvania Railroad (the E&P was a subsidiary of the PRR), and were likely to have been older 4-4-0s. One engine that did operate on the Meadville Railway was the Meadville Railway #1.

The #1 was a Pennsylvania Railroad veteran that was built by the Norris Locomotive Works in 1848. The Meadville Railway did acquire this engine in 1880 and it was in rough but still usable shape. It did last through the Meadville & Linesville Railroad (1884-1891), and three years in service for the Meadville Conneaut Lake & Linesville Railroad and Pittsburgh Shenango & Lake Erie, which leased the MCL&L. As far as owning any other locomotives, not even the Meadville Railway board of directors meeting minutes mentioned any purchase or lease of locomotives. According to a clipping from the October 14, 1881 edition of the *Conneautville Courier*, the locomotives had to run in reverse to Linesville because the turntable in Meadville was too light for the locomotives to be turned. Another turntable was being built to replace the initial one. That statement in itself suggested there was more than one locomotive in use. The latter turntable was built right up to the edge of Hope Street, as evidenced by the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance map.

The freight and passenger equipment used were likely to have been borrowed or leased from the Erie & Pittsburgh since the E&P operated it anyhow. When the Meadville Railway began they ran mixed freights with the freight and then one or two passenger cars on the end, as they had no cabooses; at least earlier in the railway's existence.

(Many thanks to Scott Woods and the Greenville Railroad Park, Sanborn Maps, Dennis Mead, Ron Stafford, PRR& THS, archived issues of the *Conneautville Courier*, "Pennsylvania Railroad - Lines West: Erie & Pittsburgh Railroad" by Al Buchan; "The Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad - 1869-1969" by Roy C. Beaver

CN/KCS Merger Is Off

It was recently learned that the proposed merger between Kansas City Southern and Canadian National has been stopped. The Surface Transportation Board ruled on August 31, 2021, that CN's use of a voting trust while attempting control of the KCS is not consistent with public interest. Though there were several letters supporting the approval of the merger, there were many letters from Amtrak, the Department of Justice, coalitions, organizations, and businesses that were opposed to the use of the voting trust. With the STB's decision, the merger is off and it leaves the possibility of a Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Southern merger in the near future.

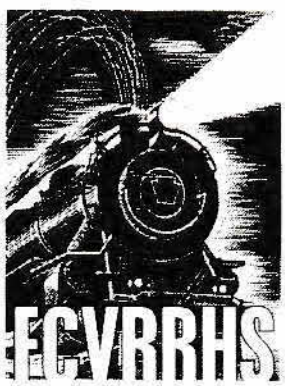
-Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD36514

CONTRIBUTORS

(continued from page 1)

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- Dan and Casey Pfeiffer
- Carol and Craig Powell
- J.V. Sample
- Lynn Sandieson
- Judith Schlosser
- Howard and Luann Schroeder
- John and Linda Sheets
- Janice and John Skendall
- Rob and Nancy Smith
- John and Lynda Snyder
- Larry Spencer and Lynn Hyde
- Samuel Spencer
- Bob Stainbrook
- Dr. and Mrs. Chris Thomas
- Margie Thompson
- Pastor and Marjorie Townsend
- Marjorie Weigel
- Roger Willis and Christine Norwood
- Dennis and Lynanne Wilmoth
- Patricia Winsor
- Charles and Bonnie Zilhaber
- Donald and Nancy Zimmer

On behalf of the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society, thank you to all who have donated funds, materials, and talents to our renovation of the Meadville Railroad Depot



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



Meadville Railroad Depot
© FCVRRHS

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society
Calendar of Events
Fall 2021 to Spring 2022

Oct. 9 - Painesville Model Train Flea Market

Painesville Railroad Museum, 475 Railroad St., Painesville, OH
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Oct. 10 - Beaver-Lawrence Railway Historical Society

Shenango VFD Social Hall, 2424 E. Washington St., New Castle, PA
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$5

Oct. 16 - Iron & Steel Model Train Show

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center, 356 Belle Vista Ave.,
Youngstown, OH; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$6

Oct. 17 - Great Batavia Train Show

Richard C. Call Arena, Genesee Community College Batavia, NY
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; \$6

Oct. 31 - Erie Train Show

Rainbow Gardens, Waldameer Park, Erie, PA; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; \$

Nov. 6 - Cleveland 2-Rail O Scale Train Meet

UAW Hall, 5615 Chevrolet Blvd., Parma, OH; 9 a.m. - ?; \$7

Oct. 6, 7 - Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show

Monroeville Convention Center, 209 Mall Blvd., Monroeville, PA
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Sat. \$11, Sun. \$10

**Nov. 7 - ALTO Model Train Museum Associaion
Toy Train & Swap Meet**

Blair Co. Convention Center, One Convention, Center Blvd.,
Altoona, PA; 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Nov. 13 - North East Ohio Train Society (NETS)
Model Train Show**

Highland Hts. Community Center, 5827 Highland Ave.,
Highland, Hts., OH; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$5

Nov. 21, Jan. 2, Feb 13 - Mansfield Train Show

Fairhaven Hall, Richland Co. Fairgrounds, 750 N. Home Rd.,
Mansfield, OH; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$7

**Nov. 28 - Penn-Ohio Model Railroaders 24th Annual
Train & Toy Show**

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 2230 Highland Ave.,
Hermitage, PA; 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$5

Dec. 12 - Massillon Train & Toy Show

Massillon Knights of Columbus Hall, 988 Cherry Rd. NW
Massillon, OH; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$5

Jan. 8 - Snow Dog Train Show

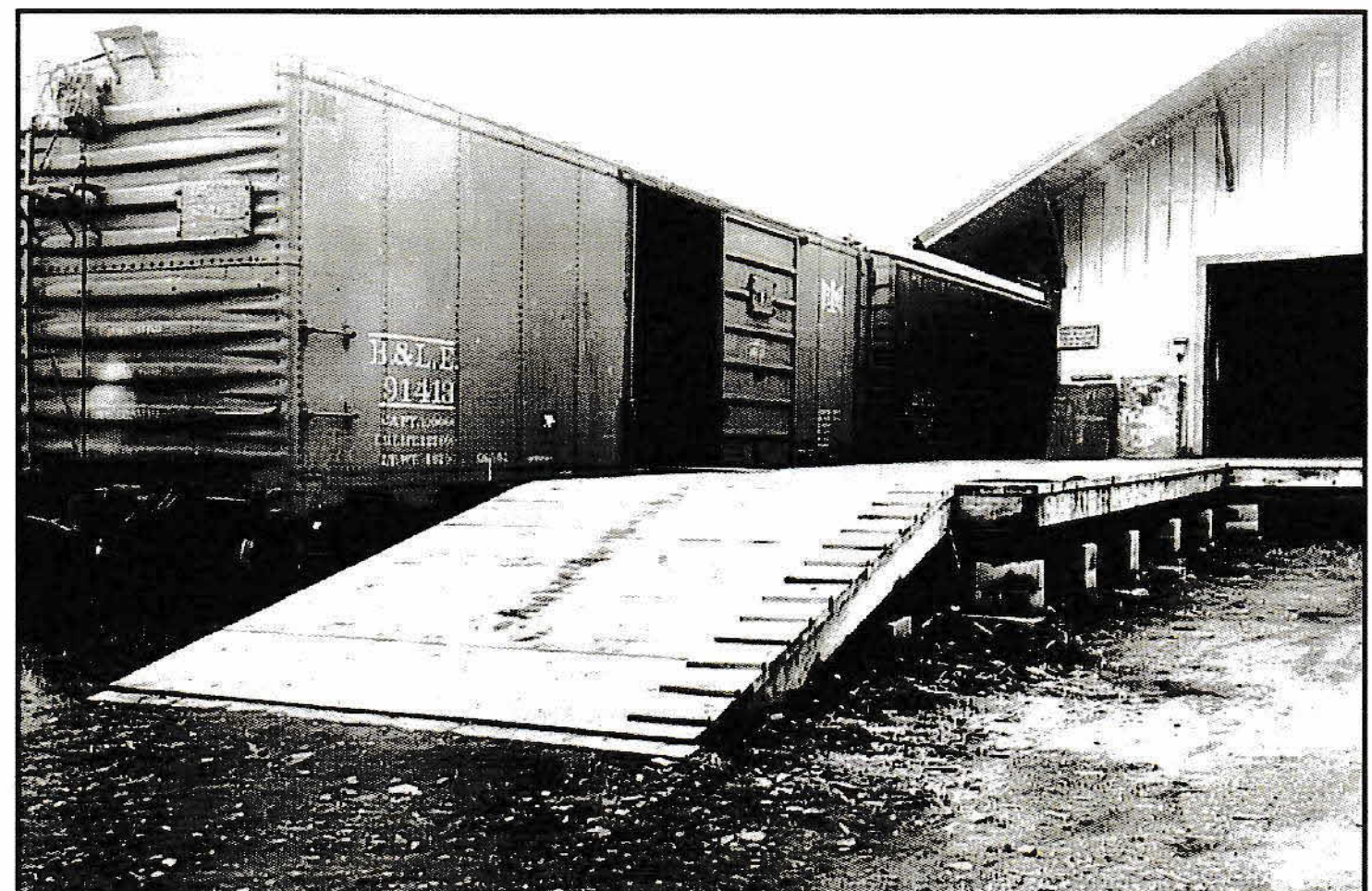
UAW Hall, 5615 Chevrolet Blvd., Parma, OH
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$6

Feb. 19 - Canfield Train & Toy Show

Canfield Fairgrounds, 7265 Columbiana-Canfield Rd.
Canfield, OH; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; \$6

**Mar. 6 - ALTO Model Train Museum Association
Train Show**

Blair Co. Convention Center, One Convention Center Blvd.
Altoona, PA; 9 a.m. - 2 pm.



**B&LE boxcars being unloaded at the B&LE Meadville depot
on September 16, 1954.**
- photo courtesy Greenville Railroad Park