

\$1.00



# VALLEY EXPRESS



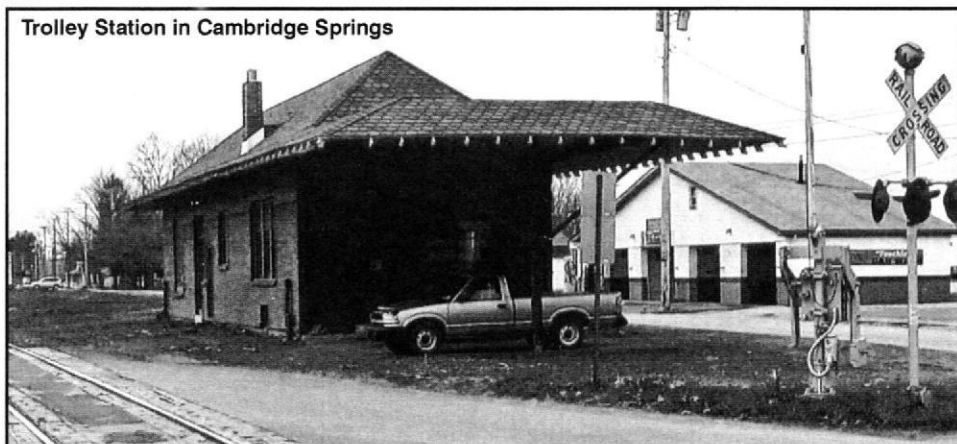
## The Trolleys of Crawford County

In a recent issue of the Valley Express (Vol.7 No. 1) we took a study of the other railroads in Crawford, besides the Erie and the Bessemer & Lake Erie routes. Besides the steam railroads of the early days, there was a period of development spanning 1897 to 1928 of the trolley system in this same area. In fact, besides competing for business with the steam railroads, these trolley systems worked to co-exist with these railroads, as we will see.

### Northwestern Pennsylvania Railway

The beginnings of this trolley line go back to the early days of the Meadville Street Railway, which received its franchise to build in the city of Meadville on February 29, 1896. The extent of the trolley route was in the city, along with extensions to Vallona in the Fifth Ward, Kerrtown, and Oakwood Park, 1½ miles east of the city proper. Trackage was over 10 miles long, with 7½ miles running in the city proper. During the construction period, the Meadville Street Railway Company became Meadville Traction Company. The intent of the new company was to look ahead on doing business in Cambridge Springs and Edinboro, along with Meadville. The city's new trolley line was finally opened for operations on April 14, 1898 with much fanfare. Business continued to grow for the Meadville Traction. Of course, there was much to learn about doing business, such as dealing with snow and annual floods of French Creek, as well as with accidents on North Main Street hill resulting from falling leaves on the tracks.

About the time of the beginnings of the Meadville Street Railway, a group of investors were incorporating the Cambridge and Edinboro Street Railway. The line was proposed to extend from Cambridge Springs north to Drakes Mills and to Edinboro following the route of today's Route 99. Then, two years later, two other companies were formed to connect Meadville with Cambridge Springs. The Meadville and Saegertown Street Railway was to start from the end of the Baldwin Street city trolley line to Saegertown. The Saegertown and Venango Street Railway was then to continue along Plank Road (today's Route 19) into Venango. Under a new franchise, the Cambridge Springs and Venango began construction starting in Cambridge on November 17, 1900.



Trolley Station in Cambridge Springs

### Cambridge Springs Trolley Station

The route of the Meadville to Saegertown line was changed shortly after the line began, starting at the end of the North Main Street city line, near the ODD FELLOWS HOME, and following today's Route 86 to the area of the Fountain House, where the line would turn east and follow Route 198 into Saegertown. At this same intersection of Routes 86 and 198, another line

*(continued on page 5)*

### Local Update

GE Transportation's planned transfer of at least 950 jobs to their new Fort Worth facility has local Erie area residents on edge. Lured by the promise of low tax incentives, a ready built facility in proximity to major customer BNSF, and Texas right-to-work laws is a strong enticement. According to the Erie Times, both Caterpillar and Joy Manufacturing are also facing downsizing, owing to the pursuit of natural gas in lieu of coal.

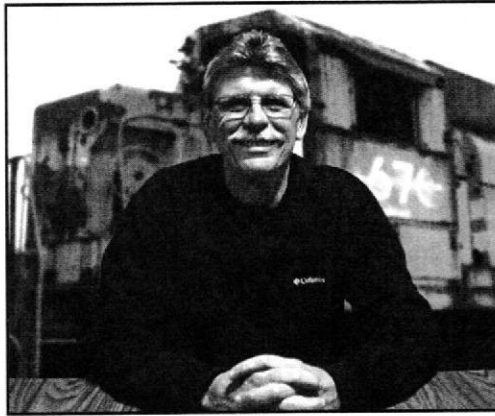
Our local WNYP is pulling several railroad crossing rails, ties, and switches in the Meadville area. A siding is needed for our Heritage Museum.

Vice President Denny Mead reports that he is again operating the train at the Erie Zoo and has participated in modeling a sawmill for the zoo's garden railroad.



## From the Stationmaster's Office

Now that spring appears to have finally arrived, we can look forward to resuming our efforts to complete the restoration of the Alco S2 518 engine at Pomona Park. Hopefully we will persevere to complete the unit by this fall. Window and metal sheathing replacement will be the first order of business, along with air tanks, hood, radiator elements and rear steps.



Recently, we have discussed plans for having a family picnic at the caboose/'518' or some other venue, to be held sometime later this summer - to celebrate the end of a 6-year effort to bring the engine to Meadville and to upgrade the view along that area of the Meadville Bypass.

I would still like to see more members with model train layouts open up their modeling efforts for member touring. Several of us have been touring area layouts on selected Wednesdays, and we have been very impressed with the amount and quality of workmanship displayed on these various scenic projects.

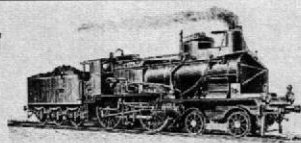
Our first work session at the 518/caboose site is scheduled for 3PM on Thursday, May 9. Please consider participating if you can spare a few hours. Think spring!

*Bernie Hanmore*

### CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Nutec Tooling Systems
- Staples Copy & Print
- Lloyd's Rental & Sales
- Crawford County Historical Society
- ACTCO Tool & Manufacturing
- Western New York & PA RR
- Jim Nelson Family
- US Bronze Foundry & Machine
- Syst-A-Matic Tool
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
- Jan Grayson / Perfect Coat
- Bob Bingham family
- Area Tool
- Carl Timko Family
- Stewart Sheet Metal
- Mears Tool & Die
- Ed Cronin Family
- Seco/Warwick (Sheet Metal)
- Jack Sheets 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.fcvrrhs.org](http://www.fcvrrhs.org)



## French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the  
French Creek Valley Railroad  
Historical Society

### Officers

Bernie Hanmore - President  
Dennis Mead - Vice President  
Carl Timko - Secretary  
Ed Cronin - Treasurer

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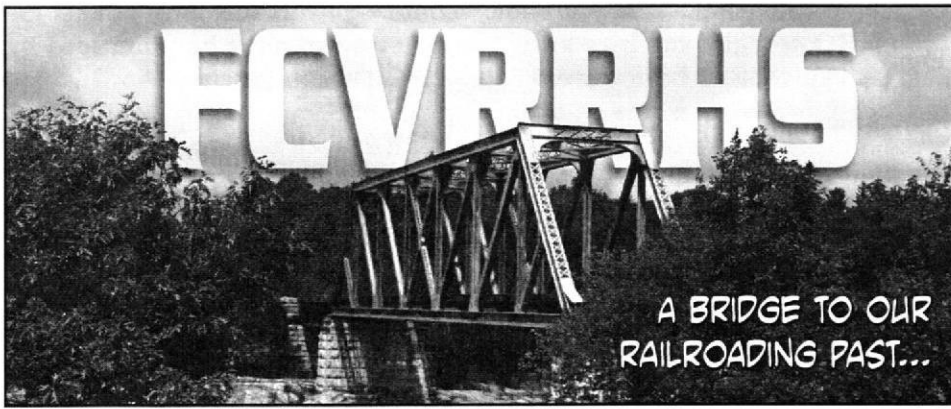
Dennis Mead

### Contact Information

P.O. Box 632  
Meadville, PA 16335

Website: [www.fcvrrhs.org](http://www.fcvrrhs.org)

**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.



*Committee Reports to the Members*

### **Budget and Finance**

If you have been to our web site recently ([www.fcvrrhs.org](http://www.fcvrrhs.org)) you have probably noticed a few changes. Thanks to Dianne Jones, our web page designer and manager, we now conduct business via PayPal. This summer, when dues renewal begins, you can pay with just a few clicks of your computer's mouse. This should greatly simplify the treasurer's job as well. Thanks Dianne!

Another change is that we are now exempt from paying Pennsylvania sales tax; so, if you need to make a purchase for our society, I can provide the paperwork needed to satisfy any vendor.

Any item we sell except food and clothing requires that we charge our customers PA sales tax. Recently the state changed our sales tax filing agreement from quarterly to twice yearly. While filing a return is not a difficult process, less is better!

As always, if you can spare a few dollars for our projects it will be greatly appreciated.

*-Ed Cronin*

### **Membership**

The FCVRRHS received donations of two books and several date nails from Dr. Tom Barratt. The books will become part of the members' library. Carl Timko donated several VHS railroad tapes to the FCVRRHS library also.

Members can borrow books and tapes by signing them out - contact me at [blebuddy@yahoo.com](mailto:blebuddy@yahoo.com) or at membership meetings held the third Thursday of every month.

Membership dues for juniors (18 years and under) were increased from \$1.00 to \$5.00 at the February membership meeting, effective immediately. The increase was necessary to cover costs of mailing materials to junior members. Dues for membership will expire June 30, although current junior members will not have to pay the increased amount until that time.

The Society lost a member recently. Dr. Robert Cupper passed away on January 3, of leukemia. Dr. Cupper was a professor of economics and computer science at Allegheny College, and had been with the FCVRRHS for only a few years. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife and family.

*-Carl Timko*

### **Museum**

At the annual meeting of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Railroad & Tooling Heritage Center - [www.railroadtoolingmuseum.com](http://www.railroadtoolingmuseum.com) - last June, Marilyn Black, chair of our Membership Committee, announced our new Museum Membership Program. A copy of the application is included with your newsletter.

To date 100% of the museum board has signed on generating almost \$2,000.

At our March FCV meeting we asked all FCV board members and

regular members to sign on too. By getting 100% of the FCV board to sign up we can then go to our partner, the NTMA board, and ask the same of them - and then go to our other partner's boards (Crawford County Historical Society and the Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau).

### **Membership Benefits:**

- All members receive direct invitations to Annual Membership Meetings and other Heritage Center events.
- All members are eligible to be nominated to serve on the Heritage Center's Board of Directors.
- All members receive a 10% discount on purchases of items & publications at the museum gift shop and/or website.
- All members receive the Heritage Center's electronic newsletter.
- Supporting Members are recognized on the Heritage Center's website and in its electronic newsletter.
- All FCV members receive a \$5.00 discount.

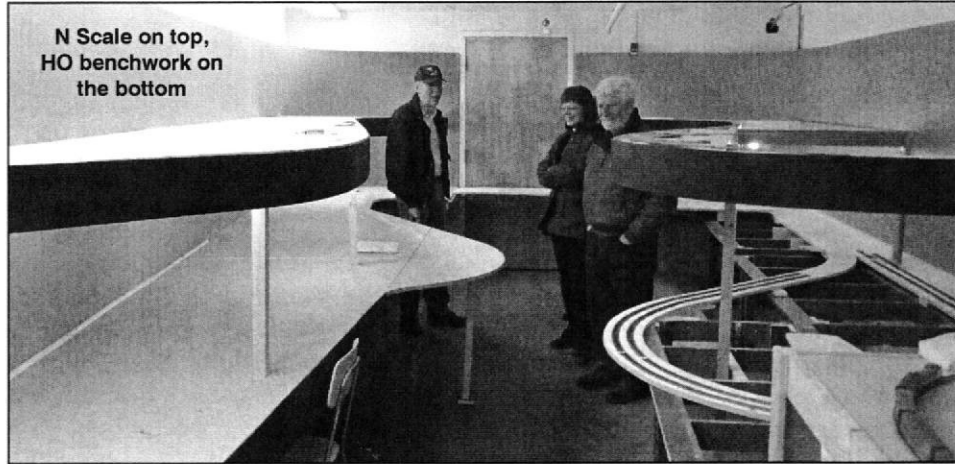
**Annual Museum Membership Meeting:** The 2013 Annual Membership Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 10 at the William J. Douglass Center at 764 Bessemer St. at 7:00 PM. You are cordially invited to attend.

**It is time:** In the fall of 2011 we signed a five year agreement with the Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County to purchase the 1.5-acre site at 869 Bessemer St. where we will build our museum. The price for the land is \$1.00. In order to complete the contract we must demonstrate that we have raised the funds to build a \$10,000-sq. ft. building. With only 3.5 years left to fulfill our contract, it is time to begin our fundraising campaign. At the Heritage Center Annual Meeting on June 10, 2013, we hope to announce that on July 1, 2013 we will begin the silent phase of the capital campaign.

*-Ed Cronin*

## Model Railroading

The Model Railroad Club, which meets in Shops@thebank, has made significant progress! The HO Scale bench-work is now complete and track is being laid. Also, more lighting is being added, so it won't be long until there are some test trains running.

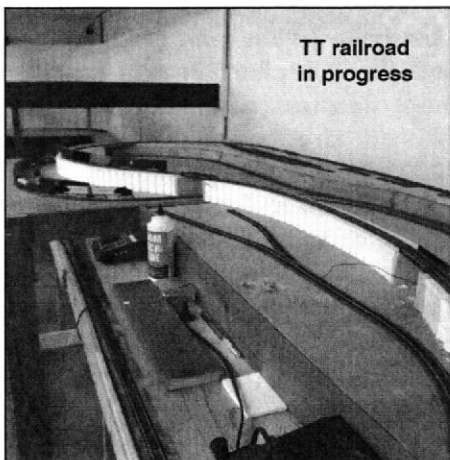


N Scale on top,  
HO benchwork on  
the bottom

The TT Scale track-work has been coming along slowly, and the club track-tested a locomotive from a new manufacturer. Tests demonstrated that there needs to be some additional play in the trucks. Otherwise, it ran very well from a crawl to a full speed.

Our N Scale bench-work is progressing nicely, and track-work will begin shortly in the area where bench-work has been completed.

Within the hobby industry Atlas has found another manufacturer in China, and is now shipping some Code 100 track to wholesalers, who in turn are filling dealer backorders. There is no word yet



TT railroad  
in progress

on Code 83 or N Scale Code 80.

Atlas HO freight car kits and ready to run models have arrived. They are updated versions of the former Branchline Yardmaster and Blue Print series.

Lionel Fastrack is now in ample supply. Lionel also had production problems in China. Lionel is also producing some die cast NASCAR

Train Day run May 11. Tickets for either event must be purchased by April 21 with lunch or April 26 for ride only.

The Lake Shore Railway Historical Society will have its Steam Weekend on August 17-18 at Northeast, featuring the American Viscose 0-4-0T #6.

A Carnival of Model Trains will be held on Oct. 5-6 at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds in Beria, OH.

The Fostoria (OH) Rail Preservation Society will begin building a 5-acre railfan park sited within the junction of the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. The park will have a stage, restrooms, and parking for cars, RVs and buses, and should be completed by late 2013.

*-Dan Higham & Carl Timko*

## Public Relations

The Society continues to participate in model railroad shows to promote the projects of our organization. During this past holiday season, we made our presence known with a table at the Clarion Model Railroad Club at the Clarion Mall. Our thanks goes out to Rich Steiner, President of the club, for the invitation to display our Society banners. And on March 3rd we once again participated in the Rainbow Gardens Train Show in Erie, selling both some calendars and T-shirts, and handing out membership applications to interested individuals.

We recently added a PayPal account to our website, making it easier for individuals to order items online from our list of sales items. We offer thanks to our webmaster Dianne Jones for setting up the account.

The Society continues to develop activities that will involve membership participation. Plans are being worked out for visits to model railroads in the immediate area which will allow everyone the

care cars. Interestingly, they are being produced in S Scale, which should be of interest to American Flyer owners.

On an encouraging note, it seems that more and more items are being made in the USA. Even Lionel has begun manufacturing some freight cars in Michigan. Other US producers include Woodland Scenics, Laser Art, Tichy Group, Accurail, Floquil and Poly Scale paints (Testors), Bowser freight car kits, Funero and Camerlengo and many others. Bowser makes their freight car kits in Honesdale.

*-Tom Collard*

## Special Events / Programs

Nickel Plate 2-8-4 #765 will run excursions on May 12 between Rocky River and Bellevue, OH using the ex-NKP mainline. This unit will later run excursions over Memorial Day Weekend from Lewistown to Gallitzin, PA via Horseshoe Curve.

The Orrville Heritage Society will have a Medina Loop excursion train on April 27 and a National

chance to see the creativity individuals have displayed in their layouts. And, the Board continues to study the idea of hosting movie and slide shows, either following our membership meetings or separately at a specified site. Keep close attention to your Second Section for further updates on this project.

Finally, it is the hope of the Board to finish the 518 work this summer and have a completion ceremony in the early fall. There is lots of work to be done, so if you have the time to spare, come down to one of the work sessions and do your part in completing this long standing effort.

-Dennis Mead

### History & Archives

Attempts have been made to save/ acquire the Trolley Station at Cambridge Springs, possibly as a model railroad layout site, storage area for display of rail/tool items, or alternate meeting spot.

-Bernie Hanmore & Ed Cronin

### Property and Equipment

Restoration of the 518 will begin soon at Pomona Park. To Do's include sandblasting, painting, mounting the air tanks, battery boxes, rear steps, re-installing the hood, reattaching doors, handrails, hatches, and radiator shutters. Metal needs to be replaced below the rear cab access as well as a few window frames. Also, lettering needs to be done.

The signal head has been rewired and is being stored in Corry, PA, while the ladder has been sandblasted and powder coated. Also, the Baggage Car that is sited in the Meadville Yard may be temporarily relocated to the siding at U.S. Bronze before it's permanent siting, which will require contacting the city if plumbing and handicap accessibility is desired.

-Al Reibel & Jack Sheets

(continued from page 1)

chartered in December of 1900 and known as the Meadville and Titusville Railroad was proposed to be constructed. This was part of the reason for the Saegertown route being diverted from its original plan. By June of 1901 the route to Titusville had been graded 4 miles to the east toward Blooming Valley, but this line was never completed. The Meadville to Cambridge Springs line did not see completion, and the first trip from Meadville was made on May 5, 1903.

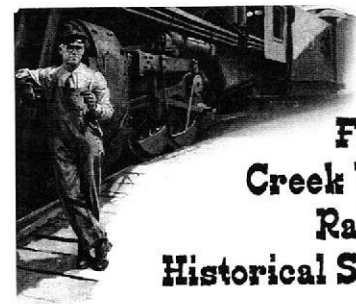
In 1906 the Meadville Traction saw construction of another route, this time the direction was west of town. The Meadville and Conneaut Lake Traction Company began a route that would connect the city with Conneaut Lake Park, as well as the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad (PRR) in Linesville. Other interests from Ohio attempted to charter a line to follow the same route as the MCL&L, but were unsuccessful at their endeavor. By 1907 the Meadville Traction Company was taken over by the Meadville and Conneaut Lake operation. They reached Linesville and service commenced on January 11, 1908. About the time of start-up, rumors were circulating that a connecting line was being proposed from Chardon, Ohio. That would have provided a direct route into Cleveland. What did come out of the Linesville line extension was business from the Adams Express Company. They had established express service from Pittsburgh to Meadville, using the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad and the trolley line.

In 1873 the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad Company bought franchises for two proposed railroad routes, both beginning from Cambridge Springs where the A&GW main line passed through. Chartered under the name Pennsylvania Petroleum Railway, the route to the east was to extend to Titusville, and the route to the

north going through Drake's Mill and Edinboro was to reach the port of Erie. Both routes were proposed for the purpose of moving oil from the Titusville region to connect to their east-west line, or to move north to Erie where it would be placed on ships for delivery to distant markets. Because of the oil boom going bust, the lines were never built, although some grading work had been done by the railroad east of Cambridge Springs along Route 408 before abandoning the project.

In December of 1898, after several proposals were submitted, the Erie Transit Company (later becoming the Erie Traction Company) was granted by the city of Erie to construct a line from along today's Route 99 from Kearsarge through Edinboro to Cambridge Springs. This route was the franchised route of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Railway. The next year the route was amended, with the line going to Cambridge west to Siverling's Corners before heading north towards Edinboro. Drake's Mills was left out of the path of the new line. They began construction of the line in June 1900, starting at Cambridge and service on the line began to Erie on October 19th of the same year. In March of 1901 the line was reorganized as the Erie Traction Company and shortly after that in July of that year the ownership of the line attempted to purchase the other franchise route of the A&GW from Cambridge to Titusville. This project never happened though. (To be concluded in Fall issue.)

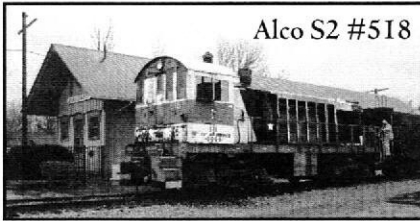
-Dennis Mead



**French  
Creek Valley  
Railroad  
Historical Society**



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



Alco S2 #518

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society  
Program & Events Schedule - Fall 2012

**May 25-27**

Nickel Plate Road Berkshire #765 Excursion over  
Horseshoe Curve • Altoona, PA

**June 8 (10am - 1pm)**

Titusville One-Day Museum  
Perry Street Station, Titusville, PA

**June 10 (7pm)**

NW PA Railroad & Tooling Heritage Center  
ANNUAL MEETING  
Douglass Center on Bessemer St. • Meadville, PA  
Guest Speaker: Nate Clark  
"Shenango River RR Truss Bridge"

**June 15 (8pm)**

Night @ The Railroad Museum (Slide Show, etc.)  
Lake Shore Railway Historical Society  
North East, PA

**June 30 (6:30pm)**

FCVRRHS Annual Meeting & Picnic  
Pamona Park, Meadville  
(Off the bypass - at the engine/caboose)  
Bring a tureen to accompany hotdogs!

**August 17-18**

Lake Shore Railway Historical Society's  
STEAM WEEKEND  
(Features: American Viscose 0-4-0T #6)  
North East, PA



With our gratitude and admiration, the WNYP crew assists with installing the hood on 518.

# TOM'S TRAIN TERMINAL

Model Railroad Headquarters  
O, HO, TT, N and Z Scales  
Lionel Value Added Dealer

***Shops@thebank***

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**(814) 853-2942**