



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 1361

Altoona, PA 16603-1361

www.hscnrhs.org

AUTUMN 2015

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Francix X. Givler Jr., 114 Scott Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

NOTE: * time-sensitive correspondence should be sent to this address.

ottodofacs@atlanticbb.net

Vice-President: Joseph K. Harella, 3812 5th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

jkharella@pennswoods.net

Chapter Delegate to NRHS: Joseph A. DeFrancesco, 5069 Gensimore Ln., Tyrone, PA 16686

jdefrancesco5@verizon.net

Treasurer: Denny Walls, 123 Sandcastle Ln, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648 d63w@aol.com

Secretary: Joseph DeFrancesco, 5069 Gensimore Ln., Tyrone, PA 16686 jdefrancesco5@verizon.net .

Chapter Historian/Editor: David W. Seidel, 2011 14th St., Altoona, PA 16601-3020

dwsnrhs@aol.com

Webmaster: Joseph De Francesco, jdefrancesco5@verizon.net

Note: Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was granted a charter by the NRHS on May 11, 1968 (3 months and ten days after the PRR-NYC merger), evolving from the Altoona Railway Museum Club (1965-1968). We meet on FOURTH Tuesday of each month except December, at Railroader's Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA, 7:30 PM. Occasional exceptions are announced to the membership.

90 (+) % of all communications and notices are handled by e-mail. Please keep your e-mail address current with the officers, especially the Chapter Historian/Editor.

Meetings are open to those interested in railroad history and membership inquiries are invited. Chapter-only membership is available but national membership dues are separate. For more information visit www.nrhs.com.

ALTOONA TRIBUNE

JULY 28, 1887

CUT IN TWAIN

"Saturday's Johnstown Tribune: At a quarter past 2 o'clock this morning, Daniel Luke, a man traveling with Forepaugh's show, was instantly killed a short distance west of the Pennsylvania railroad stock yards. Luke was what is known in show parlance as a "candy butcher," this is, he managed a candy stand on the show ground, and paid the proprietor of the show a stipulated sum for the privilege. He had packed all his paraphernalia, stock, etc., in a car attached to the show train that stood on the warehouse siding, and was leaning against his car watching a freight train going west. At this juncture another freight train approached going eastward unnoticed by him. When the engine was within ten feet of him he stepped on the track and made a few steps on the ties, when he was knocked down, his body falling across one of the rails and being cut in two and otherwise mangled. The deceased was about 39 years of age. His home was on forty-eighth street, between Ninth and Tenth Avenue, New York City. His widowed mother lives there, and is said to be pretty well off financially. Word was sent to her of the terrible accident."

Note: It isn't clear if this happened in Johnstown or Altoona.

Courtesy of Matthew Germann Collection of Blair County Memorabilia

ALSO:

DINING CARS vs. HOTELS

"The use of dining cars on the principal through passenger trains has almost obviated the need for hotels along the principal railroads. In the early history of railroads, they were an absolute necessity, but in these days of fast trains when every minute is an important factor in making up a fast schedule, and the improved methods adopted in feeding passengers while they travel, hotels have outlived their usefulness. The Keystone Hotel company which owns a number of large hotels along the lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad company, are about to abandon the general hotel business, dispose of property in certain localities, and in those retained will have only lunch counters for the accommodation of those who do not wish to dine on trains. We understand that the hotels at Bryn Mawr and Cresson have been offered for sale. They will, of course, be continued as summer resorts, but not under the auspices of the hotel company in case a sale is effected."

Note: the Cresson reference is obviously about the elaborate, but short-lived, Mountain House, images of which can be seen in the Bonine stereoview images on line. In addition, a model of the Mountain House may be seen on the 2nd floor of the library on the campus of Mt. Aloysius College in Cresson.

Also recently seen in Mr. Germann's collection, was a detailed ledger/inventory of the Mountain House contents at the time of the sale, a very rare and one-of-a-kind historical record.

WILL MOVE THE SUMMERHILL BRIDGE

"The Pittsburgh Telegraph (newspaper) says it has been decided to move the big iron bridge at Summerhill, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, this week, probably next Wednesday or Thursday. It was decided some time since to replace the structure with a stone bridge. Arrangements have been made to move the iron bridge from its foundation so that trains can still pass over it while the new one is being erected. The railroad people along the

entire line are looking forward to the moving of the bridge, as if the plans are carried out as at present arranged it promises to be the most important engineering feat along the road this year. The bridge is fourteen miles west of Cresson. It has three spans with a total length of 270 feet, weighing 300 tons. It is a 45-degree skew bridge, which makes it especially difficult to move it the required 50 feet. The work will be under the supervision of Master Carpenter Webb.”

August 4, 1887

CONDUCTOR WINGARD KILLED

At an early hour Saturday morning, Freight Conductor Theodore Wingard was cut into fragments under the wheels of his train on the Pennsylvania Railroad near Mineral Point. He was in the cabin when the train left South Fork, but subsequently climbed on deck and was running over the cars toward the engine when the train gave a sudden lurch, and he was thrown between the cars to the track with the result above stated. His remains were gathered up and taken to East Conemaugh, whence they were shipped on Johnstown accommodation to Derry, the late home of deceased. Mr. Wingard had been in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company as a trainman for ten or twelve years, and was regarded as one of the most trustworthy and careful of the company’s conductors, His demise brings mourning to a wife and six or seven children, to whom, his fellow workers say, he was most devoutly attached. Deceased, who was about 40 years of age, was a member of the Conductors Brotherhood and of the Relief Department of the Pennsylvania Railroad. For the above information, we are indebted to the Johnstown Tribune.

Pennsylvania Railroad

In effect May 22, 1887

Leave – Westward

Oyster Express, except Sunday	2:20 a.m.
Western Express, daily	4:30 a.m.
Johnstown Express, except Sunday	7:45 a.m.
Pacific Express, daily	8:05 a.m.
Way Passenger (arrive) daily	1:45 p.m.
Mail, daily	3:35 p.m.
Fast Line, daily	8:10 p.m.
New York & Chicago Limited, daily	5:20 p.m.
Johnstown Express, except Sunday	7:45 p.m.
Altoona Accommodation (arrive) daily	9:00 p.m.

Leave – Eastward

Fast Line, daily	1:00 a.m.
Altoona Accommodation, daily	5:20 a.m.
Sea Shore Express, daily	7:00 a.m.
New York & Chicago Limited, daily	10:40 a.m.
Day Express, daily	11:50 a.m.
Mail, daily	2:00 p.m.

Mail Express, daily	6:20 p.m.
Philadelphia Express, daily	9:05 p.m.
Eastern Express, daily	10:45 p.m.

Hollidaysburg Branch

Trains leave daily, except Sunday for points south at 7:20 and 8:25 a.m.; 12:50, 1:50, 5:00, 8:00 and 9:50 p.m. Arrive at 6:50 and 11:35 a.m., and 1:35, 5:55, 6:40, 7:00, and 10:35 p.m.

Tyrone Division

Trains leave Tyrone for Bellefonte and Lock Haven daily, Except Sunday at 8:10 a.m. and 7:15 p.m. and arrive from Those points at 12:05 and 6:37 p.m.

Leave Tyrone for Curwensville daily, except Sunday, at 8:20 a.m., And 3:05 and 7:25 p.m., and arrive from that point at 6:58 and 11:45 a.m., And 6:17 p.m.

Leave Tyrone for Scotia daily, except Sunday, at 9:20 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., And arrive from that point at 6:58 a.m. and 2:35 p.m.

Ebensburg Branch

Trains leave Ebensburg for Cresson at 7:30 and 10:00 a.m, and 3:20 p.m. Returning leave Cresson 9:00 and 11:10 a.m. and 5:25 p.m.

Bells Gap Railroad Co. and Clearfield and Jefferson Railroad Company

Leave Bellwood daily, except Sunday, at 8:00 a.m. and 3:20 p.m. for Mahaffey. Arrive at Bellwood from Mahaffey 11:30 a.m. and 6:20 p.m.

Cresson and Coalport Railroad

Leave Irvona at 7:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and arrive at Cresson 8:30 a.m, and 4:10 p.m.

Leave Cresson 9:10 a.m. and 5:20 p.m. and arrive at Irvona 11:10 a.m. and 6:50 p.m.

EXCERPT: Newton Hamilton, PA August 1st: Yesterday evening forty (laborers) arrived in Newton Hamilton on Altoona Accommodation where they will go to work on grading the third track.... *Note: This article contains references to ethnic groups that are inappropriate to be repeated.*

August 4, 1887, continued.

WILL BUILD MANY OVENS

“The Cresson and Coalport Railroad Company is going into the coke business on an extensive scale. Within the past few days it has contracted for the erection of six hundred ovens. It was but recently that it ordered the construction of four hundred ovens. The company is about to add largely to its rolling stock.”

HORSESHOE CURVE CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETING OF JULY 28TH

This was somewhat of an abbreviated meeting due to the lack of air conditioning, but among the items of business, carried over from the June meeting at Blair County History Center at Baker Mansion, Chapter President Frank Givler and Treasurer Denny Walls, met with officials at Penn State Altoona to further discuss the possibility of the Chapter funding a scholarship for the relatively new Rail Training and Engineering degree curriculum. This course of study graduated its first nine students in 2015, all of whom have found employment in the railroad industry, although not in the Altoona Area.

Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS has committed to a \$5,000. scholarship donation to be spread over the next five years, preferably to a local area student. The Chapter has agreed to fund the award in one lump sum which will then be awarded annually in monetary segments by the University and with proper acknowledgement to the Chapter at presentation. This is seen as investing in the railroad industry’s heritage and legacy to which Altoona credits its foundations.

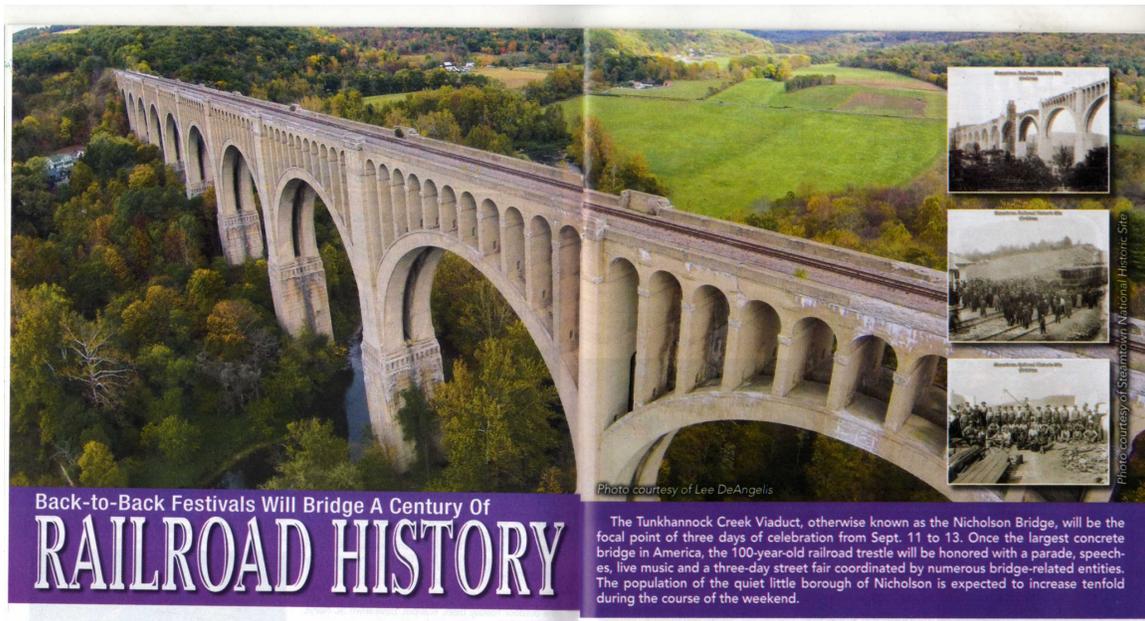


Horseshoe Curve Chapter President Frank Givler presents check to Matt Stoudnour, PSU-Altoona, while Joseph DeFrancesco looks on.

The Chapter is also welcoming two new members: Andy Charlesworth and Joe Musser, who have long volunteered at Railroader's Memorial Museum.

The Horseshoe Curve Chapter was also honored to have visitors from the Western Maryland Chapter NRHS.

TUNKHANNOCK VIADUCT CELEBRATES CENTENNARY



Mention the topic of railroad bridges of magnificent proportions, many of us automatically think of the famed Rockville bridge west of Harrisburg and Enola, crossing the mighty Susquehanna. However, many miles to the north along the corridor of I-81 above Scranton, PA, is the tiny village of Nicholson, PA. Although the town may be small, it is then dwarfed by the mighty Tunkhannock Viaduct which cuts a swatch across the valley of Tunkhannock Creek and the village of Nicholson. The bridge was the famed main line route of the Lackawanna Railroad which constructed it 100 years ago.

The centenary is being observed officially over the weekend of September 11, 12, 13, 2015 which is being observed with a community festival, restoration of the original depot into a tourism center, and steam excursions from Steamtown featuring Nickel Plate Berkshire # 765, all of which reminds this writer of the 150th anniversary of the Delaware & Hudson Railroad back in the 1970's, which then featured steam excursions across the same viaduct using Reading T-1 # 2101, slightly modified for the occasion with the addition of "elephant ears" smoke deflectors to mimic a D&H steam locomotive of the era, all of which preceded the development of

Steamtown, but gave this writer his first glimpse of the interior of the original Lacakawana Station in Scranton which later became the grand hotel it is today. But, what a sight Reading # 2101 made as she steamed across Tunkhannock Viaduct just as Berkshire No. 765 did on this weekend. Tunkhannock Viaduct aka Nicholson Bridge was completed in 1915 and is 2, 375' in length, towers 240 feet over the town, and is believed to be the largest concrete bridge for rail traffic.

Nearby, in the village of Lansdale, is another impressive railroad viaduct of note: The Starrucca Viaduct, once the mainline of the Erie Railroad. This structure is equally impressive and both should be on the "must-see" list for any serious railfan if you are traveling along the I-81 corridor north of Scranton, PA. Starrucca Viaduct is constructed of stone.

Nickel Plate Berkshire No. 765 was exhibited at nearby Steamtown within this weekend of festivities alongside sister Berkshire No. 759 which rests at the Steamtown roundhouse. What a magnificent steed was No. 759 on September 10, 11, 1971 when she steamed into Altoona from Harrisburg for a weekend of excursions around famed Horseshoe Curve, representing the first steam locomotive to be active on the property since the Pennsy dropped the last fires in 1957. You just had to be there. No. 759 hauled 18 cars, including some heavy-weights, unassisted, to the summit. The plume of smoke on that occasion was strictly vertical and we are privileged to have seen both of these sister locomotives in the greater Altoona Area, depending on your age bracket.

UNDER THE WIRE

By

Leonard E. Alwine

Three Cars, Three Generation Celebration

On Saturday, August 22, 2015 a historic event took place at the Rockhill Trolley Museum in Rockhill Furnace PA.



[Rockhill Trolley Museum](#)

PENNSYLVANIA'S FIRST OPERATING TROLLEY MUSEUM

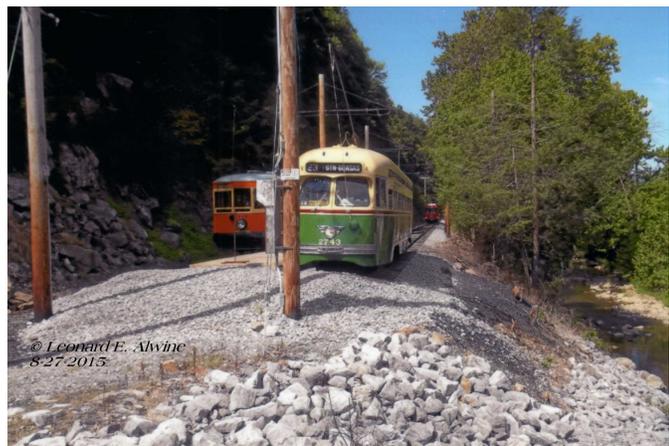


On that morning three re-built trolley cars from three different generations were dedicated to service with a special ribbon cutting ceremony.





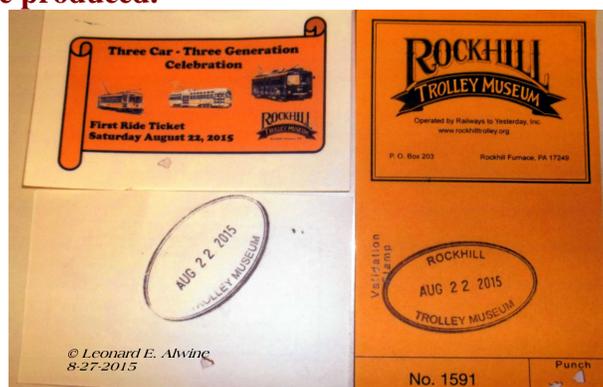
The event started at 10:00 AM with Matthew Nawn, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Railways to Yesteryear Inc., giving the welcome.



This was followed by prayer by Jim Walsh, then remarks by Joseph Kovalchick, President of Kovalchick Corporation, Rich Irvin, Representative of the 81st District, and Jeff Thomas, Huntingdon County Commissioner.



Next, a unique way of describing each trolley car was presented by having three different RTY members acting as Sales Personnel for the different trolley builders. They each pointed out the special features of their cars as they would have in the years that they were produced.



The first representative for Wason Car Company which originally built car # 311. He stated that traction companies would save lots of money with the fact that this new car was one man operation so the operator could also collect the fares as passengers entered the car. Also, it was much safer since the motorman had to keep

pressure on the control, or else the car would shut off and come to a stop if something happened to him.

Car # 311 came from Johnstown, PA, but before it traveled those rails it served the Bangor (Maine) Electric Railway Company. Built in 1922, it was acquired by Johnstown in 1942 and remained in service until end of operations in 1960. It was then purchased by RTY and moved to the East Broad Top Railroad as the first streetcar for the hoped-for museum. It sat outside in static display until 1961, when a short section of track was laid and poles erected. It became the first operating car of RTY and a mainstay for many years taking visitors for a ride which eventually became a two-mile round trip. It has the distinction of becoming the first preserved trolley operating at a museum in PA by operating of this line, in August 1962.

In 2008, Car # 311 was taken out of service for a truck (wheel assembly) re-build. This became a total re-build of the car which took until 2015 to complete. It is as good as or better than new today.

The next “salesman” was from the St. Louis Car Company who talked about the newest style street car called the PCC (Presidents Conference Committee) car. These cars are all electric without air brakes, instead using electric brakes to stop the car smoothly. They are also streamlined and faster than all previous street cars.

The PCC car being dedicated was PTC car # 2743. It came to Philadelphia Transportation Co. in April 1947. It had been ordered in 1944 as part of an order for 100 such cars. The office of Defense had delayed the construction of these cars due to the war.

Car # 2743 entered service on Mother’s Day, May 11, 1947, and ran it’s whole life on Route 23 until the route was converted to buses in February 1992. As part of a re-build program in 1979-80 by SEPTA (Southeastern PA Transportation Authority) # 2743 was re-painted red, white and blue. It was acquired by RTY in May 1994 and moved to the museum. In 1998, it ran for the first time at Rockhill Furnace after the trucks were re-gauged. Beginning in 2004, # 2743 entered a re-build program which lasted until late this summer and saw the car return to it’s original colors of green and cream.

The last salesman was from Siemens-Duewag of Dusseldorf Germany. He spoke about his companies new modern LRV (Light Rail Vehicle) which operated in two-car articulated trains. Of course these cars are smoothly riding and are air-conditioned, adding to the effects of a good ride for the money in larger cities.

Car # 1019 was bult in 1982 for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System to be used on it’s new light rail line, the first new light rail line constructed in the United States.

After running for over 30 years, # 1019 was retired in 2014 and sold to the Rockhill Museum. It took until June 2014 to get the trolley shipped by truck across the

contry to Rockhill Furnace. San Diego Maintenance staff came to the museum and helped put the trolley back together. New trolley poles were made, and attached to the roof as pantographs could not be used at the museum.

Car # 1019 became the first LRV to operate at a museum in the United States. It also has a wheel chair lift at one end which begins a new era in transporting guests at the museum.

The ribbon was then cut three different ways by three different generations of members and then those who had purchased a gold ticket were then allowed to take the first rides on these unique trolleys.

Rockhill now had trolleys operating at the museum spanning the years 1895 through 1982. Something for everybody to remember riding on their city streets, although the older cars are quickly running out of that generation of riders.

It was a great day, and toward the end of the day, car # 355, another Johnstown car which was restored a few years ago, was also run for a trip, along with # 311. It looked like Johnstown streets of the early 1960's again except the two cars looked factory fresh this time. A great way to end the day

IN MEMORY....

A sad not was learned at the Trolley Dedications, that fellow RTY member Benson W. Rohrbeck had passed away in mid-August.

Benson was without a doubt, the foremost authority on Pennsylvania trolley lines. He wrote many books about most every line ever to ride a rail in Pennsylvania. He published them through Ben Rohrbeck Traction Publications; most were spiral-bound. They were not top quality paper but the information inside more than made up for that.

I purchased my first Rohrbeck book (about Altoona's system) from him in early 1980. Later, I purchased one about Johnstown and still later a 275 page book which contained a short story about each and every trolley line in Pennsylvania and also the manufacturers that were located in PA; also, recently, a small book on the Rockhill Furnace complex. I had the privilege to speak with him at the museum a few times, and it most likely his encouragement that got me started collecting the Logan Valley stuff which later became the basis for the Altoona Trolley video tape and the book authored by Dave Seidel and myself.

He had vast knowledge and shared it inexpensively through his books, but I can't help but wonder how much more he knew that never saw print.

To his family goes my sympathy.
Leonard E. Alwine

MORE HUNTINGDON & BROAD TOP RR PRESERVED SITES

By
Leonard E. Alwine

In the last issue of the Coal Bucket, there were several articles about the Huntingdon and Broad top Mountain Railroad (predecessor to the present day Everett Railroad), and the recently opened Rail-Trail from that line's right-of-way.

In mid-August, I was able to attend a firemen's convention in Saxton, PA, for three days. It was a fun event and during the times between meetings and events I was able to explore some of the area in and around Saxton that used-to-be familiar to me. During the 1970's & 1980's I worked in and around Saxton and had explored much of the old railroad beds; no, I did not have a camera then. I had also actually bought a new Dodge W-100 pickup from Gionesto Motors which was located in the old shop building of the H&BT back in 1974 (the truck and the buildings are now long gone).

I remember that during this time I had actually watched them get ready and move the old Broad Top City station to Dudley and also had seen the old engine and tender pass through Hopewell on a flat truck and followed them to Dudley where they still are today.



© Leonard E. Alwine 8-27-2015

Dudley, PA...near Broad Top City



© Leonard E. Alwine 8-27-2015

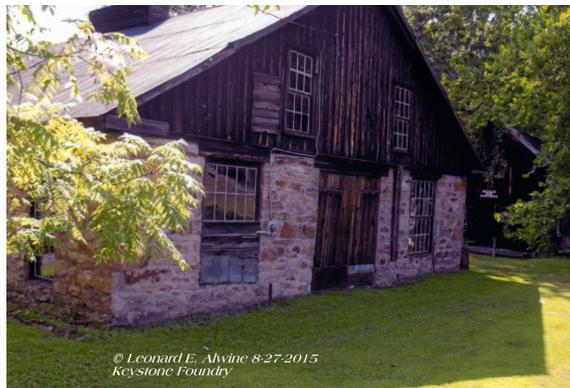
During one of the breaks on Thursday, I traveled to Dudley from Saxton and found the site very well preserved. The Broad Top Station is still there as is the Dudley water tank building. There is also a switch or small station there from Saxton and

one from Cove. All these structures have fresh paint and the grounds are well kept. Sadly the old engine is rusting away and perhaps beyond repair.



Hopewell Station

On Saturday, during another break, we traveled to Everett to the train station museum operated by the Bloody Run Historical Society. I hadn't been there since 2003 and it, too, has been very well maintained and restored. The locomotive is nice looking and the caboose is restored (the last time I was there, one whole side was missing). Also, on this day, many vintage race cars were on display which made the trip even more enjoyable.

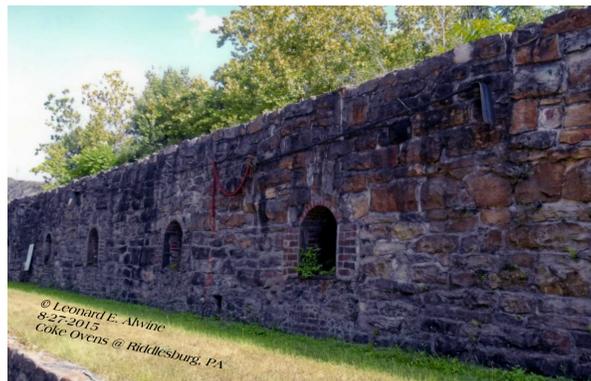


Keystone Foundry





On my way back to Saxton, I decided to stop at Hopewell to see the end of the rail-trail on the old Huntington & Broad Top Mountain RR right-of-way. The old Hopewell station is preserved too. I met an older couple there and asked them if they knew where the old Keystone Foundry was, and they gladly took us there which was only about a half-mile distant. Unfortunately, it wasn't open even though the time was on the schedule. Since it was getting late, the couple showed us around the exterior and we looked through the windows; the wood shop adjacent had patterns for molds that were used in the foundry. Also sitting outside were a few of the ladels for hot metal pouring and a few sand molds. We extended our thanks for the courtesy, and drove over to Riddlesburg to see the old coke ovens. These too are about all that is till visible there a half-century later. (Nearby would have also been located the old Colonial Iron Company in Riddlesburg).



I returned to Saxton to watch the parade and sat opposite from the new bank building, constructed to look like an old roundhouse in honor of the H&BTMRR. Perhaps our NRHS chapter could put together a short local trip to explore this local-area heritage in the near future. I think it could be interesting. At any rate, I enjoyed this year's firemen's convention twice as much because of the trains.

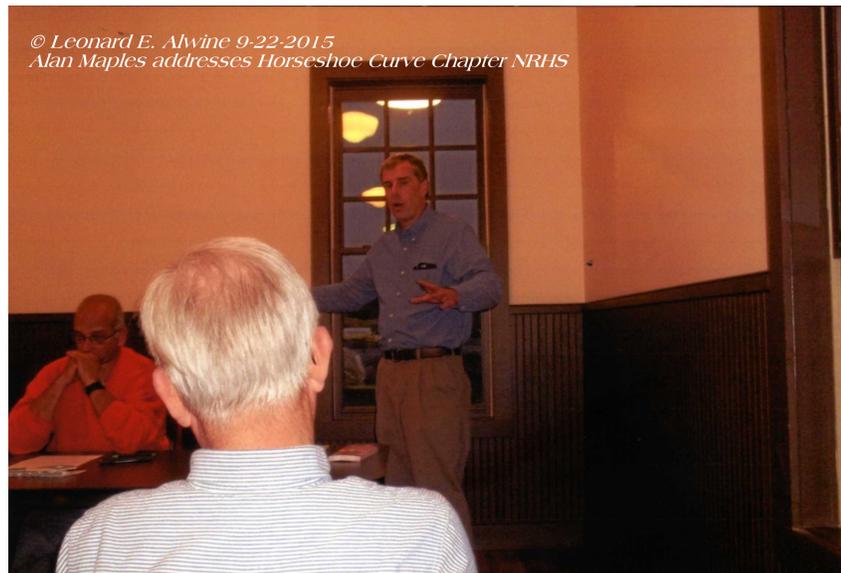


Editor's Note: The Keystone Foundry museum is definitely worth the visit and arrangements are possible for group tours, such as one I participated in earlier this year with the Altoona-Blair County Photo Society.

EVERETT RAILROAD UNVEILS NEW STATION

On September 22, 2015, Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was honored with an invitation from President Alan Maples of the Everett Railroad Company [www.everettrailroad.com] to hold our monthly meeting at the new station in Hollidaysburg, PA. As we have reported previously, Everett Railroad is initiating operation of tourist/excursion trains on a regular basis, with the autumn season now in 2015.





The new station is constructed in great detail from heritage PRR standards, particularly in matching paint colors, entirely of wood construction as you will note the in photos below. The structure is a composite of the many Pennsy styles. In addition, there are permanent restroom facilities adjacent to the station building.

The Everett Railroad's investment in the new excursion train operations is considerable: Station Building \$150,000.; Restrooms \$85,000; Other facilities, equipment \$467,000. A Bessemer & Lake Erie car will be used on trains also.

Steam Locomotive No. 11, a 1920 Alco (ex-Bath & Hammondsport) is close to being operational; steam tests are done and jacketing is installed. Coaches on the train for the fall season will benefit from steam heating.

As the autumn excursion season begins, to be followed by the November and December SANTA TRAINS, Horseshoe Curve Chapter members are invited to participate by volunteering as car hosts and coach attendants. Just telephone Sophia Vaughn at 814.696.EVRR to make arrangements.

Many thanks to Larry McKee for notes on the September meeting which your editor was unable to attend, and to Leonard E. Alwine for the photographs.

REST IN PEACE

**Frances McKinney
April 30, 1935 – Oct 2, 2015.**

Our deepest sympathies go to the family of Pat McKinney, whose mother, Frances McKinney, passed away this past week (near time of publication). Although the current membership wouldn't remember, Frances McKinney was one of the early Chapter members when Pat was just a teenager, way back in the days when the NRHS required members to be at least age 16. The Chapter and the McKinney family enjoyed our many excursions by train and bus in the chapter's earliest days 40-plus years ago.

Our best wishes for a continued recovery also go to Karen McKinney (Pat's wife) as she continues her rehabilitation from a recent stroke.

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, December 5, 2015, Chapter Christmas dinner at the Geeseytown Fire Hall. Particulars will be announced closer to the time. Please reserve the date.