



Official Newsletter  
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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[www.hscnrhs.org](http://www.hscnrhs.org)

SUMMER 2015

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**Note: Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society was granted a charter by the NRHS on May 11, 1968 (3 months and one day 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](http://www.nrhs.com).**

## UNDER THE WIRE

By  
Leonard E. Alwine

### **‘TROLLEY FREIGHT’**

When you think about trolleys, what usually comes to mind in older people, is a ride to a park on an open trolley car with that special friend. Younger generations may think about Mr. Rodgers Neighborhood and a ride with Daniel Tiger again on an old open trolley car.

But, few people would think about a trolley car and freight in the same sentence. Freight is for railroads and trains.

The truth is, that trolley lines did haul a lot of freight in their time. Some was just small package-express in a box motor car, a car that resembled a box car but was powered, or in combination-cars much like the same used on railroads, but again, a powered car.

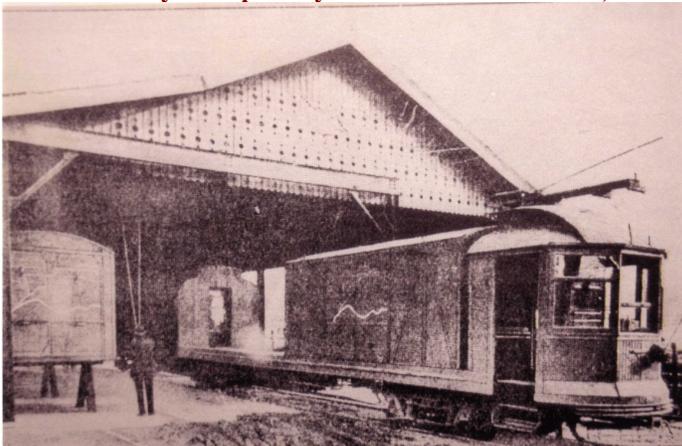
However, some trolley lines actually did operate trains...an electric locomotive pulling several cars. In fact, many cities would require the trolley line to use broad gauge track in order to prevent trains from running on the city streets.

Logan Valley did have three combination cars which operated from Altoona to outlying towns carrying freight. In talking with a retired motorman back in the 1970's, he told me that many times these cars would haul produce from the outlying farms into Altoona for the A&P stores so that fresh produce could be put on their shelves daily. He also said that even on regular trolley cars, many times a drug store (pharmacy) would pay a fare and put prescriptions on a car to be dropped off at a certain corner to the waiting customer.

I have read of trolley lines hauling coal in and ashes out of apartment buildings of larger cities at night to increase revenue.

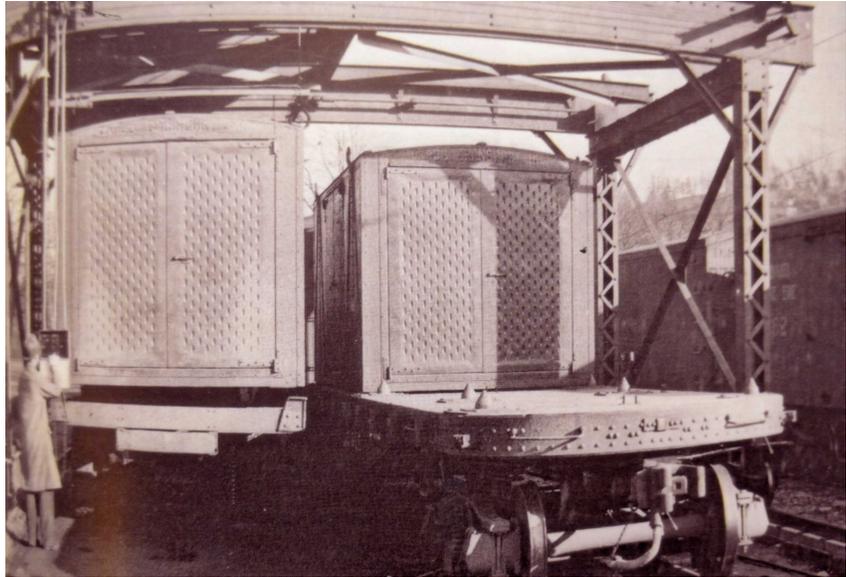
But, for the purpose of this issue of Under the Wire, I want to cover some very special equipment used by trolley lines which I think was very innovative for the day (1920's), but today we take for granted as we watch NS trains go through Altoona every day.

The first type used for the LCL freight was container loads. In 1921, the Cincinnati, Lawrenceburg and Aurora (Ohio) used an old wooden passenger car (# 10) with the middle cut out to haul containers they had specially built...17.5 x 8 ft in size, These were hoisted on and off the car and

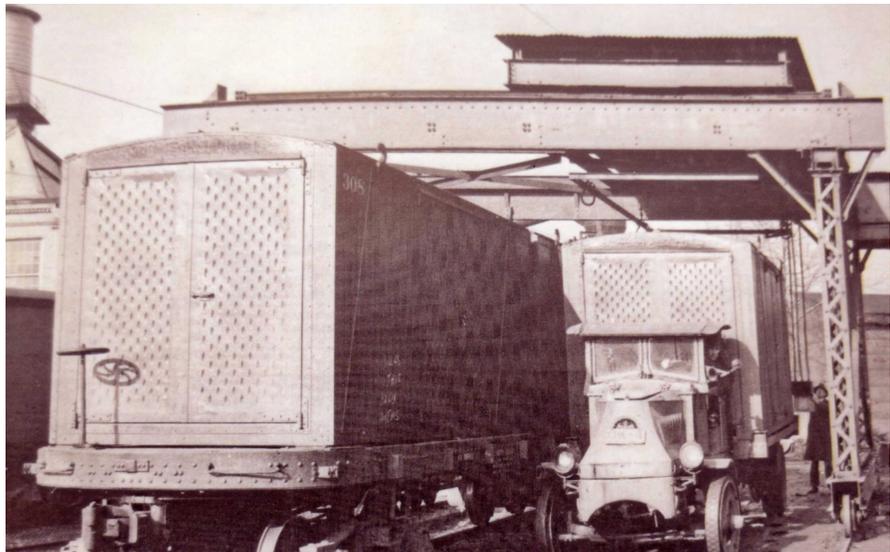


put on trucks by using an electric hoist at the car barn (Photo 1).

Another Ohio line which used containers was the Cincinnati and Lake Erie line. They had the Cincinnati Car Company build them 10 special flat trailer cars and 300 containers. This was a trolley car builder much like Brill was in PA. The flat car had special lockdown holders for the containers and had rounded ends for the tight turning radius common to trolley lines (Photo 2).



Again, these were loaded and unloaded using electric hoists on a gantry crane (photo 3)



to be delivered by truck. Of course, these trucks would be tied up loading and unloading the contents of the containers at the customer's location. To allow more road time for the trucks, the North Shore and South Shore lines had Cincinnati Car Company build special trailers which they called "Ferry



Trucks” (Photo # 4).

These were hauled on flat bed trailer cars which today we would call “Piggy Back” trains. These Ferry cars were again lifted off and on by electric hoists, but then were moved by truck-tractor to and from the customer transporting “loads” and returning “empties”.

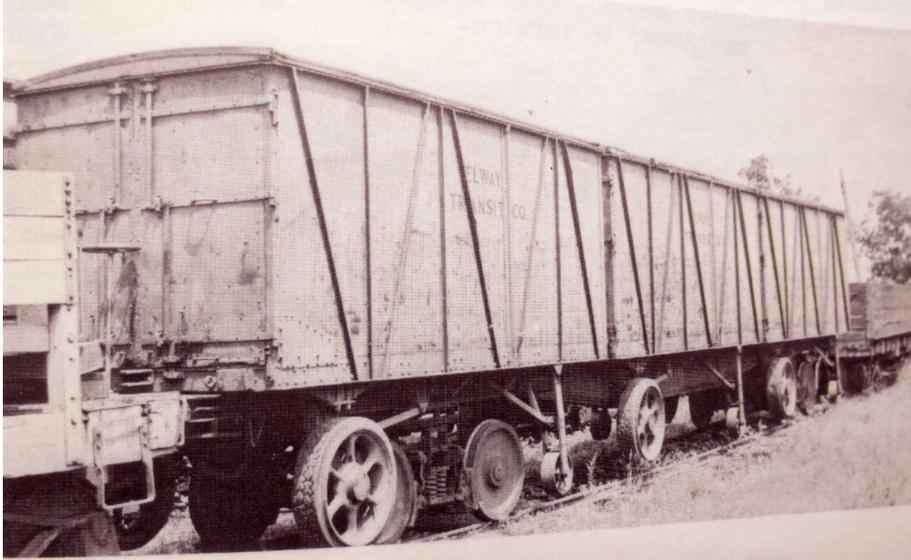
Interestingly, a company, MTS Imports, a division of Model Traction Supply Company, produced a model of this “Ferry Truck” car in HO scale in 1995 (Photo



5).

It was a brass model and came painted and lettered for \$350.00. I could not afford one, but it is perhaps the most interesting trolley model ever produced.

Two additional trolley lines that used “Ferry Trucks” were the Lake Shore Electric and the Northern Ohio Electric. They also used these specially built trailers for LCL (less-than-car-load) freight but also had special cars constructed that were basically frames. The ferry trucks were pulled up low ramps and then the car pushed under them and attached to the trailers. It is very similar to the road-railers of today. This eliminated the need for cranes to load the trailers (Photo 6). Of course, both of these types of flat or frame cars were pulled by a box motor or combine in very short trains.



Ohio was not the only place where trolley freight was tried. The Boston, Worcester, & Springfield street railway also got into this service in the late 1920's. They had 60 special container cars built which were non-powered and they were running to capacity in eight weeks after delivery. These were pulled again, by box motors.

Another unique service provided by the Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company to the Chicago area in the 1930's was a "Rail Van" for moving. These were powered cars which would go to your home and by using electric jacks for the side-way, and up-and-down movement, they would drop off the rail van on your sidewalk. You could load up your household possessions at your leisure; they would then pick up the rail van move it to your new home where you would un-load it, again at your own pace. If the trolley tracks didn't go to your home, these could also be delivered by special trucks with electric generators...much like the E-Z-Pack systems of today.

These are just some of the ways that electric railways moved freight in various communities. There are many others but I felt that these were very unique in that, today, almosts 100 years later, they are common place on railroads.

Of course, in the 1940's, government spent many dollars building roads for cars and buses which forced the trolley lines to go out of business. I often wonder if that same money had been spent on electric railway transit, would we be seeing the Logan Valley "orange-and-cream" traveling the city and surrounding area hauling containers and trailers instead of , or in addition to, the railroad. This may give you something to think about as you watch trains this summer.

*Note: Information gleaned from old "Trolley Talk" newsletters, circa 1950's. LEA*

### H & BT RAIL TRAIL OPENS

By  
Leonard E. Alwine

On Friday, May 22, 2015, the ribbon was cut officially opening the second phase of the H&BT Rail Trail. The trail is built on a 10.5 mile right-of-way of the oformer Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain Railroad (H7BTMRR) which ceased operations in 1954. The second phase is a 4-mile walk which also included putting a deck on the old 350' long railroad bridge over the Juniata River Raystown Branch. Work is expected to continue this summer over the next two phases which will connect Cypher, where the bridge is located, to Tatesville, some 4 miles to the south, short of Everett Borough. The entire 10.6 mile route is owned by Broad Top Township and it is using township

employees and equipment to build the trail saving money which is then used for the supplies to construct the trail.



The ribbon-cutting program began at 11:00 AM with Master of Ceremonies, Kellie Goodman of Bedford County Chamber of Commerce welcoming everyone. It was followed by Nathan Flood, DCNR Deputy Secretary, whose office provided the State grant for the project. Included was State Representative Jesse Topper who was also instrumental securing funding for the project. In addition, the Bedford County Commissioners and Broad Top Township Supervisors were participants.



Following the official remarks, all were invited out to the end of the bridge where the ribbon was cut. One of the officials was Joseph Kovalchick who's family sold the right-of-way to Broad Top Township and had also donated to the project.



Following the ribbon-cutting, a lunch was served under a tent set up on the right-of-way including hoagies, chips, drinks, and cake. In addition, journalist Ron Morgan showed a film of the last ride on the Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain RR in 1954 (the original 16mm film is owned by Horseshoe Curve Chapter, National Railway Historical Society and was made available to Mr. Morgan).



The whole event lasted about two hours and was held under a beautiful blue sky but tempered by a cool 60-degree day.

What made this event special for me was the fact that about 30 years ago, I actually walked over this railroad bed while tracks were still there, although buried under dirt in the cut as the side-banks had washed down. I went out to the bridge but decided not to cross it then as it had rails and decayed wood ties. It didn't seem safe. To see the area today just illustrates what can be done (or preserved), if those in charge of a project are dedicated to the project. The Broad Top Township officials should be praised for their dedication and foresight on this old rail right-of-way.

To get to this rail-trail-head, take route 36 south from Altoona to Jct route 26, a distance of approximately 40 miles. Turn left on West Cypher Beach Road about 3 miles. Then right on East Cypher Beach Road about one mile. At the top of a small hill where rails are still visible under the road, turn left into the parking lot. The trail begins there and to reach the bridge is about a 500 ft. walk through the rock-cut on level ground. Some day I plan to go back and walk from there to Hopewell borough, about 6 miles distant.

All in all, it was a good day ! LEA

## THE KEYSTONE FOUNDRY & MUSEUM

The Keystone Foundry Museum is located in the village of Hopewell in southern Huntingdon County, accessed by PA route 26, along the former right of way of the Huntingdon and Broad Top Mountain RR, which closed in 1954. As noted in the preceding article, the right-of-way is now part of a rails-to-trails project.

Unique to the area is the Keystone Foundry which, at one time, was a foundry shop of the Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain RR, which has survived, intact, and untouched for over a century. Now open to visitors (by appointment), it is operated by the Hopewell Senior Citizens organization and preserved in its original state. Stepping through the door, is like entering a time-warp from a century previous. All tools, presses, furnaces, molds & patterns are there as if waiting for the workers to return to work. Coats still hang on pegs on the wall and tools, dies, and machinery (powered by an overhead belt system) seem ready begin another days work. We heartily recommend a visit to the area, which can be supplemented by the coke ovens at nearby Riddlesburg and railroad station, water tank and steam locomotive relic, also nearby at Dudley, just east of Saxton.



Partial view of the interior of Keystone Foundry, Hopewell, PA. Note overhead belt and pulley system. Dies, patterns, templates and forges are all in place. Knob & tube wiring and knife switches are also visible .

ARNOLD C. EMERSON  
Oct 3, 1922 – June 8, 2015

Known to his many friends as “Ace” [note the 3 initials in the name] Arnold was a long time friend and supporter of Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS, but is more well-known for his dedication to the Blair County Historical Society and Baker Mansion, as well as the Sons of the American Revolution. For most of his life and that of his wife Sylva who preceded him in death, the BCHS benefited from their tireless dedication over the decades. Arnold was a U.S. Navy veteran of WWII and a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Post Office in Hollidaysburg.

May 11, 2015 begins our Chapter’s 47<sup>th</sup> year. At one time, the (national) NRHS organization required new members to be at least age 16, a rule which was later abolished. But, in those days, Arnold and Sylva joined our chapter when their son, Robert, was only 14 (early 70’s) so he could participate. At that time we were meeting at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward Civic Center in Altoona. And, as Bob’s interest progressed, along with his high school and college education and concurrent activity with Blair County Historical Society including military re-enactments, plans for developing a railroad museum for Altoona, were also progressing. While one never knows what the future holds, the stars became aligned and Bob was selected to become the first Executive Director of the new Railroader’s

**Memorial Museum which, as most of us know, opened on September 21, 1980 (although an office in downtown Altoona was opened in the year prior, and began collecting artifacts for the collection).**

**Today, Bob heads up the Fort Niagara historical site in upstate New York, but we extend our sympathy, and join in the celebration of the life of his parents.**

**EVERETT RAILROAD COMPANY HOSTS  
RAILWAY & LOCOMOTIVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**A full weekend of activities was in store for about 90 registered visitors to the greater Altoona area on the weekend of June 4 – 7, 2015. The weekend began with a buffet dinner at the Sheetz Entrepreneurial Center June 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by an evening of three slide programs on local history: (1) Horseshoe Curve by Dave Seidel; (2) The Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain RR by Keith Burkey and Randy Anderson; (3) The Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway by Leonard E. Alwine and Dave Seidel.**



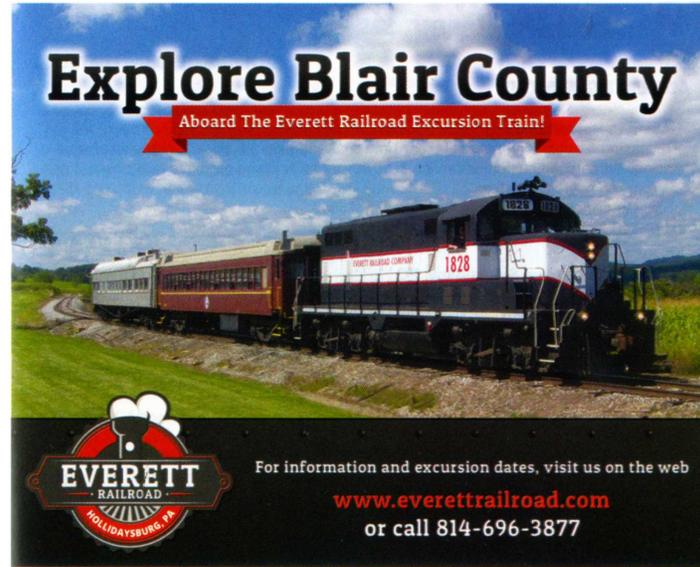
**Thursday June 4, 2015 at Sheetz Entrepreneurial Center .**





**Locomotive & Railway Historical Society excursion, Hollidaysburg, PA on the Everett Railroad.  
Note new station nearing completion at left. Trip photos: Keith Burkey**





### CURRENT EXCURSION SCHEDULE

#### 2015 Martinsburg, PA Agricultural Parade Festival Train

***Tuesday June 30, 2015 from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM EDT***

A round-trip train ride from Hollidaysburg or Roaring Spring to Martinsburg, PA for the 4th of July Parade on June 30. Departs Hollidaysburg at 4:00 PM and Roaring Spring at 5:00, arriving Martinsburg at 5:30. Price includes a token for a slice of Martinsburg Pizza. Return trip information is available on the event page.

***Railroad Depots; Hollidaysburg, Roaring Spring PA***

***July 2015 Ice Cream Special***

***Saturday July 18, 2015 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM EDT***

Beat the heat this summer with an afternoon round trip train ride from Hollidaysburg to Roaring Spring! Your ticket includes a scoop of ice cream at the depot in Roaring Spring, where additional refreshments and souvenirs will be available for sale during your layover. The train arrives Roaring Spring at 1:45 PM and departs at 3:00 PM.

***Everett Railroad Depot; Hollidaysburg, PA***

***For more info, consult [www.everettrailroad.com](http://www.everettrailroad.com).***



***Former PRR Station at Hollidaysburg at Broad & Bedford St, razed by Penn Central RR after Horseshoe Curve Chapter inquired***

*about acquisition in the early 70's. Had it remained, excursions departures could have been facilitated here. Wishful thinking.*

### HARLEY BURKET

As reported earlier, chapter member Harley Burket is recovering from triple-bypass heart surgery and is making progress. He has been at Health South Hospital in Altoona the past two weeks and is expected to return home next week, as of this writing. Please keep the Burket family in your prayers.

### NORFOLK SOUTHERN JUNIATA SHOP PAINTWORK



Union Pacific DDA40X following new paint work at Norfolk Southern's Juniata Shop, May 30, 2015, prior to moving west to the Museum of Transportation, St. Louis, Mo. This locomotive is powered by two 3,300 h.p. engines (6600 h.p.), mfg by EMD of General Motors, and is one of 13 surviving units, of 47 built in the 1969-1971 period. Body frames are 98 ft. in length. The first mfg unit arrived in Salt Lake City, UT May 10, 1969 for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of driving the golden spike, completing the transcontinental railroad in 1869. At that time, a special passenger train was assembled to travel to UT (Promontory) for the occasion, traversing much of the United States to and from the event, powered by NKP Berkshire Class, No. 759. Altoona and the (new) Penn Central Railroad contributed passenger equipment (ex-PRR) for that train-set, notably three Class B-60 baggage cars used for historical exhibits, plus a double-diner and the observation car "Mountain View" off the Broadway Limited. As you may recall, the "Broadway Limited" left the timetable December 1967 just prior to the PRR-NYC merger. The Golden Spike Ltd passenger train was painted robin-egg blue, with silver roofing and silver trucks and gold/buff lettering & trim.



**Unveiling of Norfolk Southern's 911 Unit at Juniata Shop, May 19, 2015, posing with the ex-PRR Altoona Works 1941 Mack Fire Truck, which is now part of the Altoona Fire Department. Instagram image by Kelly Dilling, A.F.D.**



### **AMTRAK**

**Has published a Guide for Railfans brochure, noticed recently on the literature rack at the Altoona Amtrak station. It seems more relevant in eastern Pennsylvania, NJ and NY and the northeast corridor, but is suggested reading for being on or near Amtrak property.**



# RAILFANS

## TIPS AND SECURITY ADVISORY

### RAILROAD ENTHUSIASTS

Railroad enthusiasts can be found throughout the world and hail from all walks of life. Some follow train technology or operations, others create elaborate train layouts or models, and many enjoy taking photographs or are content to just watch trains from a distance.

At any level of interest, the rail industry appreciates the support of railfans who are observing the railroads with a shared concern for the safety and security of the operation. Amtrak partners with TSA and Operation Lifesaver to educate communities about the dangers of trespassing upon railroad property. With this in mind, the Amtrak Police Department (APD) asks train watchers to help authorities by being on the alert for security or safety problems.



Amtrak Police: (800)331-0008  
 Visit the Partners for Amtrak Safety and Security (PASS) program website for more information.  
<https://pass.amtrak.com>



**BLAIR COUNTY HISTORY CENTER AT BAKER MANSION  
 HOSTS NRHS JUNE MEETING**

The June meeting of Horseshoe Curve Chapter, NRHS was held on June 23, 2015 at historic Baker Mansion at the invitation of Executive Director, Joe DeFrancesco. In addition to the regular business meeting, held on the steps of the stately mansion on a balmy evening, we enjoyed remarks from guest Stephen L. Dillen, P.E., a professor at Penn State Altoona. Professor Dillen is the Program Coordinator for the relatively new baccalaureate Rail Transportation Engineering degree program. Penn State Altoona graduated its first class in May of this year (9 students), all of whom have found employment in the railroad industry.



Professor Dillen explained that the Penn State program is quite unique and no other school in the United States matches the curriculum, although there are some ‘specialty’ school offerings but are not all-inclusive in course-content.

Of particular note, Professor Dillen informed our membership regarding the possibilities for such things as funding endowments or student grants and awards programs offering much food for thought for future consideration.

As most of know, the newly completed roundhouse / Harry & Rebecca Bennett Learning Center at Railroaders Memorial Museum has three bays (yet unfinished) for use by the Penn State Rail Transportation Engineering program, and it was felt that contracts for completing the academic/laboratory space are imminent. The rest of the roundhouse which otherwise houses track and equipment space for the museum, is now open to the public and, as mentioned in the previous

issue of the Coal Bucket, is the new location for the Memorial Hall plaques, which is very tastefully presented.

By way of addendum, Horseshoe Curve Chapter, NRHS has now placed on display in the roundhouse, several restoration projects for the museum space, notably the 1940 Railway Express Agency truck, the Conrail Marplex utility truck, and, most recently, the restored (1 of 2) Railway Express Agency baggage car, all of which are exhibited adjacent to the *LORETTO*, private Pullman car of industrialist Charles M. Schwab, which the chapter re-painted a few years ago (which requires additional work now that the car has been moved under roof).

**A Review of Major Chapter Projects Over the Past Decade**



**Scott Houseman & Mark Yingling unload.**



**”Before”, April 2006, freshly delivered to Railroader’s Memorial Museum from an Iowa Salvage Yard ! Junque, (implied value), not Junk.**



**“After”** Special thanks to the N.C. Transportation Museum (advice) who restored an almost identical (1939) Chevrolet Railway Express Agency truck.



**Mark Yingling applying some polish to the 1940 Chevrolet express truck.**



**Millenium Rail Car employees pose with Horseshoe Curve Chapter owned REX 7375, refinished at Millenium Railcar Co., Hollidaysburg, PA (2006) and also on display at Railroader's Memorial Museum. Millenium Rail Car Co is now Greenbrier-WATCO.**



**Conrail Marplex Utility Truck**

*More quality restoration projects by the Amalgamated Benevolent Brotherhood of Metal Finishers & Pigment Applicators, Local No. 1361 !*

#### **CHAPTER FILM PROJECT**

As some may know, our chapter has had multiple 16mm films in storage for the past 40+ years which have not been viewed in many years. Under the leadership of Jeffery Holland, several of these films are now seeing the "light of day" and will be edited and converted to DVD. Notably, the film on the end of the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway (with added footage from Jeff's own collection); Opening day ceremonies/festivities of Railroader's Memorial Museum (9-21-1980); etc. These films were made by cinematographer Howard Wright, deceased, for the TV station in Altoona (formerly WFBG-TV, now WTAJ-TV). We hope to preview these in the near future.

#### **GG-1 # 4913**

As most of us know, Railroader's Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA, opened on September 21, 1980. Did you know that GG-1 # 4913 arrived on September 17, 1980? The locomotive's acquisition was

the direct result of the efforts of Andrea Vibbert, which is detailed in a book detailing the history of this locomotive, in the gift shop at Railroader's Memorial Museum. In addition to Andrea's particular interest in this locomotive, it was built in the Juniata Shops in 1942 even though Altoona was not in "electrified territory". Andrea will be visiting Altoona and the museum on the anniversary of that event, September 17, 2015...a 35 year hallmark.

#### OTHER TRIP NEWS

##### Trip Director: Dick Charlesworth

The planned trip to Washington D. C. August 15th, arranged by on behalf of the Alto Model Train Museum, is SOLD OUT. This trip will visit Mt. Vernon, & the National Air & Space Museum (in-town). The return trip will depart Union Station via the Capitol Limited to Cumberland, where the bus will meet us for the return to Altoona.

Dick is also arranging another trip (Horseshoe Curve Chapter-NRHS) to Cumberland MD and the Western Maryland Scenic RR October 17, 2015, to benefit the Roaring Spring Historical Society. Call Dick at (814)695-2201 for further information (evenings & weekends).

#### CHAPTER PICNIC

To Be Announced

#### MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS

Railroader's Memorial Museum has recently renovated the exterior of the original museum exhibits building. In recent years it has been in need of new paint and landscaping on the forecourt plaza. Such was accomplished last month and the building now presents a professional appearance facing the nearby UPMC Medical Center. We applaud the museum for this initiative. Grand to be sure on opening day, the space once housed the principle exhibits for the museum prior to 1998. Now, essentially a "shop/maintenance" facility, the exterior nonetheless now presents a good public view. Now, all that's missing, is the original façade sign and the flag pole.....



