



Official Newsletter of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
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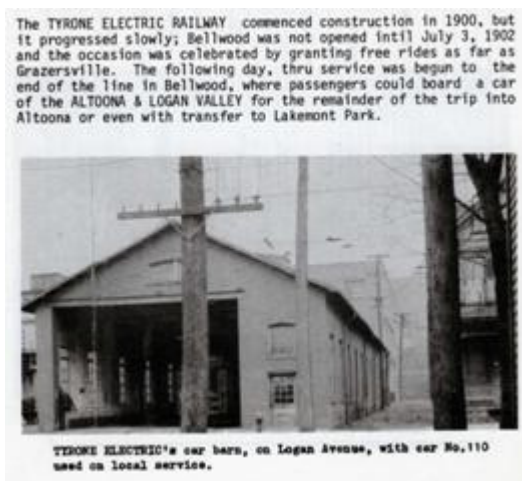
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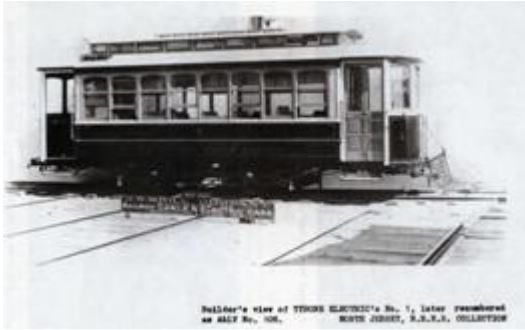
UNDER THE WIRE

A continuing series associated with the history of the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway

The Home Electric & Steam Heating Company – Tyrone, PA -By David W. Seidel



This remnant of the Tyrone Electric Railway (later, part of the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Ry) still stands on Logan Avenue today adjacent to the former Home Electric & Steam Heating plant.



Tyrone Electric Railway No. 1



Tyrone street scene illustrating the trolley tracks

Long abandoned and boarded-up, the Home Electric and Steam Heating plant on Logan Avenue has been a source of curiosity to many in the community. What was it 'really' like? How did it operate? What was the internal machinery like? Sadly, very few images remain although the building shell is still intact and may face demolition as the years accrue.

On May 5, 2009, with the assistance of Nancy Smith, President of the Tyrone Historical Society, a glimpse was afforded to the interior of this building. We had often heard rumors of trolley tracks still evident in the floor. What else would the building reveal?



Yes, there are tracks in the floor, but these are narrow-gage, and used by dolly-cars to move coal to the boilers, probably moved/pushed by hand. The track width was 25 inches. Tracks are located on north side of building (back-end). Track Plates: "The Atlas Car & Mfg Co., Cleveland, OH-Mfr's of Complete Industrial Railway Equipment"



A small turntable exists in the floor to switch cars between two parallel tracks.



There was much debris in the building. An old farm-wagon frame (with flat tires) had to be moved so the tracks could be swept to view; Nancy Smith called in the National Guard! Our thanks to: Sergeants Rhoa, Lafferty & Kissell.



Interior of Home Electric. This area probably housed coal fired stokers, boilers on lower level, generators on 2nd level.



Same as preceding photo. This is rear of bldg as accessed from side lot.



Second main room of Home Electric which still has an overhead crane in place mfg by "Alfred (?) Box Co., Builders, Philadelphia" The first name is almost illegible.



Appears to be remnants of steam pressure pipes from the furnaces in the same room as the overhead crane.



Steam pipes, one of which has remnants of insulation material.



Coal bunkers from rail siding access overhead.

According to information supplied by Tyrone resident, Andy Smith, Home Electric & Steam Heating Co. was established in 1886, with the original plant located on Blair Avenue for night street lighting only. The facility then moved to S. Logan Avenue in 1893. The present facility illustrated in the photographs above was constructed in 1908. A rail siding provided coal hopper cars on a trestle at the rear of the building but locomotives could not move beyond the concrete piers. (This siding also serviced the Bayer Bros & Sons (Clover Farm Stores). * *Note: Siding # 4392 from PRR list of sidings ca. 1918, Tyrone Division, courtesy of Andy Smith.* The smokestack for the plant was located on the side along the railroad and transformers were in the same vicinity. Home Electric ceased operations in the 1952-1953 time-frame; services provided by 'other' suppliers, but Penelec took over that role in 1957 according to Mr. Jack Myers, Penelec retiree who hired with Home Electric in 1951. The main office for Home Electric was on the space used as a parking lot today by the Searer Funeral Home. *Note: A gas lighting plant preceded the first Home Electric facility.* Following is an article which appeared in an edition of the *Tyrone Daily Herald* (Probably the Centennial issue):

Home Electric Co. Operated Here in 1886

"The Home Electric Light and Steam Heating Company was established in 1886 in the building beside the Knights of Columbus building on Blair Avenue and Eleventh St, I.P. Walton, George Garner and S. Templeton being the original owners. The first engineers were John Bookhammer and Cal Myers. The plant was built by McConnor. The Superintendent was S.L. Smith.

The original plant started with direct current equipment with two machines in operation. The first service was for night time only, and for lights exclusively. The street lights were introduced about 1887, each light being a small bulb, and the lights spaced far apart.

In 1893 the plant was moved to the present location on South Logan avenue, and there were many changes of ownership up until 1902, when the property was taken over by the Altoona and Logan Valley R.R. Co. and it was about this time that the trolley line was built from Tyrone to Bellwood.

In 1908 the present plant was built by the Home Electric and Steam Heating Company. It continued in use until a number of years ago when the electric power was purchased from the Pennsylvania Electric Company. About ten years ago the huge transformers which were located at the side of the building were moved inside the present structure, the turbines and other electric equipment being removed. At the same time, the large 75 foot flue was razed.

All of this work was done during the superintendency of the late J. Earl Oster, who was succeeded following his death by Timothy Ake.

At present new power lines are under construction to give the area better electric service.

During the disastrous flood of 1936, the company did heroic work. Their entire plant was under water, including the big transformers. Despite these great difficulties, the town was only a few hours without electric power.

The company is at present supplying electric power to Tyrone, Bellwood, Warriors Mark, Birmingham, and to farms as far east as the Centre county line and as far west as Pinecroft.” (Article supplied by Andy Smith).

Excerpt from a publication highlighting Utilities of Blair County: Blair Co. & Cambria Co. PA – Inventory of
Historic Engineering & Industrial Sites
America’s Industrial Heritage Project 1990
National Park Service

Home Electric Light & Steam Heating Company (ca. 1910)
Current Name: N & N Truck and Equipment Repair

Logan Avenue S of W Tenth Street, Tyrone, Blair County, Pennsylvania

USGS Quad: Tyrone, Pennsylvania (1.24000) UTM: 17 E.733240 N.450.5600

Historic Use: Steam Plant
Present Use: Maintenance Garage

The first electric light company in Tyrone, the Home Electric Light & Steam Heating Company, was founded in 1886. This company operated a 360-horsepower boiler, a dynamo, and AC generator capable of supplying electricity for 120 arc and 1500 incandescent lights used by the borough and its railroad and business facilities. According to an 1896 Sanborn map of Tyrone, the boilers and generating equipment of Home Electric were located in a one-story, brick building. Around 1900 the plant began providing steam heat to area buildings. About ten years later the Home Electric Light & Steam Heating Company greatly expanded its operations, constructing two, large, brick buildings. The original (ca. 1886) one-story building became a car-barn for the Altoona and Logan Valley Railway Company.

The surviving 1910’s structures include the power plant, the boiler house, and the concrete piers of the elevated rail spur. The power plant, located near Logan Avenue, is an impressive tall one-story building containing a scored concrete foundation, red brick walls, and decorative segmental arches spanning the door and window openings. The south (main) façade contains a lightly ornamented parapet with inscription “Home Electric Light & Steam Heating Company” placed in the center brick panel. The large one-story boiler house adjoins the powerhouse to the north and contains similar ornamental brickwork including stepped parapet walls at the east and west facades. Although access to the interiors was not permitted, the brick buildings probably contain steel frames. Along the west side of the boiler house stand, the remains of an elevated rail spur and coal dump.

Pennsylvania Electric (Penelec) eventually acquired the Home Electric Light & Steam Heating Company. The new owners transferred the steam turbine from the Tyrone plant to its power plant in Johnstown. In the early 1960’s, Penelec removed the Tyrone plant’s large stack, and the powerhouse was abandoned.

Currently, a truck repair business uses the buildings, however all of the structures are scheduled for demolition.”

This article supplied by Andy Smith.

Excerpt, Blair Main Line: A History of the Tuckahoe Valley, Paul Kurtz, July 1976

“In the case of the Tuckahoe Valley, the first public electric service came to Altoona in 1886. This was only four years after the first public generating station in New York City and actually only seven years after the invention of the electric light bulb (1879). The first plant was small, developing only 230 kw. Only two men were needed to operate each shift. The power plant was closed during the daylight hours. A second plant was opened in 1887 and a third in 1902. By that time, the total generating ability was about 3500 kw. The first power plant in Hollidaysburg opened in 1892.

In the early days, breakdowns were common. The light was not necessarily all that good, actually good oil lights would probably be stronger. If one wanted to have electricity installed the house would have to be torn up to have the mouldings run. The house owner already had a considerable investment in fine lamps. So the only immediately gain would be the freedom from daily washing lamp chimneys and trimming wicks. The question of whether to have “the electric” installed was a thing to ponder over. Perhaps the growth of the electric generation industry owes a great deal to the trolley. It was certainly one of the big early users. Up to the 1880’s, power meant steam or watermill but the streetcars were a market for large amounts of power. They likewise created the need to transmit this power. Early power was based on direct current which drops rapidly as distance increases from the generator. Successful transmission required alternating current. It is a matter for speculation but one wonders whether the streetcar line in Tyrone was not a mutually supportive project with the establishment of the Home Electric Company in 1901.

The first electric light company in Tyrone was the Home Electric which dated to 1886. Their 360 hp boiler was rated at a capacity sufficient for 120 arc lights and 1500 in-candescent lights. In 1897 *Tyrone of To-Day noted with pardonable pride that Tyrone had 54 arc lights used by the borough, 29 by the railroad, and 25 by businessmen, and that the plant gave employment to six men.”

Excerpt courtesy of Andy Smith

*Tyrone of To-Day-The Gateway of the Alleghenies by Rev. W.H. Wilson, Tyrone PA Press of the Herald 1897.
The Home Electric Light Company

“You press the button; we do the rest.” This familiar saying applies with special aptitude to the wonders of Electricity.....

....The company bearing the above name, chartered in 1886, is composed of stockholders who carry among them 800 shares at \$50. a share, and do business below Tenth street on Logan avenue. There they have a brick building 40 x 120 feet, and a plant capable of supplying 120 arc and 1500 incandescent lights....”

Excerpt courtesy of Andy Smith

Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway Company: Tyrone Car Barn (ca. 1911)
Blair & Cambria Co. PA

An Inventory of Historic Engineering & Industrial Sites by America’s Industrial Heritage Project-National Park Service

“In 1901 Tyrone businessmen organized the Tyrone Street Railway which was to run from Tyrone to Bellwood. Clearing, grubbing, and grading for the line commenced, with the work carried out largely by Italian immigrants. Branch lines to Nealmont and East Tyrone were soon built, and four cars were operating by 1902. One year later an electrified interurban system linked Tyrone with Altoona and Hollidaysburg. The Tyrone Street Railway system was linked to Altoona and Hollidaysburg by 1903, when it was absorbed by the Altoona & Logan Valley Street Railway, an Altoona concern owned by the American Railways Company, of Philadelphia. In 1916 the 12-mile railway ride from Tyrone to Altoona took thirty minutes, with cars operating from 5:45 a.m. to 11:15 p.m.

In the 1910’s the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway Company purchased an old (ca. 1890’s) steam plant and converted it into a car barn. Located at Logan Avenue near Tenth Street, the one-and-one-half story building was erected by the Home Electric Light Company of Tyrone and measures 120’ by 40’. It contains a stone foundation, brick load-bearing walls, and timber rafters. After Altoona & Logan Valley

Electric Railway was disbanded in the late 1930's, the car barn in Tyrone passed through several hands. The building is currently used by a trucking firm, but is scheduled for demotion."

Excerpt courtesy of Andy Smith

POST-SCRIPT ON HOME ELECTRIC

This author had the distinct pleasure of an extended conversation with Mr. Jack Myers of Tyrone (Aug 18, 2009) following an introduction from Andy Smith. Mr. Myers was hired at Home Electric and Steam Heating Co. in January 1951 by Mr. Earl Oster, at \$2.11 per hour. Even at that time the turbines in the Logan Avenue facility were not operational and by 1957 all operations were transferred to Pennsylvania Electric Co. as did Mr. Myers' employment. As we reported in a prior issue of the *Coal Bucket*, and in the book "Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway" co-authored with Leonard E. Alwine, the 'Logan Valley' was non-operational after 1954. However, Mr. Myers participated in the dismantling of the electric infrastructure, particularly the poles and lines from Plank Road in Altoona to Hollidaysburg.

Mr. Myers also related that the existing building on Logan Avenue (photos previous) had multiple floors whereas all that remains today is the outer wall floor-to-ceiling shell. The tracks in the floor were used to move the coal from the outside tippie. Boilers developed steam which operated the turbines. These units, while still in place at the time of Mr. Myers hiring, were not operational and had been consigned to an Altoona salvage dealer but remained in the building for some time. An upper floor also housed the room where power-distribution operators worked, with access from an exterior stairway. The outside smokestack was approximately 110' in height and was later dismantled by Tyrone workers.

The car-barn building on Logan Avenue, which still exists today, had two parallel tracks in it and not only stored the trolleys but provided a maintenance facility as well.

Mr. Myers is very appreciative of his employment years with Home Electric and Pennsylvania Electric Co. and had many fascinating recollections of his employment and high regard for those with whom he worked over these many years. Sadly, this also involved occasional tragedies when a friend and co-worker sustained electrocution due to unforeseen circumstances.
End.

All Photos in this Series by David Seidel.

Special Thank you to Nancy Smith, Tyrone Area Historical Society, for arranging access.

OTHER NEWS AND PROJECTS

Chapter members have provided multiple volunteer hours at Railroader's Memorial Museum (as usual) scraping and painting (primer coat) the Elkhart Wrecker (Derrick) and have applied roof coating to the ex-PRR RPO "tool car", which was in need of attention.

The Railway Express Agency truck is essentially complete except for lettering. It was exhibited at the museum for Railfest (and sustained fender scrapes on the new paint when someone opened the hinged hood). It was also exhibited at the Antique Truck and Machinery Show at Lakemont Park the weekend of July 25-26. Chapter Historian Dave Seidel will be visiting the N.C. Transportation Museum in September and hopes to measure the lettering style on their duplicate truck.

The Chapter coaches have had their airbrake valves updated and installed and additional painting of the exterior (finish-work) has been accomplished also, and Mr. Francis Givler Sr. is painting the interior of one coach (white).

As discussed at previous chapter meetings, work is about to commence with a contractor to do vestibule repair work on at least one coach, starting with the unit most in need of attention.

CHAPTER PICNIC

Was held at Will and Diane Teeter's Lodge near the Frankstown Sportsmen's Club on August 9th. The following photographs were supplied by Christine (Dave) Behe;



CONGRATULATIONS

To the Nittany & Bald Eagle RR and the consortium of shortline railroads which operate within this organization, e.g., North Shore RR, for observing 25 years of operations since these lines were sold by Conrail as surplus. The occasion was marked by a special excursion train to Tyrone, PA recently.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RR INVESTS IN EDUCATION – CONTRIBUTES TO PENN-STATE ALTOONA CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

August 13, 2009

Norfolk Southern Provides \$100,000 Grant to Penn State Altoona for Railroad Engineering Degree Program

ALTOONA, PA. – The Norfolk Southern Foundation has given \$100,000 to Penn State Altoona to assist in the development of a four-year Rail and Transit Engineering (RTE) degree program. This innovative Bachelor of Science program will include existing Penn State civil engineering courses, coupled with new customized courses in rail business, mechanical systems, track, operations, communications, and regulation. The program is designed to produce graduates who will quickly acclimate to the rail industry and its suppliers.

“On behalf of the entire Penn State Altoona community, I express heartfelt appreciation to Norfolk Southern for the vital role it is playing in the creation of this exciting academic initiative,” said Dr. Lori J. Bechtel-Wherry, chancellor of Penn State Altoona. “We are proud to be a national leader in this discipline. The railway industry has an established history of philanthropic support at Penn State Altoona. As an institution committed to public service, our college draws inspiration from Norfolk Southern’s community spirit, and we are grateful for the railroad’s support of our vision and their partnering with us to enhance academic and career opportunities for our students.”

Cindy Earhart, Norfolk Southern’s vice president human resources, said: “While the rail industry is operating in challenging economic times, the fact remains that our workforce is maturing. In order for Norfolk Southern to remain successful, we need to develop a talent pool that understands the railroad work environment. Penn State Altoona’s Rail and Transit Engineering program will provide the industry with skilled and motivated graduates who want to become the next generation of railroaders.”

“I want to congratulate Norfolk Southern and Penn State University for coming together to create this fantastic baccalaureate program in railroad engineering,” said Congressman Bill Shuster, Ranking Republican on the Subcommittee on Railroads in the House of Representatives. “Pennsylvania played an important role in building America’s railroads, and our state continues its proud heritage to this day. The transportation of goods and services over rail is critical to our economic growth and educational programs like this at Penn State will help improve its role across the country. I want to recognize Norfolk Southern for its commitment to improving the communities it works with and I congratulate Penn State and its students on this exciting new educational opportunity.”

“As a proponent of the Rail and Transit Engineering degree program for the past ten years, this truly is a dream come true,” said State Rep. Rick Geist. “It took bringing the right people to the table to create this win-win development for Penn State Altoona, Norfolk Southern and all of Blair County and we certainly have the right people. A Rail and Transit Engineering degree program is evidence of railroading’s bright future and will usher in a new and exciting era.”

Penn State Altoona is an ideal site for the new program, given its geographic location to Norfolk Southern’s primary locomotive maintenance facility and the railroad’s main artery between the Chicago and New York markets. Founded as a rail center in 1849 by the Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona is world-famous for its long history as a leading site for steam and diesel locomotive repair and maintenance, and its landmark of rail engineering, the Horseshoe Curve.

Another component of the Penn State RTE program is the Altoona Railroader’s Memorial Museum, which is dedicated to revealing, interpreting, commemorating and celebrating the significant contributions of railroaders and their families to American life and industry. The museum has close relationship with Norfolk Southern and

has offered the Penn State program space in a new roundhouse planned for the museum property. Pending approval by Penn State University's faculty senate and administration, it is anticipated that classes in the RTE program will begin at Penn State Altoona in the fall of 2010. Norfolk Southern will provide the program with technical support and assistance. Bechtel-Wherry described the program as "a groundbreaking academic initiative that will provide students with a unique multidisciplinary experience." "It is entirely fitting that Penn State Altoona – located only minutes from the hub of Norfolk Southern's local operations – will offer this particular program," she said. "The potential impact of this program on the railroad industry is substantial. Through our Rail and Transit Engineering baccalaureate degree program, we have the opportunity to play a vital role in training engineers for placement within the expanding railroad industry. The potential benefits of this program for our students, our college, and the railroad industry are limitless."

Norfolk Southern and Penn State have also engaged in joint research to improve the energy efficiency of locomotives and reduce railroad emissions. Funded by NS and the U.S. Department of Energy, this effort will encourage students to get involved in developing new and innovative technologies for the railroad.

Norfolk Southern Corporation (NYSE: NSC) is one of the nation's premier transportation companies. Its Norfolk Southern Railway subsidiary operates approximately 21,000 route miles in 22 states and the District of Columbia, serves every major container port in the eastern United States, and provides superior connections to western rail carriers. Norfolk Southern operates the most extensive intermodal network in the East and is North America's largest rail carrier of metals and automotive products.

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Norfolk Southern Corporation | <http://www.nscorp.com> *From the Internet*

CONGRATULATIONS TYLER !

If you weren't at the July meeting, we acknowledged Tyler Martynuska's graduation from Rail Camp at Steamtown. Tyler gave a very succinct report of his experiences there which we all enjoyed.

Tyler offers these observations in an excellent journal report:

"On day 1 I arrived at Scranton University at approximately 8:30 am. After we were given a brief lecture explaining the guidelines for the week we headed down to the Steamtown National Historic Site where we were given a brief tour of the yard before we headed to the Steamtown Station to board the excursion to Moscow, Pa. The excursion was headed by NKP 514, a GP9, due to the fact that CN 3254 (Steamtown's Mikado) was in the shops with burnt out wheel bearings from her last trip. So despite the excursion not being pulled by steam the trip was still enjoyable. Once we got to Moscow, we were treated to a lunch by the local chapter. There was also a small flea market consisting of various railroad related books, magazines and movies. After we browsed the flea market and completed our lunch we headed back on to the excursion to the Steamtown Station. After the excursion was over we were given a little treat. We got a ride on Steamtown's Yard Shuttle, pulled by CP 2317 (Steamtown's Pacific). 2317 is limited to the yard shuttle because it is due for it's 5 year overhaul very soon. After the yard shuttle trip we were given a tour of the roundhouse where we were allowed to climb up into the cab of the various locomotives in there. After we were done browsing Steamtown's round house, we headed back to the dorms where we wrote a journal entry and headed to bed for our next day.

On Day two we went down to the Steamtown NHS and met with Mr. Ken Gantz, a park ranger at SNHS.

Mr. Gantz gave us a formal tour of SNHS's facility. After that we were assigned a piece of equipment and were given a history on it. With that information we were to put together a brief presentation on the spot of our piece. My group's piece was L&N RPO 1100. After we were done being "tour guides" we headed to the Lackawanna Coal Mine and the Anthracite museum. We were split up in to two groups, one to the museum and one to the mine and then we switched. The museum was very neat as we learned how significant Scranton was due to its large anthracite deposits. After the museum we headed close to three hundred feet below the

surface to Lackawanna Coal Mine, Slope 190. In the mine it was very cold, a constant 55 degrees Fahrenheit. In the mine we learned about the many jobs that miners could do. We also found out that boys as young as 7 could be put to work in possibly life threatening positions. We also went to the Scranton Iron Furnaces where T-rails were made. After the mine trip we headed back to our dorms, completed our journal entries and got a good night sleep.



Boy, there was an early wake up. By early I mean 5:30 am!!!! On this day we took a trip to HARRIS tower in Harrisburg, Pa where we toured and simulated the job of a tower worker, switching tracks. The simulator was very neat as we were given calls and we had to direct several trains to the right destination. After HARRIS, we headed to Bear, DE to tour Amtrak's car shops. At the Bear shops we learned that all of Amtrak's fleet was only to last up to 30 years. But at these shops Amtrak's car restoration specialists have the ability to make these cars last up to twice as long as they are designed to. After the car shops, we headed out to Wilmington, DE where we visited Amtrak's locomotive repair facility. At this facility we witnessed several AEM-7s and various diesel engines of Amtrak's get service. After our tour of the Wilmington Shops (and some brief railfanning along the NE corridor) we headed back to the dorms for our journal entries and a good night's sleep.



On day four we headed don to SNHS to do some hands on shop work. We made a locomotive silhouette using various tools such as a welder, a grinder, plasma cutter, a pneumatic hole-puncher and a spray paint gun. We started out by cutting out a locomotive shape with the plasma cutter. Next we grinded it down until it was smooth and free of any sharp points. After that we got a base; we took the base and punched two holes on it for the supports; next we riveted the supports to the base. After the riveting we went and welded the locomotive to the base and supports. After the welding we grinded the welds down so they were smooth. The last and final step we had was to clean the locomotive off and paint it with the spray paint gun. After our locomotive was complete we headed to the auditorium where we were given a presentation about Amtrak Job opportunities. After we learned about the various jobs Amtrak employees do we were given a tour of Steamtown's Archives by SNHS's historian. After we saw the rarities the archives had to offer we headed back to the dorms for journal time and a nights rest.



On day five we headed to the auditorium where we were given an operation lifesaver presentation by a Canadian National police officer. We learned the do's and don't's when

you are around trains. After the presentation my group headed to the trolley museum where we took a brief tour of the museum then headed up to the SNHS station where we got to go on a trolley ride to Montage Mountain. During the trolley ride we encountered a mile long tunnel. After the trolley ride we headed to the Round house where we were taught how to perform inspections on the locomotives. We were taught about boiler washes, water quality, lubrication points, couplers, how to change a brake pad and a coupler and how to start up a GP9. After we were done with this we headed to the dorms where we started on a two day project. We had to create a power point for the parents to see on Saturday. After a long night of working, we headed off to bed where we dreamed of the spectacular day ahead of us.



On Friday, the last day on site, we headed down to SNHS where we were split up into two groups. One group to the GP9 for operations and the other to the Live steamer and model layout. My group headed to the GP9 first. the first thing we did was learn about how vital "three point protection" was. After that we learned hand signals. Next we used those hand signals to direct a train to couple into a car. After the train was coupled we learned how to connect the air hoses and add some air into the system. After that we learned how to uncouple the train, using the same hand signals that we learned before. After everybody had a turn coupling and uncoupling, we got to the real fun. Operation the GP9. This in

my opinion was the best part of the camp. We were instructed to follow the hand signals we had learned earlier. We ran NKP 514 up and down a 200 yard stretch of track. After many of the kids live out their fantasy, operating a locomotive, we switched groups. We started out with radio operations. We used a model train to simulate what it would be like to work in a tower and give command to a locomotive doing yard switching. After we finished that we headed outside where Mr. Seth Corwin allowed us to operate his live steamer. Although a few unlucky campers derailed the steamer (no real damage was done)it was quite enjoyable. After that we were given a demonstration on how a Hi-Railer works. After all this exciting activity we headed back to the dorms to wrap up our presentations. After the presentations were finalized, we went to sleep, dreading the sad day to come.

On our last day at Railcamp, we gave our parents a presentation on what we had accomplished on this fine week. After the presentations we headed back to the dorms where we all said good bye to our "faimily" for the week and headed home.

Railcamp was a very exiting and fun filled week for me. I will always cherish the once in a life time experiences i encountered durring this week. But most importantly, i will cherrish the friendships that i built. I would like to thank the Horseshoe Curve chapter for giving me the opportunity to experience something as amazing as this."

By Tyler A. Martynuska

OBSERVATION CAR

Unless you're living under a rock somewhere, you should note that the once emptied Hollidaysburg Yard is full to capacity once again. Maxed-out one would say. With the downturn in the economy and the reduced shipping volume on railroads everywhere, the Hollidaysburg Yard has become a storage facility for private label freight cars such as RailBox and the variety of flat and well-cars that containerized freight normally uses. Shifting operations in the yard seem to be under the management of the new owners of the former Millenium Rail Car Shop of Berwind-White history: Watco, a multi-state railroad company operating several repair shops as well as shortline railroads in various states. For more information, visit www.watcocompanies.com. The Hollidaysburg repair facility may be found under "Mechanical Services" on the cover page.

On a related note, just when we all expected the Hollidaysburg freight car yard to be bulldozed into oblivion similar to the east-end of that vast complex at Frankstown, we now observe that the entire branch line from Alto interlocking at Altoona to Hollidaysburg Yard is now being rehabilitated with all new welded rail. Not that the branch line was in bad shape to begin with, but the new element to the equation is the advent of rail shipments involving Ethanol. For sometime now, we have observed unit trains of Ethanol passing through Altoona (Iowa to New Jersey and return), but now local deliveries are being made to the petroleum tank farms in Canan Station (your gasoline pump announces that all fuels now contain 10% ethanol). This is now involving rather long trains from Altoona to Hollidaysburg carrying Ethanol as well as freight cars for interchange with the Everett Railroad,

and Watco as well. The handling of Ethanol often requires the “local” to go into Hollidaysburg Yard with loaded cars before placing the cars on the return trip, which also involves removing the empty cars at Canan Station. Safety is the paramount factor of course, and it represents a significant investment on a line one might have thought to be made redundant just a year or two previous. History does repeat itself.

Observed on the eastbound *Pennsylvanian*, Sunday, Aug 16th and the westbound *Pennsylvanian* Monday, August 17th: Ohio Central’s platform observation car “*Sugar Creek*”...a most magnificent livery; so reminiscent of the former Pennsylvania Railroad’s public image. The *Sugar Creek* has also been a regular visitor to the PRR’s former Pennsylvania Station (Amtrak) in Pittsburgh.



Ohio Central’s *Sugar Creek*, Altoona, PA, Monday, August 17, 2009. *D W Seidel photo.*

On another note, the HUPMOBILE Club was in Altoona the week of August 9th, touring local attractions which included Horseshoe Curve and Railroader’s Memorial Museum on Friday, August 14th. And for those of you in the “generation gap”, the Hupmobile automobile brand did not survive much into the 1940’s but has a rich automotive history prior to the 1940’s in the United States. Try *Google* for some further information. The parking lot at Horseshoe Curve and Railroader’s Memorial Museum was considerably enhanced by their presence. Their timing at Horseshoe Curve was impeccable with three trains passing simultaneously which included a small shipment of those ever photo-genic John Deere Tractors, but that garbage train made an appearance too. They were a very attentive audience. Their appearance in Altoona was a direct result of many previously visiting here during the prestigious Glidden Tour of the Antique Automobile Club of America about 6 years previous.

And, as most of us know, the ex-PRR Signal Bridge on the east side of Horseshoe Curve is being replaced with the newer cantilever style. Gone will be the “position light” system replaced by the modern red-yellow-green. We hate to see it go but it is progress. And, while it’s OLD news, the revered Alto Tower in Altoona received a coat of paint this year...long overdue. Perhaps it will be around awhile longer!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FALL FOLIAGE Trip on the Everett Railroad, Saturday, Oct 10, 2009. This is a charter trip to the Hollidaysburg YMCA. As such, Horseshoe Curve Chapter members are asked to help staff the train, BUT tickets are obtainable through the Hollidaysburg YMCA. Call (814) 695-4467 for schedule and tickets. Hollidaysburg “Y” has done this trip for several years and each year they have a THEME for the trips with costumed actors. We definitely recommend this one.

BUS TRIP TO THE POTOMAC EAGLE: Is scheduled for Saturday, Oct 24, 2009 by Dick Charlesworth on behalf of the Alto Model Train Museum. Essentially this trip is now full, but check with Dick (814) 695-2201 for last minute cancellations. This is a motor coach trip to the Potomac Eagle Railroad (excellent train and scenic route along the Potomac Eagle noted for many eagle sightings) and side trips. This trip involves dinner in the diner-lounge cars (first class) and is certainly noteworthy, especially for the fall foliage season.

A TRAIN SHOW is scheduled for the Pinecroft Fire Hall (north side of Altoona) on Sunday October 25, 2009. Admission \$3.50 pp. This meet, sponsored by the Alto Model Train Museum usually has 90+ table vendors and is certainly one of the best local/annual train meets representing all gages. See you there ! Use the Pinecroft exit off I-99 and follow the signs.

SANTA TRAINS by the Horseshoe Curve Chapter are always planned for the Saturday before and after Thanksgiving. Three trips per day. More information later. Chapter members will be needed to prepare the treat bags that SANTA needs as well as staffing on the train. Mark your calendars now.

This issue is rather lengthy, but we hope you enjoy it. dws

RAILROADER'S MEMORIAL MUSEUM'S summer concert series has been a huge success. Additional concerts remain. Visit www.railroadcity.com for more info.