



Official Newsletter
of



NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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UNDER THE WIRE

by
Leonard E. Alwine

In this issue of Under The Wire, we will review a book that details the history of a nearby trolley park. Back in the day most every trolley company worth anything had its own park as a destination. It was usually located out of town and the only way to get there was to ride the trolley cars. Most of the time they had picnic grounds, a dance hall, a swimming area and period games and rides, all nestled under large trees which provided cool shade from the summer sun.

The Kishacoquillas Park, located near Burnham, Pennsylvania (just outside Lewistown PA), was just as described in the paragraph above, and recently a history book about the park was printed.

The book is entitled Memories of Kishacoquillaas Park by Paul T. Fagley. It is a hard-bound book, 368 pages, with photos on most pages and many in full color. The book is available from Mifflin

County Historical Society, 1 West Market St., Lewistown, PA 17044; the cost, post-paid, is \$40.93 each. The quality of the book makes this price very reasonable. The author goes into much detail about every aspect of the park and I could tell that it was a labor of love with many years of research in gathering information and photos to preserve the park's heritage for future generations to enjoy. It is an excellent history book written in a way that makes you want to keep reading from cover to cover without putting it down. Even if you have never been to the park, you will feel close to it as you travel in time through the pages.



The park was the result of the Lewistown & Reedsville Electric Railway Company which was chartered in March, 1892. Nothing much happened with the trolley line until a local business man, James Quigley, was able to raise interest and capital to build the line on the old Lewistown and Kishacoquillas Turnpike Company toll road right-of-way. Electric Avenue in Lewistown was named for the trolley line and power house. The first trolley car operated March 14, 1900. It didn't take long for Mr. Quigley to build a park as it was most likely part of his overall plans. The park opened July 13, 1900. The trolleys stopped at a station along Logan Boulevard where passengers then walked down a tree-lined path to the picnic groves. A band provided music and ice cream was offered for sale. An estimated 1500 people rode the trolleys to the park on that first day.

Over the years of the trolley company ownership, many improvements were made including buildings for dancing, a restaurant, picnic pavilions, a theatre, swimming pool and roller skating. Also, a Merry Go Round was installed as well as swings and teeter-totters for the kids. Baseball fields were installed also. By 1930 the trolley company was losing money, and the park was sold to private individuals. Most notably was the Miller Family who owned the park from 1954-1974 and made it into a small amusement park, very similar to the original Lakemont Park in Altoona, PA. However, in 1972, Hurricane Agnes devastated much of the State of Pennsylvania, and most of the park was washed away. Parts of a few remaining rides were sold but most were lost in the flood waters – a tragic loss after $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century.

In 1974, Derry Township purchased the grounds from the Miller Family and made it back into a community park for picnics and concerts. Today, the foot print of the old park can still be seen on the grounds.

What made reading this book so enjoyable were the ties to Altoona found throughout the history of the park. Bands from Altoona played at the park, including the PRR Shop Bands from Altoona and Tyrone. In addition, the Altoona and Tyrone PRR Shop picnics were held there at different times as was the PRR Middle Division Picnic.

A primary feature of the park was the Kishacoquillas Trolley ride at the park. It was a miniature trolley that ran in a circle of track. It was added to the park in 1959 and was previously used at Lakemont Park in Altoona. (I cannot remember this ride at Lakemont Park and it was not part of the book on the history of Lakemont Park, which means you can “always” learn additional information). This trolley could hold 15 passengers plus the operator but didn’t last but two years due to electrical problems.

The other ride that caught my attention was the PRR train which was identical to the old PRR train at Lakemont Park. This train was purchased new in 1954 from National Amusement Device Company for \$8,192.50. It ran till the flood but think how many 5-cent rides it would have taken to pay for this train !

There were other ties to Altoona found in the book but I will let thee for your discovery in future reading.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who likes local history, trolley park history, or photos of days gone by, as it has all of these ingredients, including a happy ending following the flood of 1972.

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

During the last week of April 2014, I (and most Altoona residents who had occasion to travel on Broad Avenue near the Jaffa Shrine) found ghosts of the old Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway. Contractors were milling the asphalt road surface in preparation for road paving. Under the old blacktop (exposed for a few days) were the old brick/trolley track right-of-way. Most rail was removed with the end of service in 1954 but there were still small remnants from switch pints and turnouts from passing sidings. It was nice to observe infrastructure of the trolley line that was so commonplace and now part of history. In the modern age, this could be referred to as “Industrial Archaeology”.

Leonard E. Alwine





EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS AT TYRONE STATION



*From "Tyrone Pastimes", Newsletter of the Tyrone Area Historical Society
by Nancy A. Smith, President*

"Much is happening at Tyrone's Railroad Park. Ryan Cox, Boy Scout Troop 20, completed his Eagle Scout Project – painting and refurbishing the PRR Caboose. Michael Cherry, Troop 20, is working on his Eagle Scout Project of landscaping around the flag-pole and refurbishing the gazebo; and Cory Hoff, Troop 20, is planning to paint and refurbish the Conrail Caboose for his Eagle Scout Project. We commend these young men for their interest in the history of our town and admire them for contributing their time and effort toward improving this area for the community".

Note: John Meise, Curator at Railroader's Memorial Museum, Altoona assisted with information on stenciling and paint color.

CHAPTER TRIP TO NEW YORK CITY

Under the leadership of Dick Charlesworth, 14 people traveled to New York via Amtrak on Father's Day weekend (Thursday – Sunday). A good time was had by all and the train was on schedule. It afforded opportunities to see modifications in progress at Harrisburg station, particularly with the temporary relocation of the GG-1 (it is currently near Harris Tower under Shrink-Wrap). Accommodations in New York were at the Pennsylvania Hotel opposite Penn Station for convenience purposes. While all those traveling did their "own thing", a good time was had by all. Will this become an annual event, Dick ?



Illustrates position-light signals on the corridor utilizing two bulbs per aspect, red, green, amber...similar to that used in prior years on the Norfolk & Western RR.



New York Transit Museum, Brooklyn

RAILROADER'S MEMORIAL MUSEUM

As most of us here in Altoona are aware, progress has continued with many capital improvements at the museum. With a few refinements remaining, the roundhouse is essentially completed and new signage has been placed on the museum acknowledging its (prior) dedication as the Harry & Rebecca Bennett Learning Center



To be completed is the space reserved for Penn State Altoona, but the roundhouse will also house “Memorial Hall” plaques, previously located in the original building, but inaccessible for several years to the buildings other uses. All the plaques of railroad men and women being memorialized have been re-manufactured into a larger format and will adorn the walls of the roundhouse.

In addition, the former PRR signal bridge from Horseshoe Curve, has been erected in the museum yard, and re-painted. Position Light signals applicable to a four-track mainline are yet to be installed, and will be illuminated. A new addition to the museum yard is a pedestal clock which is a nice enhancement to the property. Yet to be completed, is energizing the turntable but that will be completed as the project continues. One enhancement from last year with very good results was the upgrading of the projector system in the Theatre with better image quality.

John Meise has been working hard up in the museum archives, sorting and cataloging the vast collection of memorabilia and ephemera. Substantial progress is being made and a number of people of stopped in to assist John. It is a challenge to identify objects, especially photographs, but very rewarding as well. Museum's are, after all, a communities (industry's) attic. You never know what you will find. John welcomes assistance ! Mostly, you will find John Wednesday thru Saturday.



Railroader's Memorial Museum has a very active calendar planned for the *WINGDAY WEDNESDAYS* events and the *ALIVE AT FIVE* concert series. For the remainder of the summer:

ALIVE AT FIVE

July 11th: The Four Horsemen Metallica Tribute with Half Tempted
Friday July 25th: Separate Ways Journey Tribute with Seventh Gear
Friday August 8th: Full Kilt and Michael O'Brian Band
Friday August 15th: The Clarks with Flight 19

All shows \$10 advance; \$15 Day of Show
Rain or Shine Events
Call 814-946-0834 for Tix Info

Note: Alive at Five are Rain or Shine

WINGDAY WEDNESDAYS

July 2nd – Flight 19
July 9th – KYX
July 23 – This Albatross
July 30 – Felix and the Hurricanes
August 6 – The Sitch

Note: Wingday Wednesday could be cancelled due to inclement weather.
Enjoy the best wings from area vendors.

www.railroadcity.com and on Facebook.

CHAPTER PICNIC

All Chapter and Friends of the Chapter Picnic at Deer Hollow B&B
(AKA Joe's Grandparent's Place in Spruce Creek)
Saturday August 9th at 4:30pm
Everyone is welcome to bring a covered dish, a dessert or beverage.
Bring folding chairs
RSVP to Joe DeFrancesco
814 207 1677 or defrancesco@1791.com
address
5069 Gensimore Lane
Tyrone PA 16686
PS Bonfire included

THE (PRR) T-1 TRUST PROJECT

We've all heard of the proposal to build, from scratch, a new PRR designed Class T-1 Locomotive. The incentive for this project was the successful completion of construction of the "Tornado" Class locomotive in Great Britain in 2008. While the project seems, on the surface, to be inconceivable, plans are progressing to try to accomplish this goal by the year 2030. So, is the project a serious approach or a pipe-dream?

Horseshoe Curve Chapter NRHS entertained a special informational program on this project at our monthly meeting, June 24th. We were linked by teleconference with Scott McGill, the project's Chief Mechanical Officer, and Brad Noble, Chairman of The T 1 Trust; Attending in person to assist, was David Haslam, Publisher and Author of several books, who will spearhead a project to publish three books on the T-1 in the next few years tied to a fund-raising effort for the project with a goal of \$22.5 Million dollars (which includes about \$2M for operations and \$3M for Marketing).



David R. Haslam comments on audience questions.

While education and fund-raising is the immediate goal, it became clear from the presentations by Brad Noble and Scott McGill, that they have done, and are continuing to do, their homework on the engineering end of such a massive project. Research has been diligent in this regard, as well as planning for certain enhancements which will incorporate the best knowledge to improve all operational efficiencies on the T-1 while maintaining the exact cosmetic integrity of the original design.

The presentation included all the original T-1 projects history much of which was “de-railed” (pardon-the-pun) when delivery of the T-1 coincided with the end of WWII (intended to serve the war effort, especially troop transport) and the almost immediate advance of dieselization which represented huge operational economies. As with most corporate ventures, the impact of anything on the bottom line carries the most weight.

All in all, the presentation was very professional and informative. The presentation to members of the Horseshoe Curve Chapter is most appreciated and we were the first of any chapter in the National Railway Historical Society to have such a presentation. For more information, check the project web-page at <http://prrt1steamlocomotivetrust.org> The project group welcomes further inquiries or participation in the project. Thanks also to Joe DeFrancesco for organizing this opportunity/program for Horseshoe Curve Chapter.

