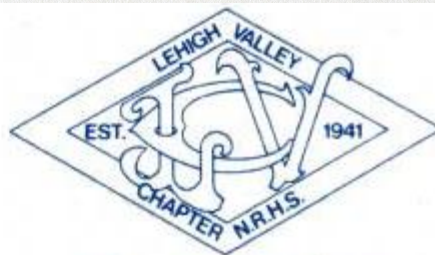
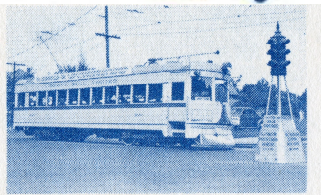
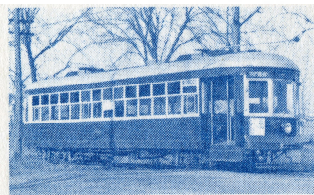
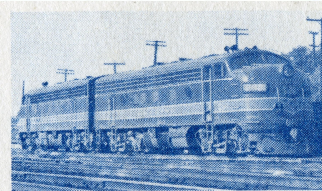
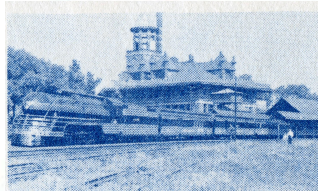


# Lehigh Lines



Allentown, Pennsylvania

*The official publication of the Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS*

Volume 58 Number 3

Fall 2013



An eastbound Lehigh Valley coal train, lead by engine 490, cruises past the Ironton Railroad engine terminal on the left and the ruins of the Thomas Iron Company on the right as it passes through Hokendauqua, PA. Step back in time to witness what early 1940s railroading in Hokendauqua was like on the Lehigh Valley and Ironton. (John D. Rowland)

## **Lehigh Lines 58 - 3 Content**

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All monthly meetings, unless noted, are held at the LANTA Offices located at 1201 West Cumberland Street Allentown, PA 18103. Use the back entrance from Poplar St, located one block south of Wyoming St. Drive around the garage to the office entrance on the northwest side of the building. Use the stairs or elevator to the second floor meeting room.

\*\*\*Inclement Weather Policy\*\*\*

If a winter storm watch or warning has been issued for the Allentown area, the meeting is automatically cancelled.

**21 SEPTEMBER:** Regular monthly meeting beginning at 7 PM. The evening's entertainment will be the LVT films of Howard Sell.

**29 SEPTEMBER:** Dieruff Train Show. See flyer on page 21.

**19 OCTOBER:** Regular monthly meeting at 7 PM. Stan Bowman will present "Railroading in Lancaster County".

**16 NOVEMBER:** Regular monthly meeting at 7 PM. The evening's entertainment will be presented by Mike Pragheimer. His topic was unknown at press time.

*From the Chief Dispatcher*  
Jim Rowland, President

Fellow Members:

We are all painfully aware that national dues are increasing to \$50 effective this coming year. Locally, the Board of Directors approved a dues increase at the end of 2011. We held off implementing it until we had some additional data as to where you wanted our Chapter to head. Based on your input, we will be rolling out a separate historical society next year. This will offer members the option of joining our group without being forced to join the NRHS. This option is has been employed by other chapters for years. Dues for new organization will be near the \$20 range. If you are a member who is planning on not renewing your membership because of the massive increase in NRHS dues but still want to belong to the our chapter/historical society, this is now possible. Further details will be released in 58 & 4. Sadly, we can no longer keep local dues at \$6. We are not covering fixed costs. The newsmagazine alone is about \$8 per issue. This is one reason why we are trying to encourage members to get their newsmagazine electronically. Please drop a line to [Century430@hotmail.com](mailto:Century430@hotmail.com) to either update your e-mail address or be added to our electronic mailing list.

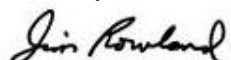
Our 1922 Mack Railbus is receiving extensive mechanical work as well as maintenance service. Work begun in July by **Jim Danner, Frank Sattler, and Bob & Cheryl Daumer** includes a thorough washing of the carbody and motor, oil change, total lubrication of parts, as well as other mechanical adjustments that haven't been done in decades. Thanks to Bob & Cheryl Daumer for donating time and materials, as well as **Paul Carpenito** and the **Phillipsburg Railroad Historians** for spotting the bus and for donations of water. Members are encouraged to help out with this on-going effort.

Don't forget about our 2013 Dieruff Show on 29 September. We need all hands on deck to set up Friday night from 4 & 8 and then tear down on Sunday after 4. Many hands make the burden easy.

Chapter material is being preserved in some current publications. **Mike Bednar's** Lehigh and New England and Its Successors book features material from Randolph Kulp, as well as members **Joe Yurko** and **Jim Rowland**. An entire book featuring the work of Randy Kulp will be released in November. Titled Lehigh River Valley Tracksides with Randolph Kulp, the book was authored by **Doug Peters** and **Joe Yurko**. Both books will be available from Morning Sun Books. Member **Richard Bach's** superbly-researched book on the Ironton Railroad will be released in late September. Rich has painstakingly researched this railroad for decades. His book also will feature some material from our archives. Lastly, former member **Mike Wikman** released a book called The Gloved Hand about his long career in the railroad industry. Mike was a member of our Chapter in the 1950s and early 1960s. He began his career working for the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western. The book is a fascinating look at the world of railroading from the inside out. Part of the book details events he experienced on the DL&W, EL, CNJ, as well as working on DL&W FM locomotives. See page 20 for further information about both books. **John Pechulis** is continuing to work on digitizing our films. A DVD on LVT's city lines is hoped to be released this November. Check John's website, <http://www.johnpmedia.com/>, for further updates as well as other DVD's that features our films. It is a testament to the quality of our archival material that it is being used for many different historical projects.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Sincerely Yours,



Jim Rowland President, Membership Chairman, & Editor  
[Century430@hotmail.com](mailto:Century430@hotmail.com)





# *The Last Years of the L&HR's West End:*

## *Part 2 1983 - 1986 Supplement*

Article By Jim Rowland, Photography by Bill Nelson



Since the last installment, additional photographic material has been found that documents this time period of great change on the former L&HR from Warwick, NY to Belvidere, NJ. While these changes are described in detail in Lehigh Lines 58 ó 2, a short summary is in order. In 1983, Conrail filed to abandon the former L&HR from Franklin to Belvidere, NJ. Throughout 1984, Conrail, the County of Sussex, and Delaware Otsego/New York, Susquehanna, and Western were involved in different proposals to save this trackage. By January of 1985, Conrail ceased service over this trackage, and NYSW purchased the line from Franklin to Limecrest. NYSW immediately restored service from Sparta to Warwick, usually once per week. NYSW needed this line segment to

preserve its trackage rights arrangement with CR should the need arise. That need did indeed arise and throughout Spring and Summer of 1986, NYSW extensively rebuilt their portion of the L&HR, while in the late summer of the same year, Conrail ripped up the abandoned L&HR from Limecrest to Belvidere. NYSW was a win for the old L&HR, while CR was most certainly a loss.

Part 3 will examine the L&HR's west end from 1987 up to today. For now, come along with photographer Bill Nelson to observe the transition years of early NYSW ownership and the end of Conrail's presence in Sussex and Warren Counties on the old L&HR. (JR)



**TOP LEFT & RIGHT:** The Andover, NJ Operator's station is seen in very derelict condition in May of 1983 in this view looking west from Route 206, and then again with the caboose of AL16 passing by. **BOTTOM LEFT:** In June of 1983, GP30 2218 has AL16 rolling westbound through Tranquility, NJ and **BOTTOM RIGHT:** through Huntsville, NJ at Whitehall Road. By this time, the L&HR was rapidly on its way to becoming a jungle.





**ABOVE LEFT & TOP RIGHT:** One of the signature locations along the L&HR was Baird's Farm just outside of Warwick, NY. This section hadn't seen a train since August, 1979. In the first view, the conductor is seen clearing the flangeways so 206 can cross the road, and then proceeding on to the Conrail interchange in the Warwick yard which was about a mile away. **RIGHT:** When NYSW resumed service east of Sparta to Warwick, the first power used was Alco S2 206. She is seen at the west end of the Warwick, NY yard in July, 1985 with cars headed for Sparta.



**LEFT:** RS1 252 was another engine assigned to the Sparta – Warwick runs. In January of 1986, trying to start the 252 at Warwick are, from left to right, flagman Paul Yanosik, mechanic Bob Honaki, and engineer John Henderson. On the ground is mechanic's helper Tom Callari.



**RIGHT:** Many times the local would start out of Sparta, though it was not und heard of to start at Warwick. In March of 1986, the 252 is throttling up as it departs Sparta for Warwick.





**LEFT:** In May of 1986, GP18 1804 arrived for locals as well as work trains to rebuild the L&HR. It is seen here in DeKays, NJ headed back to Sparta with the usual lumber and propane cars.



**RIGHT:** Interchange in Warwick was made at the site of the engine servicing facilities. 1804 is seen running around its train at the sand tower. The L&HR shop building is behind the photographer and to the left. **BELOW:** A ballast train is sitting on the old L&HR mainline at Sparta Junction in October, 1986. To the right of the locomotive, the new direct connection can be seen curving in from the right. This allowed a train heading west on the L&HR to proceed directly onto the old NYSW and continue east to Little Ferry.







## *Hokendauqua Railroading In the 1940s*

Article By Jim Rowland, Photography By John D. Rowland



Residents of eastern Pennsylvania will readily acknowledge that there are some locales with unique, perhaps odd-sounding names. In Schuylkill County, there is the Borough of Tamaqua. Nearby in Carbon County is the hamlet of Aquashicola. A few miles south of there in Northampton County lies the Borough of Catasauqua. Located directly across the Lehigh River from Catasauqua, in Lehigh County lies the Village of Hokendauqua. To outsiders, these names sound very strange. My Aunt Evelyn once showed me a letter sent to her addressed to her in the town of ðHog and Dog Wayö. People indigenous to the area know differently. If you asked someone about Hokendauqua, you might get the following answers from different groups of people. Those people who study Native American languages will recognize it as the amalgamation of two other words derived from the Delaware Indian language. ðHockinö signifies land and ðochweö translates to ðearching for or seekingö. The term most likely was first used by the Indians at the time when the first Irish settlers located there in 1730. In all likelihood it was used as an exclamation when the Indians were speaking to the Irish surveyors. Sports enthusiasts will readily recall that it is the home of football legend Matt Millen. Current residents will tell you that ðHokeyö is a part of Whitehall Township. Industrial archeologists will tell you it was the home of the Thomas Iron Company from 1854 until 1927. Railroad historians will tell you it was milepost 98 on the Lehigh Valley Railroad, with mileage measured from Jersey City, NJ. The sum total of these responses indicates an area rich in history. All of these answers are correct, but to get to today, you have to go back to the past, 1839 to be exact.

The roots of Hokendauqua begin with the 1839 arrival of David Thomas at Easton, PA. He and his family were brought to eastern Pennsylvania from Wales to construct blast furnaces that burned anthracite, a technology he perfected back in Wales. In 1840, in a venture between the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company and the Lehigh Crane Iron Company, Thomas successfully constructed and made operational blast furnaces in present-day Catasauqua. Seeing the success of this venture, by 1854, David Thomas wanted to set up his own iron company. Thomas and his partners purchased the 185-acre Thomas Butz farm along the west bank of the Lehigh River, and within the year the Thomas Iron Company was operating. An iron company needed many workers, and the workers needed housing. Thomas and his directors laid out the company town in November of 1854. The town was to be called Coplay, but David Thomas suggested Hokendauqua after the creek of the same name that emptied into the Lehigh River about a mile north of the plant site. His suggestion was accepted and thus Hokendauqua was born.

An iron company needs a multitude of supplies and transportation. Rail transportation was the key. The first of

the railroads to reach Hokendauqua was the Lehigh Valley Railroad in 1855. The Thomas Iron Company had its own in-plant railroad to handle in-plant switching. To facilitate the arrival of raw materials, the Catasauqua and Fogelsville Railroad was constructed in 1856 to bring in iron for the Thomas Iron Company and the Crane Iron Works from the Alburtis area. In 1860, Hokendauqua gained another rail company with the coming of the Ironton Railroad. The primary purpose of the Ironton Railroad, which was chartered to build between the Lehigh River and Ironton, was to bring in iron ore from northern Lehigh County iron mines to the various furnaces along the Lehigh River at Hokendauqua. The Ironton's general offices were located just south of Front Street along tracks that once were part of the Thomas's private railroad. Ironton had a small engine terminal just to the northeast of the general offices, near the junction of the CNJ interchange tracks, and a small engine servicing facility there as well. In March of 1868, the Central Railroad of New Jersey arrived in town to begin interchange with Thomas Iron's private railroad. When the Ironton became a property of the Thomas Iron Company in 1884, they too took advantage of this interchange. In 1898, the Ironton took over operations on some trackage that the Thomas Iron Company used for interchange with the Catasauqua and Fogelsville Railroad. The last company to arrive was the Lehigh Valley Transit Company, who built a trolley route through Hokendauqua in the early 1900s. By the mid-1930s, the trolley line was gone.

At the start of the twentieth century, the eastern Pennsylvania iron industry was in decline. Between heavy competition from the Pittsburgh area, as well as the rise of steel, the future was bleak. The savior for the area after the demise of the iron companies was the cement industry. Limestone was discovered during the construction of the Lehigh Canal near Northampton, PA in 1829. Originally used as an ingredient in iron making, various quarries were opened in the area to support the iron industry. In 1871, the first Portland cement mill opened in the area, and a plethora followed in the next two decades. Railroads, chiefly the Ironton, thrived on the new-found source of traffic. For Hokendauqua, it meant an influx of people. The town grew, as did the population of surrounding municipalities. This was not entirely due to the cement industry, but also the nearby Bethlehem Steel plant and the many factories and manufacturing locations in the Lehigh Valley. When the Thomas Iron Company closed in 1927, the success of Hokendauqua was no longer dependent on the iron company which was responsible for its birth. Bethlehem Steel acquired the site of the Thomas plant, and demolition was completed by the late -1930s.

Rail traffic increased greatly in this time period. By 1910, the Lehigh Valley Railroad's mainline consisted of four tracks. A station served the village on the LV mainline. By this time, the LV had expanded from a local



anthracite-hauling railroad into a trunk line between New York City and Buffalo, NY. Numerous coal trains, merchandise freight, and passenger trains plied the line daily. The Ironton's headquarters and engine servicing facilities were in Hokendauqua, and a large interchange yard was constructed on the site of the Biery Farm, beginning in 1907 and completed in 1910, just to the south of town. All of this activity was basically just outside of peoples' homes or in their back yards. By the early 1940s, the Thomas Iron Company had been dismantled, but the Ironton and Lehigh Valley Railroads were busy. Ironton engines were based out of the small engine terminal adjacent to the Lehigh Valley mainline where they worked the many drills that were needed to service the cement plants and get the cars to interchange. Passenger trains, such as The Black Diamond, The John Wilkes, The Asa Packer, and the Maple Leaf, as well as fast freights, flew by Hokendauqua on the Lehigh Valley's excellently-maintained tracks, which were good for 60 mph. Many citizens in town that lived by the railroads knew the time of day simply by which passenger train had just gone through. The Black Diamond came through about 1230 westbound as Train 9, and eastbound as Train 10 at 1700. The John Wilkes, Train 29, came west about 1900 and eastbound as Train 28 at 0900. Train 7, The Maple Leaf, passed through westbound about 2100 and eastbound at 0520. Train 11, The Star, went west about 0130. The Major, Train 4, came eastbound through town at 0400. The Asa Packer, Train 26, went eastbound at 1455 and westbound as Train 25 at 0945. One needn't go far in the small village to see some railroad activity.

With all of this rail traffic, it is not surprising that it became part of the fabric of peoples' lives. Passenger trains ran with such regularity and reliability that you could tell the time of day it was according to when the passenger train passed through town. As time progressed, better, cheaper cameras came into existence. For those in Hokendauqua, some decided to take a few photos of the trains that were part of the scene at the time. One such photographer living in Hokendauqua in the late 1930s/early 1940s was my grandfather, John D. "Jack" Rowland.

My Grandfather grew up in Catasauqua but in 1941, moved his family to North Second St. in Hokendauqua. Professionally, he was an armature winder for the H. N. Crowder Company. His line of work largely focused on large electric motors used in the many cement companies operating in the area. By the early 1940s, he and my Grandmother, Wanda, had a daughter, Dolores, and two sons, John P. and Douglas H. A fixture in many American homes at the time, they recall the Lionel trainset that was set up for Christmas. John made many models that were placed under the tree. Prototypical railroading was just outside the door. The Ironton Railroad's engine house and Lehigh Valley's mainline were a short two blocks away from their home. My father recalls hearing the sounds of the Ironton steam engines chuffing about and whistling throughout the day. Sometimes walks were taken to pick asparagus along the Ironton tracks near their enginehouse.

Most other times on spring and summer evenings after his sons were done with the dishes, my Grandfather would take his sons down to the railroad tracks to wait for and watch the Valley freights and passenger trains come flying through town. A quick check of the weather was made by seeing which direction the arrow was pointing on the weathervane atop the Hokendauqua Presbyterian Church's steeple. If it pointed east, it usually meant bad weather was approaching and the evening trip was cancelled. Whether or not they saw any trains was irrelevant; both sons said they were happy just to do stuff with their Father. They were down there often enough that the regular engineer on one of the Valley's passenger trains would flicker the headlight as a way of saying "hello". Their usual spot to go to after dinner was the old station platform. There was a milk train that'd go west, followed a short time later by the westbound John Wilkes. At that time, mail was still loaded onto the passenger trains at the old Hokey station platform. The mail was hung out on the mail catcher and would get picked up or dropped off by the passing trains at speed. A gentleman named "Hopper" Reinhart would bring the mail from the Hokendauqua Post Master, Mamie Porter, down to the platform at night. He waited in an old car that was up on blocks. Once the mail was picked up by the passing train, he left. Coal trains could be heard well in advance as they sounded as if they were racing loudly, but only went by at a crawl due to the weight of the loads. One other memorable occasion was shortly after the conclusion of World War II. A train consisting of army tanks and other army equipment was heading east and stopped to wait for oncoming trains at the interlocking at West Catasauqua. They took this opportunity to climb onto one of the tanks and look around its white interior.

If they weren't on the Valley, they were down by the Ironton engine terminal and small yard which paralleled the Valley main just below Front Street. John knew many of the Ironton men because they mostly lived close-by. Knowing many of the men paid off for his sons, as folks like Sam Reinhart, "Jockey" Kreglow, Harry Beidelman, Oscar Miller, Alex "Juny" McNeill, and Robert "Scat" Moran often gave cab rides to them around the engine terminal. They recalled that the Ironton engines were out at the cement mills during the day and in the evening, after making their interchange setouts at Biery Yard or for the CNJ in Hokey, power came back alive with their caboose to the enginehouse. Most of the Ironton traffic at Hokey was destined for the CNJ. They often recall seeing the CNJ in town around 7 PM. The CNJ would be there long enough to come over and make their set out and pickup and then head back across the river. The vast majority of the Ironton's outbound traffic was delivered to Biery Yard. If Biery was busy, they saw the trains waiting by the bridge over Lehigh St. waiting to get into the yard. It was here where the two sons unofficially got rides on coal hoppers or boxcars!

Cameras at this time were a luxury rather than a necessity. Film was relatively expensive, so it was not used indiscriminately. Many families seemed to take pictures in one setting rather than spread out. While my Grandfather



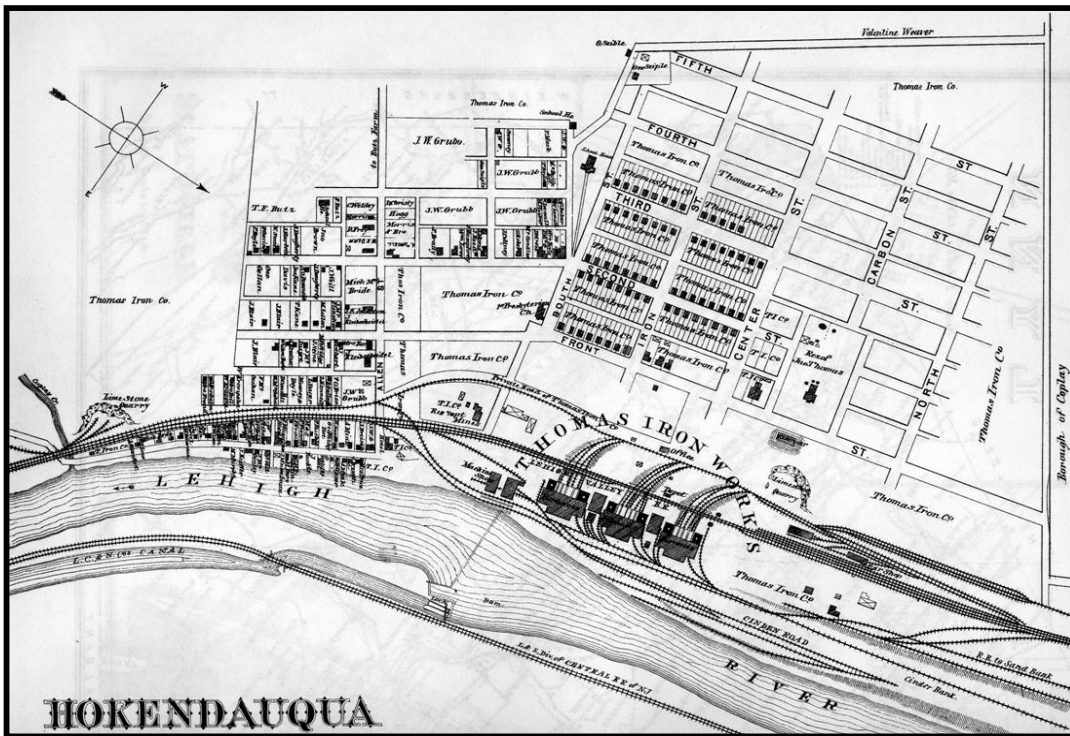
and his sons frequently visited the Ironton and the Lehigh Valley mains in the evening or on weekends, very few pictures were ever exposed. Francis Nachisty, a relative of John, got photography started in the family in the early 1940s with a Kodak Brownie camera using 620 film. A few years later, John owned a black Kodak box camera. He didn't consider himself a terrific photographer, but he did have an eye for composition. The photographs that were taken, less than ten, are almost likely taken in the 1943 to 1944 time period. The pictures are taken where he and his boys spent the most amount of time. They portray what life was like along the railroads in Hokendauqua prior to the diesel. Steam engines idled at the Ironton's terminal ready to go on the next drill to a cement company. Coal trains and passenger trains passed by the ruins of The Thomas Iron Company adjacent to the Lehigh Valley mainline. All of these things were mundane, ordinary events that went on day after day and few really had the presence of mind to record the present as it was then. Seventy years later, it is enlightening, perhaps refreshing, to look back to a perceived simpler time.

I never had the chance to meet my Grandfather as he passed away suddenly in 1968. The older I become the more I think of him and wish I had met him. Railroading seems to be a father-son tradition that got passed down in my family from my grandfather to my father, and then from my father to me. I'd like to think that he can see his grandson taking an interest in what he did so long ago. For now, I'm grateful to see what railroading looked like to him

when he was my age... a time when the Valley and the Ironton were alive and well in Ohio. Let's enjoy the look back at 1940s Hokendauqua railroading through the lens of John D. Rowland. (JR)

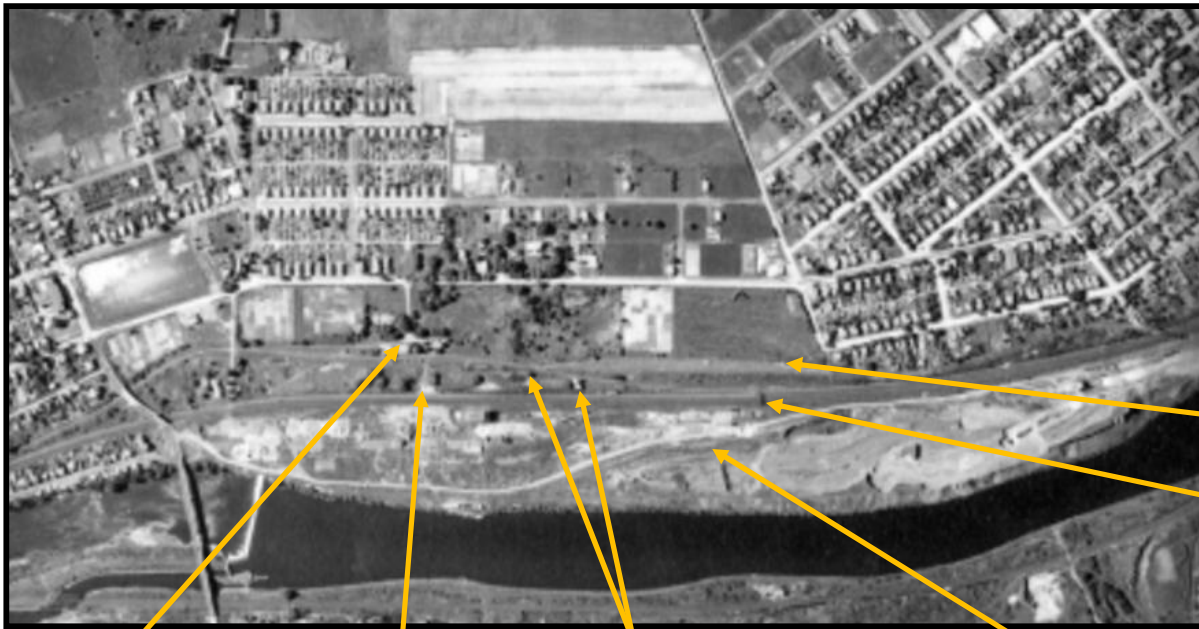


**ABOVE:** The westbound Asa Packer cruises by the old Hokendauqua station platform on track 1. From left to right, tracks were numbered 3, 4, 1, 2. Tracks 3 and 4 were for freight trains, while 1 and 2 were for passenger trains. This train, Train 25, usually passed through Hokendauqua by 1000.



**TOP LEFT:** This map depicts Hokendauqua as it existed circa 1880. It clearly shows the dominance of The Thomas Iron Company. **TOP RIGHT:** This family photo from 1940 shows photographer John D. Rowland, son John P., wife Wanda, and daughter Dolores. (Contributed by Dolores Billera)





**LEFT:** This Pennpilot aerial photograph shows the village of Hokendauqua as it was in October of 1938.

CNJ interchange tracks with Ironton

LV signal bridge 981 westbound /982 eastbound for tracks 1 & 2, 981a westbound for track 3 and 982a eastbound for track 4

Ironton's General Office

Site of the LV Hokendauqua passenger station

Ironton engine servicing area with water tower (left) and enginehouse (right)

Thomas Iron Company's deserted site along the Lehigh River.



**LEFT:** Ironton "Long John" number 34 rests between assignments at the engine terminal along with another unidentified unit. **BELOW:** Ironton's water plug with an unidentified unit and coal pier is located between the Ironton main and the LV main. To the engine's left can be seen the CNJ interchange tracks with the Ironton.

**BELOW:** The Ironton tool car, tool shed, and "Long John" locomotives are seen at the engine terminal. The tool car still exists today out on the WK&S in Kempton, PA.



Thanks to Dolores Billera, Douglas Rowland, and John Rowland for their time and reflections on their family lives almost seventy years ago. Thanks also go to Mike Bednar for track details and train times, and to Kermit Geary, Jr. for photo restoration and scanning.

# *What's Old Is New Again, The Transformation of Ironton #6*

## **Article & Photography By James Benetzky**

On Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, a big event occurred in the life of an old red caboos. Loaded onto a flatbed trailer, it passed by motorists on PA Rt. 145, also known as MacArthur Road in Whitehall, Pa. The caboos, Ironton RR #6 was on the road and on the way to a new home at the Ironton Rail-Trail's trailhead at N. Ruch & Chestnut Streets in Coplay, Pa.

Ironton #6 was built in 1924 by the Reading Railroad's own shop forces in Reading Pa. It was originally RDG #90738. It was part of a fleet of ten Northeastern-style cabooses that were classified by the RDG as class NMd. The NMd series numbers ran #90730 through #90739. IRR #6 is the second oldest surviving Reading caboos. The Reading used the caboos in revenue service from 1924, until it was sold in March of 1953 for \$1,000 to the Ironton, where it would spend the remainder of its active career as a functional railroad caboos. It served the IRR faithfully for many years until one fateful day in 1966, when it was damaged in an accident caused by a heavy coupling during a routine switching operation in the IRR's Egypt, Pa yard.

Life was not over for the little red caboos however, as it was then purchased by Raymond Brobst in October of 1969. Brobst retired from railroad service after logging in thirty- seven years of service working for the Reading, and later the Ironton. He started on the IRR in 1961 and was a General Agent. Brobst moved the caboos up to the Wind Gap, Pa, area where he used it as a cabin. The interior of #6 was modified at this time as wooden paneling; a kitchen and a bathroom were added to the car. The movement of the caboos generated some media attention, as the Bethlehem Globe Times ran a story on the movement in its March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1970 edition. This would be the first of the many times Ironton #6 would receive media attention after its retirement.

After Raymond Brobst's death, the ownership of the caboos was passed on to his son Keith Brobst. In 1990, Keith decided to donate #6 to Whitehall Township and return it back home, but the homecoming for IRR #6 would have to wait another decade. The site picked to move the caboos to was too soft, so the move was postponed until the ground could be made more firm. Finally, a decade later on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the caboos was loaded by a crane onto a flatbed trailer and moved back home onto a small piece of track that was laid in Whitehall Parkway on South Church St in Whitehall, Pa. The caboos was unloaded and set onto a pair of

Reading boxcar trucks. The move was documented by The Morning Call and The Whitehall-Coplay Press.

The caboos sat at its new location in Whitehall Parkway for almost another decade. Over the years, the caboos transformed from a restoration project into a rusty and run down piece of history in danger of being lost. When Ironton #6 first arrived at the Whitehall Parkway a restoration effort was started. It was given a fresh coat of red paint and re-lettered. New windows were also installed. The under frame also received some considerable attention as well, but that's as far as the restoration effort got.

As time went on the caboos's paint began to fade. Rust and corrosion began to take its toll. Some of the metal panels were starting to rust through completely. Some of the metal panels actually needed patching during the initial restoration, but this never occurred and they continued to deteriorate even further. The windows were smashed by vandals who only appreciated the caboos for their cheap thrills and not its historical value. The interior also suffered due to vandals braking in, plus exposure to the elements from the rusted panels and broken windows.

By 2010, IRR #6 looked like it was more destined for the scrap heap than for historical prosperity, a fate it almost met. With the paint rusting, windows smashed and boarded up, Ironton #6 began to look like a rusty red eye sore rather than anything of historic significance and the political powers in Whitehall Township, PA took notice as well. Whitehall Mayor Ed Hozza was concerned about the condition of IRR #6. The township was beginning to ponder what to do with #6. They were considering trying to get it somehow restored. They were also debating scrapping it as well. Mayor Hozza was interested in preserving it, but the problem was that Whitehall Township had absolutely no money in its budget available to spare for a caboos restoration. Someone suggested contacting the Ironton Rail-Trail (IRT) about restoring the caboos...and that's when the Ironton Rail Trail was granted approval by Whitehall Township to restore and move the caboos.

One of the Ironton Rail-Trail's first steps for the restoration of Ironton #6 was figuring out a way to seek funding to pay for the restoration and future movement. The IRT successfully applied for and received a \$5,000 Pennsylvania state grant from state Senator Lisa Boscola (D-18<sup>th</sup>). A week after the news of the \$5,000 grant from Boscola was reported in the Whitehall-Coplay Press, Eric and Lynn Eberhardt, who own Eberhardt Motors in



Egypt, Pa made a \$5,000 donation to the IRT. This would bring the finances available to \$10,000, which would be needed for the restoration.

As soon as Ironton Rail-Trail had ownership of #6, the IRT Commissioners and a few dedicated IRT volunteers began to work on the caboose and prepare it for future repair work and painting. The first workday held by the IRT took place on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Six IRT volunteers, which consisted of me, Ray Bieak, Dale Donovan, Dale Heffelfinger, Kim Scherer and Ray Deutsch began the first step of the restoration processí gutting the interior. There was no potbelly stove with a coal fire burning inside Ironton #6 to keep us warm and cozy, but we all managed to stay warm.

The interior had to be gutted in order to remove wood and any other combustible material that could ignite when welding would be done in the future. It was also done so no unwanted critters could settle in and make the caboose a winter retreat. The interior of Ironton #6 had certainly seen better days. It was an absolute mess! From end to end of the caboose each section was different from the other. On one end you could tell it was still a caboose. The gray and red painted tongue and grove wood was still intact, as well was the brake valve pipe and a small desk with a wooden cubby hole for storing the conductors paper work. All of this original wood was dis-assembled during a few various other work sessions and removed for safe keeping and possible future re-installment.

The cupola area was the section that was the worst for wear. The cupola was rotted out all around the roof to the point where daylight could be seen on the inside. The broken windows allowed Mother Nature's elements to take their toll. There was some wood paneling in the cupola ceiling and the bunks were all rusty. It was later discovered while removing the paneling and insulation, that the original windows were still intact in the end windows facing the roof. The Ironton RR has simply just covered them up.

The other end of the caboose still resembled a cabin and was heavily modified compared to the rest of the caboose's interior. This was the end of the caboose that Brobst had turned into a kitchen for the cabin. The walls were covered with paneling. Inside an original storage compartment was a medicine cabinet and sink. Across from this was a homemade wall with a door which was the bathroom. As restoration was started, this end of the caboose got the most attention. During that first work day in December the toilet was unbolted and thrown out and the home- made bathroom walls were demolished. It was also discovered that behind all the wood paneling there was electrical wiring, some wood framing and insulation. Once all this was ripped out the IRT volunteers were treated to a surprise, as the original tongue and grove wood was discovered. It had been

covered up and hidden when Brobst converted IRR #6 into his cabin.

Being an avid railfan and historian, I wanted to get advice to help the Ironton Rail-Trail properly preserve the caboose. I am friends with Kermit Geary Jr. and I knew that he was involved with Central Penn Rail Corp. and he had been involved with the restoration of some pieces of railroad equipment, so I sought his advice. Kermit directed me to Mike Bast of Tamaqua, Pa; who was in charge of Central Pennsylvania Rail Corp. I gave Bast a call and explained to him what the IRT was doing and asked him to stop by sometime to see the caboose and get his expert opinion on what he thought needed to be done to properly restore it. I also got Mike Bast in touch with Ray Bieak, who is the Ironton Rail-Trail Commissioner. Soon a meeting between the Ironton Rail-Trail, Mike Bast and Central Pennsylvania Rail Corp was held. The IRT also invited railroad historian and retired professional railroader Mike Bednar along to the meeting to also get his advice as well. The meeting took place on a snowy and cold January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Bast and his Central Pennsylvania Rail Corp. crew began to look Ironton #6 over from top to bottom, inside and out offering their expertise of what to do and how to do it. They also let the IRT know about possible hidden problems with the rust and rot that could be found during restoration or that could occur in the future if things were not fixed correctly.

A second workday was held on a snowy day on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Ironton Rail Trail volunteers consisting of myself, Dale Donovan, Dale Heffelfinger, and Kim Scherer gathered again in the cold to remove more wood and insulation from inside the walls of the caboose. More of the tongue and grove wood, which was still intact in the rest of the caboose was removed as well. Perhaps the biggest project of the day was removing a giant critter's nest, which was found behind the wood in the cupola area wall. The giant nest came down with no problems as there was no one at home. In the end five trash cans were lined up outside in the snow full of more junk and debris.

A pause in the work would follow for a while waiting for warmer weather to arrive. During the weekdays some IRT volunteers attended to the caboose and continued to gut the interior, while Ray Bieak and IRT volunteer Dale Heffelfinger made improvements to the windows and window frames.

Once the weather warmed up and all the wood was removed and the interior was down to the steel frame work began on repairing the caboose exterior. The rotten panels were given attention. The lower panels on both sides of IRR #6 were removed and replaced by new ones. The welding, which was contracted out, was performed by Tom Bartholomew of Saylorsburg Iron Works from July to November 2011. No short cuts were

taken and while performing the work Bartholomew discovered a few things that needed to be corrected before more welding could be done. It ended up being a work contract of love, as he ended up going above and beyond and donating some of his time and materials into fixing the caboos.

Once the sheet metal on the caboos was all fixed up, it was time for the next phase of the restoration to occur. This phase was painting the caboos. Ironton #6 was primed for paint in June of 2012, but the application of the caboos red paint would have to wait. Due to the heat wave that was sweeping across the nation at the time, it was too hot and humid for the paint to be applied to the caboos, as the type of paint used would not be able to dry properly. On July 14, 2012 the caboos was transformed from a primer gray color into a wonderful bright red. The painting was done by Crest Custom Paint, owned by Dan Ulicny. Two coats of red paint were applied. The stripped interior was also painted red. With the caboos fully restored the only major task left was to move it from Whitehall Parkway to the Ironton Rail-Trail Trailhead, a move which occurred sooner than expected.

The following month in July 2012, the big move of Ironton #6 finally occurred. The move of the caboos occurred faster than anyone anticipated. The movers gave the Ironton Rail-Trail a forty-eight hour notice before they moved the caboos on Friday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012. I had been highly anticipating the move and planned on documenting it, even if I had to call in sick from work. The move turned out to actually be ironic for me because I actually filed for a vacation day on that same day two weeks prior. I had planned a railfanning trip to Binghamton, New York, but that plan went out the window as I got a text message from Ray Bieak Thursday night stating that the caboos would be moving at 7 am the next morning. When I arrived the crane, provided by Craig Sidleck of Sidleck Crane Rental of Whitehall, Pa; was already set up and the boom was swinging over Ironton #6. The Sidleck crew wasn't wasting any time getting the big move rolling. A short while later, a bright red Peterbuilt and low-boy trailer owned by Scheuermann Excavating Co; also of Whitehall, PA; who was transporting the caboos showed up as well. David Scheuermann had made a generous donation to the Ironton Rail-Trail that day. The moving bill from them came to \$4,000, but Scheuermann made a \$3,000 donation and only charged the IRT \$1,000 to cover the costs of the workers' wages. By the time I had my digital camera out and my Hi-Definition video camera and tripod set up the workers were beginning to slowly lower the straps and crane chains down through the four holes in the caboos roof and were securing them to IRR #6's under frame. Within half an hour the caboos was secured and ready to be picked up and set on top of the low-boy trailer.

While all this was being done, a small crowd of onlookers began to gather in the Parkway, including a few of the Ironton Rail-Trail volunteers and trail reps. Slowly the caboos began to lift up into the air and off of the former Reading boxcar trucks it sat on for the last ten years. Scheuermann's crew slowly guided it up and off the trucks, while the Sidleck Crane operator carefully swung IRR #6 around towards the trailer. Within about fifteen minutes IRR #6 went from being on a pair of trucks, to resting on a flatbed trailer. The workmen then spent another two hours propping up the caboos to make it level and securing it to the trailer so it wouldn't fall off.

By 11 am Ironton #6 was ready to hit the road. Three Whitehall Police vehicles arrived to escort the caboos to its new home. With the police on the scene and everyone ready to go the convoy of police, the Scheuermann tractor trailer carrying Ironton #6, the Sidleck Crane, a Scheuermann work truck, Ironton Rail Trail reps, and a few onlookers departed Whitehall Parkway heading for the Ironton Rail-Trail Trailhead.

At the new location, the IRT trailhead located at N. Ruch & Chestnut Streets, an even larger group of onlookers had gathered to watch the unloading process. Since the caboos was being unloaded right next to the trail, hikers, bikers, and runners all stopped to watch the action unfold. The new location was also located at an intersection, so curious motorists also stopped to watch as Whitehall Police directed the traffic. Also on hand were local news station WFMZ 69 News and Whitehall-Coplay Press reporter Al Recker.

The crane slowly lifted IRR #6 off the flatbed trailer and up into the air. The caboos was going to be placed down onto a small section of track that the IRT volunteers had put into place with the help of a crew from Central Pennsylvania Rail Corp. A new pair of caboos trucks was also going to greet #6 as well. These were obtained from a caboos in New Freedom, Pa that was beyond repair and were provided by Wren Bitten of Classic Rail. The owner of the caboos found out about Ironton #6 and donated them to the IRT and they were moved from New Freedom to the IRT by Mike Bast of Central Pennsylvania Rail Corp.

The Sidleck Crane operator slowly swung the caboos around to put it in place, while workers on ground held onto the ends of the caboos and helped guide it into place. Once over the new trucks, Ironton #6 was slowly lowered down, while the workers positioned it over the pins for the trucks. Within a matter of minutes Ironton #6 touched down and was proudly sitting in its new home! The caboos's homecoming was not yet quite complete however, as the lettering and numbering and a dedication ceremony would have to take place. This would all take place a year later in 2013.



The caboose had spent a whole year at its new location minus its lettering and number. That all changed May 20 & 21, 2013, when Robert McFetridge hand painted these items back on. Finally the words "Ironton 6" proudly graced the side of the caboose again. A few days later on Saturday June 1, 2013, a small crowd of about 30 people gathered to celebrate the official dedication of Ironton #6. Speeches and remarks were made by Ironton Rail-Trail and local dignitaries, as #6's lettering and red paint beamed proudly in the morning sun. It was the end of a journey and the start of a wonderful new beginning for this piece of railroad history.

You can view my Hi-Definition video of the move of Ironton #6, along with 2 of the workdays at: [www.Youtube.com/user/Jimbo2317](http://www.Youtube.com/user/Jimbo2317). Just search for Ironton in the search box. More of my photos of the caboose move can also be viewed on the Ironton Rail-Trail Facebook page. I haven't posted them anywhere else on the internet. The Ironton Rail-Trail's website is [www.irontonrailtrail.org](http://www.irontonrailtrail.org)

I would like to acknowledge the following people on behalf of the Ironton Rail-Trail who contributed to this movement: State Rep. Lisa Boscola for a \$5,000 state grant and Eric and Lynn Eberhardt for their \$5,000 donation. The representatives of the Ironton Rail Trail: Bob Abbot (Whitehall), Ray Bieak (Whitehall, IRT Secretary & Commissioner), Joseph Bundra (Coplay), Ulysses Conner Jr; (Whitehall, President), Ray Deutsch (North Whitehall), Dale Donovan (Coplay), Phil Ginder (Whitehall, Designate), Paul Mantz (North Whitehall), David Royer (Coplay, Vice-President), Kim Scherer (Whitehall), Maryann Seagreaves (Whitehall), Bruce Stettler (North Whitehall), and Richard Townsend (North Whitehall). Ironton Rail Trail volunteers who helped during the restoration of #6: Dale Heffelfinger, Duane Noll, myself, plus the IRT trail reps mentioned above. Mike Bast and his Central Pennsylvania Rail Corps crew, for delivering the caboose trucks, providing guidance in laying the track and inspecting Ironton #6 in January 2011.

David Emili of RR Resources & Recovery for the rails and ties. Carl Luckenbach Fabricators Inc. for doing the excavating of the site. Tom Bartholomew of Saylorburg Iron Works, for welding services and donation of materials and labor in fixing #6. Dan Ulicny, of Crest Custom Painting for painting the caboose.

Robert McFetridge for painting the lettering on the caboose. Sidleck Crane Rental and Scheuermann Excavating Co; both of Whitehall, Pa for moving the caboose in July 2012, plus Scheuermann for making a \$3,000 donation towards the move. The Whitehall Police Department deserves mention for escorting the movement. M&M Lawn and Dan and Kathy Marakovits for the beautiful landscaping. Wren Bitten of Classic Rail for providing the wheel trucks.

Gary Weaver, a Whitehall Pa. citizen and relative of Raymond Brobst, who had compiled information into a PDF on the history and specs of Ironton #6. (Passed on to me by Ray Bieak.)

Retired Lehigh Valley employee/ railroad historian, and good friend, Michael Bednar, for answering any questions I had regarding Ironton #6 while writing this article! A major thanks to Ironton Rail-Trail Commissioner Ray Bieak for proofreading and checking the final draft of this article! And my good friend Kermit Geary Jr, for scanning the slide of Ironton #6 in active service from my personal collection for use in this article. Jim Rowland and the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the NRHS for encouraging me to write this article and publish it in their "Lehigh Lines" publication for all of you to enjoy.

Most importantly, the late Raymond Brobst, who saved Ironton #6 in the first place, and his son Keith Brobst, who donated it back home deserve a special thank you! (JB)



**LEFT:** Ironton 6 brings up the rear of this freight crossing Water St in Whitehall in January, 1966 (Charles Houser Sr, Collection of Jim Rowland). **RIGHT:** Number 6 sits in Hokendauqua in July, 1965. Note Charles Houser's "Green Hornet" in the background. (Charles Houser Sr., Collection of James Benetzky)





**ABOVE LEFT:** January 11, 2009, IRR #6 sits at the South Church St. parking lot for the Whitehall Parkway as it had been for many years. **TOP RIGHT:** IRT volunteer Ray Deutsch shows off the original wood which was hidden behind wall paneling. **BOTTOM LEFT:** By June 2011, the interior had been gutted. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** By August, 2011, the welder was repairing and replacing old sheet metal panels.

**BELOW LEFT:** By December of 2011, new sheet metal had been installed where the old needed to be replaced. The new sheet metal is installed and primed. All it needs now is to be painted. **BELOW RIGHT:** IRR #6 has received its final coat of red paint and is ready to move in this 03 July, 2012 shot.







**LEFT:** With the restoration complete, Ironton #6 is seen being moved from its long-time spot in the Whitehall Parkway on 27 July, 2012. It was picked off its trucks and moved by flatbed. The trucks were left behind.



**RIGHT:** IRR #6 is seen being lowered onto its new pair of caboose trucks at its new home. The trucks were in place prior to the move.

**RIGHT:** The last thing that needed to be done was letter the caboose. On May 20 & 21, 2013, thanks to Robert McFetridge's efforts, she once again proudly displays her name. He also painted on a brief history of the caboose. It says, "Built Reading, PA Shops Reading RR 8 - 24 Sold to Ironton RR 3 - 53 Original number RDG 90738 to IRN 6 - Retired 1966 Class Nmd".





## *Beeline Service In The Wolverine State*



### Article & Photography By Jim Rowland

What were you doing in 1962? Were you nervously waiting to see how the Cuban Missile Crisis would play out? Were you shocked to learn of the death of Marilyn Monroe? Were you among the 90% of U.S. households to own a television set? Did you watch Johnny Carson begin hosting The Tonight Show? Did you think gas was terribly expensive at 28 cents per gallon? Did you shop at the first Wal-Mart that opened in Bentonville, Arkansas or the first K-Mart in Garden City, Michigan? Or were you like me, who only learned of these events in a history book because you weren't alive yet?

1962 was a busy year on the railroads, too. Locally, the Reading took delivery of GP30s 5517 (3617) and 5518 (3618) on 20 July. By this time, Reading's GP7 614 had been on the property for nine years. By the end of 1962, the Wabash was about to enter its last full year as an independent railroad, and up in northeastern Indiana, the New York Central had abandoned and began to remove an obscure piece of branchline trackage between Fort Wayne, the crossing of the Wabash's Toledo - Chicago mainline at Steubenville, and Pleasant Lake, Indiana.

Fast-forward fifty-one years, and history shows how all of these events are intertwined into the same story in the annals of railroading. The 1964 merger of the Wabash, Nickel Plate, and Pittsburgh and West Virginia into the Norfolk and Western Railroad made the Wabash's Toledo - Chicago mainline redundant. Through abandonments in the 1970s, it became a series of stub-ended branch lines. The Reading modernized its diesel fleet and sold off or retired many of its GP7s circa 1974. The 614 was one of the units to be sold off. It would go to the Saint Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad in Vermont. When the Reading became part of Conrail in 1976, the 3617 became Conrail 2187 and would serve Big Blue until the early 1990s when it became one of the last active GP30s in sporadic service on their roster. Conrail retired the unit on 28 April, 1994 and subsequently sold it to Larry's Truck Electric, along with several other GP30s.

Penn Central, the successor to the New York Central, became the largest component of Conrail. When lines were evaluated by the USRA for inclusion in Conrail, the Penn Central had many lines deemed not fit for inclusion on Conrail. The old, undulating NYC line from Pleasant Lake, IN up to Hillsdale, MI and on out to Coldwater, MI was included in this category. Businesses in the Hillsdale area took notice and decided to take action. The Hillsdale County Industrial Development Commission assisted local leaders who incorporated the Hillsdale County Railroad in January, 1976. Operations

began over the Pleasant Lake - Hillsdale - Coldwater - Litchfield trackage on 01 April 1976. Not satisfied with having Conrail for a sole connection, the Hillsdale County purchased the abandoned Penn Central right of way from Pleasant Lake to Steubenville, IN, in 1978 and rebuilt it. This enabled the Hillsdale County to interchange with the Norfolk and Western's former Wabash Toledo - Chicago mainline at Steubenville, which by this time was a branch line extending from Montpelier, OH to South Milford, IN. In time, the HC purchased this stretch of trackage.

When they needed more power in 1978, the Hillsdale County went shopping on the used diesel market. HC purchased some GP7s from the now-defunct Saint Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad. SJLC 2614, former Reading 614, migrated west to its new home in Hillsdale, Michigan where it became HC 1601.

The Hillsdale County Railroad continued in operation until fiscal problems forced the railroad to be sold in 1992 to the Indiana Northeastern (IN). Through the years, the IN invested in its infrastructure and as traffic increased, they recognized the need for additional power. In May of 2001, IN acquired two GP30s from Larry's Truck Electric, former Conrail units 2185 and 2230. Both engines were overhauled and painted into IN's Nickel Plate - inspired paint scheme while retaining their former Conrail road numbers, then placed into regular service with their other units. This included IN 1601, formerly the Hillsdale County's GP7 1601, originally Reading Company 614.

With its well-maintained stable of GP7, GP9, and GP30 locomotives based out of Hillsdale, MI, the Indiana Northeastern provides dependable service on good track in a fairly off-the-beaten-path locale. Ask any photographer and not many will say it is high on their must-do list of things to document. Many might say they never heard of the carrier before. I will admit that I found myself in the latter category. I'd heard of the Hillsdale County Railroad thanks to Edward A Lewis's book The "DO" Lines, a 1978 book about railroads created from lines that didn't make it into the Conrail system. That was my extent of my knowledge of the IN, until about mid-June, 2013. I was going to be visiting southern Michigan and was thinking of some rail operations I had never seen. My mind wandered back to the Hillsdale County Railroad. Thanks to some information from friends, I found that while the HC was gone, the line was still in operation. I was even more astounded to learn that two former Reading units were still in operation. Checking a map and seeing that Hillsdale was a very short drive from where I was



staying, I placed the IN on my list of things to do! With units that once ran in my hometown area, I couldn't go wrong.

The responsible rail photographer will find the Indiana Northeastern very accommodating. Placing a call to the railroad the day before I planned to drive to Hillsdale paid off. After explaining why I wanted to come out there, I was rewarded with not only the plan for the next day, but the power lineup as well. The IN would run in good light from Coldwater down to Hillsdale and then on to the NS interchange in Montpelier. Even better was the fact that the 2185, Reading 3617, would be in the consist.

My mind thought of many things as I drove west on Michigan Highway 12 from Saline to Coldwater. I hadn't seen an operating GP30 in almost 20 years. I was heading into an area I'd never been to before, to chase a line I was never on before and few people knew anything about. All I knew was I was going to see an old diesel that used to call Allentown, PA home. It wouldn't be green and yellow anymore, as it had appeared in many pictures I'd seen of her in her former life, but it was still a piece of the Reading that was alive and well after all these years later. These were the thoughts that were interrupted as the scanner crackled to life shortly after 0730 as I arrived in sunny Coldwater, MI on 11 July, 2013. Driving around to the industrial side of town, I found IN 1601 parked on a siding shut down. Here was the Reading 614, now in a black and yellow dress with white lettering still earning her keep. The day's train was pulling into view as I shot the 1601. Low and behold, there was the 2185 on the point. The chase was on!

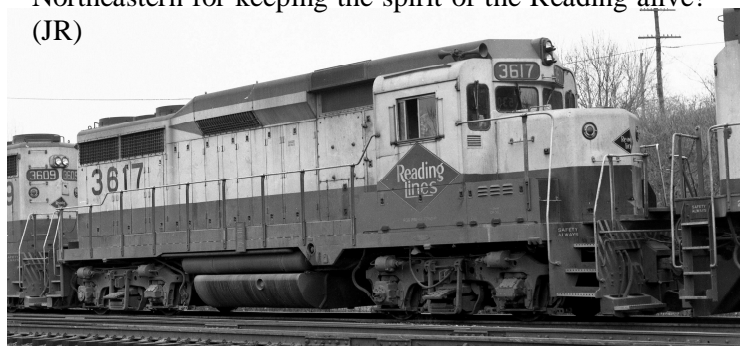
Chasing the IN does not require psycho-lunatic driving as track speeds are moderate, nor does one need to trespass on Indiana Northeastern property. Many rewarding shots can be obtained from public property. While track speeds are relatively low, do not let that fool you. The IN is far from a broken-down old shortline. IN has made substantial capital investments over the past few years in new rail, ties, and ballast. Old 80-pound rail has been replaced with brand-new 115-pound rail. This enables 286,000 carloads to safely travel the line. Unit grain trains with NS power ply the line occasionally. As of July, 2013, IN is salvaging 16 rail miles between Sturgis and to a point just east of Bronson, MI. A working knowledge of the area or a reliable map or GPS system is needed to maneuver the back roads. One cannot just attempt to follow the train and hope to keep up as the roads can be very confusing,

and are mainly dirt in many places. The tracks do generally follow state highways, but do not parallel them in all cases. The crews regularly report their location to the office at Hillsdale. Hearing IN 2185 clear of Coldwater, Quincy, etc. certainly aided in the chase. The conductor followed the train by car, stopping to observe the train at many crossings as well as where they would be stopping to switch.

Mile after mile, I imagined what it was like to chase this locomotive years ago when she wore a green and yellow dress. The bucolic locales and undulating right-of-way reminded me of chasing the Reading's East Penn Branch. This GP30, part of a model that saw a production run of 948 units, is a survivor. It's a survivor of the Reading as well as the model. Few GP30s survive today in active service. They were supplanted by more efficient locomotives as time and the rigors of railroad service took their toll on these 2,250 horsepower, 567-prime mover equipped workhorses from EMD's La Grange, IL plant. An enjoyable rest of the afternoon was spent following this train across the hills of southern Michigan and Northeastern Indiana. When it was new in 1962, the GP30's design, with its raised roof section, provided an image of no-nonsense power. Fifty years later on the point of a train, it still emits the same visual feelings as it sliced across cornfields and rolled through towns, its commanding air horn announcing its arrival.

While I never witnessed the Reading in action, I got to feel what it was like to be trackside and see, feel, and smell what Reading's locomotives were like. I chased the train as far as Pleasant Lake, and then decided to head back. My mission was accomplished. Many fans today track down the Norfolk Southern Heritage Units. No doubt the same day I was chasing IN 2185, someone was probably out with the NS 1067, their Reading unit. I prefer to think I was spending time with a heritage unit of a different variety.

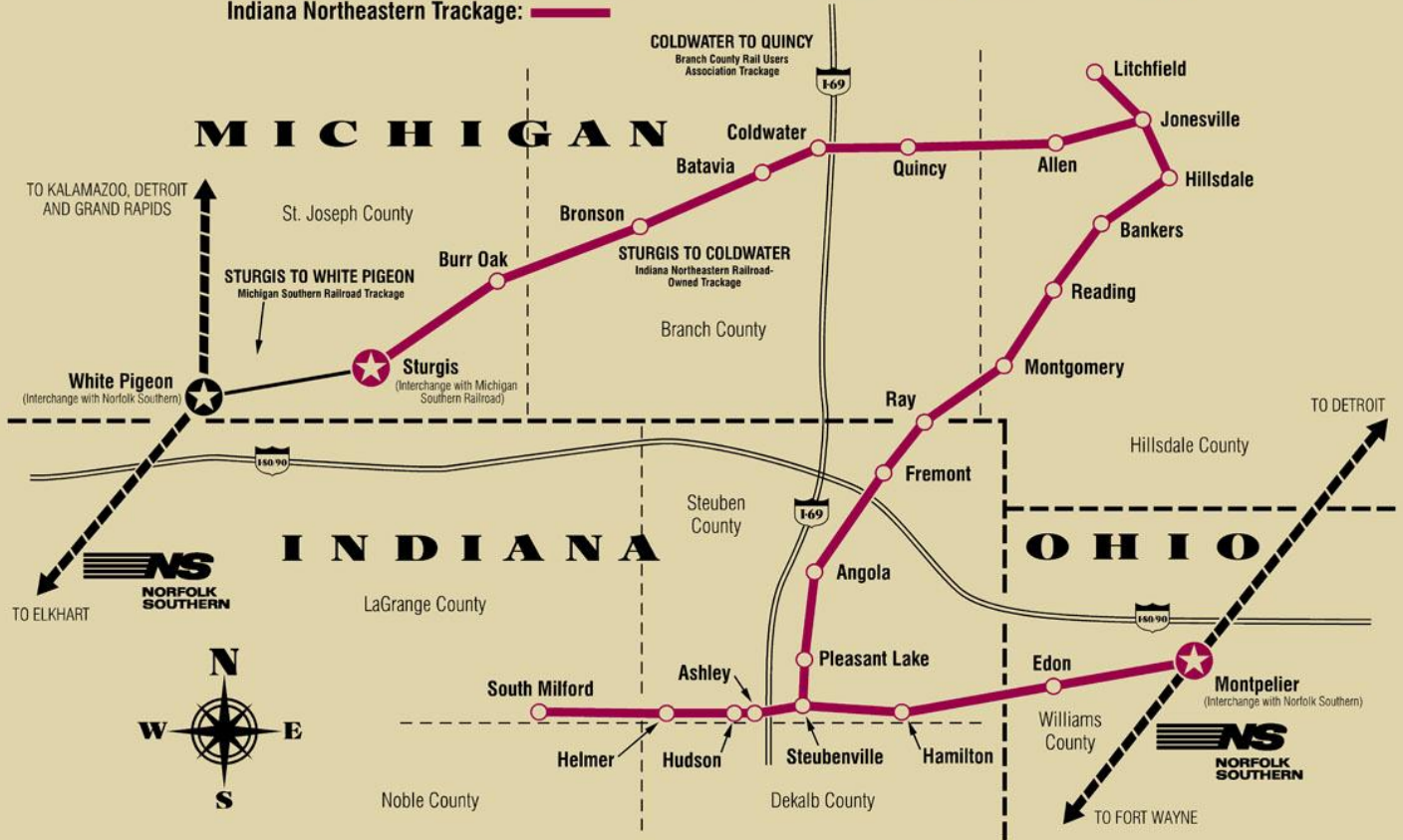
The Reading never operated in Michigan, but on this line that closely mimics some characteristics of former Reading trackage, it is a close fit to the unit's home turf. Thanks to the Indiana Northeastern's dedication to customers, reliable service provided by friendly crews, and pride in their fleet, the old Reading 3617, a true heritage unit, keeps the term "Beeline Service" that the Reading pioneered alive and well in The Wolverine State, perhaps unintentionally. Thanks Indiana Northeastern for keeping the spirit of the Reading alive! (JR)



**RIGHT:** Long before she was the IN 2185, she started her life as the Reading's 3617. The GP30 is seen at East Penn Junction circa 1970. (Kermit Geary, Jr.)

# Indiana Northeastern Railroad System Map

Indiana Northeastern Trackage: —



**ABOVE:** The Indiana Northeastern Railroad's line is comprised of former NYC line from Sturgis to Hillsdale, former NYC from Hillsdale to Steubenville, and former Wabash from South Milford to Montpelier. (Map Courtesy of Troy Strane, General Manager of the IN)



IN 2185 departs Coldwater headed for Hillsdale, MI.

Curving into Allen, MI





On the outskirts of Hillsdale, MI



Passing by the grain elevator at Quincy, MI



Storming upgrade at Montgomery, MI



Switching cars at the Reading, MI grain elevator



Former RDG 614, now IN 1601 at Coldwater, MI





## *A Valley Girl in a Tuxedo*

Article & Photography By Jim Rowland



The Lehigh Valley Railroad certainly had an affinity for Alco locomotives. The option for units from the Schenectady, NY builder was no longer possible after Alco closed in January, 1969. Two years later, in 1971, the LV was in need of additional power. With Alco no longer an option, the LV turned to EMD. The LV got superior service from their 2,000 horsepower Alco C420 units. At the time, EMD produced a 2,000 horsepower equivalent of the Alco C420, their GP38. The LV, satisfied with a 2,000 horsepower locomotive, opted to purchase four copies of the GP38 variant, the GP38AC.

EMD produced the GP38AC between February of 1970 and December, 1971. It is virtually the same as a straight GP38, with the exception being in the electrical system. GP38s had a generator, while the GP38ACs had an AR10 alternator. EMD built 261 GP38ACs in this timeframe. The LV units were among the last produced. EMD supplanted the 38AC with the GP38 ó 2 in 1972. The LV, liking the reliability of their 38ACs, returned to EMD with an order for GP38 ó 2s.

The Valley GP38ACs served them well. They were numbered 310 ó 313 and roamed the system in mainline service. They became Conrail 7656 ó 7659 in April, 1976. The LV would be the only component road to contribute this model to CR. The vast majority of their careers on Conrail were spent in service around Ashtabula, Ohio. The fleet of four continued in service for Big Blue until 1999 when the road was split between NS and CSX. When it came to the division of locomotives, many of the models were split up between CSX and NS. This wasn't the case for the four GP38ACs. All four were assigned to NS and allocated numbers 2881 ó 2884, placed above the fleet of former Southern GP38ACs on the NS roster. By the end of CR, many of their straight GP38s were in and out of storage and the 38ACs may have been, too.

By 2000, these four units were in need of an overhaul. NS had been storing older, unrebuilt power. At the same time, NS recognized a need for some medium horsepower units. NS also saw they had a fleet of older locomotives in need of an overhaul. In late 2000, NS Juniata Shops embarked on a program to rebuild existing stored GP38 and GP38AC units into GP38 ó 2 units. The first batch of units, 5501 ó 5580, funded by First Union, was placed into service between January 2001 and January 2004. Units received a new nose, cab, control stand, upgraded electrical cabinet and electrical systems to Dash 2 specifications, rebuilt prime movers, and received air conditioning units. The long hoods were retained, albeit slightly modified. One of

the former LV units, 311, went through this program to become NS 5516.

Seeing the success of these units, NS Juniata Shops again embarked on a similar program to rebuild additional existing GP38 and GP38AC units on its roster into GP38 ó 2 units between 2005 and 2007. These units, 5601 ó 5673, received the same rebuild as the first group. The three remaining LV units went through this program to become NS 5627, 5655, and 5659. With both programs completed, NS had 152 brand new 2,000 horsepower units added to their fleet. For the Lehigh Valley units that survived CR into NS, this rebuild ensured their survival. It is noted that these are the only LV units that made it to the NS roster, as Conrail had retired/sold/scrapped all other former LV units. The former LV GP38 ó 2 units went to the D&H and still serve CP Rail today.

NS's new units could be seen system-wide. Occasionally, they can be found on mainline freights. However, they primarily are assigned to secondary freights and local service. NS seemed to assign batches of units to specific locations. Many of the 5650 ó 5673 units found homes in eastern PA. The 5650 series called Lancaster, PA's Dillersville Yard home. One of the jobs that originates there is H23, the local to Lititz on former Reading Company trackage that once made up the Reading and Columbia Branch.

On Monday 05 August, 2013, I was returning home to Maryland from eastern PA. I decided to take the scenic route through Lititz in search of H23. H23 is a fairly reliable train that comes to Lititz on a Monday ó Wednesday ó Friday schedule. Arriving in Lititz late (1330), I figured I had missed it, but since I had to go to Lancaster anyway, I pressed onward. H23 usually is out of Lititz on its way back by 1330, so I was more than surprised to see H23 heading eastbound at Manheim at 1345. The lead unit was 5619, so that didn't really interest me. I hadn't planned on chasing, but that changed when NS 5655 appeared on the hind end, as the train now runs in pull-pull mode. (Due to lack of traffic and a desire from local governmental bodies to convert the right of way into a rail trail, NS is likely going to remove the Lititz Secondary trackage from the Route 501 crossing eastward to the end of track) This meant 5655 would lead on the return trip. With no hurry to get home, I opted to wait until 5655 would lead. Why the interest in the NS 5655 you ask? She is one of only four Lehigh Valley locomotives on the NS roster.



H23 wasted no time doing their switching in Lititz and returned to Lancaster. Now with the 5655 (LV 310) leading, I planned a few shots. With a leisurely pace of 10 mph, pursuing H23 is not a difficult chase. Numerous farm scenes abound along the bucolic branchline. Suburban sprawl is encroaching though, and traffic becomes significantly more dense around East Petersburg. With heavy clouds building, I opted to break off from the chase at Lancaster Junction and head for home. For a brief time, it was nice to spend time with a real Lehigh Valley heritage unit.

LV #	CR #	First NS #	Second NS #	Released from Rebuild
12/71 - 04/76	04/76 - 06/99	06/99 - 2001	Rebuild - present	
LV 310	CR 7656	NS 2881	NS 5655	16 August 2006
LV 311	CR 7657	NS 2882	NS 5516	30 August 2001
LV 312	CR 7658	NS 2883	NS 5627	17 February 2006
LV 313	CR 7659	NS 2884	NS 5659	31 August 2006

Purists will make the argument, perhaps rightfully so, that it really isn't a true LV unit any longer. That might

be the case, but for someone who didn't grow up with the LV, in my mind I spent the day with a Valley unit. Relatively fresh from a rebuild, she hopefully will grace the rails long into the future, just as she did from 1971 to 1976 on the 443 miles of LV mainline between Buffalo, NY and Jersey City, NJ. She may not be in her LV red dress and diamond anymore, but she surely looks classy in her NS tuxedo! (JR)



**ABOVE LEFT:** On Monday 05 August, 2013, NS 5655 sits in Lititz, PA leading train H23. **TOP RIGHT:** H23 curves into Limerock, PA with the 5619 pulling and 5655 pushing. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Returning to Dillersville Yard, 5655 leads H23 at Penn Valley Rd. just to the west of Lititz. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** On its journey to Lititz, 5655 trails at Limerock, PA.





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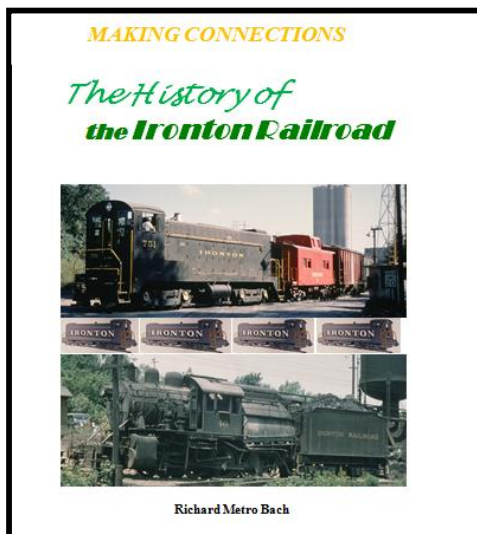
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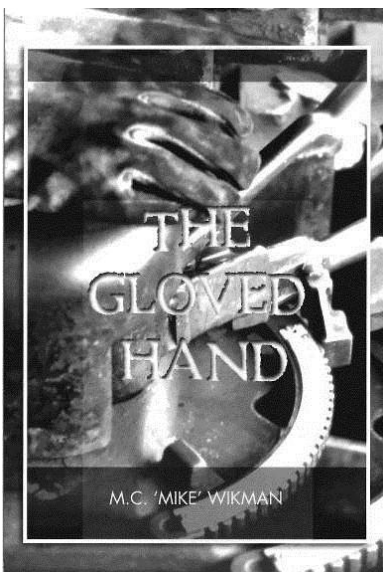
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This book is a compilation of my 55 years in the railroad industry. From my beginning to the year 2008, a lot has happened since 2008 until now. My dear wife of 56 years passed away on March 2, 2011 and I'm now going it alone. I still work as a railroad consultant at a mine in New Mexico and the Border Pacific Railroad on the Mexican border here in Texas, at 77 years old but not steady. Life has been good to me as I still do a lot of photography in this area, hot San Antonio.

Next on my agenda to write a railroad novel as a child I used to read all the novels about railroading in man's imagination which I could not get enough of. So I'm going to try to see what I can do as my mind seems to be working pretty well at this time.

I spend at a maximum of four hours a day on the computer Internet writing friends all over the country, some of the people I communicate with, I used to work for them when I started my career in the railroad industry. E-mailing friends is one of the greatest things that I do.

Learning never ends I try to learn the locomotive inside and out as I can't get enough of that either.

Living here in San Antonio isn't what it was 23 years ago; today it's crowded with people coming from all over every day to live here. I would like to move back east where I came from in Eastern Pennsylvania as I love the mountains and fewer people.

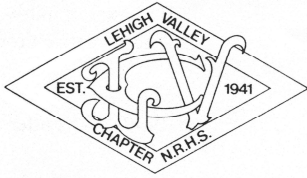
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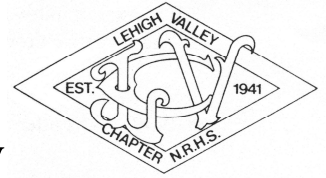
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