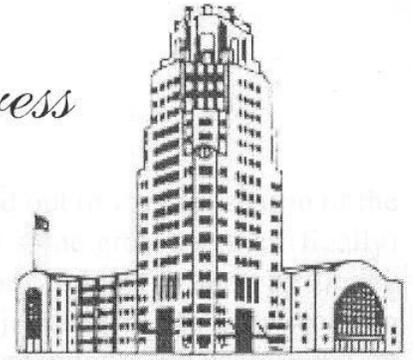


Empire State Express



April 2020

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

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CORONA TRAIN WRECK!

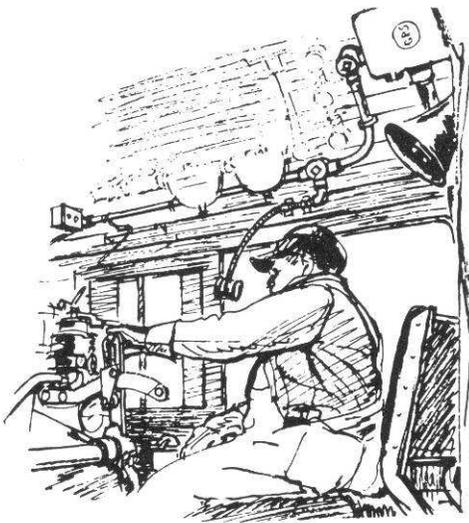


BECAUSE OF THE ONGOING INTER-NATIONAL PANDEMIC HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY THE “CORONA” VIRUS, THE APRIL MEETING OF THE CHAPTER HAS BEEN CANCELLED. ALL RESTORATION PROJECTS ARE ON HOLD. THE MUSEUM & CHAPTER LIBRARY ARE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGES FOR UPDATES ON THIS EVOLVING SITUATION. <https://www.nfcnrhs.org/>

Photo: All we know for certain is the date and location. August 28, 1911 Salamanca, NY. Can any one fill in some details for us? Email the Editor at newsletter@nfcnrhs.com

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This year has been quite unique in my memory. We have had a mild winter (not complaining!) and now the Corona Virus situation. I can't ever remember a time like this. The disruption from the Blizzard of '77 pales in comparison.

The situation with the Chapter Banquet was fluid right up until the Monday before, but unfortunately, it was not to be. As disappointing as it was, cancelling it was the only thing to do. These are trying times, to say the least. Once the scenario has sorted itself out, we will try again.

The same with the April meeting, and possibly the May meeting as well, the government recommendations for less than ten people at a gathering certainly apply there. We will suspend all Chapter Activities that require members gathering together until further notice. The Museum is closed. The Board of Directors will meet by teleconferencing.

Our annual Chicken Barbeque fundraiser event is planned for Saturday May 16th. If that is to go forward, (and that's a BIG if) Volunteers to help with the setup, serving and assembling of the meals will be greatly appreciated. Please call Becky at 434-5665 in you can help. This is subject to the Corona Virus situation, of course.

Bruce Becker has developed a U-Tube channel for us and we will be putting some things on there for you to look at. You can find it at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiB68URo_eGTrnN5pi9BxDw/

We are in need of programs for our regular monthly meetings. There is nothing on the schedule for the fall. If you would like to volunteer, send me an email. Tony Shill advises that his program (originally slated for this month) will be shown later.

I am ever the optimist, looking ahead to better days. When we are ready to resume work on the archive room expansion, the next step will be to finish the rehab of door #5. Once that's done we can lay down the cement board floor and erect the metal framing. This, as with everything else, is dependent on where we are when the time comes.

I have a saying, and I think it fits the situation; Soon the sun will shine, the birds will sing and the trains will run on time.

Until then, I'll see you when we can have a meeting again. Stay safe, stay healthy

Jim Ball

Corry, PA - Railroading's historic past in Northwestern Pennsylvania **by Mark Eyer**

My daughter had lived in Meadville, PA where the Erie Railroad once had a major presence prior to the advent of Conrail, which afforded me the opportunity to take in some truly unique locations and trains that are on the other end of the state, where the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad (P&E) once ran to. Over the coming months, I will share some of these locations with you through the newsletter. This month we will look at Corry, PA where the PRR crossed the Erie at a diamond, and the PRR Chautauqua Branch also crossed the PRR. Corry, during the glory days of the Erie and the PRR, likely had 60 trains a day through town. Today, the Buffalo and Pittsburgh operates the ex P&E PRR line with a local that operates 5 days per week, and the Western New York and Pennsylvania operates the Erie line, operating a train each way from Meadville to Jamestown NY only on Tuesday's and Thursday's. Two towers controlled trains through Corry – MS Tower and Eye Tower, and they were only 4 blocks apart in town. I was in Corry on 12/21/17, and was shocked to see that the Eye Tower building was still standing. Eye was constructed around 1963 to replace the existing tower due to the Kinzua Dam project that would result in the abandonment of the PRR Salamanca line to Pittsburgh with the construction of the dam. Below is a photo of the new Eye Tower in Corry, PA from 1964 from the internet with the original PRR Eye Tower still standing. The PRR Harrisburg to Erie Line tracks are in the foreground and the Erie Railroad tracks were behind the tower.





Corry, PA shows the remains of PRR Eye Tower on Dec 21, 2017 MS Tower in Corry, PA was located at the diamond crossing of the PRR line from Philadelphia to Erie and the Erie Railroad to Chicago. Mark Eyer photo.

WNYP 430, an Alco C430 crossing the Corry diamond at CP MS on December 17, 2017 with WNYP train ME-1 from Meadville, PA to Falconer, NY. ME-1 only crosses this location 2 days a week, a far cry from the days of this being a railroad hot spot.. Mark Eyer photo.



ON THE TRACK AHEAD

The concluding section of Ed Weber's photo look at the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, undertaken mostly in the 1950's is planned for our May meeting (assuming we have one.) We will pick up our special train at the Delaware River on the fabulous New Jersey cutoff and proceed eastward along both the Boonton freight line and the old Morris & Essex, and its branches, which form the heart of the Lackawanna's New York commuter district. Home to dozens of architecturally significant stations and towers, these properties were "mile for mile the most highly developed railroad in America". Join us for this outstanding study of the Lackawanna some 70 years ago in its last full decade as an independent railroad.



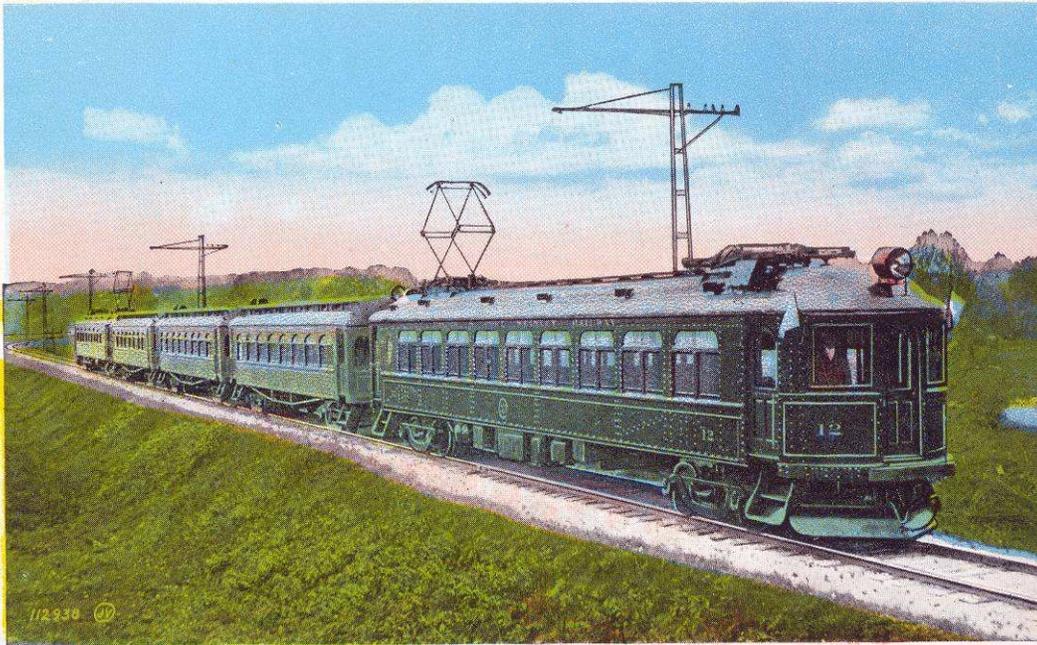
Mountain View, NJ – Controlling the crossing of the Boonton with the Erie's New York & Greenwood Lake branch, was this interlocking tower built in 1904. To the right, in the distance on the Erie, stands its depot at Mountain View. Our perspective is looking east. If you look closely, the tower-man can be seen. Taber's history notes that there was little in the way of freight interchange here between the Lackawanna and the Erie. Ed Weber photo, May 31, 1951.



The meeting schedule is tentative....until the Corona crisis is over we cannot hold any Chapter events!

INTERURBAN INTERLUDE

Hydro-Electric Train, London and Port Stanley Railway.



North of Lake Erie, our Canadian neighbors had a number of fascinating electric railways in those grand years over a century and more ago. Sir Adam Beck, a founder of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario was a prominent figure in the traction era. Calling them “radial railways”, he advanced plans for an ambitious network to link Toronto, the Niagara peninsula and the multiple cities situated on the north side of Lake Erie. The harnessing of Niagara’s hydro power represented the first large scale, successful public power project in North America. In addition to delivering electric utility power, Sir Adam had envisioned a whole system of municipal electric railways. Political bickering over the details and the onset of the First World War in 1914 delayed his grand scheme and it was not until 1915 that the London & Port Stanley Railroad would be converted from a steam locomotive powered line to that of an interurban. The L&PS was already owned by the municipality and so was rebuilt and electrified under the auspices of Sir Adam and the Hydro Commission. Powered by a 1500 volt DC system, all new steel cars went into service on June 30, 1915. Optimistic projections that this would be just the first of many radials were made. The line was successful, and within a few years, a competitor traction line, the London & Lake Erie was forced into bankruptcy and abandonment.

Lasting through the Roaring 20’s, Great Depression and on into World War II, the L&PS became a railfan favorite. The young Buffalo Division of the Railway Enthusiasts in 1941 offered a fan trip from Buffalo Central Terminal utilizing a regular Michigan Central train to St. Thomas where L&PS crossed the MC, inspection of the L&PS shops in London, and “complete coverage” of the line in a special car. An evening return to Buffalo on another Michigan Central train completed the outing. The L&PS fare is listed as \$2.20 and the total fare from Buffalo as \$6.00 in the Chapter history.

In May 1949 the group (by then Buffalo Chapter, NRHS) returned for another look, and again in 1952, 1954 and 1956 when additional excursions would be operated. The line would be absorbed into Canadian National and the electrification dropped. An example of the L&PS steel cars survives today at the Halton County Radial Railway museum. Several years ago it was operated on a Fall spectacular. Sir Adam Beck’s dream of a network of efficient, electric railways powered by the waters of the Niagara remained mostly a dream, but as such systems went, the London & Port Stanley was one of the longer lived examples of the “Interurban Interlude”.
JCD

A MAN AND A RAILROAD —they're guided by the same code

We all know someone like Ed Bell. That's not his name, but it will serve.

Ed was doing pretty well in business fifteen years ago. He was working hard, looking ahead, had rosy plans for the future.

But along came the depression and you know what happened. Borrowing, debts, a struggle to keep going.

Ed stayed at it. Slowly he's climbed back on his feet. Today he's working in a war plant—working harder than he ever worked before.

He's got responsibilities, plenty of them, and recognizes them, too. Taxes to be paid. Debts to be paid off. War bonds to be bought.

And Ed has always put first things first. He likes to buy things for his family as much as any man, but he feels that the meeting of his obligations should come before anything else.

* * *

Many railroads have a similar history, and are now faced with the same kind of obligations.

They have been through a lot in recent years. High costs for labor, material and taxes, and low revenues due to depressed traffic. The average net earnings of all our railroads from the 1929 market crash to the attack on Pearl Harbor amounted to only a fraction over 2% per year on investment.

It is small wonder, then, that thirty-seven Class I railroads sought relief in bankruptcy. And that many others had a tight squeeze because of the burden of debt they carried.

In recent months railroad income has improved. Carrying the huge loads of war traffic, they averaged for 1942 about 5 1/2% return on investment.

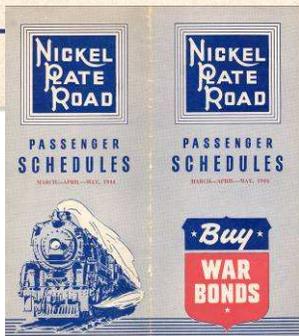
* * *

Now they are faced with the same question that confronted Ed Bell. Shall they pay out these earnings to their families of stockholders, or shall they use them to reduce their overpowering burden of debt—so that once again our railroads can become sound and solvent institutions?

In the interest of both their stockholders and the public most of our railroads—and this includes the Nickel Plate—are currently placing debt reduction first.



NICKEL PLATE ROAD



Sound advice - Nickel Plate Road (New York, Chicago & St. Louis RR) timetable, March-April-May 1944

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- APR 10 MEETING CANCELLED DUE TO CORONA VIRUS CRISIS

- MAY 8 TENTATIVE- Regular meeting, at Degraff Community Center, 7 PM. "Ed Weber's Look at the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western In the 1950's", Part 3, Delaware River to Hoboken, NJ

- JUN 12 Regular meeting, program and location to be announced.

The Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) publicly supported organization. Contributions may be deductible for income tax purposes in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service.

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