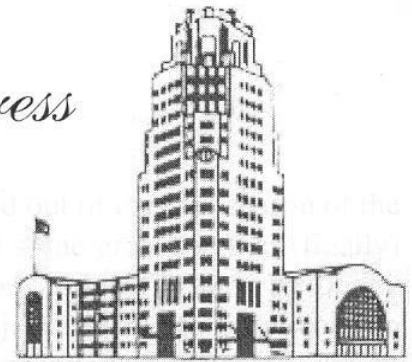


Empire State Express



May 2018

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

Editor: John C. Dahl Email: newsletter@nfcnrhs.com

The meeting of the Chapter will be held at 8:00 pm on Friday, May 11, 2018 at 8:00PM at the Degraff Community Center, 139 Division St., North Tonawanda, NY.

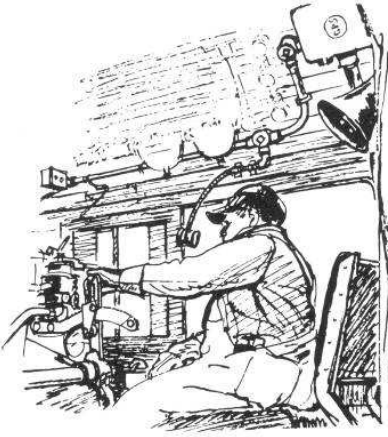
ALCO's I HAVE KNOWN



With just 10 days to go before Conrail would extinguish the Lehigh Valley in New York State, Alco Century C-420 #409 and two other sisters are on the ready track at the Tifft Yard engine facility in Buffalo, NY. Awaiting what will be among their final assignments for the LVRR, the clean engine shows that there was still an enormous amount of company pride right up to the end. Photo by Devan Lawton, March 22, 1976

Join us as Chapter member Devan Lawton presents "ALCO's I Have Known", a tribute to the locomotive builders Alco/GE and ALCO from 1971 to recent times. From switch engines to road power to passenger units, Devan's 35mm camera captured these varied locomotives in the USA and Canada. Roster shots to scenic view, his photos will show many different Class 1, shortline and industrial paint schemes. Many of these "fallen flag" colors are now long gone. So come and enjoy the search for the mighty Alco locomotives that are becoming more rare as time passes. We'll see you then, bring a friend or two!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



When I started to write this month's column, it was snowing outside. As I finish it up for submission to Ye Editor, the sun is shining and the grass will soon need to be cut. I can live with that. It has been a long, slow transition from winter.

We have a lot of experience with grant writing, most of it disappointing. We keep trying, attempting to fit our round peg in to the square holes. This year, however, we have been awarded \$15,000 through the East Hill Foundation. The money to be used for restoration of EL-2 our NYC tower. Island street lumber is quoting on windows. The

Gentlemen who did the concrete restoration on the corners will be asked to quote on rebuilding the chimney. We anticipate the students from the Iroquois Job Corp. who are apprentices to the bricklayer's trade, to do wholesale re-pointing of the brick walls of the first floor.

Just a refresher about the tower, it was built in 1911 by the then New York Central & Hudson River RR **. The bottom half of the 16 X 27 foot structure is brick and concrete. There is an entry door on the Oliver Street side giving access to the signal relays and batteries. There is a separate door on the "back" or west side giving access to the furnace room. The second floor is post and beam construction and the four walls are mostly windows. The entry door is in the west wall. The roof is flat, and the Chapter replaced that in 2003. The stairs that provided entry to the second floor were removed by us to prevent vandalism. We invested \$1,500 in concrete work on the corners of the four walls last year. The grant from East Hill will allow us to uncover many of the fifteen windows that are currently boarded up. Chimney repair is also on the restoration menu. If you have never been to the tower, it's just a short walk from the museum and the ground floor is accessible. Get a hold of me and I'll walk over there with you. It is your tower, come and see it. Getting upstairs is problematic right now; it's accessed only by ladder. There isn't any equipment up there anyway. We have recently photographed the interior of the second floor. Getting the windows uncovered and some solar powered lights up there would go a long way toward making what appears to be an abandoned building into a historical sight. We are mapping the windows, measuring and numbering each one, as they are not all the same. We will then decide on the best way to replace them and get the process moving.

After the Chicken Barbeque on May 12th the Museum will be in full operation. We publish that it is open June, July, August, and September on Saturday afternoons. We are already getting visitors in. We also try to do restoration work on those days. We would ask those of you who are not afraid of the public to volunteer to be docents. Often times we interrupt those who are working on something to conduct tours. If you want to do that or want to be apprenticed to do that, call Becky at 434-5665.

In other restoration news, we will be working on the expansion of the Archive room beginning this month. Marcus will be continuing his work on the NYC 21005 as his schedule permits.

Until then, I'll see you at the meeting.

Jim Ball

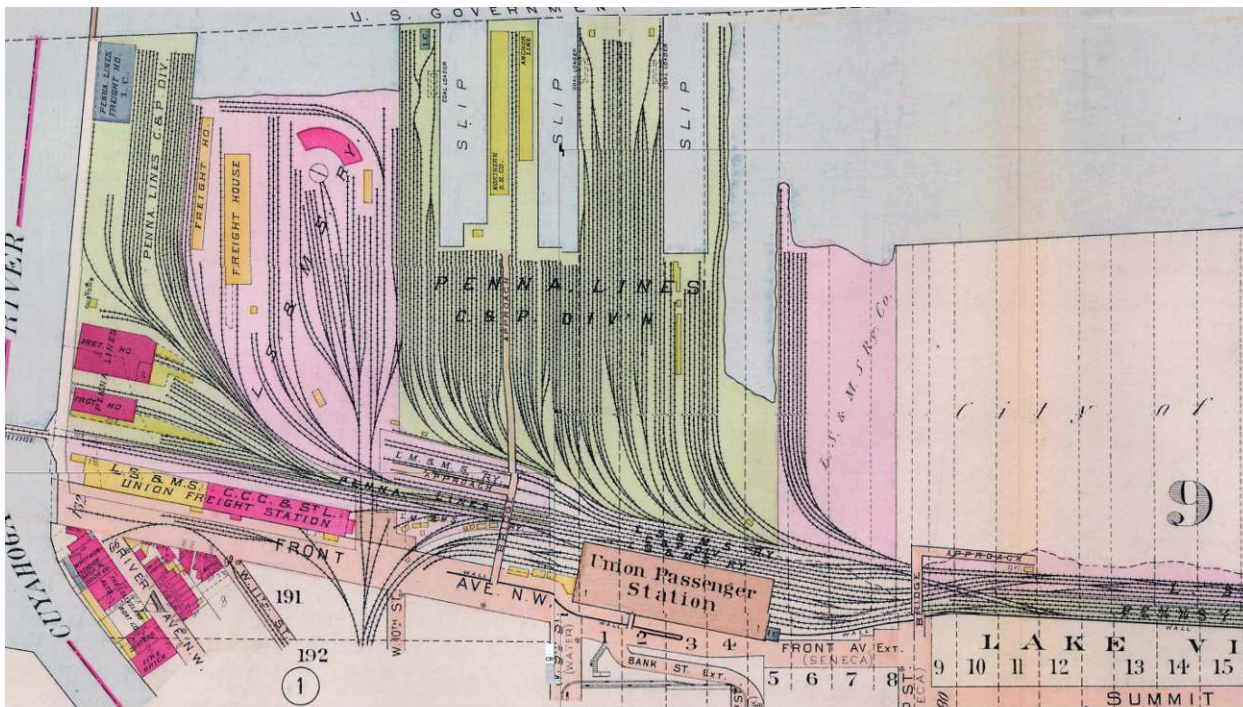
*** A more complete history of the tower appeared in the Empire State Express, May, June & September 2011.*

Cleveland's Remarkable Union Depot

Tony Schill

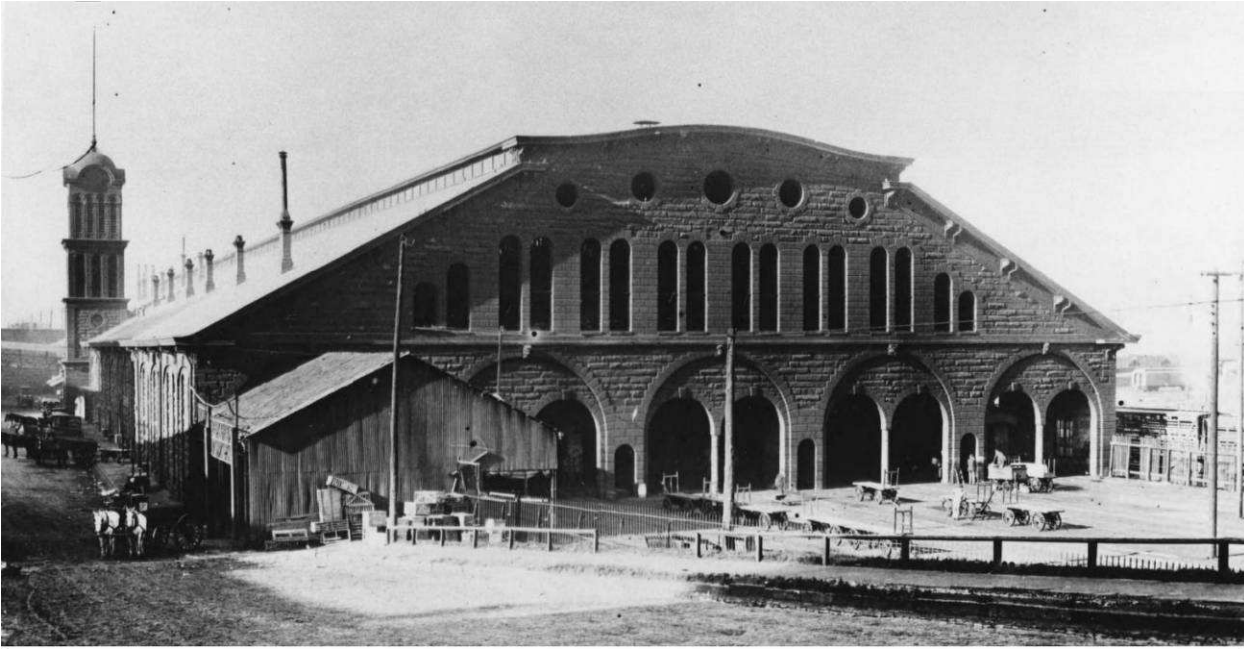
Just 200 miles west of Buffalo today stands Cleveland Union Terminal, a great architectural monument from the golden age of American passenger railroading. Alas, CUT in 2017 serves no intercity trains (though it does still host stations for Cleveland's rapid transit and light rail lines), but it is nevertheless a major and very successful retail and office center in the heart of downtown, visited by thousands of people every week. It's well worth a visit (and an article in ESX; at some point in the future one may appear).

But **THIS** article is about a much different Union Depot, and that would be the now-gone classic Gothic structure on Cleveland's lakefront. When completed in 1866, Union Depot was considered a wonder of the railroad world-- but by 1900 city leaders regarded it as a civic embarrassment. Even so, it survived in active passenger use until 1953, more than two decades after the opening of its intended successor, Cleveland Union Terminal.



LAKEFRONT LOCATION OF CLEVELAND UNION PASSENGER DEPOT

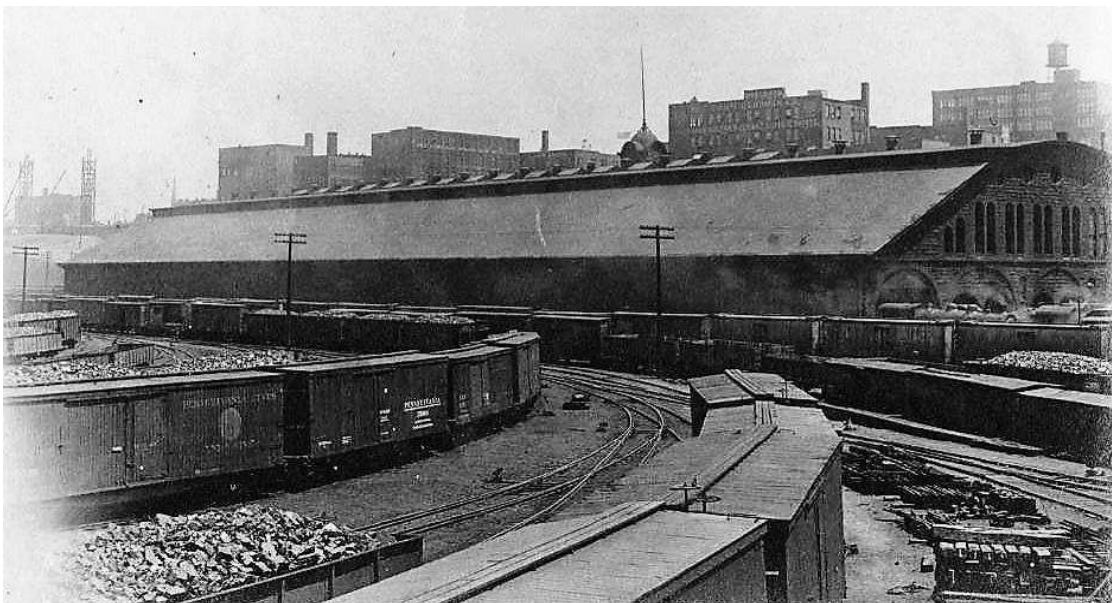
The railroad era in Cleveland began in 1849 with the operation of the first train on an initial short section of track of the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad. Within a few years Cleveland was linked by rail to points many miles to the east, west and south, and was served by the first Union Depot, completed in 1853. This first Union Depot was largely built of wood, with separate sections for each of the three railroads using it. It was destroyed by fire in 1864, resulting in the building the following year of a new and much more substantial facility that would serve Cleveland, for better or worse, for some 90 years.



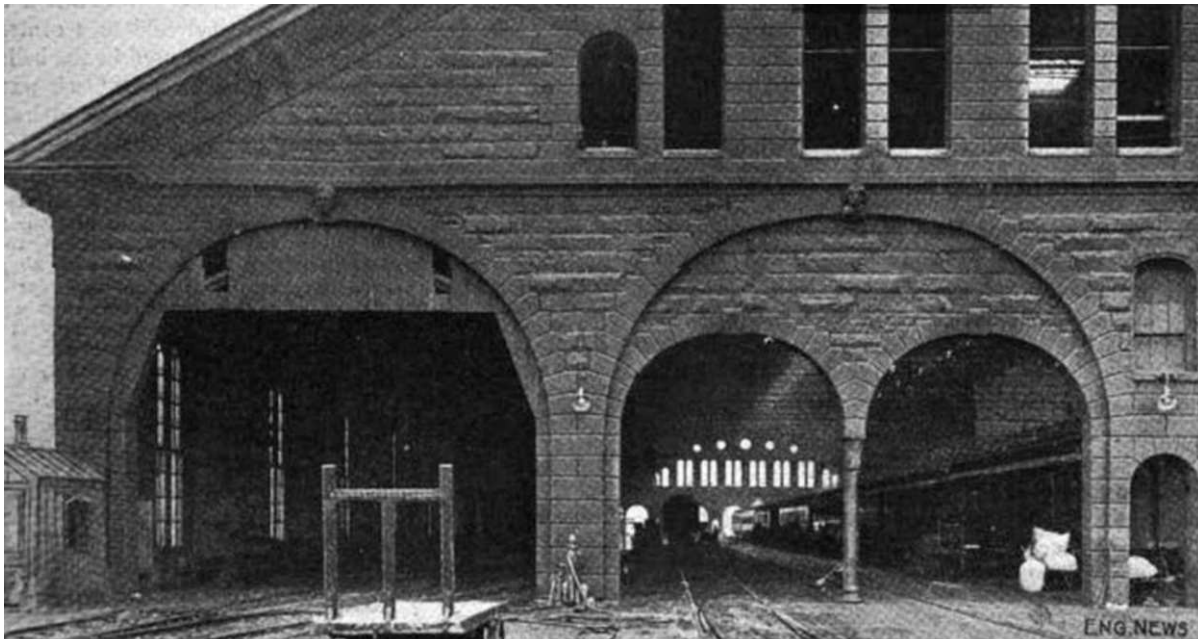
VIEW OF UNION PASSENGER DEPOT FROM THE EAST, CIRCA 1875

At the time of its completion the Union Depot of 1866 was the largest railroad terminal in America. It cost more than \$475,000 and remained the largest station building under one roof until it was exceeded a few years later by Grand Central Depot (i.e. Commodore Vanderbilt's Grand Central of 1870) in New York City.

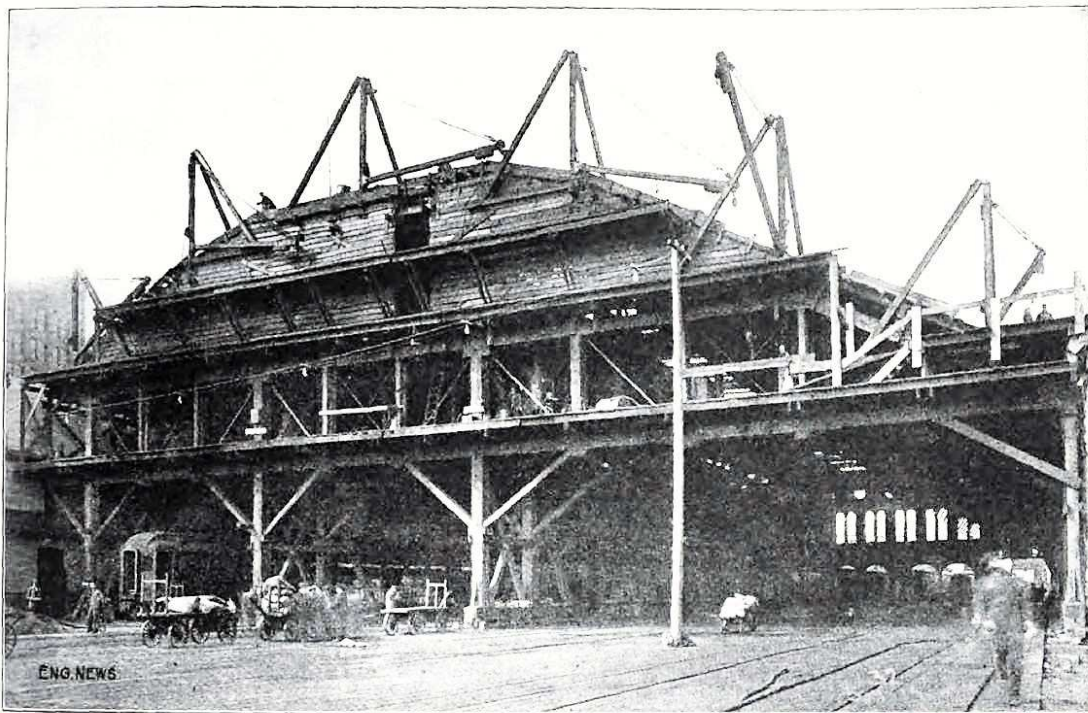
This new station was described in a contemporary account as “one of the most substantial, commodious, and well-arranged buildings of its kind in the country.” The writer noted that the structure was built entirely of stone and iron, and had a length of just over 600 feet and a width of 180 feet. A clock tower ninety feet high graced the front entrance. As was the custom of the time, the station was primarily a huge “train barn” with all of its eight tracks and associated platforms entirely beneath one vast roof as high as 70 feet above the tracks. On the south side of the station a long but narrow stone structure (also contained beneath the shed) housed “large and well furnished ticket, express and telegraph offices, baggage rooms, dining hall, coffee and luncheon room, news depot, and numerous offices...”



The mammoth shed structure was constructed entirely of cast-and-wrought-iron, except for the actual roof and the stone walls on the shed sides and ends (the end walls had many portals through which the trains passed).



VIEW OF INTERIOR - TRACKS WERE CROSSED ON FOOT



REMOVAL OF TRAINSHED - 1914

Use of iron, both cast and wrought, for large structures was a fairly new technology. Collapses of iron bridges, such as the disaster at nearby Ashtabula in 1876, as well as the frequent failure of iron wheels and rails inevitably led to concerns regarding the iron structure supporting the Union Depot train-shed. Within little more

than a decade after completion, concerns began to arise as to the safety and stability of the vast shed. Indeed, years later the prestigious Engineering News opined that “the safety of the roof was at all times precarious,” and further that the general design was “such as to defy stress analysis.” Nevertheless, the shed functioned as intended without major incident for almost 50 years. But the concerns never really went away, and in the interests of safety the shed was removed in 1914. By that time it was thought certain that an entirely new station would be built within a few years. Unfortunately, the reality of that expectation proved to be quite different.

When the train-shed was removed in 1914 replacement butterfly sheds were built on each of the platforms, and an elevated concourse of sorts was extended from the waiting room out over the tracks, with stairways down to the platforms. These changes made a significant negative impact on the overall appearance of the station, and some observers felt that the structure looked half-demolished. The unfortunate appearance was further aggravated by subsequent deterioration and by the later removal of some of the tracks, platforms and part of the concourse as passenger traffic declined.

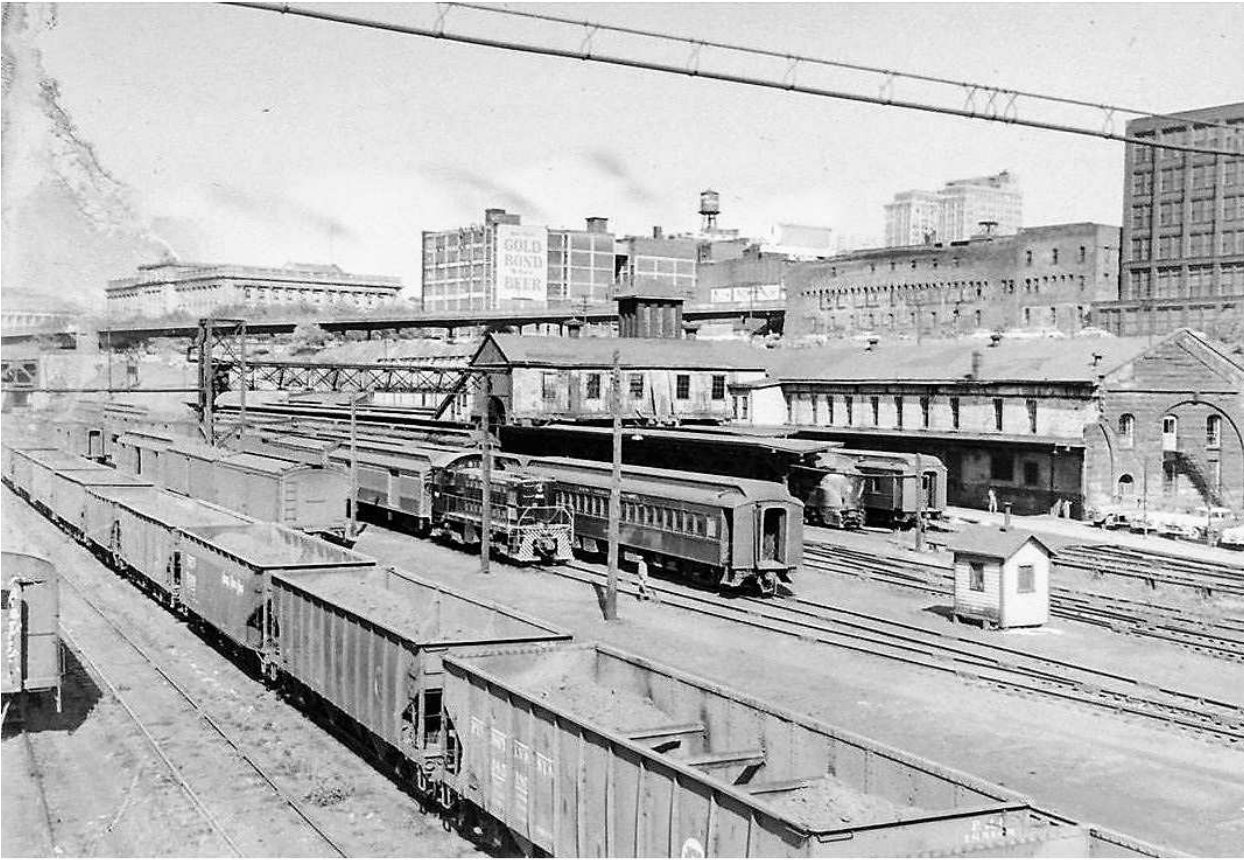
When constructed in 1866 Union Depot served about 30 trains a day. However, traffic rapidly increased and by 1900 nearly 90 trains a day were passing through Union Depot. In addition, by that time much of the land on the lakefront immediately adjacent to the station had been developed into large, busy freight yards and steamship piers. As a result, extreme railroad congestion prevailed in the terminal area.

Despite its name, Union Depot served only three railroads, but they were the “big players” in Cleveland: The Lake Shore & Michigan Southern, the Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati & St. Louis or “Big Four” (both roads controlled by and later taken into the New York Central Lines), and the Pennsylvania. Other steam railroads serving Cleveland, such as the Erie, Baltimore & Ohio, Nickel Plate and Wheeling & Lake Erie, all had their own stations away from the lakefront.



As early as the 1890's the City of Cleveland began encouraging the construction of a true Union Station which would serve all the railroads entering the city. The main goals were to make rail travel more convenient for city residents and visitors, provide Cleveland with a monumental Union Station appropriate to the city's national importance, and to accomplish the removal of the now overcrowded 1865 Union Depot. In just 30 years Union Depot had gone from being one of the finest train stations in America to being considered a dark, dingy, and overcrowded eyesore! Indeed, at one point local businesses erected a large sign near the station which asked visitors to not judge the city by its Union Depot.

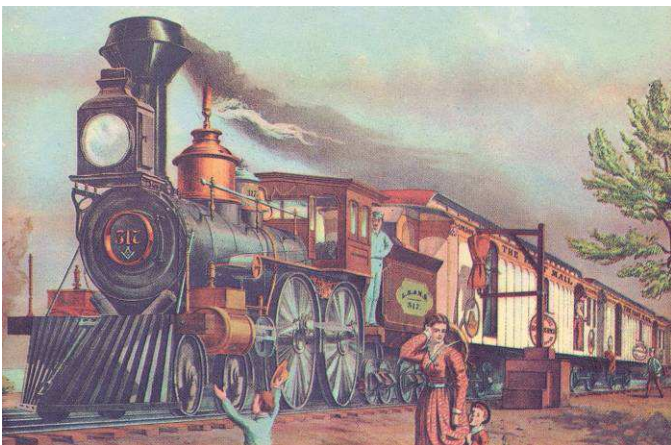
Over the next several decades various plans for a new Union Station appeared with great publicity, but all but one expired due to lack of consensus among the various interest groups involved. Not until the 1920's was the necessary degree of agreement reached on the project which resulted in the construction of the great Cleveland Union Terminal right downtown on Public Square. CUT opened in 1930 to great acclaim. But even then, not all of Cleveland's railroads were willing to be part of the project, and indeed the PRR never moved its trains to CUT, and the Erie did not do so until 1948.



THE STATION IN ITS FINAL YEARS BEFORE CLOSING IN 1953

After 1930 the Pennsylvania became the sole user of the now-ancient Union Depot. The reluctance of the PRR to move to CUT gave another 23 years of active life to Union Depot, as it was not until 1953 that the Pennsy removed its shrinking number of trains over to the “suburban” depot on East 55th Street. Union Depot then sat vacant and abandoned for a few more years until being demolished in 1959.

When Amtrak began operation in 1971 Cleveland was left without long-distance passenger trains. In 1975 Amtrak did inaugurate the Lake Shore Limited over the old NYC main line, but the train did not use Cleveland Union Terminal. Instead a small new station was erected on the original lakefront route, a few hundred feet to the east of a parking lot that today marks the former site of Cleveland Union Depot. Now, some 40 years later, the no-longer-new Amtrak station itself is seen as an eyesore, and in 2012 Cuyahoga County enacted a plan to screen it from view from the new stadium nearby with trees and shrubs. Perhaps history is repeating itself!



One of the trains that no doubt utilized the old Cleveland depot was the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern “Fast Mail”.

The first westbound trip between New York and Chicago ran September 14, 1875.

ALCO IN 1906



Alco, the American Locomotive Company, has a rich and storied past. From these erecting halls in Schenectady, NY came some of the most famous of railway locomotives ever constructed. Our program this month by Devan Lawton will look at many examples of the now rare diesel products of Alco. The company built some of the most memorable and stylish examples of diesels and to this day, railfans seek out the dwindling numbers that remain in service. However it was steam engines that dominated the catalog well into the 20th Century until the late 1940's when diesels finally ended construction of new steam. The efficient diesel pushed reciprocating engines aside in the demanding world of railroad service. From this facility, and its other works like Brooks (Dunkirk, NY), Cooke (Patterson, NJ), Dickson (Scranton, PA), Manchester (NH), Pittsburgh (PA), Rhode Island (Providence, RI), and Richmond (VA) came some great machines. Later the Rogers Locomotive Works of Patterson, NJ, and Montreal Locomotive Works entered the fold. Alco was second only to the mighty Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia. Many railroads stocked their rosters with examples of Alco products. With the demise of Alco went a part of the heart and soul of many railroads.

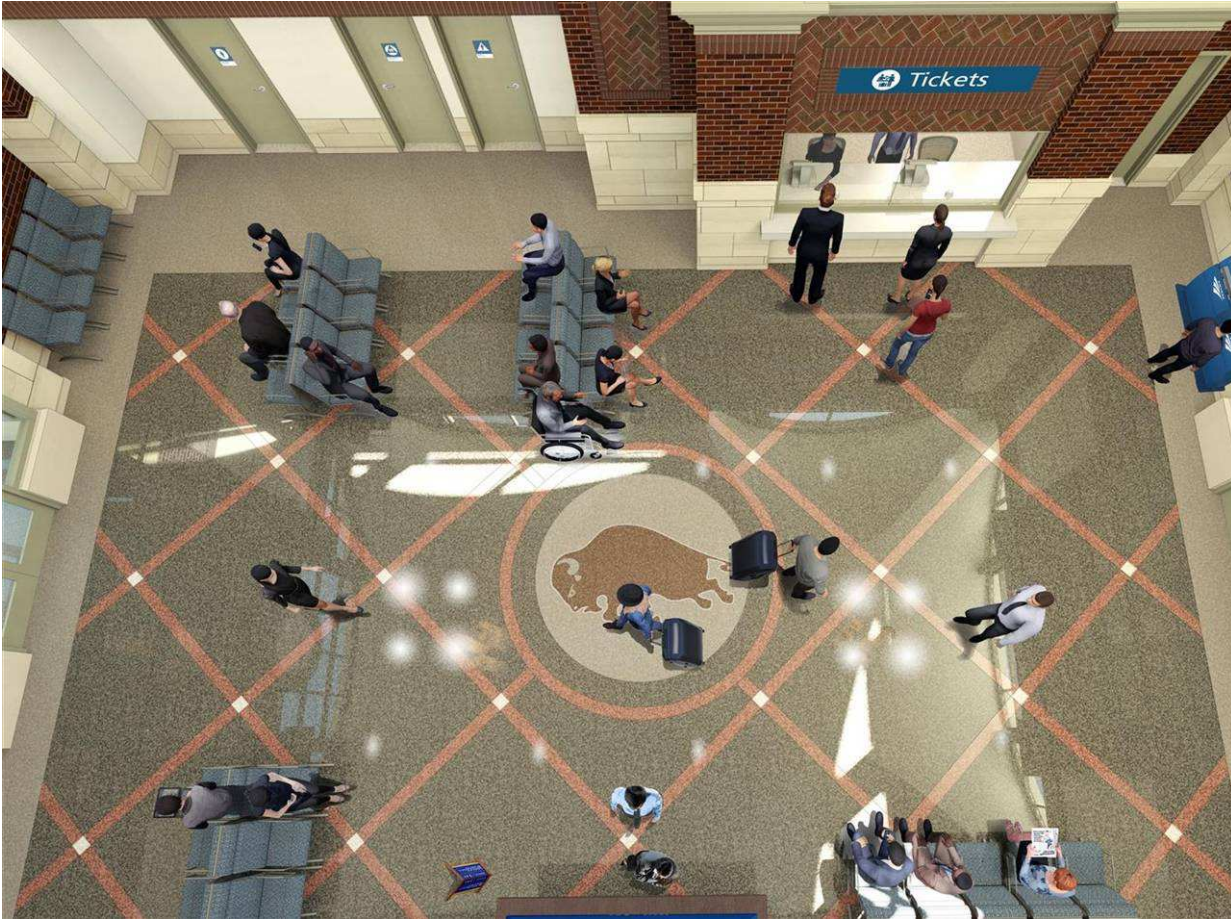


WHERE ALCOs *STILL* ROAM

Just one of the several places we can still find an Alco locally is in Gowanda, NY on the New York & Lake Erie. A pair of classic MLW cab units occasionally get fired up for an excursion. On October 11, 2008 FA #6758 and partner #6751 are switching at the depot. In a classic view, typical "Alco Smoke" rises above the handsome units as they negotiate the Commercial St. crossing.

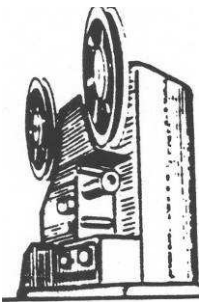
John C. Dahl photo.

PROPOSED NEW BUFFALO AMTRAK STATION



Here is one of the several interesting architect's renderings recently posted online of the proposed new Amtrak station on Exchange St. downtown. The buffalo design in the floor is an interesting detail. In general the station proposal looks good architecturally, combining modern and classic station design elements. Let's hope that in addition to being attractive and well maintained, it will serve a growing passenger rail service instead of a shrinking one. *Architects rendering: The Buffalo News.*

Editor note: Recent cuts announced by Amtrak eliminating dining cars (after spending large sums to build new Viewliner series dining cars) will further erode service on the Lake Shore Limited through Buffalo, and on the Capital Limited between Washington and Chicago. Such moves do not encourage ridership. We should have more service, not less.



ON THE TRACK AHEAD

Join us in June for a Movie Night at Buffalo Central Terminal. The show starts at 8 PM on Friday, June 8 th. It's time again for our annual meeting and outing to visit the 'Grande Dame' of all Buffalo railroad stations. Recently announced State funding will restore much of the magnificent concourse of this monument of the railway age. This may be our last time to get a pre-restoration look at the Terminal.

Bring a friend, the meeting is open to the public. Come and enjoy some rail movie scenes of yesteryear!

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- MAY 11 Regular meeting, at Degraff Community Center, 8 PM. Program by Devan Lawton, "ALCOS I HAVE KNOWN", Part 1.
- MAY 12 Chiavetta Chicken BBQ at the station, 111 Oliver St. North Tonawanda. Dinners ready 11:30 AM, \$10 presale, \$11 at the door. Drive In, Take Out. Please help support this vital Chapter fundraiser. Thank You!
- JUN JUL AUG SEP Station Open for 2018 Summer Season. Saturdays 1PM to 4 PM. Volunteers needed!
- JUN 8 Regular meeting, Buffalo Central Terminal. Railroad Movie Night, Program by Devan Lawton.

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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