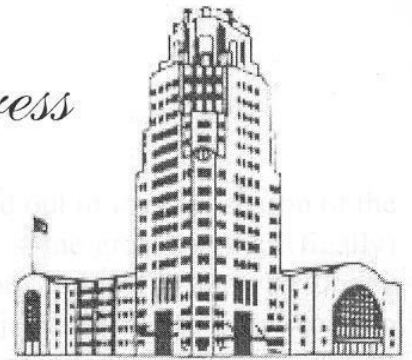


Empire State Express



OCTOBER 2025

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

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

The meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for Friday, October 10, 2025 at 7:00 PM at the Town of Wheatfield Community / Senior Center, 2790 Church Road, North Tonawanda NY. Follow Rt 62 north to Ward Rd, turn left onto Ward Road and turn right onto Church Road.

'The Sounds of Railroading' *A history of rail sound recordings.*

Presented By Aaron Heverin



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Here we go, barreling into fall and the fourth quarter of 2025. The days are perceptibly growing shorter week by week. The old expression about getting something done “before the snow flies” becomes ever more relevant on a weekly basis. Looking back over the summer, we had a busy tourist season. I checked the sign in book and discovered that we had nearly 50 visitors during the month of August. That’s more than June, July and September to date, combined.

During that time period the track crew finished their work on Tonawanda Island and transported (with help) all the materials back to the Museum. There they stacked and/or palletized all the materials: switch frogs, guard rails, tie plates, joint bars, nuts, bolts, and full length rails. The next phase is already in progress. That is to pull up and relay the east siding, probably the first time in fifty years it has been worked on. The Plymouth locomotive left on Thursday September 18th. Thanks to Steve Frey, Carl Butland, M.J. Lewandowski, Ben Hiltz, Neal Keirn, Becky Gerstung, Greg Gerstung, the folks at Rusniaks Towing and Bruce Hodges and the members of Leatherstocking Chapter, NRHS. Chapter Historian Greg Gerstung took both video and still photos for the records. We hope to visit our old friend in its new home this coming summer.

In August we unveiled a Pomeroy Foundation historic marker. There are two more in the works. One destined for Salamanca has been delivered and is awaiting installation.

We have a new computer in the archive room. The computer that we had in there was a hand me down when we got it. That was several years ago. The current technology is way beyond what we had. Aaron Heverin “spec’d out” and shopped for a new one. The Board approved the purchase, and we now have “up to date” equipment with capacity to handle our mission.

The Membership Renewal process begins soon. There has been a small increase in dues. The new rates bring us in line with costs, particularly those of printing and mailing the ESX. I sincerely believe that membership in the NRHS is still a great value. Please renew as soon as you can.

Elections are coming in December. Look for a list of candidates in the December ESX. Voting will be at that meeting. The Chapter’s 2026 Railroad Calendar, ‘featuring nostalgic scenes in and around Western NY’ is now available. (See ordering flyer, on page 9.) It will be for sale at the monthly meeting, by mail through Bob Andrycha, at the Station, at the WNYRHS train show and from select retailers. They make a great Holiday gift! Get yours now.

We are in need of presentations for the monthly meetings and Docents for the Museum. Looking to the season, some thoughts about trips. The Rochester & Genesee Valley Museum is good candidate for a “Day Trip”. Another great choice would be to head to the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley Railroad. Of course the Arcade & Attica is always great for a shorter trip, and the foliage is grand. So, with the thought of a snow cancellation in the back of our minds, we will publish the advisory information next month. We will continue that every month until it’s not necessary anymore. Speaking of the white stuff, we have contracted with a service to plow the station parking lot should it be needed. See you at the meeting.

Jim Ball

SCENE ON THE LINE



A rare survivor, an original station bench from Buffalo's International Railway Company, the corporate umbrella that eventually operated most of the trolley's and interurban electric railways in Buffalo and its suburban areas. Joe Cyarnecki brought the IRC bench to the Chapter museum; it will be stored until it can be refurbished and hopefully provide some comfortable seating for museum visitors. September 13, 2025.

Jim Ball photo.

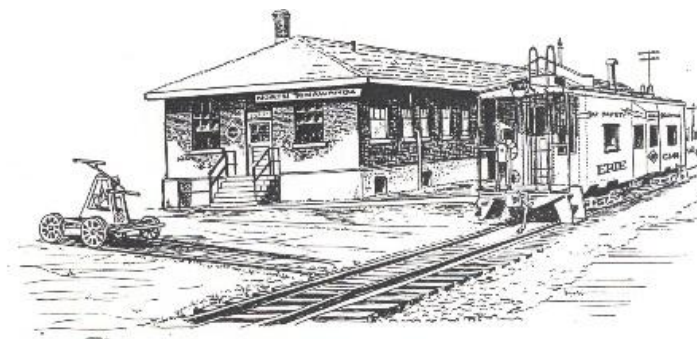


The "official" presentation of the "Builders Plate" for the Plymouth loco by Neal Keirn (right) to Bruce Hodges (center) occurred on September 18, 2025. The Leatherstocking Chapter (Cooperstown, NY), NRHS accepted our offer of the Plymouth locomotive which the Chapter deaccessioned some time ago. *Jim Ball photo.*

SCENE - continued



On August 2, 2025 our station museum historical marker was unveiled and dedicated. It is number 31 in the newly minted Transportation Series. (EL2 interlocking tower across the street is marker number 1.) At left is North Tonawanda mayor Austin Tylec with Jim Ball behind him. At right is Bruce Becker and Anton SchwarzmueLLer, who once again coordinated applying for the grant to obtain the marker and handled all the details with the William C. Pomeroy Foundation. Thank you, Anton, for your efforts over many years in “marking” significant pieces of our railroad heritage. *Mark (MJ) Lewandowski photo.*



WESTFIELD, NY - Yesterday & Today

Less than a one-hour drive west of Buffalo in the beautiful grape growing region along Lake Erie is Westfield, NY. It is a quaint and historic village and is filled with Victorian era homes and early 20th Century commercial properties. Wineries and family farms dot its outskirts. And it still has an interesting railroad flavor. The former New York Central's Water Level Route runs through the village, and the New York, Chicago & St. Louis, better known as The Nickel Plate Road and a Pennsylvania RR branch (operated directionally with NKP) paralleled it mere stone's throw away. Today the NYCRR is a piece of the larger CSX, and the Plate has morphed into a part of Norfolk Southern, while the PRR line is gone. The village once had the famed Jamestown, Westfield & North Western (JW&NW) and the Buffalo & Lake Erie Traction Company electric interurbans. Enjoy this photo essay of things past and present in Westfield.



It is Thursday, December 4, 1941 and the new Empire State Express, the latest streamliner of New York Central, is on public display near the Westfield NYC station as local citizens look it over. Hudson #5426 (identified in news accounts of the day) is on the head end of the display train. In three days' time the world will be turned upside down with the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, and the United States will enter the World War II conflict. *Myron Carr photo. JCD collection.*



The NYC owned Lake Shore & Michigan Southern erected this station in the early years of the 20th Century, replacing an earlier wood frame structure. The electric interurban, JW&NW also connected here, and remnants of the trolley tracks are still visible in the brick platforms at the west end of the building. Although no longer in railroad use, the beautifully constructed stone and brick, privately owned station, has functioned in recent years as an art gallery. May 5, 2018. *John C. Dahl photo.*

WESTFIELD, NY – continued

Circa 1920 in perhaps late winter or early spring, looking west, we see the Westfield NYC station. The then unpaved English Street looks to be a challenge for the vintage auto to navigate. The interurban trolley car at left seems a much better bet for reliable transport! The JW&NW came into the station at the opposite end of this view and is out of sight. So probably the trolley shown here is the Buffalo & Lake Erie Traction Company. The Nickel Plate and PRR tracks are behind the large building at left. Train time must have been awesome! *JCD collection.*



Ernest Breed, towerman for the NYC, is manning the levers in Westfield's interlocking tower. A 1943 NYC Employee Timetable lists its telegraph call as WX and it was located at milepost 58.35. Photo notes say that Mr. Breed was the relief man, and he worked Tuesday afternoons, and that he lived locally in Westfield. The photographer, Myron Carr, knew him and often visited to watch trains. This picture was likely taken in 1941. Those were the days! *Myron Carr photo. JCD collection.*

WESTFIELD, NY – continued



We will conclude our visit to Westfield with two contemporary photos, this page and next, and a transition photo with the old and new signals below. Above: At 7:59 AM on September 23, 2025 the early morning light of autumn is just breaking through at milepost 58. An eastbound CSX stack train is hustling tonnage under a relatively new signal gantry which just a few years ago replaced the decades old New York Central searchlight style signals at what is still a favorite train spotting location. *Robert Sikorski photo.*



Left: It is May 5, 2018 and CSXs Signal Department is in the midst of replacing the vintage NYC searchlight style signals. Those had been in place since the 1940s when this part of NYC received some of the first CTC on the mainline. *John C. Dahl photo*

WESTFIELD, NY – continued

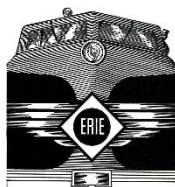


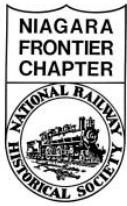
Just 10 minutes later, at 8:09 am the sun is up just a tad more and Amtrak's eastbound Lake Shore Limited from Chicago sails past the photographer. Alas, Westfield is no longer a stop for any passenger trains, but the potential is there if we are ever fortunate enough to get some additional service west of Buffalo. September 23, 2025. *Robert Sikorski photo.*

I hope you have enjoyed this brief look at railroading Yesterday & Today in Westfield, NY. - JCD

ON THE TRACK AHEAD

Next month Richard Johnson III will present a program on 'Urban Exploring at Buffalo Central Terminal'. Our iconic 1929 Art Deco masterpiece has long attracted not only architectural historians and railfans, but also 'urban explorers'! This should be a fascinating look at the Terminal. Arrangements for December and into next year are open. Please let Jim Ball know if you can volunteer to take a month and assist with a program. We all like to have meeting entertainment. Remember, it does not happen by magic. Please volunteer!





2026 Western New York Railroad Calendar

54th Edition

Another Fine Publication Of The Niagara Frontier Chapter - National Railway Historical Society
& Railroad Museum of the Niagara Frontier



Outstanding Color And Black & White Photographs Are Featured In A Limited Edition Printing Of The Chapter's Annual Railroad Wall Calendar. This High Quality Publication, A Tradition Since 1972, Contains 12 Photographs of Steam, Diesel And Electric Railroad Action. All Scenes Were Recorded In And Around Western New York, Northwest Pennsylvania And Nearby Southern Ontario. The 2026 Photographs Were Carefully Selected From The Chapter Archives And From The Collections Of Chapter Members.

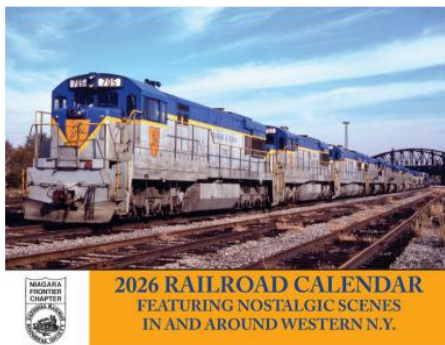
- **Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad** - Interurban car #302 (Cincinnati Car Company, 1914) at Westfield, NY
- **New York Central** - 4-6-2 K5b class Pacific #4915 (American Locomotive Company, 1926) at Buffalo Central Terminal
- **Delaware & Hudson Railroad** - U30C #705 (General Electric Company, February 3, 1967) at the North Yard in Buffalo, NY
- **Grand River Railway** - Interurban car #862 (Preston Car Company, 1921) stopped in front of the Preston, Ont Station
- **Chessie System** - GP40-2 #4301 (Electro Motive Division, January 2, 1978) pulling a freight train at Springville, NY
- **Amtrak** - P42 #100 (General Electric Company, June 9, 1997) painted for Amtrak's 50th anniversary east of Exchange Street Station
- **Buffalo Southern Railway** - RS-18u #1847 (Montreal Locomotive Works, March 1958, ex-Canadian Pacific #8752/1847) Hamburg
- **New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad** - Nickel Plate 2-8-2 #647 H6e class (Lima Locomotive Works, January 1924) at Silver Creek
- **Norfolk Southern** - 2-6-6-4 #1218 A class steam locomotive (Norfolk & Western Roanoke Shops, June 1943) at Erie, PA
- **Pennsylvania Railroad** - E-8 #6894 (Electro Motive Division, March 1951) with a passenger train at East Aurora, NY
- **Baltimore & Ohio** - SW900 #9411 (Electro Motive Division, May 1955) approaching the depot in Jewettville, PA
- **Consolidated Rail Corporation** - S-2 diesel #9705 (American Locomotive Company, November 1947, ex-NYC, PC) at Lockport



Quality Paper With Gloss Printing - 11" x 17" Open Format With 8" x 11" Photos

\$17.00 Each Or \$32.00 For Two

Includes Shipping & Sales Tax



To Order:

Make Your Check Made Payable To
'Niagara Frontier Chapter - NRHS'

And Mail To

Niagara Frontier Chapter - NRHS
PO Box 1043 North Tonawanda, NY 14120

- Or -



Order With Credit Card
By Scanning This QR Code
Or At www.nfcnrhs.org

Please Send Me _____ 2026 Calendars - Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

E-Mail _____ Phone _____

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- OCT 10** **Regular meeting, Town of Wheatfield Senior Center, 7 PM. Program by Aaron Heverin, 'The Sounds of Railroading, a history of Rail Sound Recordings'.**
- NOV 14** **Regular meeting, Town of Wheatfield Senior Center, 7 PM. Program by Richard Johnson, III 'Urban Exploring at Buffalo Central Terminal'.**

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.

***** IMPORTANT REMINDERS ***** If you receive hardcopy of the ESX and your mailing address changes, please send to the attention of Neal Kerin so that your Empire State Express can be addressed properly. Likewise, if your email address changes for any reason, please let us know by sending it to nfcnrhs@gmail.com **THANK YOU**

The Empire State Express is mailed free to all members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. Anyone who is not a Chapter / NRHS member may receive *The Empire State Express* by US mail or Email. Please contact the Chapter at PO Box 1043, North Tonawanda, NY 14120 for current membership and subscription rate details. Web site www.nfcnrhs.org

RAILROAD MUSEUM ADDRESS: 111 OLIVER ST. NORTH TONAWANDA, NY



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE EXPEDITE

The Empire State Express
NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.
POST OFFICE BOX 1043
NORTH TONAWANDA, NY 14120