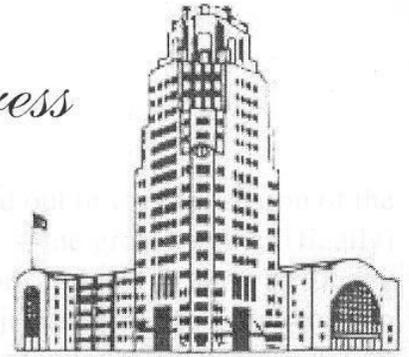


## Empire State Express



OCTOBER 2022

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

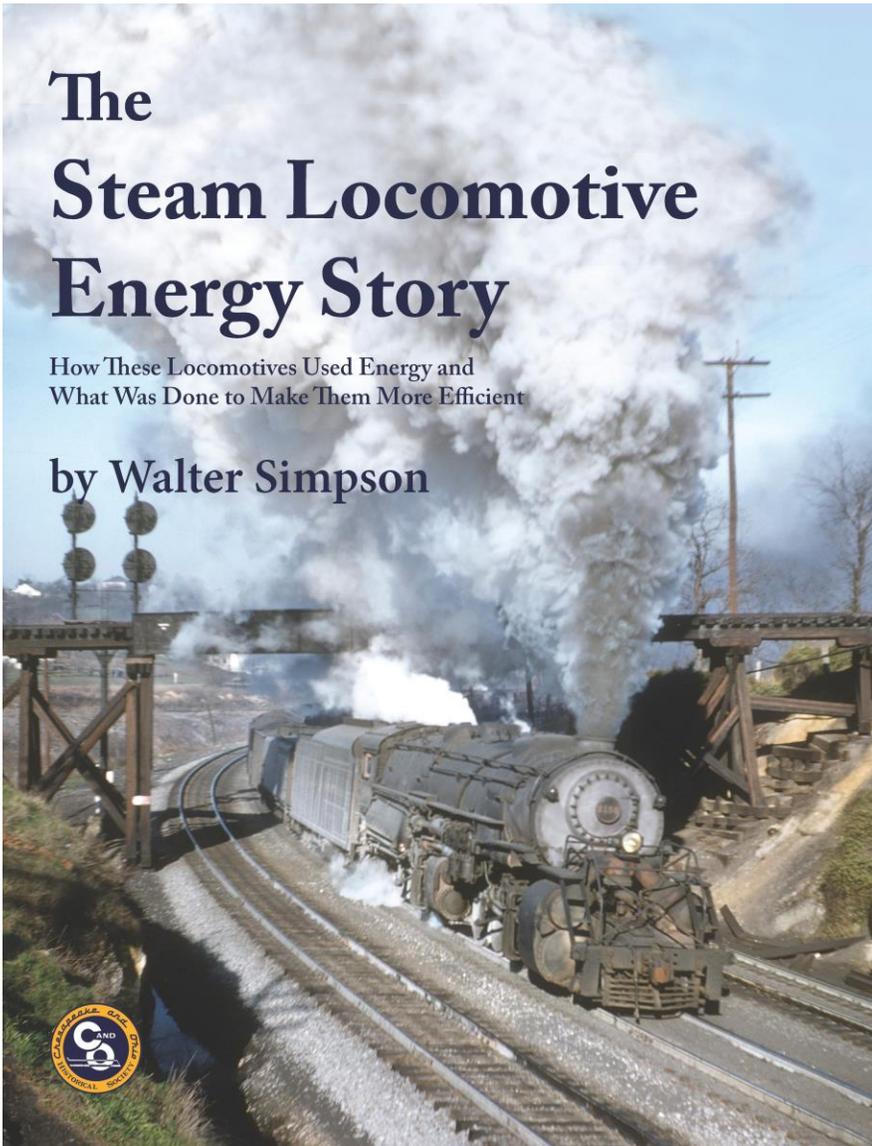
Editor: John C. Dahl    Email [nfcnrhs@gmail.com](mailto:nfcnrhs@gmail.com)

The meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for Friday, October 14, 2022 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 Steam Locomotive Energy Story

How These Locomotives Used Energy and  
What Was Done to Make Them More Efficient

by Walter Simpson



Chapter member Walter Simpson will discuss the subject of his latest book, *The Steam Locomotive Energy Story: How These Locomotives Used Energy and What Was Done to Make Them More Efficient*. If you recall Walter's previous program on the diesel locomotive, and his superb program on turbine locomotives, you will not want to miss this review of steam locomotion, especially the peak years of 'Super Power' steam. Walter's program will make generous use of many photo views of the steam engine in all its glory before and during the diesel transition. Walter will show us there's a lot more to a steam engine than just fire and water!

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



We are all very fortunate to live here on the Niagara Frontier. There are no hurricanes, very, very few tornadoes and we know how to deal with a blizzard. The change of season from summer to fall is often spectacular here. When you add the Rail History that's here, it's a great place to live. So, you ask, what is going on?

The first thing is that the 2023 Calendar is ready. The Committee has produced another stellar edition of a seasonal tradition. Get yours now! Makes a great Holiday gift.

On Saturday October first Greg and myself manned a table at the Pendleton Business Faire and Expo.... It was a great chance to show our faces in the north country.

The coming of October brought us to the end of our "Official Season" for the Museum. Even though we continue to be there and host visitors up through December, our "published" season is over. Some observations based on this year: Opening earlier (11am) proved very popular. Besides the local people and the folks from Rochester and Brooklyn, New York, we had visitors from nine other states and Canada. Having Docents on hand with only that responsibility proved very helpful, especially with a crew working outside behind the building. Thanks to Stephen Trinder for many Saturdays spent greeting and guiding our guests. He has also pitched in to help Ben with reorganizing the north end. Thanks also to Roland Kibler one of our new members who has been mowing the lawn at the Museum.

Steve has fired up the Tonawanda Island locomotive. This in anticipation of moving the equipment line north to accommodate some changes to the fence line. This was on Facebook so you check it out. More about that later.

We still need a Program Coordinator. I have been doing this, but I would really like to hand it off to someone else. We will teach you if need be and we will help you. It requires that you keep the program schedule and report it to the members at the meeting. Anyone?

News from our Canadian Reporter, Chapter Member John Freyseng: "Finally some good news from the Canadian government, as of this Sat, Oct. 1st, no more Arrive Can required, masks no longer required on VIA Rail or airplanes, no more 72 hour covid testing to get into Canada, no more covid testing at all, so a one day trip across the border at NF only requires valid passport - hooray! May want to put this info in the ESX. Also, Government of Ontario had a press conference in Niagara Falls [Ontario] about 3 weeks ago regarding continuing at least 2 return weekend GO train trips TO – Niagara Falls all year. Existing weekend service was to stop Canadian Thanksgiving Day - schedule details not yet released. "

So with that report we are looking forward to seeing our Canadian members at a monthly meeting soon. We also look forward to railfanning in Canada again, eh?  
Next month we will be at the WNYRHS, the train show is at the Hamburg Fairgrounds on November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

With that, I hope to see you at the meeting.

*Jim Ball*

## SCENE ON THE LINE



Archer, Daniels, Midland plant switcher 331 is seen in the Buffalo grain mills district. August 29, 2020. Larry Gustina photo.



Milepost 57 in Westfield, NY can be a great spot to watch trains. On July 31, 2015 a westbound CSX oil train sweeps past the North Gale Street crossing. Jon Rothenmeyer photo.

## SCENE ON THE LINE



Emerging from the Dayton, NY tunnel, New York & Lake Erie's Alco FA #6758 is on the point of an Autumn foliage excursion on October 17, 2020. That brief season of color is upon us again, and a train ride is called for. Jon Rothenmeyer photo.



Reading & Northern 4-8-4 No. 2102 recently began excursion service, here getting ready to depart North Reading, PA on July 2, 2022, on a round trip to Jim Thorpe. The sight and history are impressive. The sound and atmosphere -- *priceless!* John C. Dahl photo.

## **Why I Love Trains**

By Jon E. Rothenmeyer

I've always had a great fascination for trains. My earliest recollections are hearing the train whistles and viewing the trains of the former West Shore branch of the New York Central RR from the front window of my home on Main Street in the Hollow which faced the tracks. The trains varied, including freights pulled by a cab unit diesel to occasionally one with a great coal burning steam locomotive hauling the train. Don't forget, this was the early 1950s and the railroad still had some steam engines in the Buffalo area. When there was a traffic backup or wreck on the four-track mainline, I would be pleased to see a sleek passenger streamlined train rolling across the Main Street crossing. However cool to watch, that was a very rare occurrence.

I have not forgotten when my father took me for a visit to Buffalo's Central Terminal on the east side of the city. And my first train ride was a Cub Scouts excursion from Buffalo to Batavia on Veterans Day in 1958. Our family took a real train trip in the summer of 1959 when we rode the New York Central from Buffalo Central Terminal to Terminal Tower in Cleveland to attend a hardware show at the George Worthington Company warehouse and showroom. On the train we had dinner in the beautiful dining car; a delicious meal was served on railroad dining china, with a white linen tablecloth and a vase of flowers on it. The hustle and bustle of waiters serving us, the aroma of food and the chatter of other guests at nearby tables was memorable. The food was very good too!

We arrived late on a Saturday afternoon and the next day was a baseball game at Cleveland Stadium was sure exciting to a kid like me. Being a Sunday afternoon double header game, it was the "Indians" playing the Washington "Senators". They won both games by the way. Cleveland's Public Square in the heart of its downtown on which the Terminal Tower station fronted was a booming place with two large, fancy department stores; the May Company, and Higbee's Department Store. Another leading store, Halle's was just off the Square on Euclid Avenue.

My fascination with railroads continued throughout my youth. In August of 1965 I took the New York Central from Batavia to Grand Central Terminal on Park Avenue & 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in the heart of Manhattan in NY City. A visit to the World's Fair along with a sampling of the NY City subway and the Long Island RR was a major educational experience. Sadly, at that time, the last piece of the mighty Pennsylvania Station was being demolished, even as we utilized it. I could see then that this was a tremendous loss to a great city, but it was called "progress" at that time.

1975 was an awakening for me. My first car, a 1974 Dodge Dart and along with a 35mm Konica S2 camera, I was able to heighten my railroad interest in capturing area railroads and stations on film. In 1976 I joined the Buffalo Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, and it opened many doors for me regarding the railfan universe. Over the years, the Chapter presented outstanding programs each month along with operating several railway-oriented trips. Such excursions included many Canadian adventures on regularly scheduled Canadian National and Canadian Pacific trains. There were special steam excursions between Niagara Falls, Ontario and Toronto. During these years of the late 1970's and into the early 1980s, trips north of the border for train riding were frequent and productive. Many great friendships developed through my involvement in the railroad historical organizations.

Since September of 1973, I developed a real passion for railroad stations. When I saw that the landmark Albany Union Station was in grave danger of demolition, I realized that we would be losing another monument to the "golden age" of rail transportation. (Fortunately, this station was saved and is now repurposed as a meeting hall.) I took on the personal challenge to photograph as many stations as possible, both old and relatively new buildings constructed in the early to late 1950s during the last great gasp of passenger rail services by the private railway companies.

## Why - continued

Upon beginning of this quest, I have managed to commit the sad but still proud ruins of the old Delaware, Lackawanna & Western station in Buffalo, the Erie RR stations in Olean, Salamanca and Corning, and many others, from humble wood frame country depots to beautiful city stations to film. On the positive side, many local train stations now have been recognized as landmarks and have been preserved. Some are museums such as Orchard Park, Williamsville, and North Tonawanda. Without question, at one time not so long ago, the station had been at the center of every community. It was the place where news was delivered when out of town papers were dropped off from the baggage car each early evening or in the early morning as the case warranted. The local telegraph office was in the station; there were few home telephones and certainly no cell phones like today. The station was where you met your 'Aunt Clara' coming into town for a visit. Our fathers and uncles and women too went off to serve their country during World War I and World War II, many leaving from Buffalo's Central Terminal, the DL&W station or the Lehigh Valley RR Terminal which once graced lower Main Street downtown. Many folks of course did not return, giving their lives in defense of our great Nation. Railroad history is thus intertwined with the American experience, the good, the bad, and everything in between. The American railroad helped make us what we are today. Although to some it has faded into a shadow of its former glory, and those days of 1929 when Buffalo's then new Central Terminal opened with some 200 and more trains per day in and out of the city, there are new beginnings with revitalized rail passenger service under Amtrak in this era of a new environmental consciousness. A well run, well maintained rail system makes huge sense in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While I do not expect to ever again see a train crossing Main Street in the Hollow, I do see the possibility for Buffalo to rebound as a beautiful city, with much of its historic architectural fabric in place repurposed for the new age. And we hope that trains coming and going from its railroad station will be a big part of that renaissance.

The distinct sound of a train in the distance presents each of us with a different experience. Many will recall great rail adventures with their families. Others will think of far away places with a wish to be aboard a train to seek new adventures. Listen for the train whistle. It is calling all of us!

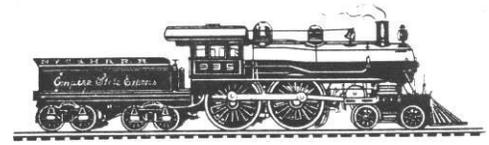


*Jon shows off his railroad display on view at the Town of Clarence Historical Society. August 22, 2021, Jon Rothenmeyer photo.*

## CHAPTER MEMORIES

Story collected by Geoff Gerstung

The Railroad Enthusiast – January 1940 issue



### Rochester Trip

Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup> [1939], fifteen members and others travelled to Rochester over the New York Central RR and were entertained during the day and evening by the Rochester Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Rochester fans had worked out a complete program and schedule for the entire day, and copies of this were distributed to everyone.

The activities started with a visit to the Model Railroad Club of Rochester where several trains were in operation. Then the group visited the New York Central enginehouse, where among the numerous engines seen were two Shay geared locomotives used in switching service. The gang posed on the front of a 4-6-0 while a news photographer made pictures. One of these appeared two days later in a conspicuous spot on the picture page of the Rochester Times-Union. Next on the program was an inspection tour of the Despatch Shops at East Rochester where all types of freight cars are built and refrigerator cars are repaired. Following this a complete round trip was made on the Rochester subway. Early in the evening everyone went to the NRHS clubrooms in the Baltimore & Ohio Building. There several reels of railroad motion pictures were shown, after which fresh apple cider and doughnuts were served.

The NRHS members spared no effort to make the day enjoyable for the Enthusiasts. Some of their wives were on hand to entertain the four Buffalo women who made the trip and, in addition, presented them with attractive gifts. This was one more day that proved the many advantages of close friendship and cooperation between so-called "rival" railfan organizations.

### LVRR Buffalo Inspection Tour

Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup> [1939], the Buffalo Division played host to a group of about 60 Boy Scouts who desired to see how a railroad operated and had called upon the Enthusiasts to help them. The activities consisted of an inspection of Lehigh Valley Railroad facilities in Buffalo and began with a visit to the engine house which proved to be a source of great interest to the boys. Then the passenger terminal, including signal tower and dispatcher's office, was inspected. Here, also, the boys were shown a Diesel-electric switcher and were taken through the Black Diamond when it arrived. In the Enthusiasts meeting room some motion pictures were shown, and Arthur (Popeye) Ross, dressed in a sailor suit, put on an act.

### ON THE TRACK AHEAD

Retired railroader Devan Lawton will present the November program. While we don't have details yet as of press time, Devan's programs are well known, and we always get a few surprises and a unique twist of railroad humor to boot. So, join us at the November meeting and enjoy the best of railroading!



## CHAPTER CALENDAR

- OCT 14**      **Regular meeting, Town of Wheatfield Senior Center. Walter Simpson will discuss the subject of his latest book, *The Steam Locomotive Energy Story: How These Locomotives Used Energy and What Was Done to Make Them More Efficient***
- NOV 11**      **Regular meeting, Town of Wheatfield Senior Center, program by retired railroader, Devan Lawton.**
- NOV 19-20**    **WNYRHS Train Show, Hamburg, NY Fairgrounds. Chapter will have display and sales tables.**

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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**THANK YOU**

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