

The Semaphore

Newsletter of the Rochester NY Chapter, NRHS
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Membership Meeting & Program:

Thursday, September 17, 1998
40&8 Club

The Program has not been confirmed as of press time, so will be announced at the meeting. A potential program is a vintage film or a personal video.

The Meeting portion should be enlightening considering all the activity that has taken during the summer and currently underway.

Do note that we return to the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue.

Program Committee

Jack Matsik (Chairman) 442-6269
Bill Limburg 586-9470
Dan Cosgrove 352-6931
Dave Luca (Board liaison) 288-0318

The Committee welcomes suggestions and ideas for future programs. Contact any of the Committee members.

Chapter & Museum Meetings

Monday Eve: Library work parties at Webster

Tuesday Eve: Museum work parties at Industry

Wednesday Eve: Excursion train work parties at Webster

Thursday Eve:

- 1st Thurs: Trustees Meeting at 40&8 Club
- 2nd Thurs: Operations Meeting at Museum
- 3rd Thurs: Chapter Meeting at 40&8 Club
- 4th Thurs: Transitown Meeting at Shillings
- 5th Thurs: Development Committee meets.
- Friday Eve:** Take your wife out for dinner!
- Saturday:** Museum work party at Industry
- Sunday:**

- Museum Operations at Industry & NYMT
- Excursion Train Operations at Sodus.

RW



Traction Nite

Our August 20th Membership/Public meeting featured all traction and trolley related exhibits at both RGVRM and NYMT, as advertised. It took a full page program handout list, prepared by John Redden, to describe all the exhibits.

Highlights of the evening were a short ride on recently arrived Rochester Subway Car #60 at RGVRM, and a live demo of hanging span wires on poles done at NYMT.

Visitors were transferred between museums by track car shuttle and our MU Power Car, pulled by a locomotive.

Thanks to John Redden, Bob Miner, Jeremy Tuke, Rick Israelson, Chris Hauf, Rand Warner and Scott Gleason from



Left: Patrons board Subway Car #60 for a short trip (the length of the car).

Right: Motive power was with the Whiting Trackmobile with John Redden at the controls.

Gale Smith photos

RGVRM; and Jim Dierks, Ted Strang, Charlie Lowe, Tony Cometta and Dick Luchterhand from NYMT for all their help in making this a very special evening for us all.

The purpose of this special event was to highlight our emerging electrification and trolley operation program, increase your awareness and participation, and garner support for the many projects and fundings required to bring it all to reality.

Annual Picnic: Sept. 12

Hope you have your calendar marked for the 'grand' Annual Picnic at the Depot on Saturday, September 12 starting at 1 PM.

Rand and Marge are soliciting your reservations at 716-425-8586. Costs: \$6 per adult, \$3 per child.

Besides food, there will be plenty of activities to entrain you. Including 'ee'-ing the latest acquisitions (Editor's pun - and apologies for the blunder in the picnic flyer!).

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Rochester Chapter's Excursion Train

by Dave Luca

Now that our excursion train will soon be on active duty with the Chapter's Fall Foliage trips, it may be interesting to review its history.

Our cars were originally built by the Budd Company for the New York Central's new *Empire State Express* that would run between New York City, Cleveland and Detroit, splitting at Buffalo. The new equipment would, for the first time, provide all year, day service in both directions for these cities. The NYC had planned a big promotion program for when the train sets were to enter initial service. The "kick off" campaign was set for December 7, 1941. Problem was that a major even in this country, and the world, captured the nation's headlines: the bombing of Pearl Harbor!

The cars were built with the new miracle metal, stainless steel, using a patented process called "shot welding." There were two Mail-Baggage cars, two Tavern-Lounge-Baggage cars, six Parlor cars, four Dining cars, sixteen Coaches and two Observation cars for a total of thirty-two. Exactly half of the cars of each floor plan were equipped with clasp tread brakes. The other half were equipped with Budd disk brakes. The trucks were built to accommodate either type and after some years the disk brakes were replaced with the clasp type.

All of the cars were lettered "Empire State Express" except the Coaches and Parlor cars which had "New York Central" applied to their letterboards. The cars were all named for governors of New York except for the six coaches, 2564-2569.

Numbers were assigned to the cars with names in 1952 and applied below the names. The Coaches (2564-2579) were rebuilt at Beech Grove in 1966 for commuter service with 108 seats and renumbered 1700-1715 and then again for Metro-North in 1982 when Microphor toilets were added and the seating was reduced to 106. The cars were renumbered 2100-2115 when the Cen-

tral and the Pennsy merged in 1968. The coaches operated in commuter service for the NYC, PennCentral and finally Metro-North from 1966 until Thanksgiving weekend of 1987.

In the summer of 1988 the Chapter purchased Coach 2566 and a group of Chapter members formed Empire State Railcar, Inc. and purchased Coaches 2568, 2572 (*Hamilton Fish*), and 2572 (*David B. Hill*). Chapter member Bob Cowan also purchased Coach 2578 (*Charles E. Whitman*). Coach 2578 was sold to ESR, Inc. in 1990. In 1990 Coach 2567 was purchased by ESR, Inc. from Metro-North. In 1992, Mail-Baggage Car 5021 (*Alonzo B. Cornell*) was purchased from the National Research Council in Ottawa by ESR, Inc.

The initial five cars arrived on the Ontario Midland Railroad on September 30, 1988. The first time they were used was for the Sodus Santa Train in December, 1988. Since then the Chapter has sponsored excursions on the Livonia, Avon and Lakeville in July of 1989. Summer Fun Train Rides from Webster to Sodus, a Fan Trip over the NYC Hojak line from Webster to North Rose and the PRR Elmira Branch from Wallington Jct. to Newark, NY and our ever popular Fall Foliage Train Rides from Sodus to Newark, NY now entering the 10th year.

(Added notes: 1) A portion of the *Alonzo B. Cornell* contains our HEP (head end power) unit: a diesel-powered generator set to furnish electricity for the lights and air conditioning. The other portion contains our 'traveling Store'.

2) The *David B. Hill* car is presently used as a storage car for parts, etc. Someday, plans are to outfit it as a 'premium fare' car with plush seats, carpet, etc.

3) The cars are equipped for steam heat; but we have no steam source! However, when a coach is filled with people and the weather outside is not freezing, it may be necessary to start the air-conditioning systems!

Note to Car Hosts: Although the Conductor (Bob Miner) will describe the history of the train set during a trip, this information may be useful to you as you 'entertain' our patrons.

Also, additional information about the cars is displayed in the Store Section of the Alonzo B. Cornell.

Membership Report

No new members have been enrolled since the last report.

Our overall Chapter membership is currently at 278, an all time high.

Discounts to all NRHS members

Rochester Chapter offers discounts to all NRHS members: 10% off admission to museum, 10% off gift shop purchases, and 10% off train rides, but train fare discount not applicable to Amtrak trips. Discounts are good only for 1998 and NRHS member must show current membership card.

Leonard Roe breaks hip

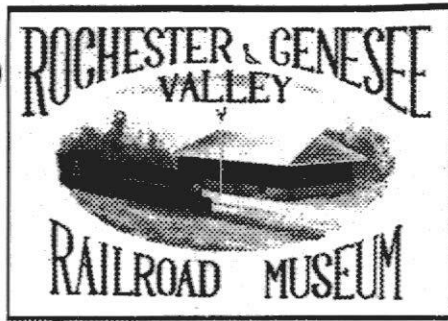
At the last Trustee's Meeting, Jeremy Tuke reported that Leonard Roe had a terrible setback and has broken his hip. A phone call, or card, would probably help to cheer him up. (223-7625; 244 S. Main St., Fairport, NY, 14450-2706.)

Library Update

Over 95% of the books at the Webster facility have had "keywords" extracted based on principal content. These along with title, author(s), assigned call number and related information have been entered in a database. The database can be searched on any of the above, which should aid the user.

Currently, permanent 'call number' labels are being applied to each book. Upon completion, the facility should be ready for use. But the work is still not done! There are many pamphlets and small items that have to be cataloged.

Have **YOU** given Jim East (377-5389) a call to volunteer a Sunday afternoon to work on the Fall Foliage Trips? Or Bob Miner (671-3589) for easy manual labor on the cars? Or Marie Miner to aid in ticket sales?



Rand Warner, Manager, 425-8587

Dreams Do Come True

Think of all the long time dreams, that have come true in just the last few months – barely a year!

A Steam Locomotive to Run Twenty-five years of dreaming come true, with a locomotive very suitable to run on our Museum trackage.

Trolley Car #60 from Albany Complete, intact, and already receiving visitors and riders. Restoration will start very soon.

Our own Real Library A dedicated, functional, climate controlled facility of 800 square feet that is already a great asset.

Railway Express Truck We've talked about this for ten years. Now a former Chapter members has donated a 1957 Ford V8-60 unit in very restorable condition.

A Crane to Lift Railroad Cars Our P&H 85-ton crane has already been to Webster to lift one excursion passenger car for truck work.

A Wooden Freight Car Our FGEX reefer has arrived on site in remarkable condition considering its age.

A Restoration Building Thanks to a very successful capital fund drive, a contractor is now putting up a 140'x60'x18' high building that we will be occupying before year end.

Outreach Programs

First shipments of model railroad equipment to the layout being constructed at Hillside Children's Center, in Rochester, have been provided by Rand Warner and Bernie Cubitt.

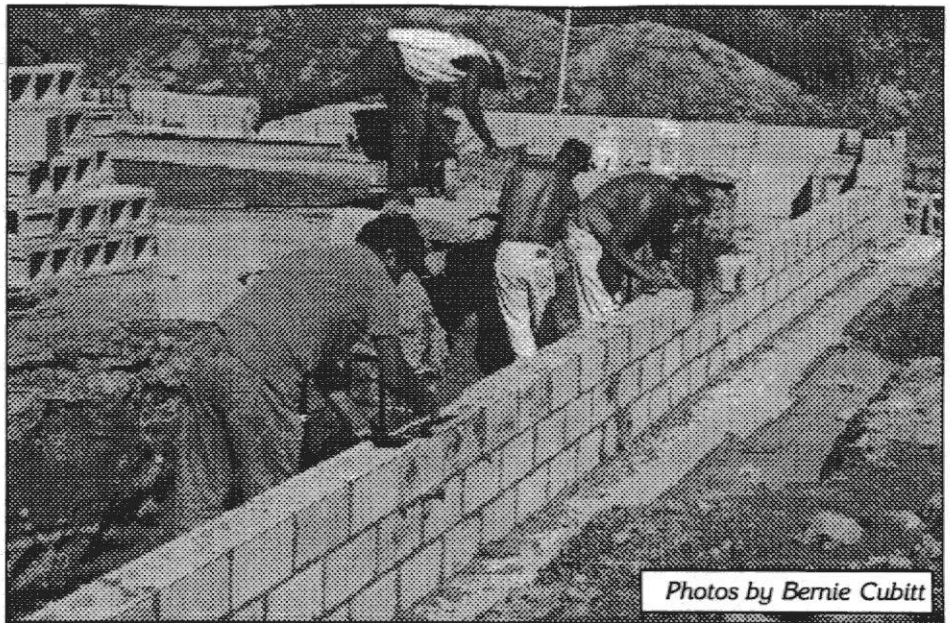
Dale Hartnett is working our interfaces with the Boy Scouts program for the railroad Merit Badge.

Dave Hulings is coordinating our Operation Lifesaver events, interfaces, training and displays.

Lynn Heintz is facilitating our Batavia high school public service work project, with several students, including son Benjamin.

New Building Project

Project Engineer - Joe Scanlon



Photos by Bernie Cubitt

The project contract started on schedule at the beginning of August.

Excavation for footers was completed, forms were erected, and concrete was poured.

Block walls have been laid up to grade level from the footers.

Chapter volunteers backfilled the footers and walls and installed foundation drainage structure.

By the time you read this, the building kit should be delivered on site and steel should be in erection.

Thanks to our backfill crew who worked Saturday and Sunday back-to-back: Joe Scanlon, Rand Warner, John Redden, Bernie Cubitt, Bill Chapin, Dan Waterstraat, Mark Pappalardo, George Knab, Chuck Whalen, Rick Israelson, Dale Hartnett, Charles Harshbarger and others.

Erie Stillwell Coach

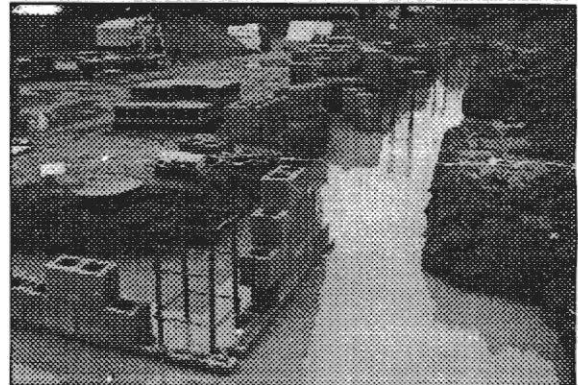
Foreman - Chuck Whalen

Chuck Whalen now has both sides of the car primed and ready for a top coat of olive drab/Pullman green.

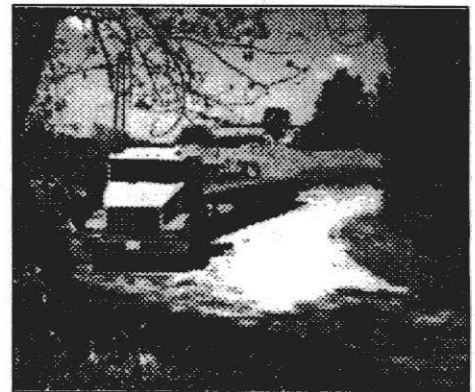
Bernie Cubitt is working on the windows, sills and separators.

We have in hand old and new lettering schemes for Erie RR.

We are planning to get the car in final colors very soon.



Top: Workmen laying the foundation blocks. *Middle:* Water, **WATER** everywhere – at least you don't have to keep the footings wet for curing!



Tractor trailers unloading our new Restoration Building kit at building site on Thursday Noon, August 27, 1998. The steel will be erected on the newly completed footers and foundation. *Polaroid photo by Rand Warner*

Steam Program

Coordinator - Ron Amberger

Ron and his helpers have removed and tagged all hardware on boiler jacket, firebox and backhead area.

We are now ready to remove cab, jacking and lagging.

Then we can final inspect the boiler shell.

Based on a good boiler shell we would pull the boiler/firebox assembly off the frame, to take it to a shop.

Then a qualified/certified contractor can replace the crown stays and do any other necessary work in their own shop.

Following this an official steam test could be done and witnessed before reassembling the boiler to frame.

All in a Day's Work

ONE (1) day that is!

Dan Waterstraat took a day off from work last month and built a whole new 4-wheel MOW push car (our former LVRR unit).

First he got all the new, pressure treated lumber. Then he had to dismantle the old push car. Then he built up the new car - frame, decking, sides and even a rider seat.

By dusk it was done and ready to use.

A couple days later it was in heavy service, hauling ballast.

Talk about heroics!

Burro Crane

Foreman - Dick Bean

Dick Bean has primed and painted almost all the body panels.

Windows and doors have been refurbished, reglazed and painted.

Boom has been temporarily removed to facilitate access.

We want to remove the cab roof section over the motor so we can rehab/remove/replace the present gas engine. We think we have a diesel replacement engine that will fit.

A fully operational Burro crane will be a great asset to our many projects on and beside our tracks and sidings. Thanks Dick.

Construction and Equipment

Bob Mader is rehabbing our Ford/Balmer backhoe tractor.

Bob and Art Mummery are working on our new-to-us Pettibone High Lift and now have it running.

Along the Right-of-way —

Tie Gang

Our tie gang, led by Dave Luca and John Redden, has been racing ahead of the stone gang, replacing bad ties in the S-curves, north to Giles Crossing, and then north to the NYMT barn lead switch.

Many times the stone gang's hi-rail dump truck has been seen in the not-too-far distance. (Once it even had to wait ...).

The two sides of the right-of-way along the track is littered with the bad ties removed, attesting to the quantity and quality of the tie gang effort.

As bad ties are replaced and the track structure strengthened, we can salvage gage rods for re-use elsewhere as needed.

Thanks to our Tie Gang Gandy Dancers: Dave Luca, John Redden, Mark Pappalardo, Kevin Klees, Don Wawrzyniak, Charles Harshbarger, Rand Warner, Chuck Whalen, Jim Johnson, Duncan Richards and others, and to members from NYMT who have helped on this rehab effort.

Hard Rock Labor

In preparation for our track resurfacing project for our main line from RGVRM to NYMT, George Knab has been spearheading our spreading of 420 tons of #3A crushed stone ballast (that's six hopper car loads, to be exact).

The stone has been loaded with our Trojan loader from a site at Giles Crossing into our Ford hi-rail dump truck for spreading along the right-of-way. George has made some modifications to the truck to improve spreading effectiveness.

The stone gang has really been crowding the tie gang as we have struggled mightily to get ready for our contractor's effort.

Thanks to our "hard rock laborers" - George Knab, Bob Mader, Chris Hauf, Bill Chapin, Dan Waterstraat, Scott Gleason, Chuck Whalen, Jim Johnson, Rand Warner and others.

High Wire Act

Scott Gleason is our first high-wire performer for the Trolley Electrification Program.

With Scott on the poles with his climbing spurs, and with Charlie Lowe of NYMT on the ground, they put up the first two span-wire assemblies, near the NYMT barn area, Thursday August 20.

We have at least a couple more "performers" in reserve. Neil Belenger has had his outfit in service at the Museum in past years, and Jeremy Tuke has admitted to having the equipment and inclination.

Stay tuned.

Left: Scott Gleason draws the span wire taut. This location is at the road crossing at NYMT, which should induce 'excitement' to our visitors.

Gale Smith photo



Dan Waterstraat has cleaned, prepped and primed our Trojan Loader, and will have a finish coat of yellow on soon.

An outside contractor has now completed painting of the Cat 212 grader, Galion Chief Road Roller, and D-2 dozer.

Scott Gleason, Dan Waterstraat and George Knab are maintaining the Link Belt Roto Hoe.

***** Private Property *****

We have several pieces of privately owned equipment at our Museum at Industry, including the following:

NKP #79 Alco S-4

B&O Bay Window Caboose

WAG Wooden Snow Plow

Bay City Shovel, Pre-war

Huber Road Roller

Cat D-2 Dozer

Mack B Model Water Truck

Mack B Model Dump Truck

Brockway Dump Truck

Bay City Shovel, Post War

International Scoop Tractor w/York Rake

Gas powered welder on rubber

Two wheel trailer, 10-foot

Two wheel trailer, 14-foot

This equipment is only to be operated by the owners, or in special cases — someone specifically designated by the owner. Please respect this policy as we are indeed fortunate to have the use of all the above equipment.

Thanks to

Jeff Carpenter for several pickup loads of concrete rip rap.

George Knab for finding repair parts for Roto Hoe at right price.

Charlie Lowe of NYMT for surveying help.

Rand Warner for coordinating fuel deliveries and another skid tank, and coordinating stone deliveries for several building and track projects.

Charles Harshbarger for donations towards new file cabinets.

Ted Strang of NYMT for loan of gas powered backfill tamper.

Dan Waterstraat for donations towards lumber.

George Knab for arranging for air operated pump to pump out flooded building foundation area after heavy rain.

Wanted

Portable gasoline powered air compressor for pumping up tires on heavy equipment and testing brakes on rail equipment. Call John Redden, 388-9124.

Air or electric operated cantilever jacks for our passenger cars. Call Dave Luca, 288-0318.

Leads on shop equipment, wood and metal working, for our new restoration building. Call Charles Harshbarger, 266-8339.

NRHS NEWS**Railcamp '98 declared Big success.**

Railcamp '98 was a combined effort of National NRHS and Steamtown National Park Service in Scranton on July 19 thru 25th. Nineteen teenagers attended (seven from PA, four from NJ, and one each from AR (Arkansas), CA, CT., NY, OH, TX, VA and WV).

Conventions Scheduled:

1999: Sacramento, CA Convention is June 21-26. A dual affair in conjunction with Railfair, sponsored by the California State Railroad Museum to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the State's railroad heritage.

2000: Pittsburgh is site of 2000 Convention: August 2-6.

VP/PR Confirmed

The appointment of Terry Holderman, who was interim Vice President-Public Relations, was confirmed by the Board of Directors at the Syracuse Convention.

Nominating Committee Reports

The Nominating Committee reported that all incumbent officers had agreed to run for

their respective offices in this November's annual election. It was noted that any NRHS member can run for any office by submitting their intentions in writing to Secretary Bruce Hodges.

Double meaning headlines

The August, 1998 issue of the *NRHS NEWS* printed this collection of headlines that slipped past copy editors:

"Something went wrong in jet crash, experts say"

"Local Police begin campaign to run down jaywalkers"

"Safety experts say school bus passengers should be belted"

"Drunk gets nine months in violin case"

"Survivor of Siamese Twins joins parents"

"Eye drops off shelf"

"Teacher strikes idle kids"

"President wins on Budget, but more lies ahead"

"Enraged cow injures farmer with ax"

"Miners refuse to work after death"

"Juvenile court to try shooting defendant"

"Two sisters reunited after 18 years in checkout counter"

"Never withhold herpes infection from loved ones"

Off the Wires

Toast Returns to breakfast: After being absent from many Amtrak diners, toast has returned. It seemed that the smaller toasters 'disappeared' even though they could not use ordinary house current. They have been replaced by "industrial-type" carousel-style toasters. (*NARP Newsletter*, August 1998).

Six youths, all employees of the Mt. Washington Cog Railway, were hurt in a joy-ride-gone-wrong. They lifted a small flat car, (called a "Sally cart") off the Cog and put it on the rails of the Conway Scenic RR. Equipped with a mattress and a makeshift hand brake, they rode the car down a steep grade, intending to go the 10 miles to a waiting truck where they would offload the car and return it to the Cog Railway. But traveling at an estimated 20mph, they plowed into a tie tamper which had been left on the rails by the Conway Scenic. Luckily the accident happen near the only house around and the quick action of the owner brought Aircare for the evacuation. (*Headlight & Markers*, July 1998)

A new dragging detector on Conrail's Chicago Line was installed at MP 378, "Coldwater NY" (*Narragansett Newsletter*, July-August, 1998).

A set of rebuilt Turbo equipment was damaged when it struck a tractor-trailer overhanging the track at Hastings-on-Hudson NY on June 2. This is one of the New York State sponsored rebuilds. (*Narragansett Newsletter*, July-August, 1998).

Hornell's Erie Depot Saved: Action of the Hornell, NY Industrial Development Agency purchased the former Erie station there. Conrail was planning to demolish it. Local bricklayer's and carpenter's unions have volunteered their services to help restore the building. GEC Alstom, which runs the former Erie shops, is said to be interested in occupying a portion for their offices. (*BLHS Bulletin*, September, 1998)

What does CSX stand for?

"Ever wonder what CSX stands for? CSX was formed in 1980 by the merger of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad (which after acquiring control of the B&O and Western Maryland became known as "Chessie System") with the Seaboard System Railroad.

Seaboard consisted of the Atlanta & West Point/Western Railway of Alabama, Clinchfield RR, Georgia RR, Louisville & Nashville RR, and Seaboard Coast Line railroads, known as the "Family Lines System". Hays T. Watkins, chairman of the newly formed company at the time, explained that "C is for Chessie and S is for Seaboard". The "X", as explained by Watkins, is a multiplier, meaning that the two companies together were greater than the sum of the two parts." (BLHS Bulletin, Sept, 1998).

A Video Review

TOUR OF THE M-10000

A Videotape from Pentrex

Reviewed by Bill Heron

During the winter and early spring of 1934 the Union Pacific Railroad staged a massive publicity campaign with the M-10000 a revolutionary streamlined passenger train as the star. Pentrex, in cooperation with the Union Pacific Historical Society has released a documentary covering the M-10000 tour and subsequent display at the Chicago World's Fair during the summer of 1934. The original black-and-white film obviously was shot by someone associated with UP's publicity group. The images on the TV screen are sharp and clear. The original narration, delivered by a dignified, important sounding voice, also has been preserved.

The M-10000 was a streamlined three unit, four truck, articulated train set. The first unit housed the V-12 Winton engine and the generator. Space for baggage, express and mail also was provided. Next came a passenger car with a capacity of 56 patrons. The final car also carried passengers, 52, and at its rear offered an attended buffet facility. M-10000 was built in Chicago by Pullman-Standard.

The purpose of the M-10000 was to test the concept of a comfortable, fast, light weight train as a counter punch to inroads being made on rail passenger business by automobiles and even aircraft. The train's aerodynamic design was tested in a wind tunnel, perhaps a first for American railroad. Normal top speed on straight track was given as 90 mph, with an absolute top of about 110 mph.

This tape is rather long, about 75 minutes. If you like almost interminable scenes of crowds standing in lines and treading resolutely for a turn to pace through the train's two passenger cars, you will really like this tape. If you are not so

interested in what a fine job the UP's flacks did in turning out the crowds you may be disappointed that there is so much crowd footage and so little of the M-10000 actually cruising the rails.

From the historical standpoint, I found it interesting to see the kinds of cars that carried people to the viewing sites in 1934. You can even spot a Chrysler Airflow, a not so successful attempt at "streamline" transportation. Clothing styles also are interesting. For example, a large majority of the men tramping through M-10000 are wearing fedoras, whereas the proper head gear for young males obviously was a cap. And if you are quick enough you might catch an occasional glimpse of a trolley.

All in all this is a great tape to look at - once, and perhaps again ten years or so later. In my opinion it's the kind of tape to borrow rather than to own. I plan to donate my copy to the chapter's library so there you are.

WATCHING TRAINS

1939-1945

by Bill Heron

Upon reaching the threshold of my teen years I was able, and allowed, to spread my wings a bit in pursuit of my life long interest in trains. If you are interested in the railroad spectating opportunities available back then, please read on.

Rochester: The Bridge at East Main and Goodman.

Beginning in 1939, there were two locations in Rochester at which I was a regular "train watcher". One was the East Main Street bridge over the New York Central's tracks. There was a great place to sit on my bike on the south side of the bridge's east end. This vantage point overlooked the NYC's Goodman Street yard, which in those days was a very busy place.

When not observing a through train, passenger or freight traveling on the main line, there always was switching activity. Most of this was performed by 0-6-0 steam engines.

Once, and only once, I saw a very strange locomotive at work there. It had shafts that connected to gears that were attached to the wheels. I had no idea what to call it. Later in life I learned about shaft driven engines as opposed to the more common rod driven variety. I learned later that this was a Shay. This was not the type of engine one would expect to see shifting cars in a yard. Why there was one for me to see one day in the

Goodman Street yards I have no idea.

The other good spot for me to watch trains in the Rochester area was at Brighton Station. This was an old, wooden branch line station that used to be located just east of Winton Road and south of University Avenue Extension. Brighton Station was located at the point where the NYC's Auburn Road branch split from the mainline to wend its way eventually to Syracuse by a different route from that traveled by the mainline. The Auburn Road went to Canandaigua, Geneva and Auburn on its way to Syracuse.

In those war time days all rail lines were busy, even the Auburn Road. There was passenger service on it and I tried to time my visits to Brighton Station so as to see the evening passenger train pause there around seven PM and then continue east. This train was a main stay for businessmen and military people for travel to Washington, D.C. The evening train carried two Pullman cars, one in the NYC's drab color and the other in the Pennsylvania Rail Road's famous Tuscan Red. This was the only train I knew of that stopped at Brighton Station other than an occasional local switcher.

The Brighton Station itself was no longer in use, meaning that travelers on the Auburn Road train needed to buy a ticket downtown in advance or pay the conductor. Those bound for Washington had little time to enjoy their ride on the Auburn Road since they were on it only as far as Canandaigua. At that point, the Pennsylvania Pullman car was taken off. From there the Pennsylvania took it on to Washington, where it arrived some time the next morning.

Brighton Station also was a good vantage point to watch action on the New York Central's main line. In those days the main line consisted of four sets of tracks. The two tracks on the south side of the right-of-way were for high speed trains, both passenger trains and fast freights. The two tracks on the north side were low speed tracks. Here one would see "drag" freights or an occasional "local".

I saw all of the New York Central's famous steam engines at work pulling the trains that passed Brighton Station including Hudsons, Niagaras and Mohawks.

Lakeview, NY: Twenty Miles West of Buffalo.

A third place at which I did a lot of train watching was the grade crossing on Pleasant Avenue in the town of Lakeview. This was about a mile from the house where an aunt and uncle of mine lived. I spent a good bit of time with them during the summers. The

action at the Pleasant Avenue crossing was wonderfully diverse. First, there was the four track main line of the New York Central. I remember in particular how awesome it was to experience a "double header". What a great sight – and sound.

Very close to the New York Central main line there were two more tracks. They looked like an ordinary double track line, but they were not. One track was part of the main line of the Nickel Plate Road, the other was an important branch line of the Pennsylvania Rail Road. The pair of tracks were operated as if both belonged to one railroad. The north track served all west bound trains and the south track served all east bound trains.

The road bed of the track owned by the Nickel Plate Road was ballasted with crushed stone, very similar to the New York Central's road bed. The Pennsylvania, however, used slag for the ballast for their track. I suppose this meant that each road had its own crews of track workers.

The volume of traffic for the two partners seemed to me to be about the same. In those days, the Nickel Plate Road's premier passenger train, the *Nickel Plate Limited*, still operated. It was a beautiful sight with an open platform observation car on the rear end. I saw it many times as well as many of the fast freights for which the Nickel Plate Road was famous. Many of these were pulled by the well known Nickel Plate Road "Berkshire" engines.

I don't recall seeing any Pennsylvania passenger trains, but they did run their share of freights. Often the engine would be one of the Pennsylvania's famous K-4 engines. The K-4's had a whistle with a loud, raucous, screeching sound. At night when I went to bed I usually heard a train or two before I dropped off to sleep. I could always tell if the train I heard was one of the Pennsylvania's. That whistle for the Pleasant Avenue crossing was a positive identification.

I didn't just watch trains at the Pleasant Avenue crossing. Often I walked the tracks for a considerable distance. Almost always I walked on the Nickel Plate - Pennsylvania lines; they were "different" from what I could experience at Rochester. And there was no penalty since the New York Central's tracks were very close and thus I never missed a thing.

Usually I brought back a souvenir from a track walk. This might be an unburned portion of a flare. Usually the flares produced a bright red flame, but I do remember finding a yellow one once. When parental permission could be obtained it was fun to

light whatever flare stubs I might have accumulated. Other souvenirs might include a spike or some other piece of track hardware. Nowadays my granddaughters enjoy walking beside the Conrail tracks with me and bringing home what they call "stuff". Some day this will be part of their "good old days".

Trip Report

The Mount Washington Cog Railway

Reported by Bill Heron

For years I have been aware of the Mount Washington Cog Railway, but unlike quite a few members of the Rochester chapter, I had never had a ride on it. That omission in my list of rail experiences was corrected during July of 1998. The line's promotional brochure says that it is "an unforgettable journey to the top of New England". This is NOT a promise that goes unfulfilled.

The line was opened in 1869 and has changed very little since then. Thus it provides not only a ride to the top of the Northeast's highest mountain but also a trip back in time. Other than to shift from vertical boilers to tilted horizontal boilers, the motive power employs the same technology as that which proved successful 130 years ago. With the Mount Washington line showing the way, other cog lines have been built all around the world, including the well-known Pike's Peak line.

At present Mount Washington has nine engines. Eight were constructed in their own shops. The other one was built by the Boston & Maine in 1941 during the time that the B&M owned the Mount Washington line. On a trip the engines push one tilted car up the grade and then retard the car on the way down, an operating procedure rather similar to that employed at Cass.

At maximum capacity, seven trains can be on the line at one time. This is facilitated by two passing sidings. Necessarily, the switches on a cog line are complex. Turning a switch requires nine separate actions, which must be accomplished in exact order.

The line is three and a quarter miles long and achieves a total climb of 3500 feet. The end of the line is within a few feet of the actual summit. Thus it is easy, if you don't mind shortness of breath arising from the 6288 feet altitude, to clamber up some rocks and perch on the very top. For me the trip up included two highlights. One is Jacob's Ladder, a portion where the line is well

above the ground on a trestle. The grade on Jacob's Ladder is 37%. The other highlight is rising above the timber line and being in a barren landscape featuring rocks of all sizes.

Supposedly, at the end of his ride P. T. Barnum described the Mount Washington line as "the second greatest show on earth". Beneath that hyperbole there is a considerable element of truth. Maybe it's not "the second greatest", but it certainly is something people interested in steel wheels on steel rails would not willingly pass up.



Editor's Corner

Just when I think I am catching up with Bill Heron's input, he submits more articles! GREAT!!

Don Shilling submitted a "whopper" on the recent Chapter sponsored Amtrak around the US – 31 pages, which when digested in this newsletter's format amount to 15 pages! Just how to handle this, like serializing over six issues, remains to be seen.

It is interesting to browse through the many organization's newsletters for layout ideas and content. Recently, we been receiving the Bridge Line Historical Society's *Bulletin*, based in Albany. The September issue contains 38 pages(!) absolutely filled with historical, current and modeling information, with emphasis on the Delaware & Hudson. The editor, Barb Bachorz, must have worked in the graphic arts profession to deftly handle the input from 20+ "columnist" – and publishing every month!

The Green Block, from our neighbor chapter in Syracuse, has been featuring one or two articles of historical interest, such as on the manufacturer of RDC cars.

The Conrail Historical Society seems to cover Conrail's current activities. Very soon, they will be living up to their society's name.

This brings up the subject of historical articles concerning Rochester railroads for *The Semaphore*. Maybe the opening of our Library/Archives will promote the writing bug amongst our members.

Although Rochester is a fair sized city, it was only served by one mainline railroad, NYC. The BR&P/B&O had a terminal here. However, PRR, LV and Erie only had branch lines to the city. As a newcomer to the local RR scene, was PRR was the first to go? (That should prompt some mail!)

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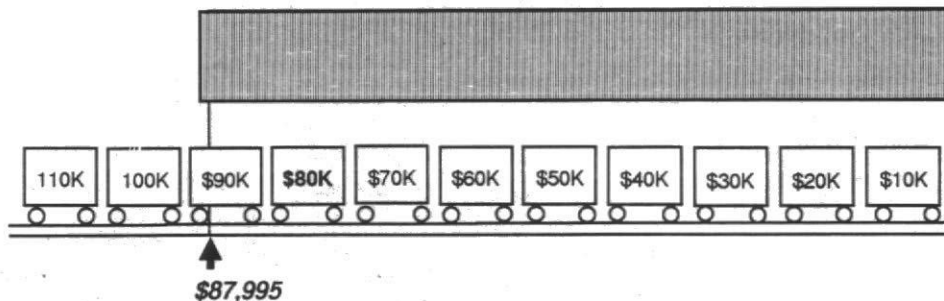
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Contributions to **The Semaphore** are welcomed and encouraged from all readers. They should be mailed to: Gale E. Smith, 299 Seneca Park Avenue, Rochester, NY 14617-2433. Phone: (716) 544-6221. Contributors using a computer are asked to send their submissions on any MS-DOS diskette in ASCII format, as well as a printed copy. **Deadline: First Day of Each Month.**

The status of our Restoration Building Fund. Each 'car' represents \$10,000 in the fund. Surprise – the building moves rather than the train – easier to do!



The Semaphore

Rochester Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
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Rochester, NY 14603

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Chapter Meeting & Program:

To Be Announced

September 17, 1998

40 & 8 Club

933 University Ave