



## Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society LINES WEST – BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER

Bulletin No. 2020-02 May 2020

### The President's Corner

We had planned on convening a chapter meeting on 7 June, 2020. However, with the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 and the closing down of non-essential business activities, any attempt to put together a meeting now or in the near future is impractical, and health-wise, not advisable. At this time, we do not know when we will be able to schedule a meeting room for us to get together, or if we can have a meeting of over ten people. Therefore, a decision has been made to skip the 2020 Spring meeting. We will plan to have our next meeting this fall, on or about mid-September.

Alex Campbell has put together a Chapter Facebook Group for the members to use. If we can get all of our members signed up this could become a primary method of communication among our membership. This should be easier to use than email, which will still be available.

The name of the Facebook Group is **PRRTHS Buckeye Chapter**.

For those who are already using Facebook search for "PRRTHS Buckeye Chapter" and click "Join".

For those who aren't Facebook members, you will need to go to the facebook.com website and join Facebook. Then search for "PRRTHS Buckeye Chapter" and click "Join".

This has been set up as a closed group. After requesting to join an administrator will let you in so there will be a slight delay before you can view our Facebook group.

Al Doddroe, President  
Buckeye Region Chapter

### Chapter Officers

Al Doddroe, President  
Bob Flores, V-President  
Jim Kehn, Secretary  
Dick Briggs, Treasurer



Email your comments to  
Alex Campbell  
columbusrr@att.net

## PRR RESOURCES - CHRONOLOGIES

Chronologies are a valuable source of information for digging into the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad. They list events by date, telling what's happened. There are two Chronologies of note available to the reader.

The first - *A General Chronology of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company Its Predecessors and Successors and its Historical Context, Columbus Addition*, created by Christopher T. Baer. The 70-page document covers 1850-1960, from the first railroad to reach Columbus to the end of the steam era.

[http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/prr\\_cbls\\_chronology-2.pdf](http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/prr_cbls_chronology-2.pdf)

The second - *Timeline of Columbus, Ohio Railroads*, created by Rick Tipton when he was writing *The Pennsylvania Railroad in Columbus, Ohio* in 2010. Rick's Chronology also includes sections on the other four Columbus Class I railroads and their predecessors.

[http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/12\\_Timeline\\_of\\_Columbus\\_Railroads-2.pdf](http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/12_Timeline_of_Columbus_Railroads-2.pdf)



PRR, Class HH-1 at Columbus, Ohio, September, 1947. No. 378 is spotted just west of St. Clair Avenue. Photo from Alex Campbell Collection.

“Apr. 28, 1943 PRR board authorizes purchase of 6 secondhand 2-8-8-2's from N&W for \$250,200” – From Christopher T. Baer's Chronology

## Building Alum Creek Tower

### Photos from the Russ Thompson Collection

Just six months before the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy the Pennsylvania Railroad started construction on a new tower on the Columbus-Newark Division at Nelson Road. The PRR expanded the east end of their Yard A and Yard B eastward toward Nelson Road in Columbus. AC Tower was built to control the east entrance to the newly expanded yards and a small locomotive terminal.

It was at AC Tower that the three-track main coming from the east became four tracks. In 1944 this was a very busy railroad with all the war time traffic – passenger trains, mail trains, troop trains, express trains and freight trains with helper locomotives needed to ascend the grade from the Scioto River to Summit Station.

The tower's construction wouldn't have been started in early 1944 unless it was absolutely necessary.

AC Tower was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad but operated by B&O operators as were all the towers along the B&O/PRR Columbus-Newark Division.



Figure 1 – January 6, 1944 work starts on the foundation. AC Tower was located just west of Nelson Road on the north side of the tracks. The camera is looking west. In 2020 the tower is gone. The site still shows up on Google Maps.



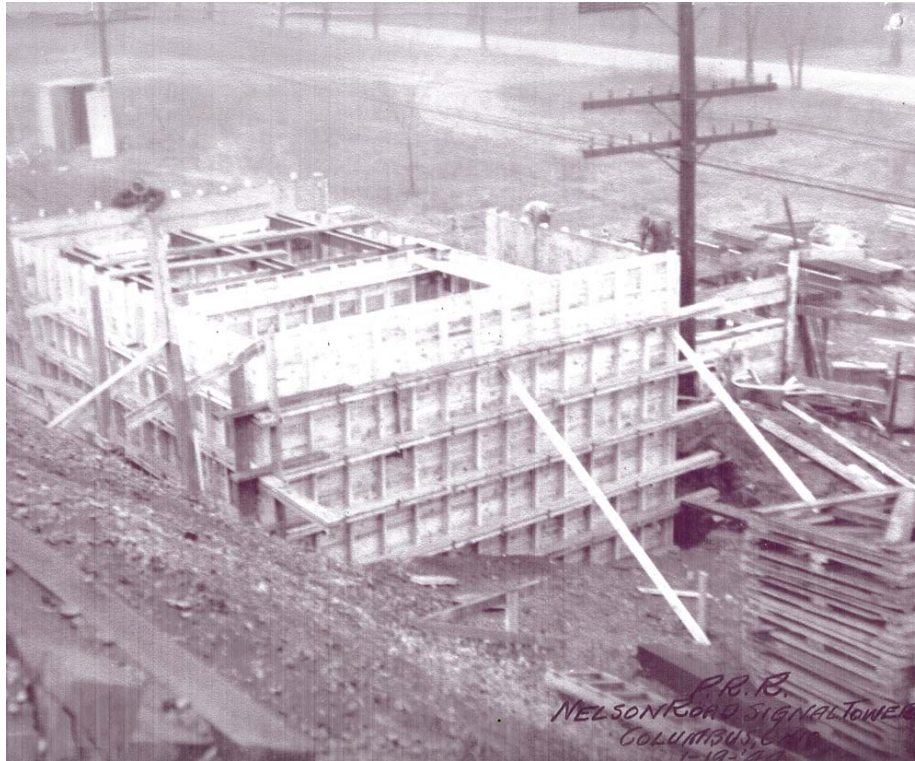


Figure 2 – By January 19 the basement is ready for concrete. Avalon Place is in the background. The photographer is standing on the tracks looking northwest.

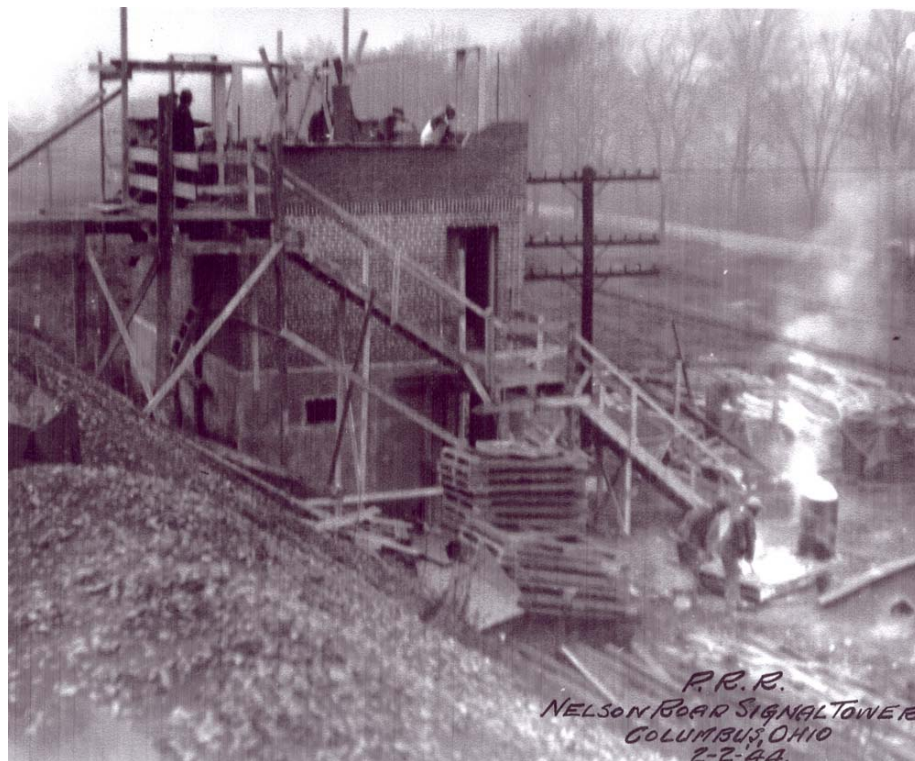


Figure 3 – By February 2 the first-floor brick work is nearing completion.



Figure 4 – February 15 and the second floor is bricked up. Cold and snow are not stopping the work.



Figure 5 – March 1 the brick work is nearing completion. Windows and doors have been installed.





Figure 6 – March 1, the view from the other side looking southeast. The Nelson Road underpass is in the background. Alum Creek is about 1000' to the east.



Figure 7 – AC Tower is complete with equipment to control the switches and signals being installed and wired.

## **Preface to *Changing Trains in Columbus***

John Anderson Carnahan writes about his trips from Cleveland through Columbus to Virginia in the 1940s. He describes his impressions of Columbus Union Station. A lawyer by vocation, Civil War and railroad historian by avocation, Mr. Carnahan has a good memory and keen eye for detail. The reader can almost hear Fred Lodge at the microphone calling out the cities as each passenger train is ready to load. You can almost smell the coal smoke and hot oil as young John Carnahan walks the platform to his car. Enjoy the trip.

## **CHANGING TRAINS IN COLUMBUS**

By John Anderson Carnahan

In our constant quest to improve our lot, we Americans sometimes manage to cast out the baby with the bathwater. So, has it been with the way we travel. Most of our passenger trains are gone, victims of our national haste to make haste.

Today, for the sake of celerity, we routinely submit to being stuffed into oversized toothpaste tubes and hurtled through the atmosphere, knees-to-chest, munching on stale pretzels, trying in vain to spot something of interest out the window or in the bland décor of a Boeing 767. We have sacrificed civility to speed.

I now and then feel this sacrifice with pangs of slight sadness and nostalgia because I am old enough to recall how it was to travel by train and because I am fortunate enough to have experienced, when I was young, the essential grace and leisure of that civilized form of locomotion.

No doubt there are those of my vintage who would remind me that traveling by train was not always a fun trip. There were, to be sure, delays, missed connections, the surly ticket clerk eyeing you suspiciously from his brass cage, grumpy conductors, and occasional irate passengers. And, truth be told, steam engines, although marvelous creatures, did generate soot and steam and grime. Furthermore, even the great streamliners took valuable time to get from one point to another.

In 1945, for example, a New York-bound Columbus traveler could depart the old Union Station on North High Street at 6:20 PM aboard the New York Central's Ohio State Limited and arrive in Grand Central at 9 the following morning. For variety, the traveler might choose the Pennsy's all-sleeper Spirit of St. Louis, leaving Union Station at 9:35 at night and arriving at Penn Station a few minutes before 10 the next morning.

**To continue reading click →**

[http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/CHANGING\\_TRAINS\\_IN\\_COLUMBUS-2.pdf](http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/pdf/CHANGING_TRAINS_IN_COLUMBUS-2.pdf)

## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME

Members and friends of the Buckeye Chapter are invited to submit Pennsylvania Railroad related articles, stories and photos for publication in the Buckeye Chapter Newsletter. This is an opportunity to share what you have learned about the Pennsylvania Railroad Lines West in Ohio and Columbus Union Station (jointly owned by the PRR and NYC). The PRR had five lines out of Columbus all fodder for research and articles for the newsletter.

If you have an idea and some material but need help putting it together contact Jim Kehn ([prrfreak@aol.com](mailto:prrfreak@aol.com)) or Alex Campbell ([columbusrr@att.net](mailto:columbusrr@att.net)). We would be glad to hear from you.

The next Buckeye Chapter Newsletter will be September, 2020.

