

Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society

LINES WEST – BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER

Bulletin No. 2021-04 --- December 2021

The President's Corner

After some delays and confusion due to the Columbus area libraries closing on Sundays the Lines West-Buckeye Region Chapter will hold a winter meeting on **Sunday, 16 January 2022**.

We will meet at the home of chapter member Chris Walsh, beginning at 1:30 PM. The address is 4800 S County Line Rd, New Albany, Ohio 43054.

Chris's directions are: County Line Rd runs off St. Rt. 62 and is called Tippet until it crosses the Delaware County Line. His home is approximately half way between New Albany and Johnstown. Parking is a little tight so carpooling is encouraged. There is a gravel parking lot on the north side of the drive way which should hold about 12 cars, and another 5 or so on the pad next to the garage.

Note that Google Maps shows the house, Bing Maps does not.

For those concerned for health reasons masks are optional. It is your choice to mask up, or not.

We will conduct the usual business meeting followed by a program by Russ Thompson. This will be a slide show from his collection.

In accordance with our by-laws, we will need to conduct an election of chapter officers. Chris will officiate that process to elect a President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations can be made at the meeting.

We have resumed an annual dues requirement based on the calendar year and will accept payment by any who are not already paid up. Dues remain at \$10 per year.

There are two excellent articles included in this newsletter, one by Russ Thompson on his experiences working on the railroad and the other by Alex Campbell from his Columbus Railroads web site. Thanks to both of you for your contributions, and many

Chapter Officers

Al Doddroe, President

Bob Flores, V-President

Jim Kehn, Secretary

Dick Briggs, Treasurer



Email your comments to
Alex Campbell
columbusrr@att.net

thanks to Alex for supporting this chapter through his editing efforts and articles of railroading interest.

We still are looking for articles for the newsletter from our membership. Those of you who have had railroading experience must have some interesting stories about your time on the railroad that you can pass on to us. Or if you don't care to write an article perhaps you could volunteer to do a program at one of our meetings to tell us of your experiences. Let any of our officers know if you are interested in telling your story and we will get you on the schedule.

Al Doddroe, President
Buckeye Region Chapter



Southbound J1a No. 6496 is stopped at Worthington waiting for the semaphore to raise. This is the way I remember the PRR J1 in the last two years they ran, grimy to the point of obscuring its number with a couple of seasoned railroaders in charge. Nostalgic photo from the Alex Campbell Collection, 1956.

Blizzard of 1977-78

By Russ Thompson

It was the winter of 77/78. The blizzard had passed Columbus, but the cold continued on.

We were still using the pole line on sections of the CA&C for power and signal control. Just south of Innis Ave. was a broken pole.

A gang had set a new pole, but had yet to transfer the wires to the new pole. I was working with John Shover, out of the 20th St. maintainers shop. John never liked climbing, and to John, I was nothing but a rookie.

John helped me with my gear, but then got back into the warm truck to do "paperwork". He had the driver's window cracked so we could talk, but that was about it.

It was a wayside location not near a crossing. The new pole was a 25 foot one with 5 foot in the ground and 20 foot in the air. Once I was on the new pole, I told John it just did not feel right.

He told me it was just me and the cold weather. As I disconnected one wire off the old broken pole to the new one, I again told him something was not right. He told me it was just the difference of the wires changing, and to keep at it.

The longer I worked, the more times I questioned him, but to my knowledge, he never looked out of the truck, he only told me to quit bothering him.

When I was on the pole. at working height of about 14 feet up, I rapped on the top of the truck with my fist. John jumped out of the truck, only to find me at about a 45-degree angle, still on the pole! The gang had dug the hole for the new pole, and they thought they had backfilled the hole with the frozen soil, only it turned out to be only dirty frozen snow and ice.

I was able to get off the pole and onto the top of the truck, finished replacing the last two wires, and climbed down using the step ladder John got out of the truck, while I was still wearing my spurs. We normally only used the step ladder to work on crossing flashers.

We somewhat secured the new pole, but I think it was not tamped in good till the spring.

Today, with that portion of the CA&C line not going north of 17th Avenue, all that is left is the memories.

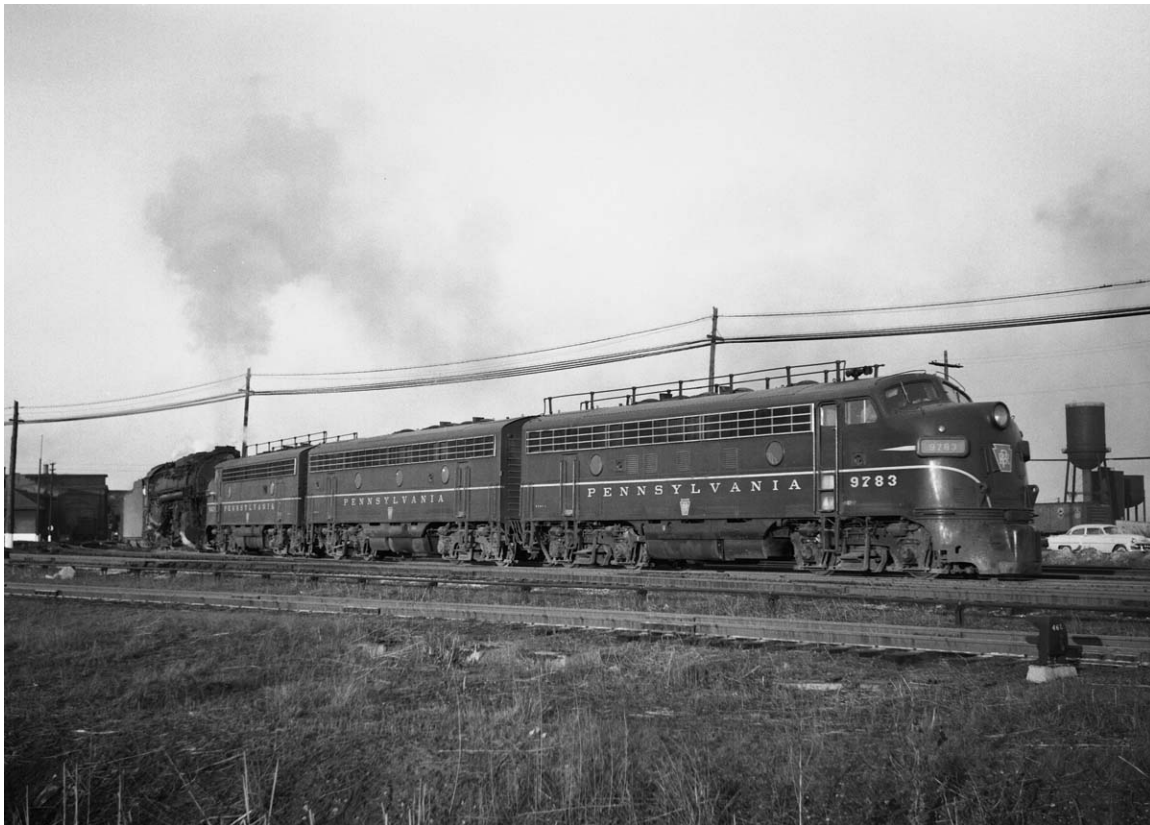
Moving Coal Through Columbus

During the steam era Columbus, Ohio, was a hub for coal traffic from south of Columbus to customers in the north and west. There were several points of interchange between the five class I railroads serving Columbus in the 1950s.

The Pennsylvania Railroad had the ten track Pennor Yard on the north side of the Norfolk and Western's Joyce Avenue Yard that facilitated the interchange of coal heading north to Michigan and the Lake Erie docks at Sandusky.

However, this was not a convenient interchange point for N&W coal headed to Chicago and Northern Indiana via the PRR Bradford line. To handle this coal traffic, interchange the PRR leased four tracks on the south side of the N&W Joyce Avenue Yard.

The Bradford line had heavy grades that called for helper locomotives as you will see in the photos. To get from the Joyce Avenue Yard to the open road west of Columbus required weaving around and passing CW Tower, PRR Chase Avenue Yard, PRR Yard B, Neilston Tower, US Tower, Union Station, High Street Tower, NYC Dennison Avenue Yard, Dennison Avenue Block Station, PRR Spruce Street Yard, Olentangy Tower, Grandview Yard, and Mounds Tower. It was a grand tour of Columbus railroading.



Three EMD F7A/B are helping J1 No. 6472 leave Joyce Avenue Yard headed West.



A close up of J1 6472. Both photos above by Donald A. Kaiser, April 1955.



Another westbound coal drag with J1a No. 6478 in the lead passing the Chase Avenue Yard. The Chase Avenue Yard was built for the Cleveland Akron & Columbus railroad. As shown here it was being used to store serviceable steam locomotives and as the bone yard for locomotives being scraped. Photo by Don Etter, July 1957.



Two J1 class locomotives on the PRR freight by-pass that routes traffic around the south side of Union Station. Photo by JJ Young, c1955.



On the west side of Union Station Coal drags passed the C&O Freight house on the left, the NYC's Dennison Avenue Yard, and PRR Spruce Street Yard on the right. Photo by Donald A. Kaiser, April 1954.



A hard-working westbound pair of J1's in Marble Cliff, soon to cross the Scioto River headed toward Mounds tower. Photo by Galen Gonser, April 1955.

Once past Columbus the coal drags would pass through Piqua, Bradford and Logansport, IN on their way to Northern Indiana and Chicago's industrial belt along Lake Michigan.

To learn more about coal traffic and the railroads in Columbus visit *Columbus and the Coal Country Railroads*, by James M. Cavanaugh -

http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/?menu=06Milestones&submenu=x40Coal_Country

For more information on Points of Interchange in Columbus between the five class I railroads see the 1934 Unification Committee Map and Tables -

http://www.columbusrailroads.com/new/?menu=05Steam_Railroads&submenu=24Steam_Railroad_Maps_and_More -

Scroll down to find the unification committee material.