Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society

LINES WEST – BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER

Bulletin No. 2021-03 --- September 2021

****

The President's Corner

After enduring cancellation of two meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic The Lines West - Buckeye Region Chapter will have a chapter meeting. The meeting will take place Sunday, 19 September 2021 at the **Columbus Metropolitan Library, South East Hamilton Library Branch**. The library opens at 1:00 pm. We will start the meeting at 1:30. The library is located at **3980 S. Hamilton Rd, Groveport, Oh 43125**. The library is on the east side of Hamilton Rd just north of the Hamilton Rd (SR 317) and US 33 Interchange.

We have use of the meeting room from library opening until 4:30 pm. Please note that the library currently requests every one wear masks to enter the library. The meeting room is large enough to allow for adequate social distancing for a group of our size. We are responsible for set up (chairs, tables) and tear down after the meeting. The chairs are foldable and on rollers so the set up/ tear down will be quick, and easy. This is a new location for our meeting because the libraries we have previously used are currently closed on Sunday's.

Russ Thompson will present the program after the meeting. The subject will be a 1948 PRR Director's rail tour on the Pennsylvania railroad from Philadelphia to Pittsburg to Chicago, then return to Philadelphia through Columbus.

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

Russ Thompson recommends you bring paper & pen to take notes during his presentation. He has lots of dates and interesting facts from the Director's rail tour to share with the members.

Columbus Dispatch Reprint - 1924

The camera is looking north-northwest. The street crossing under the railyard is Dennison Avenue. Spruce Street separates the railroad facility from the homes to the north in Fly Town. On the east side of Dennison Avenue is the Big Four Yard, on the west side is the Pennsylvania Railroad's Spruce Street passenger engine terminal – roundhouse, machine shop, locomotive servicing area, coach yard, Pullman sleeping car yard, and commissary.

The photo is from the Columbus Citizen-Journal, Scripps-Howard/Grandview Heights Public Library/ photohio.org Collection.

MILLIONS INVOLVED IN PENNSYLVANIA IMPROVEMENTS

(Columbus, Ohio)

(Columbus Sunday Dispatch, May 11, 1924) The Spruce street passenger engine terminal, Pennsylvania railroad, one of the most modern equipped railroad engine terminals and ranking as one of the largest in the United States, will be opened by the railroad the latter part of June or the first of July.

This addition to the facilities of the Pennsylvania railroad in Columbus, Ohio has cost approximately $3,250,000 to build and equip and covers about 22 acres of ground. The terminal is located one-half mile west of the Union station just below Dennison avenue.

Work was started on the passenger engine terminal in 1918 when the railroads were under government control. Construction of the terminal stopped when the government returned the roads to private ownership in 1922. Because of the decrease in transportation and railroad traffic work, which was not resumed until the later part of 1922, has continued until today. Practically all equipment has been installed and all construction work completed.

BEST IN COUNTRY

Railroad officials of the Pennsylvania declared that there is no other passenger engine terminal in the United States which can compare its equipment with that of this terminal at Columbus. They point out with pride that only two other such terminals equal it in size. These are located at Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The terminal at New York city is not taken into consideration because of its equipment for electric engines, whereas the Columbus terminal is one for steam.

The passenger engine roundhouse has 32 engine stalls. A feature of the roundhouse will be the nonexistence of smoke when an engine is brought in. The funnel of the engine will be capped with another funnel through which the smoke will travel to flues beneath the building to the power house where it will be carried off through the smokestack of that building.

There is among the numerous buildings of the terminal, an annex of three stories to the engine house. In this annex will be housed the machine shop, completely equipped; office rooms for executives at that point, storerooms and locker rooms for train crews.

Only running repairs will be made at this passenger terminal. Heavy repairs, railroads officials declare, will be made at the shops of the Pennsylvania railroad located in East Columbus.

Within the yard of the terminal have been laid about seven miles of tracks. A coal wharf, which has a capacity of 1000 ton, is another feature of the plant as is a sand house, which will also have 1000-ton capacity.

ASH HOIST HOUSE

An ash hoist house has been built. Ashes will be disposed of by a link belt system, which will carry the ashes to a storeroom and automatically load them into cars.

An oil house and tank have been built near the roundhouse. The tank will have a capacity of 15,000 gallons. Two engine inspection pits have been built in the yards.

Fire protection has not been overlooked. A fire house completely equipped to cope with any emergency is an added facility. The power plant is equipped, according to officials, with the most modern machinery obtainable. The smokestack is one of the

largest in Columbus, measuring 150 feet in height. Approximately 50,000 barrels of cement has been used in the construction of building and foundations.

A battery charging house has been built where batteries of the passenger cars will be charged. This is necessary because many of the cars on the system are not equipped with generators.

The saving to the railroad by the building of the terminal at this location has not been estimated, according to officials, who declare that it will run into a handsome figure. They point out that the savings will come from the relief afforded the St. Clair avenue shops, where all passenger engine work has been done. Much time has been lost in the past in taking an engine from the downtown yards to the St. Clair avenue shops because of the congested condition of the yards from the Union station to that point. When the new terminal is opened the St. Clair avenue shops will be devoted to heavy repairs of passenger engines. The majority of the time will be devoted to the repair of freight and yard engines.

Passenger engines of divisions entering Columbus will be repaired in the new terminal. These are the Columbus, Cincinnati, Panhandle, Akron and Toledo divisions.

Head on Collision: The Doodlebug Train Disaster

There is a new YouTube video about the July 31, 1940, disastrous accident near Cuyahoga Falls in northern Ohio. The narrator explains step by step what happen in the head on crash of a Pennsylvania railroad gas-electric motor car and a double headed freight train. This accident prompted the PRR to replace the gas engines in their doodlebugs with safer diesel engines.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRLtBS4g_RA

The Humble Caboose

By Bill Westhoff

Wandering through the national archives of patent drawings revealed this. Not what I expected when I saw "caboose" in the description, especially dated 1812! ...but in accord with where the name for our beloved "crummy" "cabin" or "hack" may have originated.

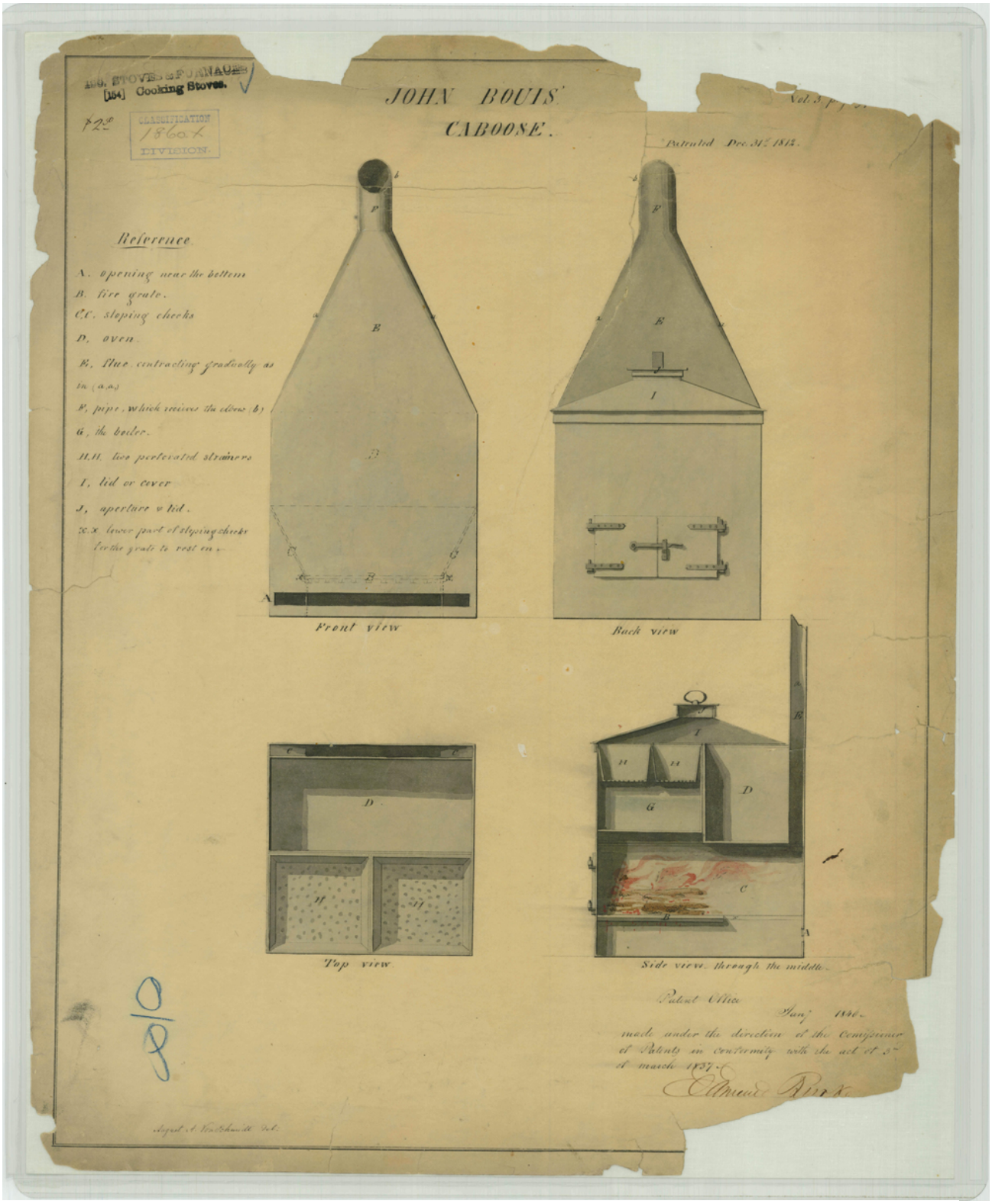
I've thought it has been interesting how terminology has been applied to new inventions. Or how advancement in technology follows a set path sometimes. Lamps had been used on sailing ships to distinguish the port from the starboard sides of a vessel. This has been faithfully applied to aircraft (air ships). Markers on the head end of locomotives (red and green as well as white) were used to distinguish details of the train. On the rear in the old days red, yellow and green markers could define track conditions to a passing train. Railroad signals and their usage were carried over to the traffic control of automobiles: mostly red for stop, green for go. Or how about red over a green arrow for example. And now in some places a flashing signal means something or other..... Sorry, but I rant... why didn't the railroad use track circles to smooth the flow of trains at interlockings? Back to the subject!!!!!

This definition surfaced on the wonderful and all-knowing google search:

> **caboose (n.)**
>
> 1747, "ship's cookhouse," from Middle Dutch *kambuis* "ship's galley," from Low German *kabhuse* "wooden cabin on ship's deck;" probably a compound whose elements correspond to English **cabin** and **house** (n.). Railroading sense "car for the use of the conductor, brakeman, etc.," is by 1859.

So perhaps the use of a stove and a place for food to be prepared for a crew made it easy to transfer the term of ships caboose to a railroad car that clattered along the end of a train. I don't think searching for the descendants of Mr. John Bouis will prove fruitful.

For the fun of it I sketched this contraption with a set of arch bar trucks.... not good.



The humble caboose