

# Lines West – Buckeye Region Newsletter



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## Upcoming Chapter Meeting June 16

Our next chapter meeting will be held SATURDAY, June 16 as a part of Railroad Days at Bradford, Ohio. We will have our business meeting at 1 pm in the rear meeting room of the bank building, 200 North Miami Avenue. The main entrance is on Miami Street and there is a side entrance on Main Street. Do not bring models and displays to this meeting, as there is no secure area to display them.

Other than the business meeting, our activities will be to participate in the Railroad Festival events. The Bradford Tower will be open although restoration is in progress and may limit our access. The N5 Cabin Car will be open, and the Bradford group is asking for volunteers to help explain the cabin car features and uses.

Events scheduled start with a ten o'clock Kickoff at the Bradford Tower with donor recognition. Other events planned are a Telegraph School, Caboose Tours, Kiddie Train Rides, Operation Lifesaver, and tours of the Museum and Tower. For lunch, the Museum group will have chicken dinners available for \$6.00, with drinks from 50 cents to a dollar. There are also a Dairy Queen, a deli in the ICA store, and several small restaurants in the vicinity.

In September, the group is planning a **Hobo Hangout** September 6, 8, and 9. Come dressed as a hobo and listen to tales of the Hobo life. Includes a bowl of Hobo Stew. For further information go to the website: [www:bradfordmuseum.org](http://www.bradfordmuseum.org).

## **Bradford, A Railroad Town** by Bob Flores

Bradford was at a major junction of railroad lines in western Ohio, with lines from Columbus, Indianapolis, and Chicago meeting here. The first railroads were pushed through in the 1840's, and it was not long that this location was chosen for railroad service facilities, since it was a day's travel from both Columbus and Indianapolis. Initially this included a 12-stall roundhouse and shops for the maintenance and repair of locomotives and railroad cars. By 1900, these facilities had grown to a 27-stall roundhouse and a railroad YMCA. By 1920, there was an icing dock, stockpens for livestock, a 500-ton coal dock, and a yard with a 3000 car capacity. Nearly 2000 men were employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in Bradford during World War I.

During the twenties, Bradford's fates began to decline. Locomotives were larger and could travel further between stops. Major yards in Indianapolis and Columbus reduced the need for the Bradford yards. The Bradford terminal was closed in 1929. The roundhouse was torn down in 1954. In 1962, crews demolished the coal dock. Most of the yard tracks were pulled up the following year. The interlocking tower remained in service until 1983, and two years later the line was abandoned and the tracks pulled up.

Scott Trostel has reprinted his book, *Bradford The Railroad Town*, which provides a valuable look into the lives of the people who made Bradford their home. He can be reached at Cam Tech Publishing, PO Box 341, Fletcher, Ohio 45326.

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## **Weekend in Lewistown: the PRRTHS Archive Project** By Bert Kram

An announcement in the KEYSTONE recently caught my eye, inviting members to inquire about attending a work session at the PRRTHS archive facility at Lewistown, Pennsylvania. That appealed to my interest in railroad documents, but I wondered why it appeared to be a "limited attendance" event. Why couldn't any PRRTHS member just show up? A quick email exchange with Bob Johnson, chief of the PRRTHS archive project, supplied answers to my questions and resulted in an invitation to join the crew for an archive weekend.

The Society's archives are located in the restored PRR station in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, built in 1850 as a freight station, and renovated to a passenger station in 1868. It is believed to be the oldest existing original PRR structure. Lewistown is located about sixty miles northwest of Harrisburg along a bend of the Juniata River, on the famous PRR Middle Division, now operated by Norfolk Southern. For a complete history of railroad activity in Lewistown and of the station itself, see *LEWISTOWN AND THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD, From Moccasins to Steel Wheels*, PRRTHS (2000).

The Society acquired ownership of the Lewistown station in 1985 and began a major project of repair and restoration. Today, it is a pleasure to see and to work in. A small portion of the station serves as an Amtrak station, manned on a volunteer basis by PRRTHS members from the Middle Division Chapter.



**Lewistown station after restoration**

In the meantime, a major effort was underway to save valuable records of the Pennsylvania Railroad, especially those in Pittsburgh. A railroad as large as the PRR, in existence for over 100 years, generated a huge volume of records related to mechanical activity. With the merger of the Penn Central into Conrail, these records were in danger of being thrown out, but a number of Society members were able to rescue them, storing them in garages for a number of years. A major component of the archives are the files of PRR's Mechanical Department, responsible for the design, acquisition, maintenance, and disposition of the Railroad's operating equipment, most notably locomotives and rolling stock. When the Lewistown Station restoration project was substantially complete, the records were moved to the station into safe, dry storage.

Saving the documents, however, was merely the important first step. To be useful, it is necessary to "preserve" the documents, that is, to remove pins and paper clips and similar items that themselves can mar or destroy paper and place the documents in acid-free folders and boxes. Then they must be sorted and catalogued so that they can be easily accessed by researchers. These are the steps that are currently underway in the archive project. In other words, someone must retrieve each file from storage, read and identify the material, remove offending foreign items, and then mark the files for computer input. This can be a tedious process that does not appeal to everyone. Occasionally there are some materials of particular interest; however, much of the activity is simply routine.

Fortunately, I have experience doing similar work for the Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society, which has a small archive at Cleveland State University, and also for the C&O Historical Society at its large archive in Clifton Forge VA.

The Lewistown station working space is limited. Only six to eight members at a time can process documents, and be accommodated overnight in the bunkhouse in the former baggage room. On the plus side, however, the available work space is quite comfortable. And there are frequent NS

mainline trains—perhaps as many as 60 a day--flowing by right outside the window. Those are more than a slight distraction for railfans trying to do work! Also a plus is the opportunity to meet and exchange information with the other workers.

Bob Johnson reported recently that thus far volunteers have spent 5,400 hours on the project, during which they have processed about 30% of the archive material. Currently, drawings from the microfilm library of rolling stock are available upon request. The Society Board has approved making the processed portion of the correspondence files available to researchers by appointment, and this will probably begin this fall. The maps and drawings remain to be processed. It is estimated that there are more than 100,000 maps and drawings.

In the meantime, there is much more work to do. Archive sessions are held nearly monthly at Lewistown. Information about schedules and how to apply to participate is available in the KEYSTONE and on-line via the Keystone e-News, which can be accessed via the PRRTHS website. To participate in a work session, contact Bob Johnson directly at [Bobjohnson@alltel.net](mailto:Bobjohnson@alltel.net). For those of us who enjoy such work, it is a fine opportunity to contribute to our society.



**Engine 5356 at Xenia, Ohio station, 1953 (Scholes Photos)**



THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD  
TECHNICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
A PENNSYLVANIA NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

REPLY TO:

LINES WEST - BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER  
326 BEAR WOODS DRIVE  
POWELL, OHIO 43065  
OFFICE OF THE TREASURER GG BILDERBACK III  
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THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD SYSTEM



INFORMATION



FOR EMPLOYEES AND THE PUBLIC

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FOR YOUR SUPPORT**