

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

**** Bulletin No. 2018-01 February, 2018 ****

Ron Widman, Lines West Buckeye Region Chapter Newsletter Editor

February, 2018 Chapter Meeting:

Our next Lines West meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 25, 2018, 1pm to 4:30 p.m. @ meeting room of the Hilltop Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library –**

**511 S. Hague Avenue
Columbus, Ohio**

– located just north of the BP station on the corner of Sullivant and Hague Avenues. The Hague Ave. road reconstruction has been completed, so there is easy access off either Hague or Powell Avenues.

The main item of business is the annual election of officers. **Bert Kram** is expected to handle the election process. Anyone who desires to run for a position should let Bert, or any of the current officers know of your interest. As always, the positions open for election are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Following the business meeting **Russ Thompson** will present a photo show of eight western railroad museums visited on his 2017 trip to the Pacific coast. He took many photos at the museums (more than can be shown in one meeting), so while not PRR subjects, we should see pictures of museums and equipment that many of us have never had the opportunity to see.

We are in a new year, time to **renew your annual dues**. We will accept dues payments (\$10.00/ year) at the meeting.

Tables will be set up to display any items you would like to bring for our members to see. These can be artifacts, photos and models of projects you have been working on.

Do you have a model under construction? Bring it along to show us what you are working on!
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From *The Pennsy* Magazine Collection.

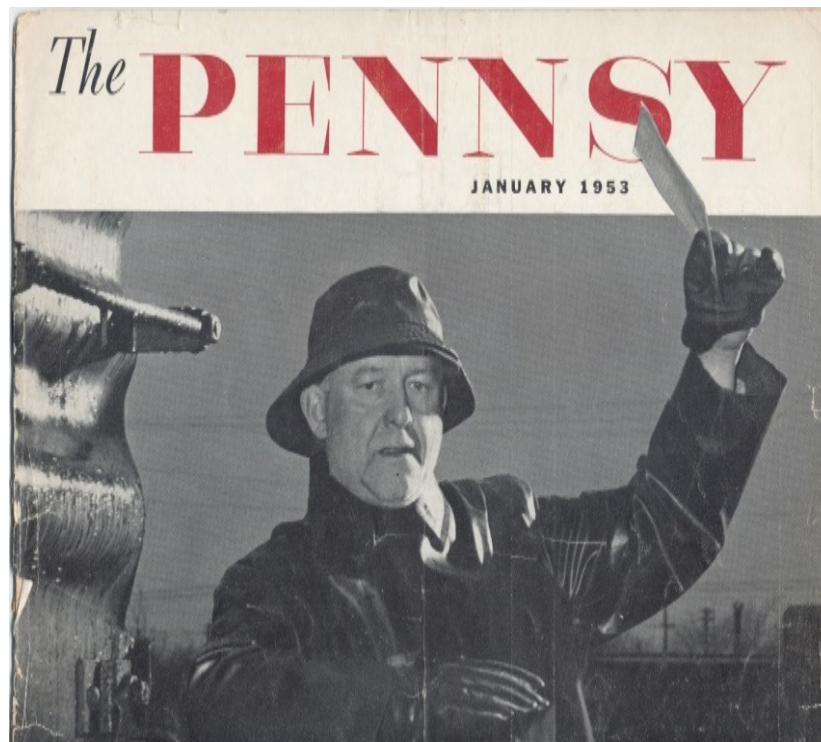
The Pennsy magazine contains many facts and figures about PRR history regarding Columbus and the Ohio area, in addition to system wide coverage from the years 1952-1968.

The publication originated from Room 1417, Suburban Station Building in Philadelphia, the company magazine was sent out monthly to active and retired employees.

First published in June of 1952, *The Pennsy* was headed up by Editor I.K. Shuman and seven other members during 1953. The magazine writers and photographers would have undoubtedly traveled on PRR trains over the entire system producing 1 to 4 page stories on many topics. The company magazine informed every one of the latest equipment, developments and news related to the railroad.

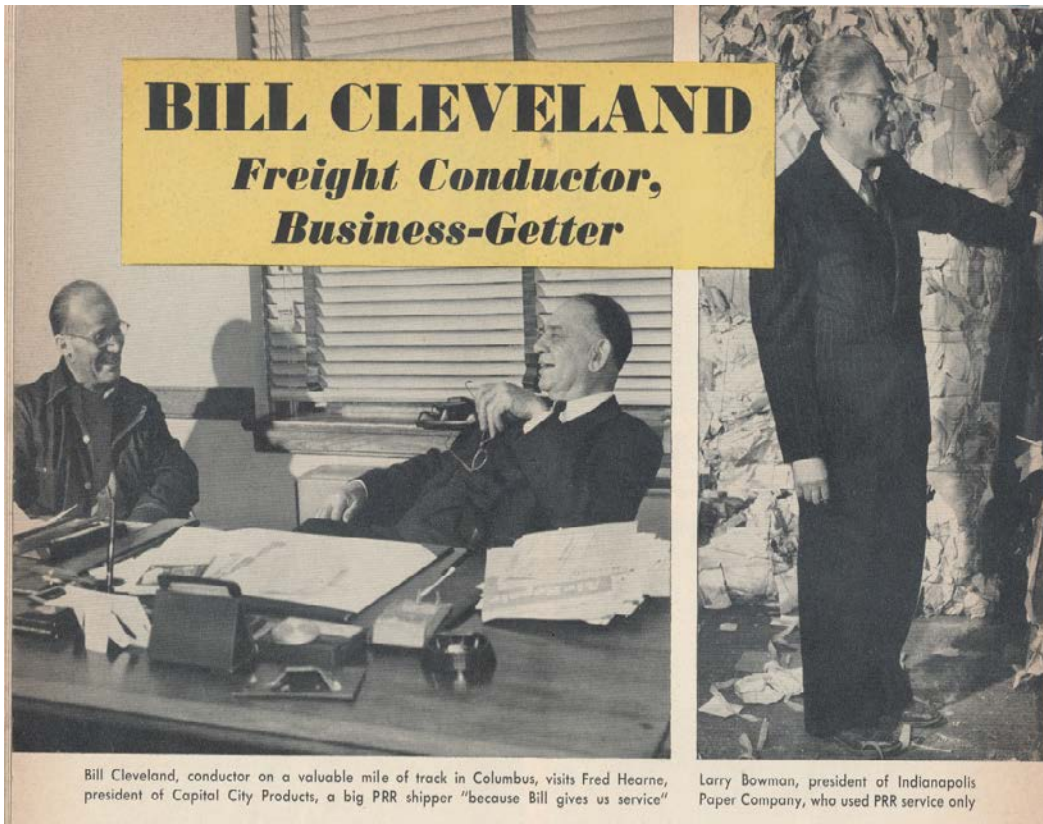
The Pennsy also printed photos, news of employees at work, new operations, employee outings, hobbies and cartoons in addition to the column *Mileposts on the Pennsy*, focusing on the PRR's 100 + year history.

Coverage of The Neil Track was featured in the January 1953 issue:



The Pennsy magazine format was 12" X 9 1/4".

(Actual size reduced to fit on page.)



During the 1950's the mile long Neil Track had a total of 14 PRR business customers.

William James (Bill) Cleveland, who is 60 years old and, with his hat brim jauntily creased upward, seems 40, has spent 32 years as freight conductor on the mile-long Neil Track in Columbus, and gets a kick out of his work every day. "Something's always popping up there to keep a man on his toes and make life interesting," he says with a grin that helped earn him the nickname Happy.

Neil Track, a single line, is south of the Ohio State campus along the Olen-tangy River on land that once belonged to Columbus' prominent Neil family and is now part of the city's manufacturing district. It is bordered by 14 industries that produce, among other things, der-ricks, oleomargarine, television towers, coffins, beer, and nearly an annual half million dollars of freight business. It was relatively unproductive for the PRR when Bill Cleveland came there in 1920. The two other roads that share it with the Pennsylvania—the C&O and the Big Four, which is part of the New York Central System—were then handling more than 80 per cent of its traffic. But Mr. Cleveland's friendly persistence in getting business changed that. Last year, typical of many in the past, the PRR handled \$340,-

000 of the Track's business, almost 80 per cent of the total.

"We didn't get all that business overnight," he says. "It took time to prove that the Pennsylvania gives better service."

He enjoys talking about the work he does. "It's hard to explain," he says, laying his pipe aside for a moment to polish his spectacles, "the satisfaction I get from spotting a car just where a customer wants it, or cleaning up a freight yard, or working out a shipper's problems."

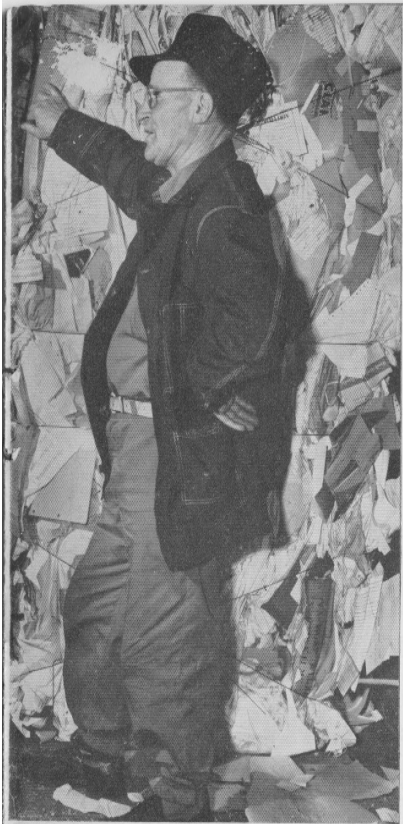
He started with the Railroad in 1911 as a yard clerk but soon found he "could not stand being housed up inside all day" and grabbed at a chance to be a brakeman. He says he always feels better when he is working outside, even when the icy winds of February nip his ears.

The PRR has rights on Neil Track only until 3 P. M., when one of the other roads takes over. Mr. Cleveland arrives there at 10:30 A. M. after he and his crew have finished up at Little Miami Yard the general yard work of the third trick, shunting, classifying and delivering cars to the Big Four and the B.&O. and after he leaves Neil Track he disperses in Miami Yard the cars in his train and lines up empties for the next day.

Mr. Cleveland's day on the Track seems leisurely. He manages to stop for a sociable smoke and a chat with most of his shippers and to pick up complaints, compliments, and, sometimes, new business. During one of these visits, the Washington Breweries, a small and growing firm which did not then ship PRR, expressed concern about the long time it took shipments to arrive from Milwaukee. He worked out a route, via PRR, to eliminate a long delay in Chicago; the company tried it, found their shipments arrived a day earlier than before, and now specify and ship entirely by Pennsylvania.

Sociability and business mix well for Mr. Cleveland. "After some 30 years up here," he says, "these people are my friends as well as customers. Naturally once in a while I have to stop by and shoot the breeze." He does not usually say much during these calls about his three daughters and his son, all graduates of Ohio State, but last Summer he could not help letting his friends know that his daughter Suzanne had received a Master's degree in Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

He spends some time every day walking through the factories on the Track to



infrequently until Mr. Cleveland came to Neil Track, now ships five cars a week



Mr. Cleveland, usually with his pipe and an anecdote to start the day, and his crew: Martin Keenan and Paul Schlupe, brakemen, John Hill, fireman, Fred Worch, engineman

observe the progress of work so he may have the required cars spotted at the proper time. "I sometimes think Bill knows more about our business than we do," says E. R. Buchwalter, traffic manager of Dresser-Stacey, a subdivision of the International Derrick and Equipment Company. "He always gets us cars when we need them. We construct a lot of bulky stuff and often need 65-foot gondolas to ship it. They are sometimes hard to get, but Bill always has them."

Mr. Cleveland's friendships, however, never ease the three-way competition for business on the Track or the demands of shippers for service. Sometime ago he and his crew were about to leave for the day when a customer requested that a car just loaded be taken along. "Could it wait till tomorrow?" Mr. Cleveland asked. "Not unless you want it to go Big Four," was the reply. Mr. Cleveland took the car.

"That one car didn't amount to much," he says recalling the incident. "But each car counts. Last year, taking care of every customer that way helped the Railroad keep its business on Neil Track. You know," he adds, reflectively, "I sometimes wish Neil Track had more factories on it; maybe then I could get more business."



E. R. Buchwalter of Dresser-Stacey, who calls him PRR's "best salesman," joins Mr. Cleveland in inspection of roof trusses



Chas. Downey gets waybill for Washington Breweries, which finds Mr. Cleveland's advice good, tells suppliers to use PRR



High-Visibility Yellow

Also From *The Pennsy*. January 1953 issue, in the column *Short-Runs*, the story behind the PRR standard, hexagonal yellow pencil and how it came about.

short-runs



High-Visibility Yellow

Last February John T. Williams, System Manager of Safety, was idly fingering one of the 755,244 maroon-colored pencils that PRR men and women sharpened, wrote or chewed to stubs last year. He had no thought then of changing a 40-year old PRR practice by substituting for this old-style pencil the hexagonal yellow pencil now in use throughout the System. He was merely wondering if he had overlooked any display spots for his department's safety slogans, which were already nearly everywhere a man's eye might reach,—on shop walls, employe timetables, note pads, the steps of switching engines, even on paychecks. Suddenly, he saw that he had missed the most obvious spot of all—the PRR pencil in his hands. He coined for it the slogan: "Work in Safety."

"It's short and sensible," Mr. Williams says, "and you can read it three ways. First, it means join the safety movement; also, promote safety whenever possible; and, most obvious of all, work at your job in safety."

Several days after writing the slogan Mr. Williams discussed it with his assistant, Don Irving. "If you are going to have a pencil with a safety message," Mr. Irving said, "you ought to have a safe pencil." He recalled there had been mild complaints from the Dining Car Department that the PRR pencil's excellent rolling qualities allowed it to slide easily from desk or table to the floor, where its color made it difficult to spot and easy to slip on. Mr. Irving then suggested, in the lingo of safety supervisors, that the pencil's color be changed to "a high visibility yellow," and its shape to a non-rolling hexagon.

Toward the end of February Mr. Williams lined up his facts and arguments in a persuasive memorandum and sent it off

through channels. It was promptly approved.

It has taken until this month, just a year, for the "high-visibility-yellow" pencils to be distributed to all Divisions. S. R. Manion, with his customary thriftiness as the PRR's Stationery Storekeeper, held up System-wide distribution of the new pencils until the old supply had been exhausted. "Everybody's got them now, though," he said recently. "It's the same pencil, still comes in three grades—soft, medium, and hard—and still writes just as well as the man behind them writes. But they look a lot better, seems to me."

Meanwhile, Mr. Williams continues to devise new slogans and to look for new places to display them. "It'll be a long time, though," he says regretfully, "before I find another spot as good as the pencil."



All scans of *The Pennsy* and company pencils are from the Ron Widman collection

A Final Word from Ron Widman

The Columbus Historical Society is planning for major displays and programs on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I this year. I am specifically in need of World War I material on the railroads in Columbus and the PRR to continue in my "Pennsylvania Railroad in Columbus" history exhibit at the society. I would appreciate any assistance you can give to this major history observance of 2018