

# PRRTHS

# BUCKEYE CHAPTER

Volume 9. No 6 – February 2012

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## **CHAPTER MEETING FEBRUARY 26 IN UPPER ARLINGTON.**

Our next chapter meeting will be on February 26th, at the Upper Arlington library, Lane Road Branch, 1945 Lane Road. (Not Lane Avenue) We have the room reserved from 1 to 4:30 pm. Expect the business part of the meeting to begin at 1:30.

The main item will be the annual election of officers, as required by bylaws of our chapter, as well as the society by-laws. All positions (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) are open, as always.

Gary Salzgeber will show some of his slides after the business meeting. Bring models or memorabilia from your collections to show at the meeting. New models that you haven't shown before, or models under construction but not finished, old models that you have upgraded. All are welcome. Show us what you have been doing, or got new for Christmas!

It's a new year, so that means it is time to pay annual dues. Please bring your payments along with the application form that is included in this newsletter. Do remember to look up your PRRT&HS membership number and include it on your dues application form. We ask you to fill out the form annually so we can keep the roster up to date on your addresses, etc.

## **LEWISTOWN ARCHIVES ARE OPEN TO RESEARCHERS**

The archives at Lewistown are slowly becoming accessible for those wanting to do research in the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Work groups are in the process of identifying and entering descriptions of materials into a computer file. Currently all the correspondence files and most of the smaller drawings are available for those wanting to see them. Also, mechanical drawings were put on microfilm by Penn Central, and we have a full set of these. A large number of valuation maps are available, although these are not indexed well.

If you want to go to Lewistown for specific research, the first step is to determine whether there is anything there on your topic. The best way to do this is to contact Ian Fischer at [ianfischer\(underscore\)lakenelson@verizon.net](mailto:ianfischer(underscore)lakenelson@verizon.net). (type the underscore symbol—don't write it out). He has access to the data in the computer, or can tell you how to search the EXCEL files.

The second step is to determine when there will be someone to let you in, show you where to look, and close the facilities after you are finished. Currently, we are doing this during work sessions, usually Monday through Thursday, about every six weeks. For specific dates, contact Charlie Woodward, at [woodwacb@yahoo.com](mailto:woodwacb@yahoo.com).

## EARLY HISTORY OF THE LINES WEST

The following is excerpted from “Reminiscences of the First Railroad Over the Allegheny Mountains,” an address to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on April 8, 1878, by Solomon W. Roberts, Civil Engineer. The full speech is on file at the archives in Lewistown. After discussing the building of the inclined planes of the Portage Railroad, he moves on to its relationship to the building of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Text in brackets are additional information not part of the speech.

There were ten inclined planes on the Portage, with the whole length of the road being 36.69 miles. The planes were numbered eastwardly from Johnstown, and the ascent from that place to the summit was 1,171.58 feet in 26.59 miles, and the descent from the summit to Hollidaysburg was 1,398.71 feet in 10.10 miles. [The planes were connected by rails over relatively level terrain. At the both east and west ends, the road connected to existing canals.]

At the head of each plane were two engines, of about thirty-five horsepower each, and each engine had two horizontal cylinders, with the pistons connected with cranks at right angles to each other, which gave motion to the large grooved wheels, around which the endless rope passed, and by which the rope was set in motion. The engines were built in Pittsburgh, and could be started and stopped very quickly. Only one engine was used at a time, but two were provided for the greater security. Hemp ropes were used at first, and gave much trouble as they varied greatly in length with changes in the weather. . . Wire ropes were afterwards substituted, and were a great improvement. . . .

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, 1833, about two and a half years from the beginning of the work, the first car passed over the road, carrying a committee from Philadelphia . . . returning from Ohio where they had been inspecting proposed lines for connecting the Pennsylvania and Ohio canals. . . .

In 1851, the state began the construction of a railroad to avoid the inclined planes, with a maximum grade of 75 feet per mile and a summit tunnel about 2,000 feet long. Parts of the old line were used and the road was lengthened about six miles. A single track was laid down and was in use in 1856. The following year, the whole work as a part of the main line was sold by the State to the Pennsylvania Railroad.

[The organization of the Pennsylvania Railroad came in 1847]

At the [1854 session of the Pennsylvania Legislature] a charter was obtained for a railroad from Pittsburgh westward, on the line towards Ft. Wayne and Chicago. I was afterwards the chief engineer of it from Pittsburgh to Crestline, a distance of 188 miles. I had charge of the location, construction and working of the road as far west as Crestline, from 1848 to 1856, and the towns of Alliance and Crestline were located, and their names selected by me. This line was originally called the Ohio and Pennsylvania railroad, as it was chartered by both of these states and was the first line to connect their railroad systems. It has become a most important feeder to the Pennsylvania Railroad. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, 1852, the road was opened from Pittsburgh to Alliance, 82 miles, where it connected with a railroad to Cleveland. . . . The road was opened to Crestline on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 1853, where it connected with a direct railroad to Columbus and Cincinnati. This road has now been in use about twenty-five years, and has been of great public utility. The completion of the line between Crestline and Chicago was delayed by financial difficulties for some years, but it was opened in December, 1858, mainly by the efforts of John Edgar Thompson. . . .

Fifty years have passed since I rode on the Mauch Chunk Railroad on the first train of cars that ever ran in Pennsylvania, and during that long period, my interest in the growth of our railroad system has never ceased. Four years later, when I led the locating party on the Allegheny Portage Railroad, it was with a feeling of enthusiasm for my professional employment which it gives me pleasure to recall. . . . Although this railroad has ceased to exist, . . . the present is the child of the past, and will be parent of the future, and to keep the past from being forgotten, and to preserve its lessons for our instruction, is the highly useful office of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which I trust it will continue to fill, for the benefit of those who may come after us for many generations.

**LINES WEST - BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER**

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**Please mail to: Lines West, c/o Richard Briggs, 4397 Hidden Street,  
Grove City, Ohio, 43123-8489 or bring to the chapter meeting.**

**P.R.R.T. & H.S. LINES WEST - BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER THANKS  
YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**