Toledo & Ohio Central Southbound Trains to Columbus – the 1960s

by James M. Cavanaugh

The Toledo Layover

Columbus-based T&OC crews stayed at the Stanley Yard YMCA after their northbound run from Columbus to Toledo. This was a two-story yellow brick hotel and dining hall that sat between the Stanley Yard hump track and the T&OC (NYC) Eastern Branch main track. When crews went off duty from a train arriving from Columbus, and put their engines away at the roundhouse just south of the yard office, they walked the 200 yards over to the "Y" with their suitcases (grips) via a concrete underpass directly beneath the hump.

The "Y" had a long two-floor north-south wing with small individual crewmember rooms and shower and bath rooms at the ends of the halls, and a short one-floor east-west wing that contained the main sitting room, front desk, small reading and TV rooms, and a big "diner" area. The diner had a long formica-covered counter all the way around a central service area, and was open for business 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Staffed by a crew of waitresses and a short-order cook back in the kitchen, this busy room offered breakfast, lunch and dinner at all hours. The fare was never short on grease, but hit the spot on a cold morning, especially the really strong coffee (then rare in Ohio).

Often you would run into T&OC crew from one of the "WIP" jobs at the "Y". The "WIP" was a group of four T&OC local switching runs out at the Willis Day Industrial Park, off the Western branch just south of Stanley Tower, bounded to its north by the Toledo Terminal RR and to the southeast by the T&OC. WIP crews worked Monday through Friday (WIP4 also worked Saturdays). They came up for the week and resided at the "Y" between shifts. Usually someone on the WIP crew had his car at the "Y", so if invited, you could all go out to a restaurant or movie theater.

Going to Work

Crews got a two-hour train call from the front desk man, who would come around with his clipboard and knock on your door, then open it with his pass key, stick his head in and say in a most unnecessarily loud shout: "Cavanaugh? TC-2, 2:30 AM". They wanted to make sure you really were in there and that you really got up.

After some grub, the five men on the crew assembled at the front desk, then walked back through the hump underpass and over to Stanley Yard Office, grips and lanterns in hand. This structure was a three-story brick building, brightly lit inside and out, surrounded by a gravel parking area with NYC green company vans and employee vehicles parked every which way. The conductor would go into the back and return with train orders and waybills for all cars in the train. The head brakeman and engine crew walked about 150 yards southwest to the Stanley roundhouse to pick up the assigned locomotives. We always had plenty of power going south. It was not essential in that direction, where the only big grades were downhill, but the company needed to balance up its power for the northbounds that really required it.

Our waiting southbound train would be in Yard "O," the outbound yard which ran north-south just to the west of the T&OC Eastern main line for about three-quarters of a mile south of the yard office. If we were proceeding south to Columbus on the Western Branch, the caboose would be on the south end of the train at the far end of Yard "O," and usually the flagman and

conductor would get a ride down there in a green NYC Chevy Suburban. Southbounds for the Western branch would actually start out by running north for two miles up through Stanley Yard. If the train was heading south via the Eastern Branch, the process was reversed, with the caboose on the north end in Yard "O" and the engines running down and reversing in to couple onto the south end of the train for a direct exit out the southern lead from Yard "O" onto the Eastern Branch main track.

Crews heading to the Western would pull the locomotives to the north from the roundhouse onto the main switching lead connecting Yard "O" and Yard "S," then reverse back down into Yard "O" through the switching leads, and couple onto the north end of train. After the air test, the brakeman walked up to the Yard "O" office, leaving the switches (all manually thrown here) lined up for the train to pull ahead to depart the yard. The Yard "O" office was a one-floor gray wooden shack that had a clerk with a phone connecting with Stanley Yard Office and Stanley Tower, and a crew area with a small oil-fired caboose stove, a very welcome feature on a freezing windy winter night. You might have to sit in there an hour before getting the highball to start your southbound trip, waiting for the single-track Western to clear of northbound traffic.

Trains heading over to the Western would have to snake northward all the way up from Yard "O" past Stanley Yard Office past Yards "K" and "S", then curve around to the west past Stanley Tower and along the Toledo Terminal RR, and then out onto the Western main. Southbounds heading down the Eastern had only to get under way, exit the south end of Yard "O" and through SO switch onto the main. There was no manned tower at that lonely south end of Yard "O." Once were ready to go, we would ring the Tower and check for permission to get underway. No waiting here. There were no northbound conflicting moves on the Eastern except for the infrequent local run, which always kept out of the way of through freights.

Southbound Trains - CN2, TN6 and TC-2.

Southbound trains from Stanley to Columbus were the mirror image of the northbounds from West Columbus to Toledo. Southbound CN-2 from Stanley Yard was much like the northbound NT-5 - through mixed freight of 85-100 cars called around mid-day, occasionally with a pick-up or set off at Ridgeway, but seldom any other short cars. CN-2 was likely to be a 10-12 hour job through to Columbus. ("CN" stood for Chicago-Norfolk, suggesting in days past there were through blocks of cars moving on this route over the NYC and C&O.)

The nightmare of all southbound working trains was TC-2, rivaling its close cousin, the northbound NT-7 all-night switching run. TC-2 was a 70-100-car train with 20-30 short cars (to be set off along the way) and perhaps 60-80 Columbus cars, often called in the late evening or small hours of the morning. TC-2 often had pick-ups and drops at five or six locations, ranging from Bowling Green (MP 21), Trombley (an alfalfa mill just north of Cygnet, MP-30), the Whirlpool Plant south of Mortimer (MP-39), North Findlay (MP-41), downtown Findlay, hopper drops at the Akron, Canton & Youngstown north-facing points switch interchange (MP-50), Williamstown (MP-58), Kenton (MP-72) and Ridgeway (MP-81). The train might have to switch multi-car cuts at Whirlpool or Ridgeway, ducking other trains and waiting for time to pull out and shove cuts on the main. By 1969-70, when track conditions on the Western after the NYC-PRR merger worsened and the former 50 mile-per-hour seed limit dropped in places to 5-10 MPH, TC-2 was almost a sure bet to "violate," exceeding the 16-hour maximum crew work day.

When TC-2 had been mired for hours switching at Ridgeway on a cold night, the Trainmaster sometimes arranged for a van to take us to the big truck stop at Mt. Victory. Diner food and

strong coffee, hot and lots of it - really hit the spot, energizing us to get back and finish the job and sprint for Columbus.

At various times, there was another southbound working freight called TN-6 with multiple drops and pick-ups, but usually fewer switching points than TC-2.

In addition to mixed freight trains, there were southbound through unit trains of hoppers. These included the Peabody empties (three or four trains of 95-110 brand new bright yellow and green 100-ton proprietary hoppers per week), other drags of empty 50-ton "standard" hoppers for Ohio and West Virginia coal mines, and occasionally in 1967-8, monstrously-heavy iron ore trains of 100 hoppers for interchange onto the C&O or N&W at Columbus, bound for places like Ashland, Kentucky. These ore blocks were testy devils going down the Western's hills southbound, especially since the dynamic brakes on most older EMD F9 NYC and PRR covered wagon units had long since been fried. (The dynamic brake reversed the electrical fields of the locomotive's traction motors, converting them into generators and then dissipating the electric energy as heat in large coils on top of the locomotive body. This gave a very gentle but powerful braking effect, without setting the brake shoes against the wheels.) A heavy southbound ore train could also be a challenge to start up again out of West Columbus yard after a crew change.

Unit trains could usually make the run to Columbus over the Western Branch in 9-12 hours total time on duty.

Section Gangs and Hot Boxes

The Western was a hard-working railroad, managing to handle something like 35 million tons of freight annually over its single-track main between West Columbus and Toledo. The line was kept in fairly good condition, even after things started to decline following the Penn Central merger. The Western still had its maintenance crews positioned about every 25 miles, in small gray wooden sheds. (All NYC railroad structures from phone boxes to operator towers to big freight stations looked similar, gray and white wooden boxes with vertical board and batten siding and wide overhanging eaves, the better for hornets and spiders). These section buildings housed motorized track cars, old hand-cars and light rolling cranes, with all manner of tools and buckets of nuts and bolts. Nearby in the weeds were piles of ties, rails and joint bars. If our train hit a rough spot or dipped at a low joint, the engineer would pencil the location (such as "mud-hole 20 pole lengths south of Route 31 grade crossing") on a Dixie cup, wrap it in the head cover of a fusee flare, and throw it (unlit if course) in front of the next maintenance shed as we passed. Usually the bad spot miraculously was fixed by the time we made our southbound run the next morning. At least that was the case up through about 1967-8.

The Western also had several automatic hotbox detectors along the line, as I recall near Peoria and Mentzer. These would alert the dispatcher in Columbus and give the car number and exact axle in your train that was hot. By the late 1960s most cars had roller bearings, which would not heat up. But some, especially older hoppers, still had the original friction bearing arrangement with the axle ends resting in a grooved slot in a covered journal box filled with old rags and cotton waste soaking in lube oil. The idea was that the oil kept the axle lubricated enough to avoid running hot. But if the journal box oil ran low, or the axle was badly worn, it would heat up, start smoking or catch fire, which was the proverbial "hotbox". The engine and caboose crews would watch the sides of the train on every curve to look for anything smoking. If you got a hot box, you tried to put out the fire with a CO2 extinguisher from the locomotive or caboose

(often impossible if the axle was red hot) and then set the car out at the next available side track for repairs.

Arriving at West Columbus

Whether making a weed-bending hot four-hour run, or about to violate after a grinding night switching on TC-2 in the rain, most trains coming down the Western Branch took siding north of Mounds at Highway (MP-124), running down to the south switch just above Scioto-Darby Road, to meet one or more northbounds and to wait for the busy yard crews at congested West Columbus to clear out two receiving tracks. This wait could be so long you started thinking about putting in a tomato garden alongside the track, and checking into the reputation of the local public school system. If you "violated," the company sent a van there with a replacement crew (who would make a full day's pay of 10:31 hours to pull the train the six miles down to the yard, although they might be on duty five or six hours before it was over).

Coming into the yard, most trains had to "double" into two tracks. We would pull in until the caboose cleared at the Grandview end, getting the "stop" signal over the radio or from the assistant yard clerk out beside the West Columbus Yard Office, receiving shouted directions from the clerk inside on the phone with Grandview Tower, where the operator would be watching the rear end. The head brakeman would have dropped off at the south switch for the first receiving track, and after the train stopped and he turned the air line angle cock on the rear end of the car just ahead of the last car to stay in the first track, he would put his hands in the air and bump fists together, the signal for the hogger (engineer) to back up and give him slack to uncouple. The assistant yard clerk might relay that signal to the engine, which was far ahead around a slight curve up toward (or beyond) the B&O diamond and GN Tower. After the front cut was uncoupled, the train moved forward, brake line air letting out a "pshht" and loud creak as the hoses between the two halves of the train parted and the brakes in the rear half set tight. The train pulled ahead, brakeman hanging on the rear car, until the rear was clear of the switches at the south end of the yard. Then the train slowly backed down into the second receiving track, brakeman running ahead to line up switches. I recall once we arrived with 140 cars and had to "triple" in. After getting in the clear, the brakeman cut the engines off, the locomotives pulled ahead through the lead, and then backed down the running track around the south end of the yard to the West Columbus roundhouse, their work done. Hostlers and engine maintenance men would hop aboard as we approached the roundhouse lead, and start their inspection and servicing work. The brakeman would hitch a ride back to West Columbus Yard Office in the conductor's car, and the crew would complete their time sheets, mark off and call it a day.

The T&OC Eastern Branch

About a third of our southbound trains from Stanley Yard, especially unit trains of empty hoppers, traveled via the Eastern Branch of the T&OC.

The original Eastern Branch ran directly south from downtown Toledo, skirting the east edge of Stanley Yard. From Stanley Tower, the Eastern was 147 miles of single-track railroad down through Luckey, Pemberville, Fostoria, Berwick, McCutcheonville, Sycamore, Bucyrus, Martel, Mt. Gilead Junction, Marengo, Centerburg, Johnstown, Heath and Millersport to Thurston, where it rejoined the T&OC Western Branch. Predating the Western by about ten years, and bypassing Columbus, the Eastern originally moved rich T&OC coal traffic from the Sunday Creek Valley up to Toledo and the Great Lakes in the 1880s, interchanging with all the premiere East-West railroads linking New York and the Atlantic with Chicago and the upper Midwest. Well-

engineered and drained, the Eastern was fairly flat and ideal for moving trains right into the south end of Stanley.

In the 1960s, the NYC began to use the Eastern Branch section to Berwick (Eastern MP-44) and its venerable Big Four Clyde-Bellefontaine branch from Berwick to Kenton as a virtual double track with the Western. Northbound T&OC trains (and Big Four Bellefontaine-Stanley trains such as BF-4) used the Western, and most Big Four freights and around half the T&OC southbound unit trains during congested periods used the Eastern. CN-2 also occasionally "went Eastern." After 1969, the Penn Central renamed the Stanley-Berwick-Kenton segments the "Eastern" and renamed the old Eastern from Berwick down through Bucyrus to Thurston (by then becoming a candidate for abandonment) as the "Thurston Running Track. "

The Eastern south from Yard "O was in good shape, flat and well maintained, with no significant bridges or grading north of Berwick or on the old Big Four from Berwick to Kenton. Unlike the Western, which had mostly newer active industry, the Eastern was a classic panorama of the Mid-American "Rust Belt" that had emerged by the 1960s, lined with shuttered-up middleweight manufacturing plants. There were virtually no active shippers on the branch except for low-revenue stone and gravel at Spore and a little coal and stone at Bucyrus. Its only good-paying industries were down at Heath, switched by T&OC crews interchanging the cars onto the Pennsylvania's Panhandle main line after the merger. The economic theory of railroading as of the Penn Central merger was that a branch supported itself if on-line shippers produced 34 cars per mile annually. The Western's shippers produced many multiples of that, but the Eastern came nowhere close. The Eastern's former industries were gray and grim, vine-covered mills, tanks and elevators, with no sign of human activity.

Interestingly, and a portent of change we did not sense at the time, a lot of the Eastern's southbound traffic, especially on the Big Four trains, were standardized 40-foot marine containers on flatcars and trailer vans on flatcars (COFC and TOFC). We saw the container trains as somehow good for the T&OC, and more so the East-West railroads like the PRR Panhandle, luring high-value shipments away from trucks and back to the rails. What we did not know then was the same invention would also cut ocean shipping rates by 70-80 percent, opening up the U.S. markets for goods from Japan, and later Singapore, Hong Kong and eventually China. This signaled a 30-year downward slide for U.S. manufacturing jobs, and paving the way for big box stores full of garden gnomes and \$2 stackable plastic lawn chairs from Taiwanese factories, eventually changing our Midwest economy and affecting our lives profoundly.

But at the time, the Eastern had its appeal for the observer of railroad history and development. Fostoria (Eastern MP-35) was one of the great rail cities in Ohio. Here the T&OC had four major active and interesting at-grade rail crossings, including the Lake Erie & Western (service had long since been discontinued after acquisition by the N&W but the track was in place looking surprisingly good). The Eastern also crossed the B&O, C&O Hocking Valley line and Nickel Plate/N&W in a single complex junction in Fostoria controlled by the C&O's busy "F" Tower. These were the Chicago main lines of all the "big" roads in Ohio except for the Pennsylvania and Erie. Back in steam days, the C&O, which paralleled the T&OC for most of its path through Fostoria, sported high-stepping 10,000 ton coal drags single-headed by their enormous H-8 class 2-6-6-6 Alleghenies. These engines could generate 7,500 horsepower, the top figure of any freight locomotive in the steam world, rising from their 135 square-foot fire grates over the sixwheel trailing truck.

All included, the four lines through Fostoria produced 75 or more trains a day at the big fourway interlocking downtown, a sight to see. In spite of the plethora of colorful trains crossing every which way, this was not a bottleneck, with T&OC trains usually moving right through the interlockings after brief stops, if any.

The Eastern Branch through Fostoria, controlled by the old T&OC Interlocking Tower near Jackson Street, had the first remotely-dispatched and automated rail traffic control system ("TCS") installed in the US, if not the world, back in the 1930s. The Tower controlled 40 miles of the line from the south end of Stanley Yards to Berwick. The TCS operator here activated all T&OC signals and switches down through the maze of interlockings in Fostoria via electric circuits, centrally managing this crowded stretch of rails. But by 1967 the Eastern was back to manual block, a shadow of its former self. The yellow-brick flat-roofed tower had long since been boarded up, with its signaling equipment and electrical system removed, the "New York Central System" black & white oval logo with the "C" in "Central" wrapping around the "e," slowly peeling away.

South from Fostoria, passing Landgraf and New Reigel with its stately brick church steeple, the Eastern swung to the southwest at Berwick around a sweeping interchange track with the former Big Four, heading down toward Kenton through Carey, Wharton, Forrest, Patterson, McVitty and Grants. This line, one of the first railroads ever built in Ohio in the 1840s, crossed the same C&O double-track Hocking Valley line again along with the AC&Y at Carey, and the Pennsylvania's Chicago main line at Forrest. At Carey there was also the switch to the NYC Vanlue branch, a stub of a former Big Four line that ran north and west up to Findlay.

On the north edge of Kenton on the Eastern, around the intersection of Kohler and Detroit Streets, was the roadbed for a long-since removed track that veered westward from south-facing switch points. I heard this was an old interconnection between the Big Four's Clyde-Bellefontaine branch and the T&OC Western Branch several miles to the west, which this track joined around Western MP 69 via north facing switch points. This tree-covered right-of-way is plainly visible on satellite images today. I never knew how it was used, but logically it allowed northbound Big Four trains to divert over to the Western via a level route, joining the Western north of the steep grade above Kenton. It also would have permitted Big Four southbounds coming off the Western Branch to reverse the process, thus avoiding the grade at Rushsylvania that they would face if they came down onto the Western at Kenton and headed to Bellefontaine via Ridgeway. Perhaps once the advent of the diesels eliminated the need for helpers on those hills, and after a portion of the Big Four line south of Kenton to Belle Center was abandoned and all southbounds used the Western between Kenton and Ridgeway, there was no further use for this interconnection.

The entire Eastern Branch was originally one of the foremost north-south lines in Ohio, once meticulously maintained and operated. Older railroaders often told of runs in the 1950s where they picked up a unit train of loaded coal hoppers at Bannon off the N&W (which terminated in Columbus until a divestiture in 1964 just before the Penn Central merger handed the N&W the PRR's Columbus-Attica Junction-Sandusky line). These trains would be headed by a shiny new "ABBA" consist of F9 EMD covered wagons, freshly-delivered from GM. They would roar south (east) on the Western at 50 MPH, roll around the interchange track at Thurston at 30 mph onto the Eastern, regain speed up northward through Heath, Johnstown and swing through Marengo hollow, roar through Bucyrus and Fostoria, arriving at Stanley Yard "O" three and a half hours later. There the yard crew would pull off the crew's caboose and put it onto a southbound train of empties in Yard "O". The crew and their covered wagons, never idle for a moment and purring like big cats, would have the empty drag back at South Columbus in another four hours. But by 1967, the Eastern was a brush-encroached line with little active local business,

disused weed-covered sidings, abandoned signal towers, freight houses and stations. It was still a potentially strong asset for a railroad who would use it. But that railroad was clearly not the Penn Central.

Looking at our timetable, you would see names of places that existed on the line for some unknown railroad purpose, but at which there was no longer any sign of rail activity or human settlement. You can find old 1890s photos of stations and freight houses at these places all along the T&OC, with names like Beagle, Curtellis, Mentzer, McVitty. The photos show small communities, with a bit of rail infrastructure like a siding or two, and maybe a water tower, and trim wooden houses in the background. One wonders what became of these places, many of which seem to have disappeared without a trace over the decades.

Too Many Cars, Not Enough Railroad

Being a north-south railroad, the T&OC faced serious seasonal traffic fluctuations and imbalances. In the summer, the line needed many hundreds of coal and iron ore hoppers to handle commodities bound for Great Lakes shipping, as well as boxcars and covered hoppers for agricultural commodities. But these volumes dropped precipitously in the winter. While some unused rolling stock would drift to other parts of the NYC System, there was no "attic" in which to store all those extra cars. If the empties accumulated on yard tracks, sidings and industrial leads in or around places like West and South Columbus, they quickly gummed up traffic unbelievably. The T&OC's solution appeared to be to park them on the old disused sidings of the Eastern Branch.

Unlike the Western, where as many as two dozen old steam-days passing tracks had been removed leaving only six big mile-long sidings between Columbus and Toledo, the Eastern still had most of its original array of shorter side tracks. By 1968 these were jammed with older rolling stock, awaiting reactivation the following spring, or it appeared, in many cases, the scrap yard. This rusting fleet also slowly became the home of a population of raccoons, possums and a few human drifters. Finally, one August day, a line of tornados flipped over nearly half the boxcars sitting in these tracks between Pemberville and Berwick, fortunately tipping them away from the main track. They sat there unreclaimed for as long as I could remember.

Dropping Back Down onto the Western

Southbound trains coming off the Eastern re-entered the more civilized Western Branch at Kenton via a steep and sharply-curving interchange track, the switch for which veered eastward off the Eastern main just north of the trestle where the Eastern (i.e. the former Big Four Clyde-Bellefontaine branch) crossed over the Western and the Scioto River, heading for the Big Four diamond with the Erie at Sands. The old Big Four had been abandoned from Sands to Belle Center, and Big Four Toledo trains descended through this interconnection and used the Western from Kenton to Ridgeway where they exited to the west back onto their own railroad. This heavily-graded Kenton interconnection clearly could not easily have supported a northbound move by a train with much tonnage. To avoid the need to stop on this move, which would have tied up every at-grade crossing in Kenton city limits, the Kenton yard office man usually drove over and set the switches for the descending train. Trains moved south through this interchange so slowly that a fleet-footed head brakeman could take up a collection from the engine crew, drop off and run over to the Dairy Queen, pick up orders for everyone, and swing back on the rear unit as it inched by the grade crossing at US Route 31.

Once back on the Western, trains moved quickly to Ridgeway. Typically Columbus-bound trains dropping off the Eastern at Kenton did not have any short cars for Ridgeway. Southbound T&OC

trains usually had a clear run from Ridgeway to Columbus, with no local work in this territory largely switched by the Marysville Turn.

As noted above, trains arriving at West Columbus generally had to cool their heels at the 125-car Highway Siding (MP-124), sometimes for hours, while the yard crews cleared out an arrival track, usually track 6 to 10.

Occasionally we would be called for a southbound Big Four train from Stanley Yards heading for Bellefontaine and "BN" Yard. This was rare, but if they had no Big Four crew with their rest good (i.e., having been off duty for at least eight hours), the NYC would not want to delay one of its hot trailer-van trains and would scare up a T&OC crew, which after all, knew the line all the way to Ridgeway. At that point we would pick up a Big Four "pilot" engineer and conductor for the front and rear end, respectively. Getting up out of Ridgeway, we had to lay on all-possible speed to build momentum for the big hill at Rushsylvania, seven miles south of Ridgeway, the highest rail point in Ohio. Bellefontaine, 14 miles south of Ridgeway, sits atop a high hill, and it is upgrade into there from all five rail approach directions. I recall that when we pulled into BN yard and prepared to cut off our engines for the roundhouse, the pilot engineer told me to set eight handbrakes on the train. After going off duty in Bellefontaine, we got a "deadhead" ride back to West Columbus in one of the NYC's ever-present green Chevy Suburbans.

<u>Buckeye</u>

At the end of 1969, the Penn Central's new Buckeye Yard opened in Columbus west of Interstate 270 in the notch between I-70 and the PRR Bradford side main line. The approaches to Buckeye included a new lead out the north end, across the PRR Bradford line and onto the T&OC Western with north-facing switch points at Darby (MP 123). Freight trains thus saw the last of Highway, Grandview and West Columbus. Southbound T&OC trains departed Buckeye out onto the T&OC just west of Miami Tower (LM). Western unit trains such as the Peabodys continued to use the old T&OC main through Grandview, changing crews variously at Highway, old West Columbus yard office, or Frankfort Street.

The changeover to Buckeye altered the character of the T&OC dramatically. It had been a railroad of its own with only arm's length contact and no shared facilities with even its cousin Big Four NYC lines. Even following the NYC-PRR merger we had little to do with the Pennsylvania Railroad, considered by us to be the quintessential "big road" with dozens of fast trains on the Panhandle to the east and on the Miami and Bradford sides to the west.

Once all eight Penn Central lines to and from Columbus consolidated yard operations at Buckeye, and the more than a dozen old NYC and PRR yards in Columbus closed, it was a different world. On the T&OC, except maybe at Stanley, you never saw a man you did not know, probably well. Conversely, Buckeye was overrun by an army of nameless railroaders in overalls with hats, lanterns and suitcases, going out to a dozen destinations from Pittsburgh to Central Indiana, and Cleveland to Cincinnati. Our train crews quickly started learning where the money was to be made, marking up and sharpshooting on extra boards for the Big Four and PRR, aiming for big-paying overtime on the old CA&C Akron Secondary Track local to Orrville, fast runs to Sharon Yard in Cincinnati, and big-miles high-speed double track lines like the 180-mile runs to Indianapolis or Logansport, Indiana, the 191-mile PRR Panhandle and Ohio River run over the Bayard and River Branches and Pittsburgh-Chicago main Line to Conway Yard west of Pittsburgh, or the incredible 229-mile Panhandle run to Pitcairn east of Pittsburgh. Eventually with the Penn Central bankruptcy and evolution and break up of Conrail, the T&OC Western Branch north end became the N&W, and the Eastern became a bicycle trail in places and an obscure history book chapter for the most part. But there was a rich history of railroad and people on the T&OC that will never die.

[Written from notes and memory from 45 years ago - comments, corrections and additions most welcome.]

Photo Links: New York Central T&OC Interlocking Tower in Fostoria (this housed the first TCS system in the USA in 1930s, controlling T&OC Eastern Branch from Stanley Yard to Berwick):

http://www.michiganrailroads.com/RRHX/Stations/CountyStations/OtherCounties/Fost oriaOH.htm (Note: Accuracy of caption indicating this Tower protected the Lake Erie & Western crossing is uncertain.)

http://www.rrpicturearchives.net/showPicture.aspx?id=1443491

Genealogy of the T&OC - Western Branch, Columbus to Toledo, and Eastern Branch from Stanley Yard to Kenton.

Whitmore (Stanley Tower) to North Findlay, Toledo and Indianapolis Railway Co., 1882-3, 40.7 miles

North Findlay to Findlay, Toledo Columbus and Cincinnati Railway Co., 1885, 0.7 miles

Findlay to Curtellis (just south of Hancock siding), Toledo Columbus and Cincinnati Railway Co., 1888, 5.0 miles

Curtellis to Kenton, Toledo Columbus and Cincinnati Railway Co., 1888, 23.2 miles

Kenton to Ridgeway, Toledo Columbus and Cincinnati Railway Co., 1890-92, 9.1 miles

Ridgeway to West Columbus T&OC, 1892-3, 49.6 miles

Eastern Branch - Toledo to Heath, Atlantic and Lake Erie RR Co and Ohio Central RR Co 1869-76, 132.7 miles