

NRHS News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021

The Reason for the Winter Train Chasing Season

By *CLAY MORITZ, Potomac Chapter NRHS*

NRHS PERFECT WEATHER! On January 31, 2010, Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's 1916 Baldwin 2-8-0 No. 734 departed Cumberland, Maryland, leading a Winter Photo Freight Special.

Rounding Helmstetter's Curve in Cash Valley, No. 734 is on its way to the Depot in Frostburg. The participating photographers thoroughly enjoyed the Snow, Sun, and Steam!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLAY MORITZ

PICTURE-PERFECT 'WINTER SPECIAL' OUTING – Clear weather, chilly air, just enough snow cover and rolling hill. An optimal photo moment to capture, enjoy and preserve the joys of the season, and share all the fun and reason for chasing trains in the winter.

NRHS NEWS - DECEMBER 2020

Table of Contents

The Reason for the Winter Train Chasing Season	1
<i>Table of Contents</i>	2
<i>Upcoming Conferences and Conventions</i>	2
<i>Submission Deadlines</i>	2
East Broad Top is Back!	3
Niagara Gorge Belt Line Railroad Historical Markers	18
Trains during the Holidays – Memories, Bells & Rides	20
<i>Bells of Peace at ORHC, November 11, 2020</i>	20
<i>Visiting Holiday Trains in Philadelphia</i>	20
<i>Nostalgic Train & Trolley Scenes of the Season</i>	21
<i>Holiday Train Story – My First Model Train Set</i>	22
Operation Toy Train Acquires 13 Historic Rail Cars	24
2021 Calendar – Central New York Railroads	26
2021 Calendar - Northstar Railway Historical Society.....	27
President’s Column – Greetings of the Season.....	28
Editor’s Notes – What Is Your Favorite Locomotive?	28

Upcoming Conferences and Conventions

August 23-28, 2021
2021 NRHS Convention
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

October, 2021
2021 NRHS Fall Conference
 Ronkonkoma, New York

Submission Deadlines

Month	Print or online issue	Deadline
January 2021	No issue	
February 2021	Online issue	January 20, 2020
March 2021	Print/mailed issue	February 10, 2020
April 2021	Online issue	March 10, 2020

East Broad Top is Back!

By ALEX MAYES, Potomac Chapter NRHS

East Broad Top Railroad Marks its 60th Anniversary with Three Day Celebration

(This is Part 1 of a two-part series. Part 2 will be published in an upcoming issue of the *NRHS News*.)



History of the EBT

The East Broad Top Railroad began operation over its 33-mile, three-foot gauge line in 1871 hauling primarily semi-bituminous coal from coalfields in south central Pennsylvania to Rockhill, PA. There was an iron furnace in Rockhill where the coal was processed into coke and was also used to make pig iron. In 1907 the iron furnace shut down and the EBT began hauling most of its coal north to Mount Union, PA to a connection with the Pennsylvania Railroad to be shipped to Pittsburgh and other cities with substantial steel-making facilities. The EBT also carried significant quantities of other materials, including lumber and ganister rock, as well as mail and passengers, and lesser amounts of concrete, agricultural products and general freight.

In the early 1900s several facilities were built in Mount Union for the manufacture of silica bricks. Large amounts of coal and ganister rock were required to make the bricks. The EBT delivered the needed materials. Also in the early 1900s the EBT made several upgrades which included the purchase of six new 2-8-2s from the Baldwin Locomotive Works, modernizing its machine shop, and purchasing new railcars. With the arrival of the newer, larger 2-8-2s two new stalls 68 feet in length were added to the roundhouse, and the other six stalls were lengthened to 68 feet to accommodate the new engines.

The next several years were difficult for the EBT as the demand for semi-bituminous coal declined as well as for the other products they transported. The decline in traffic and revenue eventually forced the EBT to end operations and shut down on April 14, 1956. The EBT was the last operating three-foot gauge common carrier railroad in the U.S. A few months later the EBT was purchased by the Kovalchick Salvage company of Indiana, PA. The owner of the company, Nick Kovalchick, recognized the significance of this amazing 19th century railroad and decided to preserve it rather than scrap it. During the planning of the 200th anniversary of the twin boroughs of Rockhill Furnace and Orbisonia in 1960 Nick was asked if he would put together a train for display during the celebration. He decided to go a step further and activated one of the

steam engines, assembled a short passenger train and reopened the track to Colgate Grove, five miles north of Rockhill Furnace. This was the beginning of the excursion train era on the EBT. Regularly scheduled excursion service began in summer 1961 and ran every year until 2011. The EBT's facilities in Rockhill Furnace and elsewhere remained silent for the next nine years. Nick Kovalchick tried selling the EBT over the years; however these efforts were unsuccessful. Nick passed away in 1977 and his son Joseph assumed control of the business.

Being aware that the 100+ year old structures, rolling stock and other equipment was subject to deterioration a group of serious historians and rail enthusiasts got together in 1983 and founded Friends of the East Broad Top Railroad, Inc. (FEBT). This organization of over 1,100 supporters and enthusiasts realized the East Broad Top Railroad was a historic treasure of national significance and became committed to its preservation and restoration. Over the past 37 years volunteers of the FEBT have restored or stabilized over a dozen structures and about eight freight and passenger cars and cabooses and several sections of track. Without the efforts of these hard-working volunteers the EBT would not be in as good condition as it is today, and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Fortunately, a buyer emerged in January 2020, which was the East Broad Top Foundation, Inc. This organization purchased the six 2-8-2s, rolling stock, the buildings in Rockhill Furnace and about 27 miles of track between Aughwick Creek north of Rockhill Furnace and Wood Township, 18 miles south of Rockhill Furnace. The amount of the purchase has not been disclosed. The group plans to restore two locomotives to service and rehabilitate five miles of track between Rockhill Furnace and Colgate Grove and resume steam-powered excursion trains in 2021. The EBT Foundation, Inc. was created by an alliance of EBT employees, prominent railroad executives and long-time EBT fans. Early supporters of the effort to purchase the EBD were led by:

- David Brightbill, longtime EBT office manager and volunteer at the Rockhill Trolley Museum.
- Brad Esposito, former assistant general manager of the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad and a longtime member of the Friends of the East Broad Top.
- Lawrence Biemiller, longtime EBT historian and guide for EBT facility tours, a former senior writer at The Chronicle of Higher Education and a member of the Friends of the East Broad Top board.
- Jane Sheffield, executive director of the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, a regional-development agency based in Altoona, PA.
- Stephen Lane, director for Railways to Yesterday Inc., a non-profit corporation operating the Rockhill Trolley Museum.

The foundation is governed by a 10-member board. Three members represent the group's founders, three represent the prominent railroad executives, three represent outside or community interests, and one member will represent the Kovalchick family.

The three principal backers of the foundation who are also board members are:

- Henry Posner III, chairman of the Railroad Development Corporation and the Iowa Interstate Railroad, which operates two steam locomotives on excursion trains.
- Bennett Levin, former Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections Commissioner, owner of the Juniata Terminal Company which owns vintage passenger cars and two former PRR E8 passenger engines.
- Charles "Wick" Moorman, former CEO of Norfolk Southern Railroad and former Amtrak CEO. While NS CEO he launched the heritage fleet of 20 diesels painted in the schemes of the railroads that were predecessors of NS.

60th Anniversary Celebration

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of their opening as a tourist railroad the East Broad Top Railroad held a three-day celebration August 13-15, 2020. This event also celebrated the purchase of the railroad by the new East Broad Top Foundation, Inc. The celebration began on August 13th at the front of the Orbisonia station.

Senior members of the EBT Foundation, Inc. and the Kovalchick family addressed the estimated 200 attendees. The speakers all thanked Nick for not scrapping the EBT and also thanked the many employees and FEBT members who worked hard over the years to preserve the EBT.

The last speaker was Millie Kovalchick Glinsky, daughter of Nick. She talked about a visit to EBT in 1960 when she was a young girl. She was infatuated with engine No. 12, so Nick decided to name No. 12 "Millie" and had her name painted on both sides of the cab. Later on that day No. 12 was officially christened by Millie when she broke a bottle of ginger ale on No. 12's plow. The cab of engine No. 12 is still adorned with her name. During the August 13, 2020 ceremony, 60 years to the day, Millie rechristened No. 12 by smashing a bottle of white grape soda on No. 12's plow.

Following the opening ceremonies held in front of the Orbisonia station the attendees moved to the roundhouse where another special ceremony was held. To honor Nick Kovalchick for saving the EBT from destruction and beginning a steam tourist operation that lasted 51 years engine No. 16 was officially named "Nick".

Brad Esposito, EBT's new general manager, read the proclamation announcing this distinguished gesture and then he and Henry Posner III removed the green cloth from the cab unveiling the new "Nick" lettering. The lettering was a reproduction of Nick's signature which was obtained from documents that Nick signed years ago.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies a special train carrying the Kovalchick family, the mayor of Orbisonia and other VIPs departed for a trip over a one-mile section of track to the Enyeart Road crossing which has been rehabilitated. Shortly after this special train returned to Orbisonia the first public trip to operate over the EBT in nine years departed. Each train carried 50 passengers which were kept apart to comply with social distancing requirements. The trains proved to be immensely popular, with all 800 tickets selling out in two days.

During the three-day celebration the Rockhill Trolley Museum, Inc. operated trolleys for the attendees over their five-mile line between Rockhill Furnace and Blacklog Narrows at Route 522. This line was originally part of the EBT's Shade Gap Branch which was abandoned and then relaid with standard gauge track in 1964 for the trolley museum. The Kovalchick family has been supportive of the trolley museum since its opening in 1962. The Rockhill Trolley Museum is located across Meadow Street from EBT's Orbisonia station. The three cars operated by the trolley museum during the celebration were Johnstown Traction car No. 355, former Oporto, Portugal car No. 249 and York, PA Railways car No. 163. The trolley museum remained open during the nine years that the EBT was shut down and is currently operating on a limited schedule. To obtain information about their schedules check their website at <http://rockhilltrolley.org/>

The ceremonies commemorating EBT's 60th anniversary as a tourist operation and the purchase of the railroad by the new East Broad Top Foundation, Inc. went very well. Many thanks to the countless individuals who worked hard to make this event the great success it was.

This is the conclusion of Part 1. Part 2 continues in an upcoming issue of the *NRHS News*.

60th Anniversary Celebration at East Broad Top - The Photo Story

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

MIKADOS AT ORBISONIA – Narrow gauge Mikados Nos. 12 and 15 were displayed in front of the Orbisonia station on the morning before the ceremonies began.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

MIKADOS CLOSE UP – Narrow gauge Mikados Nos. 12 and 15 displayed in front of the Orbisonia station.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

EBT'S 2-8-2 NO. 17 – No. 17 coupled to a string of vintage freight cars in the Orbisonia yard. This engine was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in March 1918 and pulled the last two freight trains before the EBT shut down in 1956.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

MIKADOS NO. 15 AND 17 –No. 17 and 15 in the EBT's roundhouse, built in 1882, on August 12th. This roundhouse replaced a four stall roundhouse built in 1874 which housed smaller engines. The new roundhouse was built with six stalls, each 56 feet in length. The newer, larger, 2-8-2s (1900) needed two new stalls 68 feet in length. The other six stalls were lengthened to 68 feet to accommodate the new engines.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

MIKADO NO. 14 UNDERGOING RESTORATION WORK IN STALL NO. 8 – This roundhouse stall was modified shortly after the New EBT Foundation, Inc. purchased the EBT, which included the addition of sheet metal side walls to facilitate asbestos abatement and a concrete floor with radiant heat so work can be done during the winter months.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

ORBISONIA STATION, BUILT IN 1905 – This station was originally known as Rockhill Furnace Station. Since freight was frequently misrouted to two other Rockhills in the state, the name was changed to Orbisonia Station about 1906. This station is actually located in Rockhill Furnace.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

BAGGAGE AWAITING ADVENTURE – Vintage baggage cart with very old steamer trunks displayed at the front side of the Orbisonia station.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

VINTAGE STREETCARS AT ROCKHILL TROLLEY MUSEUM - On the evening of August 12th following the annual Orbisonia-Rockhill Furnace Parade the Rockhill Trolley Museum, which is adjacent to the EBT, had two vintage streetcars placed at their boarding area for guests to take a ride in.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER
CAR NO. 163 STANDS BY FOR PASSENGERS - The Rockhill Trolley Museum, which is adjacent to the EBT, had car No. 163 ready to accommodate overflow passengers if necessary following the annual Orbisonia-Rockhill Furnace Parade on August 12th. This streetcar was operated by the York Railways Company in York, PA and was built by the J. G. Brill company in 1924.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES
GETTING READY FOR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION- News media, railfans and other attendees gathered in front of the Orbisonia station just before ceremonies began.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

BRAD ESPOSITO OPENS THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CEREMONY. - Brad Esposito, EBT's new general manager, makes opening comments at the beginning of the ceremony celebrating the 60th anniversary of the EBT's rebirth as a tourist railroad on August 13th and the revival of the EBT after being shut down for nine years. Seated to the right is Joe Kovalchick, son of Nick, who purchased the EBT in 1956 and decided to Preserve this historic treasure instead of scrapping.



HENRY POSNER ADDRESSES CROWD DURING CEREMONY - Henry Posner III, one of the three principal founders of the new EBT Foundation, Inc., addresses the crowd during the ceremony celebrating the 60th anniversary of the EBT's rebirth as a tourist railroad and the revival of the EBT after being shut down for nine years.

Mr. Posner thanked Nick Kovalchick for saving the EBT from destruction after he purchased it in 1956.

Mr. Posner is also the Chairman of the Railroad Development Corporation and the Chairman of the Iowa Interstate Railroad.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

MR. JOSEPH KOVALCHICK ANNOUNCES DONATION - *Mr. Joseph Kovalchick, son of Nick who purchased the EBT in 1956, announces he is donating 25 acres of land in the vicinity of the old Rockhill iron furnace to the new EBT Foundation, Inc. Behind Joe is Henry Posner III, one of the three principle members of the new EBT Foundation, Inc.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

A SPLASHING MOMENT FOR NO. 12 – *The last speaker was Millie Kovalchick Glinsky, daughter of Nick. During a EBT visit in 1960 as a young girl, she was infatuated with engine No. 12, so Nick decided to name No. 12 “Millie”, and had her name painted on both sides of the cab. The cab of engine No. 12 is still adorned with her name.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

WORKING AT THE ROUNDHOUSE. – Diesel switcher M-4 and 2-8-2 No. 16 at the roundhouse following Millie Glinsky's speech just prior to a significant announcement. M-4 is a three-foot gauge diesel switcher built by Plymouth Locomotive Works in November 1947, model JCD. .



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

ENGINE NO. 16 OFFICIALLY NAMED "NICK" - Nick Kovalchick purchased the EBT in 1956 and decided to preserve this remarkable railroad instead of scrapping it. A ceremony was held at the roundhouse for the unveiling of Nick's signature applied to both sides of the cab. Brad Esposito, EBT's new general manager reads the proclamation announcing this distinguished gesture while Henry Posner III, in yellow vest, and Joe Kovalchick and his wife observe this momentous occasion. This photo was taken just prior to the green covering was removed from the cab.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

MIKADO NO. 16 WITH "NICK" PAINTED ON THE CAB - This is a reproduction of Nick's signature, which was obtained from documents that Nick signed years ago. Brad Esposito, EBT's new general manager is on the left, Henry Posner III, one of the principal founders of EBT Foundation, Inc. is on the right.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

No. 16 CAB JUST AFTER THE UNVEILING. - Close-up view of "Nick" lettering painted on the side of No. 16.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

M-1 MOTOR AND EBT'S NO. 20 BUSINESS CAR - Following the Orbisonia station ceremonies, a special train carrying the Kovalchick family, Orbisonia's mayor and other VIPs departed for a trip over the one mile section of track which has been rehabilitated to the Enyeart Road crossing. This train was comprised of EBT's unique gas-electric motor car M-1 and EBT's business car No. 20, named "Orbisonia". Photo taken as VIP special train departed the Orbisonia station.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

FIRST PUBLIC TRAIN DEPARTED 3 PM, AUGUST 13, 2020. This is the special train, powered by diesel No. M-7, departing the Orbisonia yards to pick up passengers at the passenger station. On the left is 2-8-2 No. 17, on the right is No. 18. This train was comprised of five open air coaches, EBT cabooses Nos. 28 and 29.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

ENGINE NO. M-7 LEADING THE FIRST PUBLIC TRAIN - The M-7 is a three foot gauge diesel switcher, built by General Electric, model 50 ton. This engine previously worked at Algoma Steel in Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

FIRST REVENUE PASSENGER TRAIN IN NINE YEARS – This is the first passenger train for the public arriving at the Enyeart Road crossing on August 13. This is as far as the trains could run during this event since it was at the end of the rehabilitated track, about a mile north of the Orbisonia station.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MAYES

RIGHT OF WAY ON AUGUST 13, 2020 - This is how EBT's right of way looked on August 13th at the Enyeart Road crossing looking north. Since this photo was taken new ties have been installed and fresh ballast has been spread.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA RENNER

RETURN OF VIP SPECIAL TO ORBISONIA STATION. - the special train for VIPs arriving back at the Orbisonia station following its run to the Enyeart Road crossing. Conductor David Brightbill, on the rear platform, sends hand signals to the engineer, just like they did 100 years ago.

Niagara Gorge Belt Line Railroad Historical Markers

By *BECKY GERSTUNG, Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS*

September 19, 2020, was a day to celebrate local railroad history with the unveiling of two historical markers at Artpark in Lewiston, New York. Niagara Frontier Chapter member Anton Schwarzmuller arranged for grant money to complete this project. Artpark granted our request and installed the markers for us.

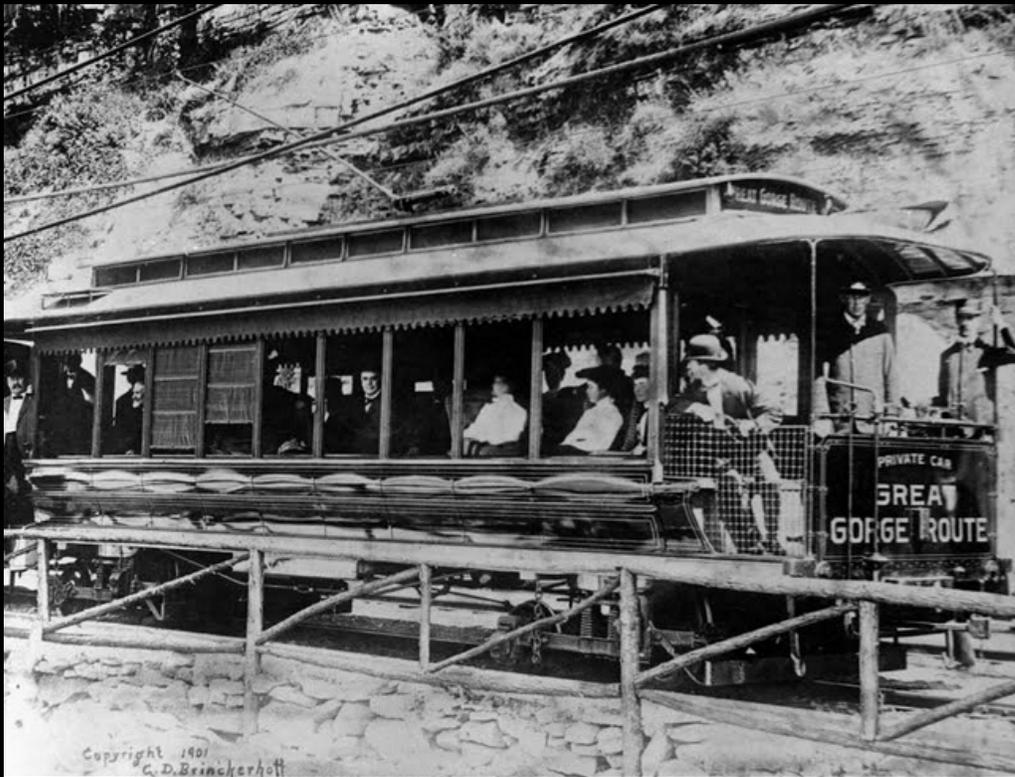
Artpark is located along the Niagara River gorge. It is a unique destination where the arts, nature and culture unite. The land holds significant historical features in addition to being one of Western New York's premier event venues. Everything from local graduation ceremonies, to Broadway plays and musicals to very popular concerts make use of this facility along with hikers and fishermen.

In 1895 the Great Gorge Railroad began construction of an electric line in the gorge. After becoming part of the International Railway Company in 1902, it continued service until 1935. Rock slides and river erosion proved too expensive to maintain. This electric railroad ran a "circle" route around the gorge on both the US and Canadian sides. From Niagara Falls, NY, to Lewiston the line ran along the river's edge. On the Canadian side it ran from Niagara Falls, Ontario, to Queenston along the top of the gorge and then down to the river's edge. Bridges at each end made the loop possible. The Niagara Frontier Chapter has published a book on this one-of-a-kind, impossible to do with international borders today, line. It is available on our web page at www.nfcnrhs.org.



COLOR PHOTOS COURTESY OF BECKY GERSTUNG
FIRST MARKER - This marker denotes the route of the Niagara Gorge Belt Line.

The ravine within the park was the first access inland as early explorers attempted to navigate the mighty Niagara River from Lake Ontario. This area is of great historic significance. Trestle abutments remain visible on both sides of the ravine today. We chose this historic place for a marker denoting the route of the railroad.



FAMOUS VISITOR - President William McKinley (center window) rode the U.S. side of the line. His time was limited as he had to return to Buffalo to host a reception at the Pan-American Exposition where he was assassinated later that day.

The other marker is located near the remaining towers of the Lewiston-Queenston suspension bridge. Trolleys crossed to and from Canada here. After the railroad ceased operation the bridge was used for automobile traffic. I remember crossing this bridge as it was a main route to Canada. The clickety, clickety sound of the wooden deck as you drove slowly across was a little scary. Once the new Lewiston-Queenston bridge on the gorge's top opened in 1963 the bridge at river level was closed.



THE LOWER SUSPENSION BRIDGE – Built in 1889 by the International Railway Company, the bridge connected Lewiston NY and Queenston Ontario.



SECOND MARKER - Tom Collister, Curator, Historical Society of Lewiston, Niagara Frontier Chapter member Anton Schwarzmüller, Chapter President Jim Ball unveiled a marker at the location of the remaining towers of the Suspension Bridge.

Trains during the Holidays – Memories, Bells & Rides

Bells of Peace at ORHC, November 11, 2020

By ARLEN L. SHELDRAKE, Pacific Northwest Chapter NRHS

On Wednesday November 11th at 11 a.m. the Oregon Rail Heritage Center participated in the national *Bells of Peace* event by ringing the portable locomotive bell 21 times. This event is sponsored by the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission in remembrance of those who served and sacrificed.

11-11-11 is the date and time that the armistice was implemented to end World War 1.

11th month – 11th day – 11th hour.

The ORHC bell was moved outside and rung by John Holloway and myself with five-second intervals between rings as specified in the national procedure. The public is invited to participate by listening for the bell ringing across the nation and by ringing your own bell.

This is the first year of ORHC participation in this national event. More information: <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org>.

Note: the ringing of the bell 21 times follows the 21-gun salute tradition.

Many thanks to the ORHC for reuse permission. This article originally appeared in the *ORHC Blog*, October 28, 2020. <https://orhf.org/blog/>



Visiting Holiday Trains in Philadelphia

By PHIL MULLIGAN, Philadelphia Chapter NRHS

Growing up, we were Catholic, and that meant school was closed December 8 for a holy day. The Reading took us to Center City where we visited all five of the department store displays. I rode the Wanamaker's monorail over the Toy Department.

Later, as a teen I would go in the evening, visiting Wanamaker's and Snellenburg's, which had a real hobby shop managed by a NMRA member. The return one year was on train 329, a Bethlehem Express with a Pullman for Toronto. It was snowing and the ride home behind 2 RS-3's was spectacular through the snow. I had to get off way too soon.

Nostalgic Train & Trolley Scenes of the Season

By FRED WASKIEWICZ, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum

Many thanks to the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum (WVRHS&M) for sharing these holiday greetings from the January 2021 issue of their *Whistle Stop* publication.



TROLLEY #6 READY FOR HOLIDAY VISITORS - Twelve WVRHS&M members recently crossed over Sam's Gap to Woodfin (Asheville), NC to ride Craggy Mountain Line Railroad's Bersky trolley #6, where they found the car all decked out in Christmas finery.



HOW ABOUT A HOLLY, JOLLY, TROLLEY? - WVRHS&M members seen here enjoying a ride on the Craggy Mountain Line Railroad.

For a nostalgic look at Christmases past, when there was an electric train running around the tree or in the department store window, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y3etjc74> . A must see for any kid at heart.

Holiday Train Story – My First Model Train Set

By KATHLEEN RYAN, Connecticut Eastern Chapter NRHS

I think that I have always loved trains: their size, their smell, their appearance as they come into view, their excitement of where they have been and where they are going. One of my earliest memories is going to the Thomaston, Connecticut railroad station with my Mother to pick up my arriving Uncle Jack at the station that served the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad on its Naugatuck branch line. I was a preschooler, and I still remember the face of a handsome man with a moustache who stayed on the train to travel farther up the line to his destination. How lucky I thought that he was to be traveling on a train!

As I said, I have always loved trains. For Christmas the year that I was in kindergarten, I wanted a model train set. Keep in mind that in 1956 wanting a model train for Christmas was an unusual request for a little girl; more than one person told me so. My own fondest wish was more important than what people thought of it, so I persisted with my Christmas 1956 wish. I knew that I would receive it if I told the real Santa Claus in Christmas Village in Torrington that I wanted a model train for Christmas.

The Sears Roebuck Christmas 1956 catalog had pages and pages of model trains and related accessories. Those pages were well worn by my daily examination. I didn't choose a big train set or one with fancy accessories. A train that ran on an oval and came with a metal tunnel would suit me just fine. It had a black metal steam locomotive, a lighter weight black metal coal car, a State of Maine Potatoes boxcar, a brown metal open gondola, and a red and white caboose. It was operated by a 4 inches by 4 inches black electrical transformer. When I sat on Santa's lap in Christmas Village that December, I made sure to tell him that the train that I wanted was in the Sears Roebuck catalog.



MY HOLIDAY TRAIN – Christmas 1984 with my 1956 train underneath the tree.

December is the longest month. It has 31 days, and the daylight is short and the nights long. Counting down to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day seemed to take forever back then. Weekend visits to aunts, uncles, and cousins helped to pass the time, as did holiday activities and decorations in school. *Tempus fugit* and Christmas finally came that year.

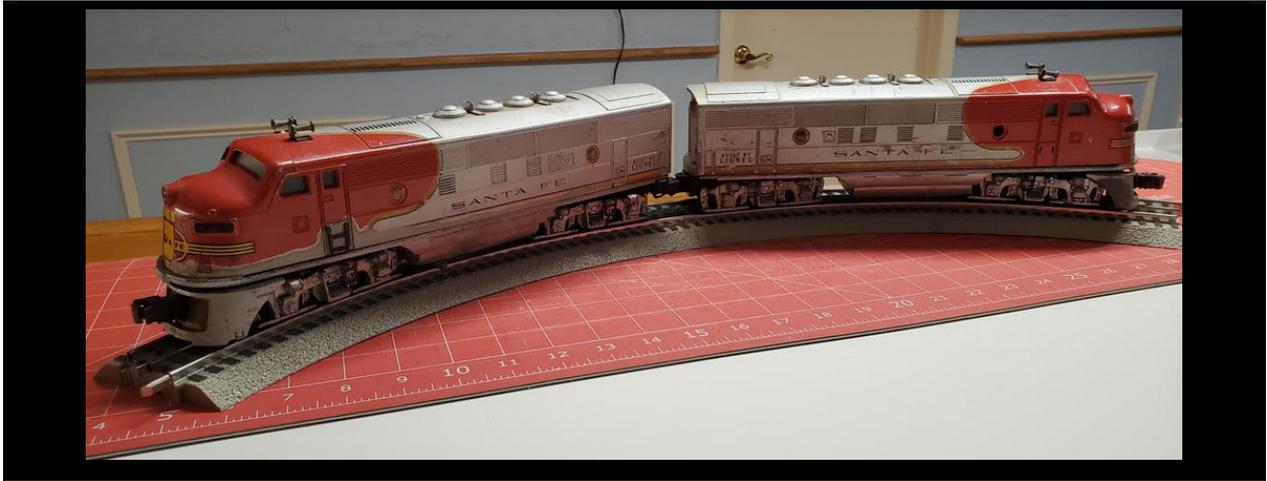
Descending the staircase from my bedroom upstairs Christmas morning, the bottom of the staircase opened up into the living room, its fireplace and mantle, and its Christmas tree. There it was in all its anticipated glory! My model train was set up underneath the Christmas tree! It looked just like the Sears Roebuck catalog page's picture! There was Christmas Day Mass to attend that morning and visits to relatives in the afternoon, so my engineer days had to wait until December 26 to begin.

It is more than 60 years later. I still have that train, all of its track, its still-working electrical transformer, and the box that it all came in. I haven't had it set up and running since my railfan son was a boy. Perhaps this is the year to go up into the attic, grab the train box, and set up and run my model train again. Women are engineers, aren't they? [Editor's note: *Most certainly!*]

Look Doug! A Santa Fe!

By DANIEL HULITT, *Northstar Chapter NRHS*

The year 1955 was to be a tipping point in our family railroading experience. As I was only 8 years old, I had no idea about this, but Doug, my 14 year old brother, was wiser in these things, especially since he knew that the deep well of our parent's art deco wardrobe could hold wonderful Christmas treasures. For decades I only knew part of this story. My brother told me the rest of the story a few years ago, the last time we were together. I had no idea previously. Maybe he was wiser on that, too.



In the late fall of 1955 Doug started scoping out the favorite parental Christmas hiding places, and in the wardrobe he made a marvelous find. A Lionel O gauge F-3 double A unit Santa Fe locomotive, one A unit powered, the other A unit a dummy. As there was only 1 set, he assumed it was for him, the older son. He said nothing about his find due to my focus on Santa.

On Christmas morning, at first light, we awoke our parents (I doubt that they had actually fallen asleep) to see what Santa had brought. My dad was a minister in Salem, N.J., and the Christmas season was very full of church activities, so Christmas Eve preparation left very little time for sleep. Tradition held that we could not go down the stairs until dad had checked it out and that the tree lights were turned on.

When we came down the stairs, our usual temporary train platform was set up, the gifts were assembled and staged, perhaps as magically as if Santa had done it himself.

My folks anticipated a special Christmas, so they set up the church's Wollensak reel to reel tape recorder. I did not pay much attention to that as there were gifts to open!

During his tale of that Christmas my brother told me he was anxiously waiting to open his gift. As it happened, I was told to open a long square ended box that was quite heavy. When the gleaming red and silver Santa Fe slid out of the box, a seismometer could have registered my brother's heart dropping. "I was totally disappointed," he told me. The folk's must have realized this so they quickly directed him to the box that held his Santa Fe.

That was to be the last year for the temporary Christmas layout, as we were now into it big time. A permanent layout was set up on the 3rd floor of the Victorian parsonage, only to be moved and enhanced 9 months later in a move to Haddon Heights, N.J. As we made our way to our new home, the very last item attached to the back doors of the moving van was our train platform.

Many Christmases have since come and gone, with my own sons and grandchildren, but my recorded yell of delight, "**Look Doug, a Santa Fe!**" still rings in my ears.

Operation Toy Train Acquires 13 Historic Rail Cars

By RUDY GARBELY, *Operation Toy Train*

Acquisition of the Historic Rail Cars

Operation Toy Train is an all-volunteer non-profit group that normally runs an annual toy collection train each December to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. This train provides the largest single donation to Toys for Tots in the United States. In just four days, the train collects over 25,000 toys, which are then redistributed by the Marines to children in need within the collection areas just in time for Christmas.

To facilitate moving this quantity of toys, Operation Toy Train maintains its own fleet of railcars. As the program experiences continued growth, additional railcars are needed to transport volunteers and provide a place for them to sort and stow toys while the train is en-route between stops. Unfortunately, the organization announced in August that the 2020 train would be canceled due to safety concerns resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Operation Toy Train is working with the Marines and the Toys for Tots Foundation to develop an alternate collection method for the upcoming holiday season that reflects the realities of the pandemic.

Despite the setback in 2020, Operation Toy Train has continued to refine and expand its railcar fleet to prepare for future operations. On Saturday, September 12, 2020, Passaic Street Properties, a property developer in Passaic, New Jersey, graciously donated thirteen historic railcars to Operation Toy Train.

Seven of the new cars will be used on either the organization's annual Toys for Tots collection train or for display at the new Port Jervis Transportation Museum, slated to open in 2021 in Port Jervis, New York. Three of the cars included in the donation are cabooses that formerly belonged to the Erie Railroad and are historically relevant to the City of Port Jervis. A baggage car in the collection will become an integral piece of the toy collection train, allowing volunteers to sort, pack, and stow toys while the train is en-route between collection stops.

Movement of the Historic Rail Cars



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JON BERKEMEYER

TRAIN MOVEMENT, PART 1 – The Morristown & Erie Railway moves Operation Toy Train's historic railcars eastward along Monroe Street in Garfield, NJ on Saturday, October 3, 2020.

With the assistance of the Morristown & Erie Railway (M&E) and the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway (NYS&W), a two-day logistically challenging move was undertaken to remove these 13 historic railcars (most of which have not rolled in over a decade) from their prior storage location. OTT is extremely grateful to Passaic Street Properties for donating these cars, and special gratitude is due to the M&E and NYS&W for their assistance in the planning and execution of this complicated and time-sensitive movement in compliance with all applicable federal regulations.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JON BERKEMEYER

TRAIN MOVEMENT, PART 2 – The New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway moves Operation Toy Train’s historic railcars westbound past the Charlotteburg Reservoir in Newfoundland, NJ on Sunday, October 4, 2020.

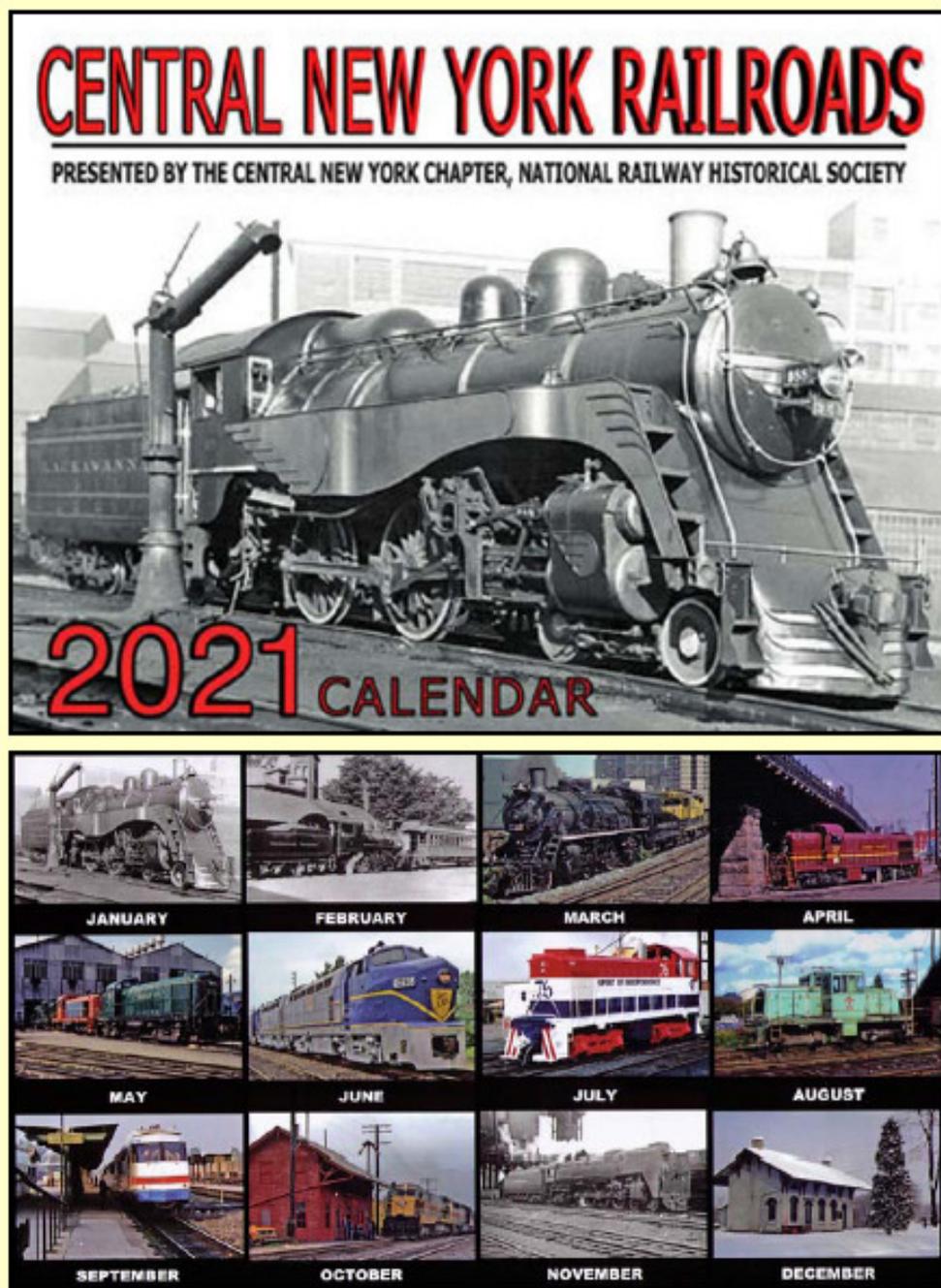
NJ Transit also graciously assisted with equipment inspections and operating logistics. OTT also thanks Softrail and The Andersons for their last-minute assistance with the project, as well as the Delaware, Lackawaxen & Stourbridge Railroad (DL&S) that will be moving these railcars from Lackawaxen to Honesdale and storing them for OTT.

From this new 13-car acquisition, Operation Toy Train plans to retain and specially outfit a baggage car for use on its annual Toys for Tots collection train. This car will allow OTT volunteers to sort, pack, and stow toys while the train is en-route between collection stops. In addition, three historic Erie Railroad cabooses (numbered C121, C262, and C340) and a flatcar will be retained. You can learn more about the history of each of OTT’s rail cars at www.OperationToyTrain.org/equipment .

Operation Toy Train is fundraising to rehabilitate these historic railcars. You can learn more about the history of each of these cars and donate to their restoration on Operation Toy Train’s website at www.OperationToyTrain.org/equipment. Operation Toy Train is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

2021 Calendar – Central New York Railroads

The Central New York Chapter, NRHS presents the *Central New York Railroads* 2021 calendar. Photographs cover Amtrak, local railroads, historical locomotives, a local train station and even a caboose. The calendar has 28 pages is 8.5 inches by 11 inches in size. The calendar may be purchased at the Chapter's online store at <http://www.cnynrhs.org/store.html> .



If you prefer to order by mail or purchase it locally, those options are also available.

- Calendar price is USD 15.00 and USD 4.00 shipping cost. New York State residents need to add USD 1.20 tax.
- To order by mail, send check or money order payable to CNYNRHS to: CNYNRHS Calendar c/o Phil Edwards, 6426 North Kirkville Road, Kirkville, NY 13082.
- For In-store pickup, visit Jr Junction Train & Hobby, 6426 Erie Boulevard East, Syracuse, New York.

Many thanks to the Central New York Chapter for permission to reprint this in the *NRHS News*.

2021 Calendar - Northstar Railway Historical Society

By Dawn Holmberg, Northstar Chapter NRHS

The Northstar Railway Historical Society, affiliated with the Northstar Chapter, NRHS, announces the 2021 edition of the *Minnesota Rail Calendar*. The calendar covers a wide variety of Minnesota rail subjects, from historic to modern, including passenger trains, steam and diesel locomotives and streetcars.

Calendars may be purchased by mail order, online or see <http://www.MnRailCal.com>. Quantities are limited, so please order soon. All proceeds support our railroad reference library, located in Crystal, Minnesota.

Minnesota Rail Calendar 2021 Order Form

The Northstar Railway Historical Society is pleased to announce the 2021 edition of the *Minnesota Rail Calendar*, continuing an over 30 year tradition.

Large 9" x 12" Format

It remains the best 12 months of Minnesota railroad history available.

Please print your information on the form below and mail it with your payment to:

**Minnesota Rail Calendar
Northstar Railway Historical Society
P.O. Box 120832
New Brighton, MN 55112**

Please make checks payable to:
Northstar Railway Historical Society

For more information, see:
www.MnRailCal.com

Email: Info@MnRailCal.com

Prices:

Minnesota residents - \$22.50 each.
Postage and Minnesota Sales taxes included.

Non-Minnesota U.S. residents - \$21.50 each.
Postage included.

Orders to Canadian addresses: Please send an email to:
Info@MnRailCal.com for pricing information.

Quantity discounts available on orders of 10 or more.



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Minnesota Residents: # of Calendars: _____ x \$22.50 = \$ _____

Non-Minnesota U.S. Residents: # of Calendars: _____ x \$21.50 = \$ _____

Grand Total = \$ _____

Minnesota Rail Calendar, Northstar Railway Historical Society, P.O. Box 120832, New Brighton, MN 55112

President's Column - Greetings of the Season

By AL WEBER, President, National Railway Historical Society

Season's Greetings. Well it has been an interesting year. Most of you will probably have a slightly different take, but the year has been a big challenge for the Society. With vaccines being distributed now, the end of the Covid lock down might be accomplished in the medium-term future.

Many of your NRHS committees are working on getting things done under these trying circumstances and we all need to thank them for their volunteer work. Along with many of you, I have gotten used to having meetings on my computer. Not ideal, but I do enjoy seeing many of you persevering with these new virtual tools.

If you get *Railway Age*, this month the issue is on women in railroading. On the cover is Katie Farmer, BNSF's next chief executive. We have sent several women to RailCamp over the years and several are

now working for railroads. It's just a matter of time until they are in an issue of *Railway Age*. If you know of any high school student (male or female) that is interested in railroads, please help them connect with the RailCamp committee. These future railroaders are our replacements so help them along.

Our membership renewal cycle is now in full swing. In addition to individual dues, we often receive extra donations. This year, we have an anonymous donor that is matching members' donations. PLEASE renew and donate a few extra dollars. The match will make all donated funds stretch further.

January is just around the corner, with spring and summer to follow soon. I look forward to getting together again in person at our meetings and at the annual convention.

Stay safe. Al Weber <aweber@nrhs.com>

Editor's Notes – What Is Your Favorite Locomotive?

By VALLI HOSKI, Editor, NRHS News

My family sends very merry regards and happy holiday wishes to you and yours. Have a joyous Christmas, a healthy New Year and enjoy the brightly glowing holidays. May you make new memories, share fond reminiscences and enjoy warm, comfortable holidays at home.

I hope you enjoy this issue's holiday train stories shared by members. I thank those members who graciously submitted their memories and photos to this holiday issue.

Let's start 2021 with a new conversation, this time about your favorite locomotive(s). Many a long winter night could be passed with a vigorous debate on which locomotive deserves the title of 'The Best'. Steam locomotives have a venerable history, from the standard to the streamlined models of the 1940s. America's coast-to-coast expansion sure would be a different story today, without the steam of the previous centuries. Diesel is 'modern', works almost anywhere, but its romance might be disputed.

What about the motive power. There are many pros and cons of steam versus diesel – which is the better technology, more innovative, and time efficient? Electric power? Is it resurgent and practical, or limited to smaller regions or countries?

Next, what is your favorite locomotive and why? Favorite type, manufacturer, type, gauge ? What about the look and style (livery), sound (horns), and movement (trucks, wheels)? What scale – prototype or model? When and why did you decide that this specific locomotive was 'IT' !

Please share your story for the February issue of the *NRHS News*. The accounts of 'secret Valentine' locomotives that have captured our hearts and imagination will provide fun and interesting reading.

Please submit articles, photos, suggestions to Val Hoski at news@nrhs.com .

Thank you and have a healthy 2021! Val.

The *NRHS News* is published nine times a year by the National Railway Historical Society. Valli Hoski, North Texas Chapter NRHS, Editor. Alex Mayes, Potomac Chapter NRHS, content and editorial assistant. Send items to: *NRHS News*, c/o Valli Hoski, P.O. Box 234, York Springs, PA, 17372. E-mail: <NEWS@NRHS.COM>. Phone 717-398-0430. The address for the Society is: National Railway Historical Society, Inc., 505 South Lenola Road, Suite 226, Moorestown, NJ 08057. All membership information changes should be sent to Hugh Harris <hughrharris@aol.com>.