

THE YORK MAIL



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NRHS Board Visits Muddy Creek Forks

by Craig Sansonetti

On Saturday, November 6, Muddy Creek Forks and the railroad were looking their best in order to welcome a very special group of visitors. Members of the Board of Directors of the National Railway Historical Society from all over the United States were our guests to ride the Ma & Pa, tour our village, inspect Locomotive No. 82 and the other rail equipment in our yard, and to enjoy lunch at Muddy Creek Forks.

Our Society was honored to be part of a milestone occasion for the NRHS, the 75th anniversary of the nation's premier rail enthusiast and preservation organization.

The Lancaster Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, formed in 1933, was one of the earliest railfan organizations in the United States. In 1935 several fledgling rail enthusiast groups congregated in Baltimore for a farewell excursion on the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Electric Railway. There the officers of the LR&LHS and the Interstate Trolley Club of Trenton, NJ, discussed the possibility of merging their organizations, and the idea of the National Railway Historical Society was born.

On October 2, 1935, the LR&LHS passed a resolution dissolving itself and establish-

ing the Lancaster Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. On October 13, at a joint meeting with the Interstate Trolley Club, by-laws for a national organization were adopted, and the first two chapters, Lancaster and New York, were admitted to the NRHS. Leon Franks, President of the Lancaster Chapter, was elected the first chairman of the new organization.

In recognition of the central role of the Lancaster Chapter in the founding of the NRHS, the National Board of Directors convened in Lancaster for their 75th anniversary meeting. In connection with the meeting the host chapter arranged visits to a number of railroad sites in the area, including the Strasburg Railroad and the Wilmington & Western. Needless to say, the visit to the Ma & Pa was a little different from the visits to those steam powered excursion lines, but our NRHS visitors were enthusiastic about what we had to share at Muddy Creek Forks.

In a follow up e-mail Lancaster Chapter

President Tom Shenk confirmed the success of the visit with the words, "Thanks – Everything was GREAT." It was great for our Society as well to have the opportunity to showcase our museum to this distinguished group.

Think **Big!**

Support the
Large Equipment Fund

President's Message

by Jerry McCloskey

Think Big(ger)!

If you've had the opportunity to fully read the Society's Annual Report of October 30, 2010, you'll no doubt note the continued increased appeal our project is generating. Attendance is up significantly over prior years as evidenced by growth in ticket sales, store receipts, requests for special/private events and membership. Even the increase in attendance at our annual meeting was such that we ran out of barbecue (which was my fault)! To me, all of this is indicative not only that the uniqueness of our project is enticing, but that the planning and execution by so many is on target.

*As my note in the Annual Report expressed, 2010 may prove to be a watershed year for the Society. We have achieved much over the years and continue to position ourselves for the future as envisioned by our Strategic Plan. You likely recently received the "**Think Big!**" mailing from the Society. Briefly, the "**Think Big!**" initiative seeks \$40,000 to fund the Society's entry into the operation of full-size equipment. The mailing provides more details, but the money will be used to:*

- ◆ *complete the restoration of the 45-ton locomotive as the initial power for full-size trains*
- ◆ *complete the conversion of our Union RR tool car to an open excursion car (with roof)*
- ◆ *purchase and move an early 1900s steel passenger car*
- ◆ *complete the restoration of M&P Caboose #2007 as an "extra-fare" car*

Please read the "Think BIG!" mailing and consider how you may be able to support the request. If you have any questions, please contact any Board member or me.

While we want to continue attracting

more visitors while providing a quality experience, we also want to earn revenues from additional sources. One of those is the rental of facilities. This is not limited to railroad enthusiasts (like the recent NRHS meeting of Chapter Directors), but can include family reunions, corporate/association picnics, weddings, etc. I ask that each of us be alert for any opportunity of this type. We are flexible in what we offer and can customize packages for specific applications. I am the contact person for the rentals, so please either call me or refer interested parties to me. This will be posted on our website.

Thanks for your continued support.

*Jerry
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NEWS!

**Both VISA and
MASTERCARD
are now accepted
for purchases
from the
Society!**

Track Report

by Mike Shay

On Saturday May 22, Mike Shay and Sam Bistline installed nine ties on the B-4 bridge so that the J.C.Ehrich spray truck could cross the bridge and spray the right-of-way for vegetation control to the double track passing siding near Laurel. The entire railroad was sprayed the following day. The spring work camp was held May 24 –27. On Monday and Tuesday all the new track between B-4 and Laurel siding was spiked and new joint bars placed at some of the joints. Wednesday and Thursday were the hottest days with temperatures in the 90s. Using the scarifier to excavate the tie cribs we were able to install 42 ties. On Friday the track crew gauged and spiked the 42 ties. The last day of work camp we tightened bolts on the joint bars between Muddy Creek Forks and High Rock. We also cut back brush on the main line so we could start passenger train operations on the following weekend. The high rail dump truck was used during the week to spread 50 tons of ballast between the B-4 bridge and Laurel siding. The passenger train ride has now been extended to just south of Laurel siding.

On Saturday September 4, the track crew spiked 14 ties in front of the shop at Muddy Creek Forks. In the afternoon we replaced 8 ties in front of the south end of the High Rock cut. This job took a lot excavation by hand because the ties had to be slid in on an angle. We also had to remove one piece of the safety rail to get the job done. The following Saturday, Jim Curd and I re-installed the safety rail. During the remainder of the year we plan to ballast the rest of the track between B-4 bridge and Laurel siding.

Thanks to Gary Gadziala, Darrell Sacks, Lowell & Joan Shakers, Charlie High, Joe Kane, Larry Freeman, Pete Tinsley, John von Briesen, Sam Bistline, Mark Blevins, and Dan Varholý for helping out.



A volunteer crew left to right: Lowell & Joan Shakers, Gary Gadziala, Dan Varholý, & Darrell Sacks. (photo by Mike Shay)

Muddy Creek Forks Rules!

by Teddy Blevins

Hello, my name is Teddy Blevins. I am a student member of the Maryland & Preservation Railroad Society. I am also a Cub Scout. My Cub Scout Pack is Pack 28. We meet at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Red Lion, Pennsylvania. This church is right beside the old Ma & Pa railroad bed and is not too far from the Red Lion Railroad Station. Engine 82 used to run right by the church to the railroad station.

On Saturday, June 19, 2010 my Cub Scout pack went to visit Muddy Creek Forks. We went to the mill. We were able to grind wheat with a hand mill and sift the flour. We checked out Engine 82. We took a train ride. Some people drank the best root beer in the world. We saw history about Muddy Creek Forks and the railroad. We heard the player piano make music.

A lot of the Cub Scouts and their families had never been there before. They seemed to have fun. They are planning to come back next summer. Thank you to all of the members that came and helped with our awesome day.

Muddy Creek Forks Rules!

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Heritage Day Highlights

Heritage Day 2010 dawned with a tiny bit of drizzle, but soon brightened into a perfect day for exploring our Heritage Village and riding the trains. Excellent publicity, our growing reputation for being a fascinating place to visit, and the quality efforts by our docents brought visitors flocking in. Lines formed early at the greeter's table and ticket office and later crowded the food tents. The parking lot soon filled almost to overflowing. By the end of the day we had given 531 people train rides, docents had given countless demonstrations, and visitors, young and old, had stepped outside their everyday lives and discovered a little more about what makes America what it is today.

It takes a fantastic team of volunteers to run such a complicated event which shows off so many aspects of life in the 1915 era. Many, many thanks to all who helped with publicity, the set up, the day's presentations, and the clean-up.

It is impossible to capture the whole Heritage Day experience in a limited number of photos, but here are a few which highlight some of the joys of the day.



Above: The whole crew of docents, except the parking gang and photographer Craig Sansonetti, are ready to welcome Heritage Day visitors.

Right: Long-time members Wade, Joann, and Chip Momm are among the many passengers on this crowded departing train. (photo by Craig Sansonetti)



Left: Though she is hidden by the crowd, Kristy Albright explained the rope-operated freight elevator to visitors all day. (photo by Tom Arnold)

Heritage Day Highlights, cont.



Above, right and left: The parking crew managed to find spaces for everybody, even though the field was nearly full at times. This year we had three vendors to add to the interest - local artist Charlie Long, candied apple and hard candy makers Lee and Don Culp, and crafts maker Spotted Fawn Shay. (photos by Tom Arnold)

Below, left and right: Cub Scouts found lots to explore at Heritage Day, with this group checking under the grain elevator to see the auger and bottom of the input hopper. Pete Tinsley and Craig Sansonetti had the mill and grain elevator open for business. (photos by Tom Arnold and Craig Sansonetti)



Heritage Day Highlights, cont.



Above: Expert Ma & Pa RR modeler Joe Bower brought some of his trains for train buffs to examine.

Below: This fine-looking crew kept the trains running safely and on schedule all day, enabling over 500 people to enjoy a beautiful ride on the M&P right of way. *(photo by Tom Arnold)*



Left: Knowledgeable experts like Ken Spencer and Jake Bankert (not shown) were available to answer hundreds of questions about locomotive No. 82. *(photo by Tom Arnold)*

Right: The children enjoyed the special activities tables run by Lana Blevins and Linda Mack. *(photo by Tom Arnold)*



Heritage Day Highlights, cont.



Above: Some “new” antiques were available to challenge our visitors, who could discuss them with Evelyn Snyder. *(photo by Craig Sansonetti)*

Below: Don and Sandy Jones staged a special exhibit of many of their collection of M&P artifacts and documents. *(photo by Craig Sansonetti)*



Below: Sam Bistline coordinated the track working demonstrations along with Gary Gadziala and Art Bowers. *(photo by Craig Sansonetti)*



Below: The first floor docents had to really hustle all day to handle the large number of visitors. *(photo by Craig Sansonetti)*



Didja Know?

by Jean Sansonetti

(An irregular column of unusual facts
about the railroad, the village, and the 1915 era)

Though there is not a lot of information available about the topic, this Didja Know column will try to shed a little light on lighting in Muddy Creek Forks. Much of what we know is obtained from the oral histories of Bruce Grove.

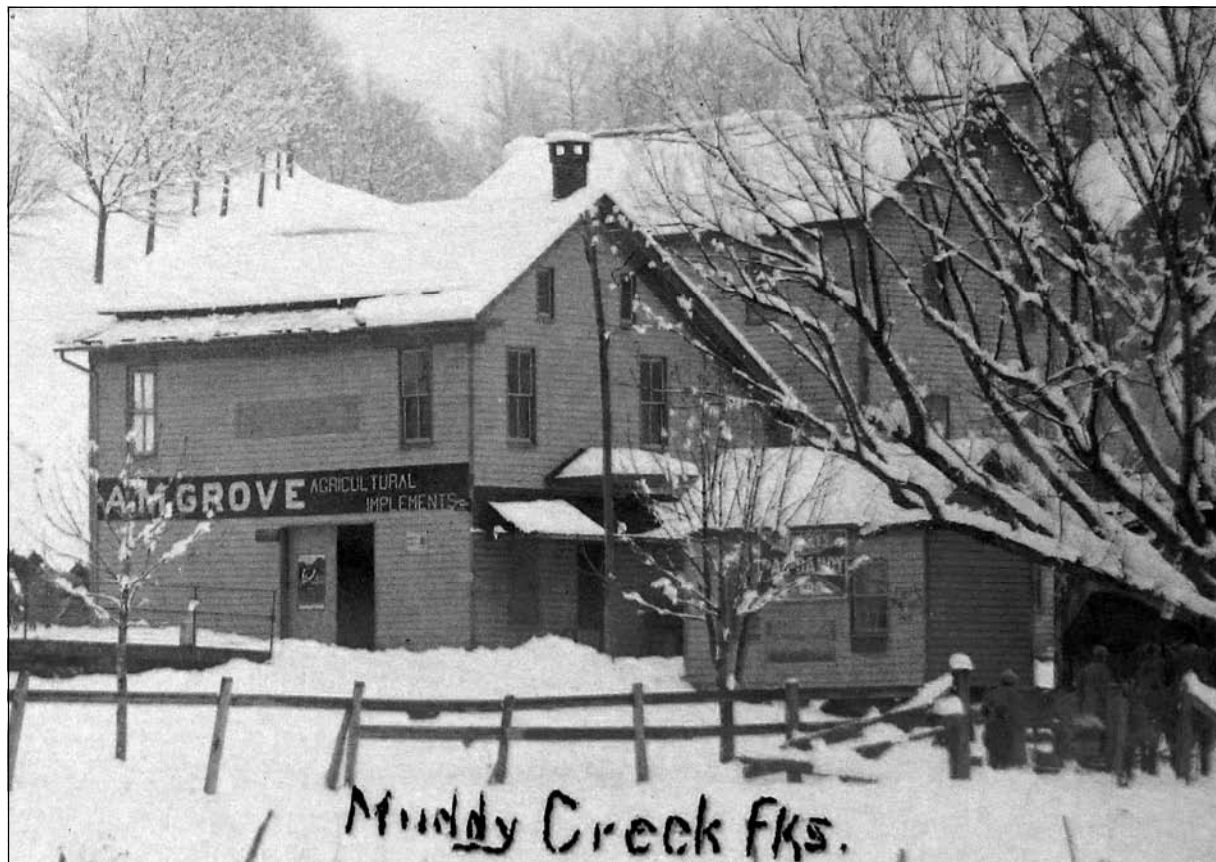
When A. M. Grove built his new store in 1899, he had four floors of merchandise in a wood frame building with gas lights and an acetylene plant in the basement. The nipples for the gas lights are still visible in the ceiling of the first floor of the store.

Though the store had gas lights from the time it was built, some merchandise, like dynamite, wire screen, plows, rakes, and hoes, were sold from Machinery Hall across the tracks and some items were sold from the unlit basement. So the clerks kept four to six lanterns lit in the evening, which they hung from nails in the support timbers in the cellar. When customers needed something from Machinery Hall the clerks just grabbed a lantern and hung it back up when they returned.

In one of the oral histories, Bruce Grove

talked about the old store, “*We had in there a bank of batteries. Oh, it was from here clear up to the ceiling and a generator. The mill ran a generator and the generator charged the batteries and lit the lights.*” Clearly this equipment must have been installed sometime after the construction of the new store with its gas lights. In the back of his 1917 diary in an undated area, A. M. Grove noted the cost of an electric light plant — \$1460.80. This might well indicate that the power plant Bruce Grove described was installed at that time.

John Manifold, who moved into A.M. Grove’s home on the hill in the mid 1930’s, described the electrical system in that house. They had about four to six big wet batteries and a gasoline-powered generator. They ran the generator either every day or every other day to build up the batteries, which then provided 32-volt D/C electricity – enough to power just the lights and a radio. The power company arrived, bringing A/C electricity and modern lighting to Muddy Creek Forks, around 1940.



Progress and Plans Highlight 2010 Annual Meeting

The 25th Annual Meeting of the M&PRPS was held in Muddy Creek Forks on Saturday, October 30. The meeting was well attended and there was a sense of optimism and anticipation in the air. Dues paying membership is up, operating revenues for 2010 were more than 50% higher than in 2009, and for the first time since 1996 our afternoon inspection train was able to run as far as the north switch of the Laurel siding. The nearly complete diorama of Muddy Creek Forks on the second floor of the store drew rave reviews, and the diorama team of Steve Fisher, Ted Baccala, Dave Renard, and Alan Anderson were recognized during the meeting for their outstanding work. Incumbent directors John Finlayson, Charlie Nichols, and Pete Tinsley were re-elected to new three-year terms on the Board.

The Strategic Plan adopted by the Society last spring was a major topic of the meeting. Society President Jerry McCloskey summarized principal aspects of the plan and the timeline and goals it establishes. Progress on first year goals, many of which have already been met, was reviewed in detail. To finance the Strategic Plan's goal of initiating operations with full size rail equipment, the Board of Directors has established a Large Equipment Fund. Those in attendance were given a preview of the "Think Big!" fundraising appeal that debuted in No-



Above: The afternoon track inspection traversed the Laurel passing siding for the first time since 1996. Here the train sits astride the north switch of the siding.

member to seek support for this initiative. In closing, McCloskey summed up the Society's priorities for 2011 as promoting financial sustainability including the establishment of a professionally managed endowment fund, expanded marketing to bring visitors to our museum, and membership growth and volunteer development.

Following the business meeting Bob Gotwols presented a program on the plans of *Steam into History* to operate Civil War era trains on the Northern Central Railroad between New Freedom and Hanover Junction. President Lincoln traveled this route and was photographed at Hanover Junction on his way to deliver the Gettysburg address. *Steam into History* is organized as a not-for-profit corporation whose pri-



Above: Bob Gotwols of Steam into History provoked a lot of interest and discussion with his description of plans for a Civil War train operation on the Northern Central Railroad.

mary aim is to promote tourism in York County with a focus on Civil War history. The organization already has a replica locomotive under construction and Civil War era passenger coaches are planned. Turntables at both ends of the run and maintenance and storage facilities for the equipment will also be built. Startup of the operation is targeted for the spring of 2013 to coincide with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. Gotwols stressed that *Steam into History* wants to work cooperatively with other regional history attractions, including our Ma & Pa Heritage Village, to strengthen York County as a tourist destination.

School Visits MCF

On October 5, the Society welcomed the Blue Rock Mennonite School to explore our Heritage Village. For the first time, we had a school group with a wide range of ages — first



through tenth grades — with over 50 students. By dividing into groups based on age, each group was able to have a train ride plus educational experiences in the mill, grain elevator, and the A.M. Grove store; the experiences were tailored to the group's interests and capabilities. A docent team of Mark and Lana Blevins, Craig and Jean Sansonetti, and Pete Mory escorted the groups and prepared and delivered the presentations. Both students and docents seemed to enjoy the visit.

Thanks to all those who have paid
 Our heritage may never fade.
 But if your name's blue,
 Your dues are still due,
 Help see that much progress is
 made.