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The Sentinel

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Letter from the President

Time to Prepare for the Future

Gregory M. Smith, President B&ORHS

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Historical Society has been a continuously functioning educational society for more than 30 years. We have made many significant changes over the last 15 years, offering members such things as an outstanding quarterly publication, *The Sentinel,* yearly calendars, books and reproductions on the B&O operations, mini-conventions and annual conventions.

Great progress has also been made in developing the Society's archival collection. The Society's photographs, maps and charts, books and documents are now secure under one roof. But with the growing collection and the increase in the number of volunteer workers, plus an increase in technology (think computers), we have rapidly outgrown the space.

The executive committee and board of directors have come to the conclusion that we need to plan now for change in the archives space and location. So we are beginning to institute a fund-raising campaign to establish a war chest for such a move.

The collection is housed in a rented 2,000-square-foot space. We have been organizing the collection with limited working space for the volunteers. This has been made by using every space in corners and along walls. To date most of the maps and charts are recorded in a spreadsheet and photographs are being scanned and indexed.

Our next step is to place our spreadsheets in a workable program for use with our web page. This program has just been approved by the board and we will need time to get it up and running.

We will begin work on company files that we obtained. Since they are now being preserved they will be indexed into the new program. This is going to be a long process and more volunteers will be needed, but there is the problem of work space. Space is tight for archive storage, company store storage and operations, and Society operation storages. There is no space for offices, conference room, classroom(s), and/or meeting room.

To grow and meet the requirements to keep our 501 (c) 3 educational status we need to do outreach to members and the community. We expect that the Society will need more than 8,000 square feet of space to be more functional and have space to expand. One place we have checked into could require a minimum of $450,000 for purchase and renovations to reach a workable amount of space. This would provide space for a world-class railroad research library, digital imaging center, volunteer work stations, storage space for archival records, space for the company store, several offices and a conference room for the board, closets, and at least one classroom and a meeting room. So we must allow for the costs of modifying any space, furniture, and moving the collection.

Your president and archivist have committed $1,000 each to start the building fund. Other members of the executive are making plans to follow suit.

Meanwhile, here are the proposed classes to meet the monetary goals for the building fund, and to reward contributors.

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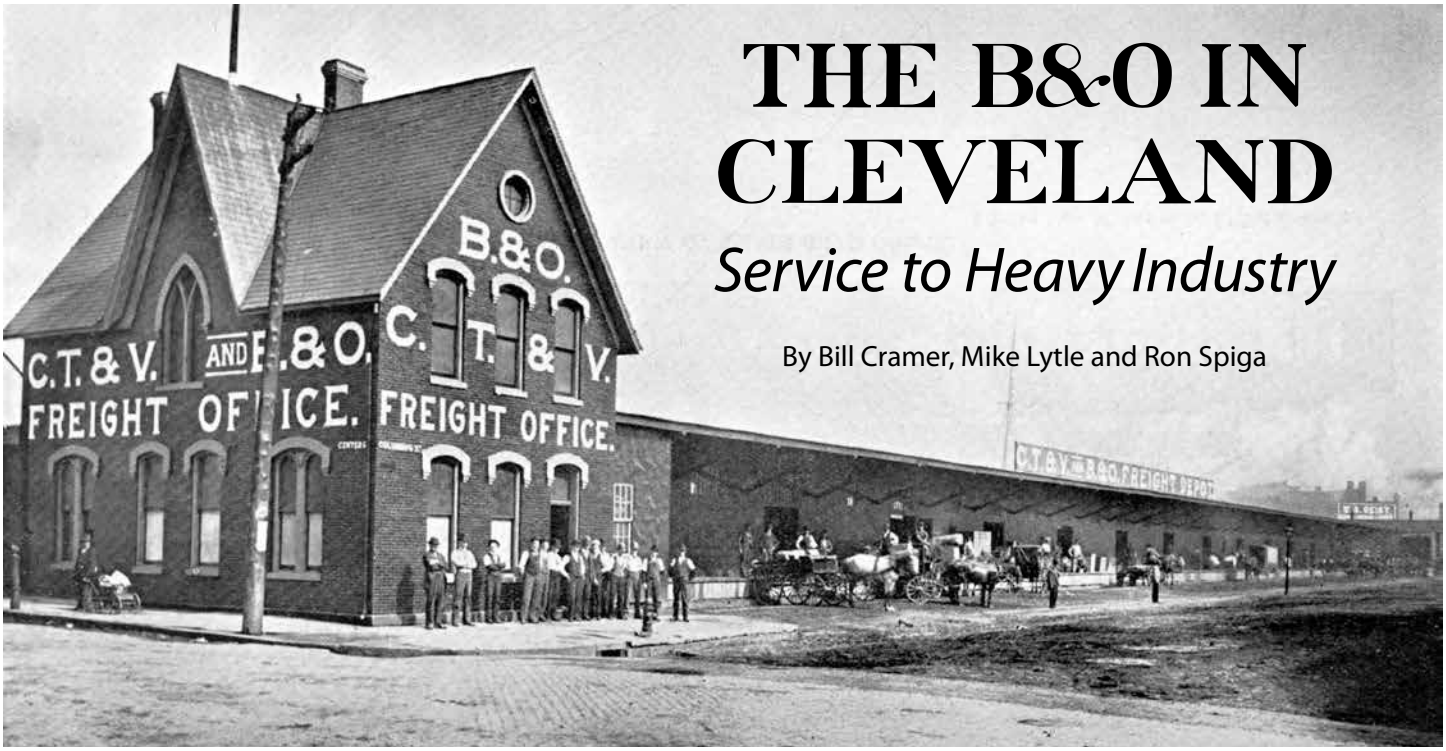
The Baltimore and Ohio Historical Society is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving and disseminating historical information about The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

On the Covers

FRONT COVER: Bridge 464 is one of three lift bridges the B&O needed in Cleveland; the peg-and-hole mechanism [inset] helped with alignment. The railroad's role in the city will be a topic of July's NMRA convention there. *(Ron Spiga photograph; E. Ray Lichty photograph)*

BACK COVER: Alex Mayes headed for Sand Patch grade the day after a February snowstorm to get this photograph of a new CSX double-stack National Gateway train on the former B&O. See page 33.



THE B&O IN CLEVELAND

Service to Heavy Industry

By Bill Cramer, Mike Lytle and Ron Spiga

The original CT&V/B&O Columbus Road freight house in the Cleveland flats. Put into use on June 17, 1896, it was 500 feet long and could accommodate 85 freight cars on multiple tracks. Built at a cost of $16,000, it was located only about a block from the proposed new brick CT&V passenger depot. *(Photograph from CT&V Annual Report dated October 21, 1897)*

The city of Cleveland traces its roots to the summer of 1796, when a Connecticut Land Company surveying party led by Moses Cleaveland (the first "a" was dropped over time during the 1800s) arrived in the lands of the Western Reserve that it had recently acquired from the state of Connecticut.

The Western Reserve was an area of what is now the northeastern portion of the state of Ohio that was reserved for westward expansion by settlers of Connecticut during colonial days. Cleaveland made the recommendation that the "principal" city in the Western Reserve should be located at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, where it flows into Lake Erie. His judgment was based on its central location in the Western Reserve lands along the shore of Lake Erie and that the river was navigable for small boats for several miles inland.

The name "Cuyahoga" is commonly believed to be a white settler's derivation of the Mohawk Indian word "Cayagaga," which meant crooked river. The name is certainly an accurate description of the lower Cuyahoga River, which winds its way like a writhing snake through its narrow valley the last few miles before it empties into Lake Erie.

A small settlement formed along the river bank near the outlet into Lake Erie and a town was even platted on a bluff above the river at what is now Cleveland's Public Square. But growth was slow to come, largely because the mouth of the river was frequently blocked by sandbars and the narrow valley was a swampy and overgrown home of malaria-carrying mosquitoes and other unwelcome critters.

Things began to pick up in the 1820s when the new Ohio and Erie Canal was developed. Inspired by the potential of the canal system across New York State and the opportunity it offered Ohio settlers to reach eastern markets by crossing Lake Erie to Buffalo and the new canal, the Ohio government developed two major canal systems to connect inland to both Lake Erie and the Ohio River.

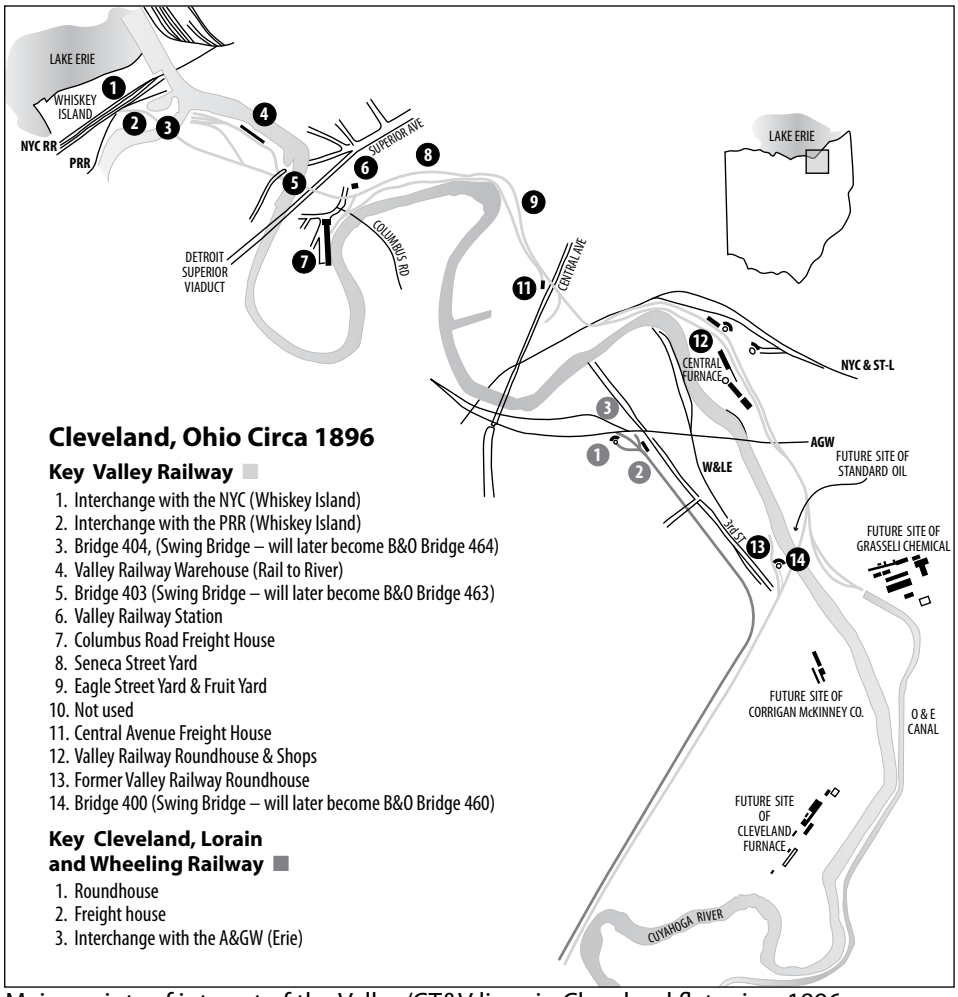
In western Ohio, the Miami and Erie Canal was developed along major rivers to connect the Ohio River at Cincinnati with Lake Erie at Toledo. In the eastern part of the state the Ohio and Erie was developed between Cleveland and Portsmouth to make a similar connection.

Alfred Kelly, a local politician and businessman, is credited with bringing the northern terminus of the canal to Cleveland. While we cannot question Kelly's business and political skills, he was no doubt assisted by the canal planning engineers, who noted the close and favorable proximity of the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas river watersheds and a supply of water necessary to operate the locks at what is now Akron, Ohio.

The selection of the mouth of the Cuyahoga as the northern terminal for the O&E led to an infusion of federal money for infrastructure improvements, including a cutoff channel to improve the outlet of the river into Lake Erie. In addition to providing better access by lake vessels to the river, the cutoff channel improved the flow of the river, enabling residents to drain the swampy valley and make it more livable.

The cutoff created an island between it and the original river mouth that became known as Whiskey Island, so named for a distillery, one of Cleveland's first important industries, that was located there.

The canal was opened for navigation between Cleveland and Akron on July 4, 1827, and was opened all the way to the Ohio River at Portsmouth in1832. Largely because of the canal,



Major points of interest of the Valley/CT&V lines in Cleveland flats circa 1896.
(Map by Mike Lytle, graphic by Marsha Stepowany)

during the next 20 years Cleveland's population grew from a settlement of 500 hardy settlers to a large trading center of 12,000 people.

The canal followed the Cuyahoga River north from Akron and entered Cleveland along the east bank of the river, roughly paralleling it to a location about a half-mile south of its mouth and just "under the hill" from Public Square where a ship lock was constructed to permit lake vessels to enter the canal from the river to transfer cargo directly between canal and lake vessels. The location of the canal and its proximity to downtown Cleveland later became important to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, as we will see shortly.

The Trouble With Canals

As the industrial revolution spread across the country between 1845 and 1860, Cleveland grew into a major manufacturing and trading center largely concentrated in the Cuyahoga River valley, which became known locally as "the flats" and was overlooked by a bustling business and residential community on the bluffs on either side of the valley.

During this period the business and political scene in Cleveland came to be dominated by a close-knit group of entrepreneurs who owned and operated most of the local businesses and industries. This group of men did business with each other, invested in and held management positions in each other's businesses, ran for and supported each other for political office, socialized both during the day and evenings, and supported each other's charity and philanthropic interests.

The canals had brought growth and prosperity to those communities located along them. Communities denied access to the canals for political or physical reasons began to search for ways to overcome "the tyranny of distance" that plagued early settlers in Ohio and other parts of the newly developing western frontier of the United States.

The emerging idea of railroads began to offer an opportunity to compete with communities that had canals and caught the attention of business interests in Ohio, much like the business community of Baltimore, Maryland, that had started the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to compete with cities such as Philadelphia and New York that were developing canal systems to reach the interior.

The earliest successful example in Ohio of railroads competing with canals is the Lake Erie community of Sandusky and the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad, which sought to connect Lake Erie at Sandusky with the Ohio River at Cincinnati, in competition with Cleveland and Toledo.

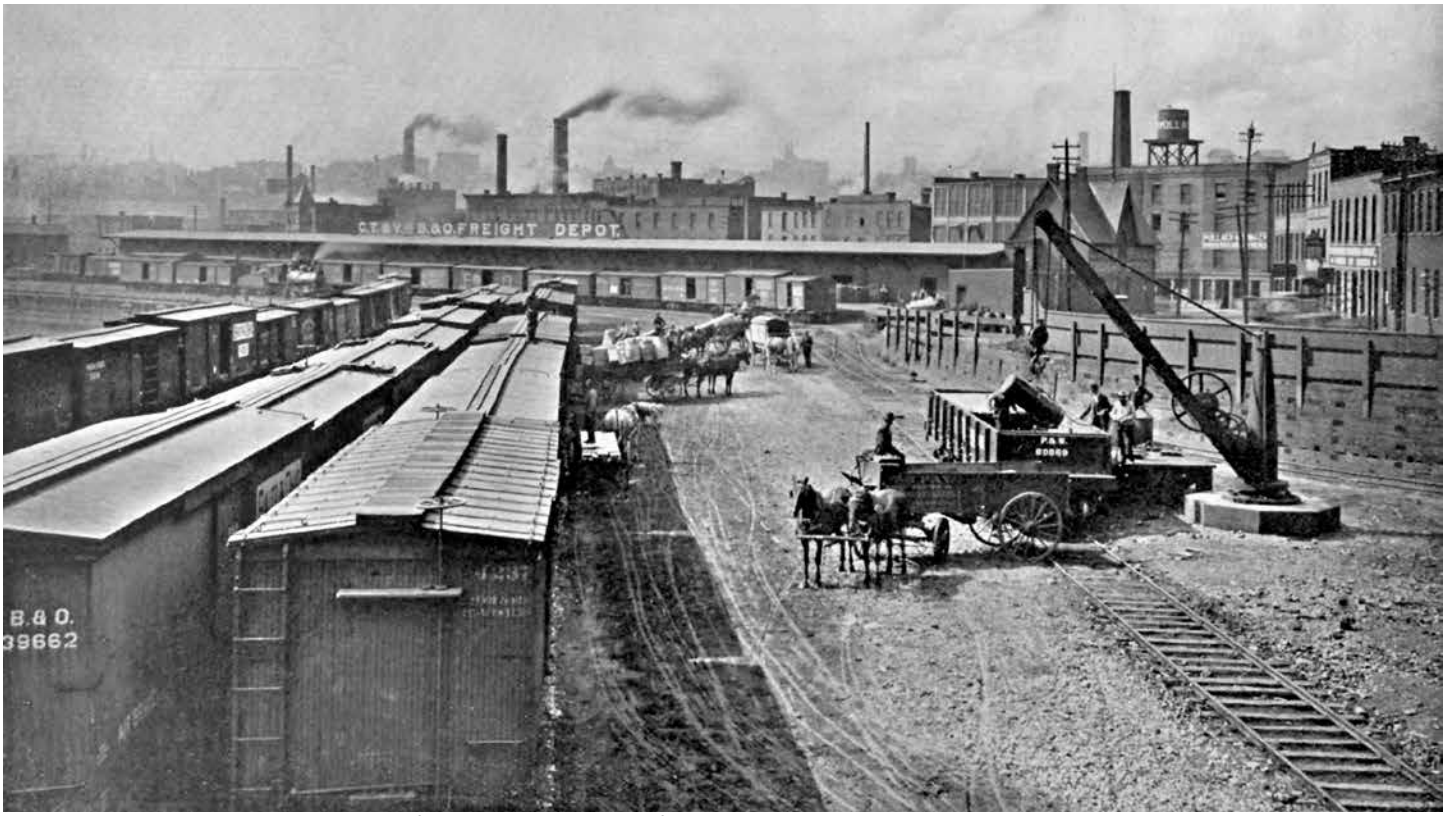
By the 1850s the superiority of railroads as a transportation mode became apparent. Canals were limited by topography, water supply and weather, particularly in winter. Compared to the canal systems, the railroads demonstrated greater flexibility in where they could locate, were less influenced by drought and winter weather, and were able to move passengers and freight economically and much faster!

The Cleveland business community, even with its canal, began early to recognize the potential of railroads. Cleveland's first successful railroad was the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, known as the Bee Line and later the Big Four, that began construction in the late 1840s and was opened all the way to Cincinnati in 1851.

It was followed quickly by lines running east and west from Cleveland along the shore of Lake Erie that became parts of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad. By 1890, both the Big Four and the LS&MS became part of the New York Central System.

The Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad was opened from Cleveland to the Ohio River in 1852. It quickly fell under the control of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Cleveland and Mahoning Valley Railroad, which opened in 1857 from Cleveland to Youngstown and Warren, Ohio, eventually became part of the Erie Railroad.

These early Cleveland railroads were built by men from the Cleveland business community or were supported by and



Activity was brisk on the track side of the Columbus Road freight depot. Here a typical crew goes about its duties working at the freight house. At one point cars were lined up abreast so crews using portable ramps could roll cargo from the loading dock through one car and into a second. *(CT&V Annual Report 1897)*

provided investment money by them. A Union Station, used by the Bee Line, LS&MS and C&P, was built along the lake shore just east of the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in 1853. It burned in 1864 and was replaced in 1866 by a station that was, at that time, the largest structure in the world under one roof.

The heyday of the canals in Ohio was short-lived. The state-owned canal system became politicized and had created a heavy debt that was hard to deal with. Floods, drought and economic ups and downs periodically strained the system. Revenues from canal operation peaked in 1847 and tonnage carried reached its highest point in the early 1850s, followed by a rapid decline caused in large part by competition from the growing railroad system.

In 1861 the state government leased the canal system to private operators. They made improvements in the operation and physical structure, but the inherent problems persisted and finally in the late 1870s the state was forced to take back the now partially dismantled canal system.

A Manufacturing Colossus

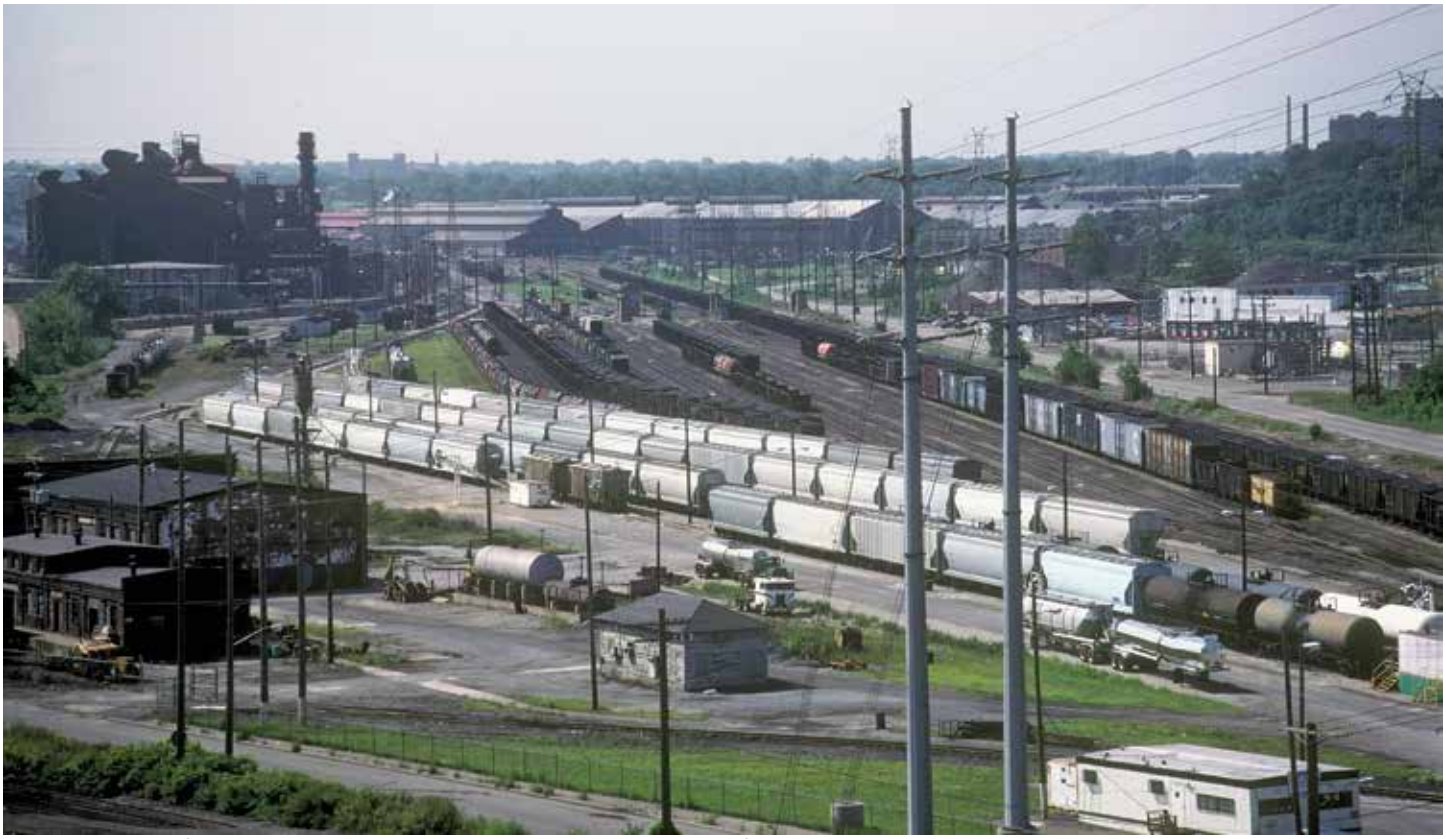
After the Civil War our industrial revolution kicked into high gear, and Cleveland, strategically positioned as a growing railroad center and Great Lakes port, continued to grow rapidly. By the end of the 19th century it was one of the largest cities in the United States and also one of its largest manufacturing centers. John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company started in Cleveland and grew quickly to be the country's largest oil company.

The iron and steel industry, attracted by the availability of iron ore from the upper Great Lakes and coal from the eastern Ohio fields, grew rapidly and became Cleveland's largest industry. The steel industry in turn attracted businesses that supplied it or used its products.

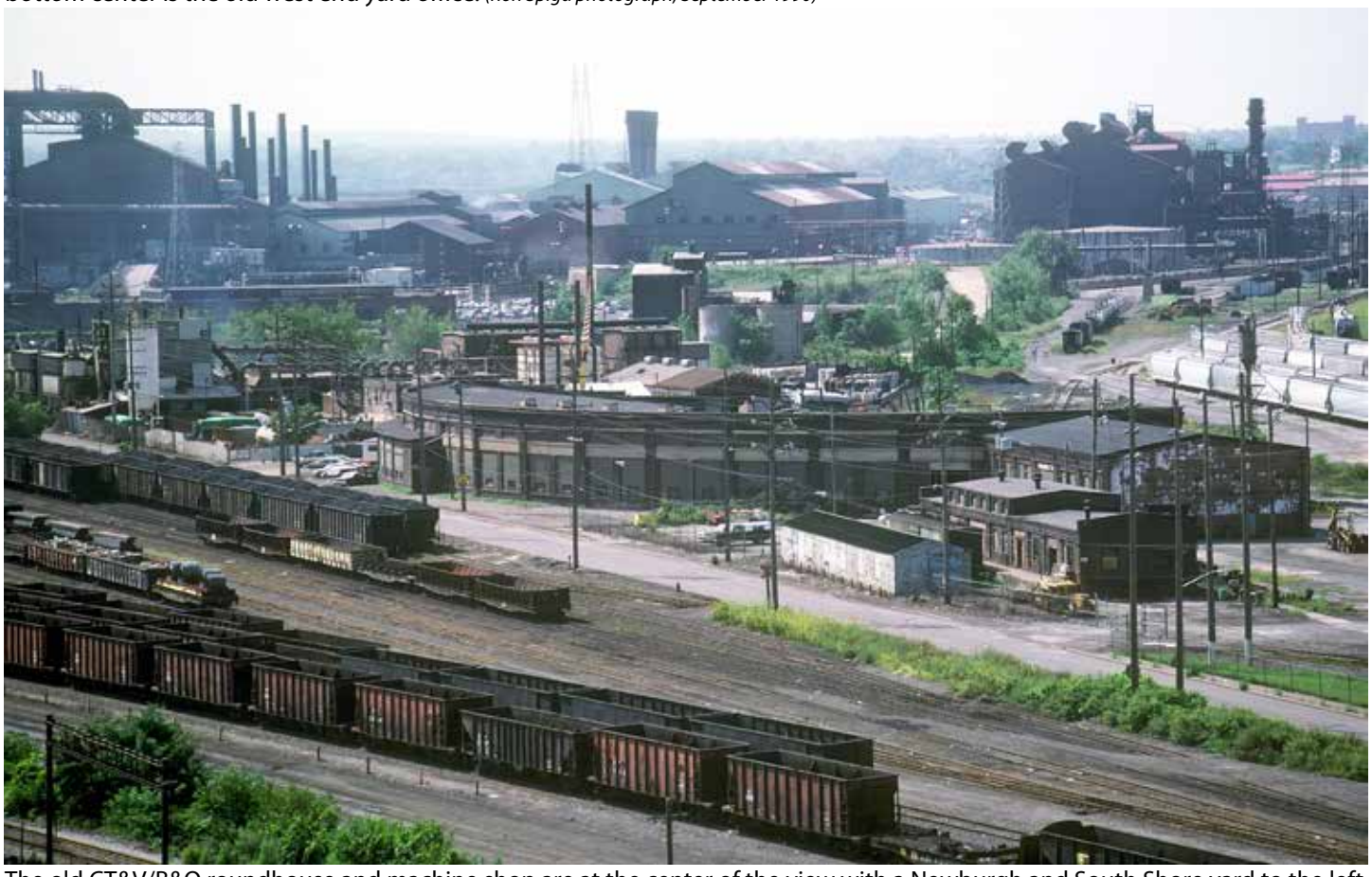
The Cleveland business community, as well as other entrepreneurs, looked for more and better ways to bring coal, the fuel of the industrial revolution, to Cleveland and the ports along Lake Erie. A number of railroads down into the coal fields were proposed. Some never got off the drawing boards, or even out of the crazy-idea category, but several of them had merit, obtained support and were built. Two of these lines, the Valley Railway and the Lake Shore and Tuscarawas Valley Railroad, became part of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad by the turn of the century.

The Valley Railway began life as the Akron and Canton Railway in 1869 and was the brainchild of David L. King, a businessman from Akron. King was also involved with the B&O in an unsuccessful attempt in 1870 to extend the B&O westward from Pittsburgh to Chicago via Youngstown, Akron and Chicago Junction.

King's Akron and Canton Railway quickly grew into the larger idea of a line not just between Akron and Canton, but also into Cleveland. With investors from all three communities involved, a company with the broader name of the Valley Railway was incorporated on August 21, 1871. Its objective was to build a railroad from Cleveland through Akron and Canton into the eastern Ohio coal fields, and there were plans to reach the Ohio River at or near Wheeling, West Virginia.



The west end of Clark Avenue yard looking south. In the center foreground is the BIDS (Bulk Intermodal Distribution Services) terminal area filled with covered hoppers and tank cars with loads waiting to be transloaded to trucks. The small gray structure at bottom center is the old west end yard office. *(Ron Spiga photograph, September 1990)*



The old CT&V/B&O roundhouse and machine shop are at the center of the view with a Newburgh and South Shore yard to the left, the BIDS terminal and Clark Avenue yard to the right and part of the large Cleveland steel mill complex in the background. The smaller brick building and gray metal shed were the B&O's Cleveland storehouse. *(RS)*