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B&O's EM-1s

2017 Cumberland
Convention

Message from the President

Happy New Year!

Let us review the last quarter of 2017 starting with the 2017 convention in Cumberland. Although events did go off as planned, many problems occurred just before the convention. Weeks before the convention, the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad informed us there were no accommodations for Friday's scheduled events. They did not want to honor their negotiated terms with us and we had to seek outside help to get the situation resolved. With the assistance of Maryland House of Representatives Delegate Mike McKay, we were able to resolve the conflict with a contract suitable for all parties. Then, days before the convention, the Ramada Hotel informed a third of the attendees they had no rooms. Some of these people had made reservations 3-to-4 months in advance. After contacting the parent company's headquarters, rooms were found several miles from downtown Cumberland. Needless to say, many people were not happy with the situation. There were other problems with the hotel, including lack of service and the rate rooms were cleaned. So with the downsizing of rail operations, poor hotel accommodations, and the sad condition of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, it will be a long time before we return to Cumberland for a convention.

In November we had our first community

outreach program, and it was modestly attended. We will have to do a better job promoting these in 2018, but I feel these need to continue. On December 2nd we had our first holiday party for members to relax and share the holiday spirit with each other. If you are going to be in the Baltimore area on December 1, 2018, please consider coming. This quarter is the last time to make a contribution to the society under the current donor policy. As of January 1st, the donor policy has changed and a new donor form will be the 2nd quarter *Sentinel*.

With the current chaos going on with CSX, the Board of Directors have decided to sell all but 100 shares of CSX stock. A portion of the sale will go to the building's new roof, which started to be replaced on November 29, 2017. The remainder of the funds will be reinvested.

As some of you may know, the median age of the society members is in the mid-sixties. Only three officers, directors, and committee chairs are under sixty years of age. We need to get younger people involved. Now there are advantages with retirees in positions of leadership: their knowledge, experience, and free time. But if people do not get involved with assisting these current leaders, who is going to take control of the society in the future? We need your support! So here is a start. Harry Meem, our publications chair, has

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)

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In This Issue

2017 ANNUAL CONVENTION <i>Cumberland, Maryland</i> BY HENRY FREEMAN, ETAL	3
ALTERNATE REALITY CUMBERLAND BY HENRY FREEMAN	9
B&O's EM-1 <i>Was one to be saved for the B&O Museum?</i> BY DWIGHT JONES	19
REPRINT FROM RAILWAY AGE WEEKLY <i>March 16 1964</i>	29
THE SANTA FE AT LOCUST POINT BY JOHN TEICHMOELLER	35
RUNNING LIGHT	36
MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPHS	38
ARCHIVE CENTER REPORT	39

On the Covers

Front Cover: B&O EM-1 2-8-8-47619 was westbound at Cumberland Narrows, Maryland on September 18, 1955. There's a nice stream of condensate coming from the generator, and the fireman may have put some sand through the flues as a present to the photographer in this photograph from the twilight of steam power. A war baby of September, 1944, 7619 was still receiving upgrades as late as July, 1953. November, 1958 would be her final performance. Was B&O planning to save an EM-1? Check out Dwight Jones story on page 17 for a view of the controversy.

Back Cover: These two photographs of the Queen City Hotel were taken on September 8, 1953, at the completion of the renovations that removed 80 years of soot, but damaged the wood trim. For B&O's dalliance with other potential Cumberland stations, and plans for alternate yard locations, see Henry Freeman's article on page 9. (B&ORRH collection)

2017 Annual Convention Cumberland, Maryland

By Henry Freeman, with contributions from Bruce Elliott and Andy White
Photographs and captions by Allen Young



Group convention attendees photograph on the steps of the Western Maryland station.

The Society's annual convention has been to Cumberland on three prior occasions (1989, 2000 and 2014), but this was the first time we have done a joint convention with the Western Maryland Railway Historical Society and the knowledge of their members added a great deal to a better understanding of how multiple railroads operated around the Queen City.

The convention headquarters hotel for the 142 attendees over four days, starting October 5, was the Ramada Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn) located right on the tracks in downtown Cumberland. I call it the "headquarters" hotel because just days before the convention several of our members, including me, were informed our reservations would not be honored because the hotel was over-booked, despite having reserved rooms well before the deadline for our block of rooms. Andy White, our convention organizer who always comes through during these last-minute emergencies,

quickly protested to Wyndham Hotels customer service and was successful in having the Ramada Inn staff rebook our members at other area hotels at the convention rate. While I did miss having a room right on the railroad tracks and being able to slip back up to my room during convention breaks, being quartered in a much newer hotel located two miles away proved to be a minor irritation.

Andy White and the archive staffs from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Historical Society and the Western Maryland Railway Historical Society did an excellent job preparing this year's convention book. The convention book for the last several years has included a CD with additional documents, drawings and photographs, and this year was no exception. When BORRHS members checked in, they also received a replacement CD covering last year's Buffalo convention. All attendees received a convention pin with the logos of both societies.



WM steam and diesels, O-scale, by Doug Albrecht.



B&O D-35 combine "Capitol Gardens", *The Ambassador*, HO-scale, by Bruce Elliott.

EVENING PROGRAMS

The convention started on Thursday evening with two presentations. Henry Freeman presented a clinic on *The B&O Railroad in Cumberland: History and Facilities*. Some of the information had been covered in Freeman's clinics on Cumberland at two previous conventions, and in the 2000 *Sentinel* cover story article he wrote with Gary Schlerf. By using historic aerial photographs and pairing them with GoogleEarth images, Freeman showed attendees how the area had changed over the years. The convention hotel sits across Baltimore Street from the site of the B&O's original Cumberland station, and across the tracks from the location of the famed Queen City Hotel and station, which is now the site of a regional Post Office and an Amtrak station. He was followed by John King, Bill Hopkins, and Randy Anderson's presentation on *Western Maryland Railway Operations in Cumberland*. Bill Hopkins started the presentation with his steam slides on Cumberland and the Western Maryland Connellsville Sub. John and Randy wrapped up with a discussion and photographs of Ridgely Yard, Maryland Junction, and Knobmount Yard.

On Friday evening, following a dinner on a Western Maryland Scenic Railroad train trip with three photo run-bys at Helmstetter's Curve, Dave Downton presented his clinic *Coal the Reason: The Birth, Growth, and Demise of the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad Company*. Dave had a large exhibit of maps and documents on the C&P and coal mines that he had digitally enhanced to make the maps easily understood and the documents easily read. Downton discussed the beginnings of coal mining in the Georges Creek Valley and the interesting individuals who created the companies. Then he followed the right-of-way from Cumberland to Westernport/Piedmont. Although the B&O reached Cumberland in 1842, it was the C&P, founded in 1850, that laid the first tracks through The Narrows and leased the right-of-way to the B&O to build their line to Pittsburgh. In turn the C&P, which was merged into the WM in 1944, used the Queen City Hotel and station for their passenger service, and leased space in the B&O freight House on George Street.

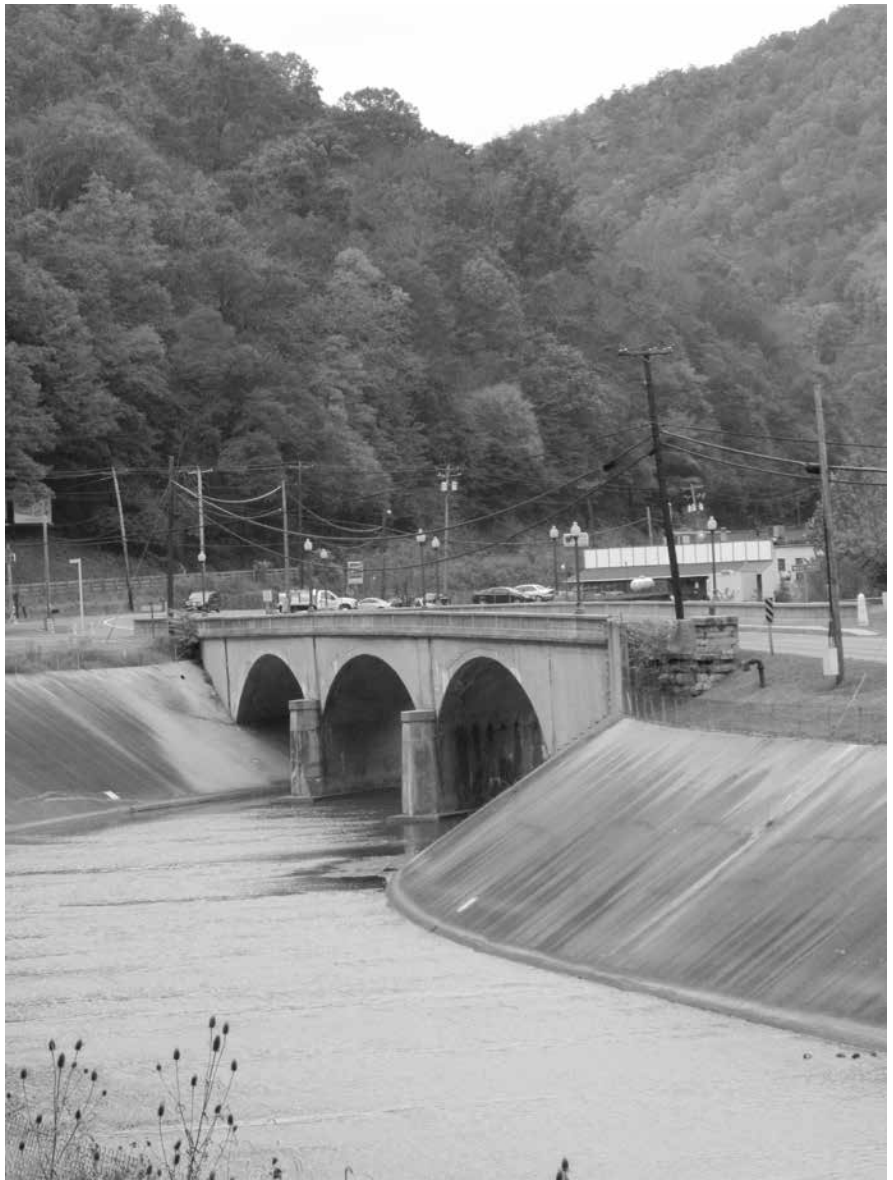
Saturday night's banquet was followed by Joe Nevin, past president of the B&O Historical Society, who shared moving remembrances of his friendships with Harry Stegmaier and Ralph Barger, both of

whom passed away this year. The two were known for their knowledge and love of the B&O and its passenger trains. The evening was capped by Nick Fry, the B&O Historical Society's archivist, who was serving in his day job as Curator of the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library in St. Louis. He spoke on *Links in the Chain: The B&O and Western Maryland Go Toward Pittsburgh*. This look at the historic competition between the two railroads for traffic between Pittsburgh and the East was highlighted by photographs taken by Barriger, mostly during 1933 to 1941 when he was the railroad chief of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and later during his work for the Office of Defense Transportation during World War II. Many of those photographs can be found on the John W. Barriger III National Library page on flickr.com.

MODEL DISPLAYS

The annual convention photo and model display was the best turn out we have had in years. This was due to the joint participation of Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) and Western Maryland (WM) Historical Society members. B&O models were relatively thin, but the WM display was outstanding. Bruce Elliott had a complete HO scale model of The *Ambassador's* early 1950s consist. He modeled the train set using a Proto 2000 E-7a, a Varney B-unit and Rivarossi, Walthers, and Bachmann passenger car bodies for the foundations. He then modified them with detail parts, roofs, sides, ends, diaphragms, and custom painting and lettering (Walthers eat your heart out).

Two WM O-scale steam passenger trains (by different entrants) were brought, as well as Alco diesels and freight cars. Wes Morganstern brought a two rail O-scale model of a Western Maryland passenger train including a Frank Miller custom-built K-2 Pacific WM No. 201 and three cars built from kits produced by Basil Varnam, who lives in Nottingham, England. He made photoengraved sides and ends for the cars based on Pullman-Standard plans. The display also featured Western Maryland H7-b Consolidation No. 751 custom-built by Frank Miller. A second O-scale passenger train was displayed with a custom-built steam locomotive and Walthers passenger cars. Doug Albrecht displayed four Weaver O-scale FA-2 models. He acquired one 3-rail and two 2-rail Alco FAs in WM Fireball attire: Nos. 301, 304 and a second 301 renumbered to 302. Doug modified the running gear and made WM-specific changes to the exterior using drawings from the Union Bridge archives and color photographs. They are all nearly complete, except for the cab interiors. The fourth FA is a 3-rail model with an undecorated shell. After converting it to 2-rail, the body will be decorated and detailed as WM No. 303. Convention participants appreciated everyone who brought models. Many spent a lot of time looking over the displays.



A view of the iconic National Road/US route 40 bridge near the Cumberland Gap, taken from our return train from Frostburg as we entered Cumberland on Friday afternoon. This nearly identical scene was included on the B&O's famous "Centenary" pattern blue dining car china, initially on the medium platter (Scammell's Lambertton China), and later on a small celery tray (Sterling China).

Photos are usually centered on the convention area and this year was no exception. There were some outstanding photos. In the photography display, Matthew Jablonski, a freelance graphic artist, displayed eight of his art works containing digitally traced photographs and interpreted renderings, both using Adobe Creative Suite applications. He has two different methods to create the art. For the first, he digitally traces a photograph from his personal collection, and subtracts or adds new objects to enhance or accent it. In the second, he uses educated guesses with the aid of multiple photos to create a preliminary drawing including the most prominent features of the overall envisioned scene, establishing the artist's vantage point. He then uses those photos as references while adding the fine details and colors for the final illustration.

Bruce Elliott noted, "When we realize what is now gone, the models and photographs really gives us a memory jolt of what we miss."



View of the huge main Cumberland shop building from the street entrance, which was the start of our Saturday bus tour.

FRIDAY

Friday was spent out on the railroad. Following breakfast, attendees walked the few blocks across downtown to the former Western Maryland Railway Station, which is now a visitors' center for the C&O Canal National Historic Park, and boarded a train for the short trip across the Potomac River to Ridgley, West Virginia. Their destination was the former Western Maryland Railway engine and shop facilities, which are now the home of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. Tours were given of the facilities, and the extensive collection of vintage equipment owned by the tourist railroad. Among the items on display was No. 74, a Baldwin 2-8-0 steam locomotive built in 1916 for the Lake Superior and Ishpeming Railroad, and now painted in the classic WM Fireball paint scheme. The star of the show was engine 1309, an ex-Chesapeake & Ohio 2-6-6-2 built by Baldwin in 1949, which was obtained from the B&O Railroad Museum in 2016 and is undergoing restoration. Expectations were that the restoration would have been completed and the engine running in time for the convention, but funding shortfalls have pushed the completion of the work into 2018.

That didn't prevent everyone from having an enjoyable day riding the train. After the shop tour, attendees boarded the WMSR train for a trip up the mountain to Frostburg, enjoying a box lunch in route. Frostburg is the site of a former C&P station that was designed by architect Francis A. Baldwin. Baldwin should be familiar to many fans of the B&O for his work on several B&O stations, including the iconic structure at Point of Rocks. Later in the afternoon, attendees were treated to three photo run-bys with diesel engine No. 501, freshly painted in the Western Maryland's Circus red-and-white paint scheme, and pulling a consist of vintage freight cars. The location was the WM's historic Helmstetter's Curve, and it was a highlight of the convention. The 501 is an EMD GP-30 that was a former Pennsylvania Railroad and Conrail engine; however, the prototype Western Maryland engine that carried 501 was a GP-35.

SATURDAY

The last full day of the convention was devoted to a bus tour to visit and discuss B&O, WM and C&P structures in Cumberland and the surrounding area. While we have visited some of these areas during past Cumberland conventions, many of the BORHS members commented on how much they learned from WMRHS seatmates, who provided information that hadn't been covered previously.

Before leaving Cumberland, the buses made stops at the B&O's yard complex in South Cumberland, which is now part of CSX, and the eastern entrance to Knobley Tunnel. There was evidence of the many changes taking place in Cumberland since Hunter Harrison became CEO of CSX. The Cumberland hump, opened by the B&O in 1961, was closed in May, and several out-of-service engines could be seen parked on the backside of the yard. Traffic in general was down in the yard and on the mainline tracks, and the future of the locomotive shops, opened by the B&O 100 years ago, is in doubt pending the completion of upgrades to the CSX shops in Huntington, West Virginia.

The rest of the morning was spent at Mount Savage, home of the historic Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad shops, where Dave Downton discussed C&P operations in Mount Savage. Then the buses followed the former C&P right-of-way through Georges Creek headed to Westernport, Maryland.

After a quick stop to pick up lunch from Subway, the buses stopped at Westernport's Creekside Park and the rest of the food and beverages were unloaded for lunch. Gerald Altizer discussed the new George's Creek Railroad, which reopened several miles of the former CSX/WM/C&P branch out of Westernport starting in 2006. The GCK does switching at the Versco paper mill (formerly Westvaco) in Luke. Historically, the mill was switched by both the B&O and the WM. The GCK engine roster includes eight ex-WM locomotives and a former Alco PRR T-6 switcher, No. 101, that is used to switch the paper mill. Three recently acquired ex-WM engines (EMD GP-9 No. 301, EMD SD-35 No. 7436, and EMD SD-40 No. 7471) are stored in Westernport and could be viewed as attendees enjoyed their picnic lunch.