

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I've just attended a large Civil War re-enactment in Cedar Creek, Virginia, and I was knocked over—albeit not by a minie ball or artillery shell, but by the success and dedication of the average people in re-cre-

In period costume, many in uniform of blue or gray, they lived in tents, sat around campfires, and fired on the actual battlefield. To look at or photograph them, you'd really believe you were back in that era.

How did they do it? The clothes, the accessories, even the food they ate was accurately researched and reproduced by companies that cared about the quality of what they were doing. You could see wonderful anachronisms outside of the camping and battlefield areas—Confederate soldiers on cell phones—but they were not present on the, um, shall we call it “layout?”

For me, it was a real inspiration. If you do your homework, are conscientious, and a reasonably good craftsman, you can create a lost world, whatever place or era you choose.

Here's how Society member Duane Carrell, who's both a B&O modeler and a Civil War re-enactor, put it:

“One big similarity that I see between the two hobbies is the great lengths we go to to weather. I bleached the pants I had on to fade them, don't wash my wools unless absolutely necessary, have put vinegar on buttons to tarnish them, hung my shell jacket in the sun to fade. Some guys soak their buttons in urine for the same effect.

“And we also realize there are limits to where we can go. We don't fire live ammo, we bring our gear in cars and trucks, we

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than-scale couplers, plastic instead of steel cars and engines, run on electricity instead of internal combustion.”

I laughed in thinking about how this could play out for the members of the Historical Society. We pick a date to re-enact, dress up as passengers and railroad crew, go out on some abandoned stretch of track and start laying ties and rails or operating simulated trains. Well, it's a little harder with the actual trains.

We, too, are re-enactors, even though we don't have to sleep in tents under a single blanket (unless we spend too much on the hobby and are banished there due to cost overruns) or, more specifically, pound in those spikes with a big mallet and risk our lives blasting tunnels or building bridges over chasms.

There's an easy solution, of course—some of us do it on a smaller scale, painting up little people to do all the simulated work and creating the countryside, buildings, and equipment. Just a bit smaller.

Now I'm going to say something that might surprise people or lead them to guffaw, but do give it a thought: I think that we are engaged in a hobby that is not only fun and interesting but noble.

To keep alive history, to give tribute to those who worked so hard to create a

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ON THE COVERS

FRONT COVER: This ancient crossing signal still guards the diamond adjacent to the North Vernon, Indiana, depot. The former B&O tracks are in the foreground. See page 20. (*Allen Young photograph*)

BACK COVER: This mid-1950s photograph shows Q-3 Number 4508 passing the Madison Pickle Company and its wooden vats in Medina, Ohio. The Henry Furnace Company is in the upper right of the photograph. Our look at the B&O in Medina begins on page 3. (*Willis McCaleb photograph from the collection of Bruce K. Dicken and James M. Semon*)

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I took this on lunch break from Supreme Court jury duty [located directly behind me, across Richmond Terrace]. The diesel crane, the floatbridge and the fender shop dominate the middle of the picture. The two tracks coming from the left are the floatbridge tracks. Next is the tail of the scale track. The Staten Island 9/11 memorial now sits just about where the floatbridge used to be.

The End of the B&O Line

The Last Marine Transfer Bridge at St. George, Staten Island, New York

By Tom Griffiths

Photographs by the Author Unless Otherwise Noted

In 1976, I had the opportunity to visit the Baltimore and Ohio's freight yard at St. George, Staten Island, in the company of a friend and his father, who was then the yardmaster at Arlington yard, on the Island's North Shore. Freight operations were winding down—there were a very few customers on the South Shore, and not many more on the North Shore.

St. George still saw a fair number of moves, as it was here that the B&O interchanged freight with several other railroads that had facilities around New York Harbor, via car floating. Up to 15 floats were handled at St. George in the

average week. Cars handled to or through Staten Island were carried by the Reading Company and the Jersey Central between Philadelphia and Cranford Junction, as well as from Harrisburg and Allentown, Pennsylvania, to New Jersey, where they were received from/delivered to the Staten Island Rapid Transit.

By 1976 the car float interchange on New York Harbor was probably the only reason the B&O maintained a presence in the Big Apple. The passenger operations on the Island had been sold to the City of New York when it became obvious to the railroad that the commuter traffic

had no intention of drying up, though the multiple-unit electric car fleet was past the age of reasonable retirement, and needed desperately to be replaced.

The B&O began car floating in New York by October 1886 with six car floats, each with a 10-car capacity. Tugs were hired as needed.

The car floats were likely used from the CNJ docks at Communipaw for interchange with other New York area railroads. There was no B&O freight service to Staten Island until March 1890, after lawsuits involving the Arthur Kill swing bridge were finally settled.

General Smith's Legacy

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Along the CSX right of way CL&W Subdivision near Chippewa Lake at the location where Lake Junction was, stands a black-lettered white sign proclaiming "SMITH." We understand that this sign announces to CSX operating crews that they are entering SMITH Direct Train Control District, which runs between Lake Junction and Lester, 9½ miles to the north.

The name Smith was given to this district because at one time there was a passing siding about midway between Lake Junction and Lester that was called Smith Road siding. Smith Road, a Medina county east-west road, was bridged there by the railroad.

Smith Road at one time was an Indian trail known to early white explorers as the watershed trail, because it followed the divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi watersheds across Medina County and much of northeast Ohio. In 1787 the new United States government passed the Northwest Ordinance, which was intended to open the Northwest Territory to settlement and secure it from influence by the British and French. To open the territory for settlement, the Native Americans would have to be driven west.

A number of military expeditions to drive the Indians out failed, including one led by a General Martin Smith. General Smith's force marched along the watershed trail, clearing and widening it as they went along to permit wagons and cannon to pass.

There is a legend in Medina County that one or more of General Smith's cannon were abandoned in stream beds somewhere along the trail in the county, prompting local citizens to search for treasure along the road.

The "improved" trail today is a paved road running fairly straight from east of Medina through the city and past the county line. General Smith did not make much impact on American history, but we give him a fragment of immortality by, indirectly, naming a railroad train control district for him.



Doubleheaded Q-4s moved a lot of coal north on the former Cleveland, Lorain and Wheeling division of the B&O. These two Mikados are going through Sterling, Ohio, south of Medina, in the mid-'50s. (Herbert H. Harwood Jr. photograph)

and removed the old wooden dam under the Cleveland line, allowing both of the reservoirs to drain and Mallet Creek to resume its original course past Lester.

By the early 1980s, Madison Pickle, which became part of J.M. Smucker Company, had closed down, Henry Furnace had stopped using rail service, A. I. Root had changed its product lines and, of course, LCL business was long gone. Chessie System felt it could no longer make money operating what by that time was generally referred to as the Medina branch, and filed for abandonment.

Once again, the community of Medina was being bypassed by a railroad, this time the one that its citizens had gone to great lengths to ensure would be built into town more than a hundred years earlier. As before, the community rallied to the cause, and came up with a plan to purchase the B&O right of way within the city limits from the railroad, then lease the tracks to the Norfolk and Western Railroad, which by that time was operating the former AC&Y railroad through Medina.

The city's business leaders put together a package of private money from the industries using rail service and government grant money obtained by the city.

N&W agreed to upgrade the interchange and the 3¾ miles of B&O track within the city limits.

The Chessie System abandonment became official in September of 1983. It took until late 1986 to get the track upgrades completed, including shifting the interchange from the west side of the freight house to the east side, and the first carload was delivered to Plastikote, a relatively new industry with a plant at the south edge of town near where the Chamberlain scale had been.

Of the original Cleveland, Medina & Tuscarawas Railroad, the line south of Uhrichsville to the Ohio River has been abandoned for several years. The line between Uhrichsville and Warwick is served by a short-line operator, R. J. Corman. The tracks in Medina are now used by the new Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway, a regional railroad that acquired the former W&LE, P&WV and AC&Y lines from Norfolk Southern.

The Wheeling serves a number of industries on former B&O and AC&Y tracks in Medina, and is using the former main line from Medina northwest toward Lester as an industrial track to serve a new plant of a large limestone processor and distributor that uses stone quarried

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With “smoke by request” (as the steam photographers used to say), Q-4s, Numbers 481 (formerly 4632) and 420 (formerly 4433), blast out of Lester in August 1957 with an eastbound Cleveland-Justus empty hopper train. “Lake Lester” in the foreground was man-made by the B&O as a reservoir for the regularly used water facilities here. It has long since reverted to its native state. (Herbert H. Harwood Jr. photograph)

west about ½ mile to a platform at the entrance to the picnic grounds and growing amusement park, which included a wooden roller coaster, then back to the main line.

During the summer season, all passenger trains negotiated the loop and stopped at the park. A general order announced when the trains would begin using the loop in the spring and again when they would discontinue at the end of the summer season.

When the Cleveland and Southwestern interurban line was built through Chippewa Lake in 1903, the railroad and the trolley line shared a platform adjacent to the entrance to the amusement park.

The railroad also served an ice house on a spur off the loop. Before mechanical refrigeration, harvesting ice from a lake in winter and storing it for summer sale

was a lucrative business, and the railroad enjoyed the business of carrying the ice away from Chippewa Lake in insulated cars to local markets.

The freight house in Medina was expanded in late 1899 and into 1900 to accommodate an increase in business and the passenger station was fixed up a couple of times, once after a carload of coal derailed and plowed into the station, spilling coal all over one of the waiting rooms.

(We noted in researching newspaper files occasional references to break-ins at the stations, which included thieves breaking into or taking slot machines. The railroad was apparently looking for ways to keep its passengers happy while waiting for trains, and improve profits as well.

(We also noted more than one occasion where the widow of an employee was appointed station agent.)

The CL&W’s access to Cleveland was by operating its freight and passenger trains over the Bee Line between Grafton and Cleveland or the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroads. By the 1890s, the Vanderbilts had gained control of both of these friendly connections. The owners of the CL&W saw a need to find their own route to Cleveland

They did this by acquiring the Cleveland Southwestern Railway (not to be confused with the interurban line with a very similar name). This company was intended to be an extension of Jay Gould’s Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway into Cleveland from the west. Its short-term goal apparently was to build from the W&LE line at Lodi, southwest of Medina, to Cleveland. It acquired some property and some legal rights, but was never built.

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EM-1 renumbered 673 (formerly 7623) drifts past the Lester depot in order to back up on the Cleveland track to take on water. The tank and column can be seen immediately to the right and behind the depot. By this late time the water tank on the Lorain line must have been abandoned. A Mike from the Cleveland - Lester run awaits its next orders. (Willis McCaleb photograph held by Bob Lorenz, Ron Spiga collection)

Bees, Pickles and Roller Coasters at Medina, Ohio, Courtesy of the B&O

By Bill Cramer and Mike Lytle

An unusual combination, but it is representative of Medina, Ohio during the years the B&O served the city.

A B&O predecessor came to town in 1871 and served a company that produced bee keeping supplies, bringing in the raw materials and carrying the products to market. The roller coaster was at the amusement park at nearby Chippewa Lake, and the B&O and its predecessors carried passengers to and from the park for a day's outing. The initial combination continued well into the 20th century, when it was joined by H. W. Madison Company, making pickles and salad dressing a part of Medina's economy and the B&O's freight business there.

The story of Medina and railroads is also one of extraordinary efforts by the citizens to attract a major railroad system to their community, and though having to settle for branch line operations, keeping up a century-long effort to hold onto what they had.

Medina is in the Connecticut Western Reserve of Ohio, just south of Cleveland and a little west of Akron. The area, in the newly opened Northwest Territory, was undeveloped land with unlimited potential at the beginning of the 19th century.

Elijah Boardman had acquired two tracts of land, one of which became Medina Township. Boardman initially selected the name Mecca for the tract, symbolizing the "end of the journey" for settlers on his land much like the "end of the journey" for religious pilgrims to the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. But there was already a Mecca in Trumbull County, Ohio, so Boardman settled on the name Medina, which was the second city in Arabia that was the destination for religious pilgrims.

The first permanent white settlers arrived in Medina Township in 1814 and when a county government was formed in 1818, Boardman donated the land for

a county building and a public square in what is now the City of Medina.

Railroad fever came quickly for Medina. When the Ohio and Erie Canal was built in the 1820s from Cleveland south to Akron, then on down the Tuscarawas River valley toward the Ohio River, bypassing Medina, neighboring communities enjoyed an increase in prosperity because of the more efficient form of transportation. The produce of farms and the products of businesses in and around Medina still required a long day's wagon ride over what passed for roads to reach their markets.

Located on high ground astride the divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds and seeing no prospect for a navigable waterway, the Medina business community turned to the relatively new idea of a railroad.

The community first put its hopes on the Cleveland and Columbus Railroad, and pledged a substantial amount of