



We are looking northeast toward the west end of Hill yard and the coaling tower at Akron Junction, Ohio, sometime in the early '50s. Though locomotives are smoking up our view, we can see the water tank and coaling tower with the Loop line trestle crossing over the Pittsburgh, Cleveland & Toledo Railroad and the wye track, which curves off to the right under us. The Valley main would be just in front of us, hidden below that boxcar that looks like a derelict B&O car. (Edwin C. Kirstatter collection)

# Akron Junction, Ohio

## *A Wonderful and Amazing B&O Place*

By Edwin C. Kirstatter

My first recollections of Akron Junction go back to when I was a child riding in the back seat of my father's old Locomobile automobile, a big, black, square, four-door sedan of unknown vintage, in the early '30s. We would go to downtown Akron to shop at two big department stores on Main Street, O'Neils and Polsky's. Sometimes we would return home the "back way" through East Akron.

Arlington Road took you north to Home Avenue, which would take us into Cuyahoga Falls where the road became Main Street. We lived at the east end of town near the B&O mainline.

As we were going north on Arlington Road we descended a hill, first crossing over the Akron, Canton & Youngstown Railroad, which was in a deep cut. Then

we'd cross the Erie (New York, Pennsylvania & Ohio). At that point I could look east and see the almost-flat roof of the B&O enginehouse with smoke belching from stacks that reminded me of chicken coops. The smell of coal smoke was always overwhelming in that valley, but I always became excited when we went home this way and begged every time to go to Akron or home the "back way."

The next tracks we crossed were the joint B&O and PRR at a tower that proclaimed this to be ARLINGTON, whose telegraph call letters were AY. This was a Pennsy structure because the PRR (originally the Cleveland, Akron & Columbus) arrived in Akron first, coming from Hudson, 10 miles to the north. At this Akron Junction the Pittsburgh &

Western—or was it the Pittsburgh, Cleveland & Toledo Railroad at that point in time?—joined the CA&C and had operating rights to connect with the Wheeling & Lake Erie line to make a connection for Chicago service. Later it joined with the Akron & Chicago Junction Railroad at this point.

The Pennsy tower controlled this junction, phoning instructions to a switch tender who hand-threw five or six switches to direct trains for the B&O and Pennsy. The switch tender had a shanty on an embankment near the enginehouse and right over the Little Cuyahoga River. A crossing-gate operator was also stationed in that tower. You could see him pump the handle to lower or raise the gate across Arlington Road.



Though it lacks the “B” designation on its side, Number 630123 is from the third batch of B&O N-25 covered hoppers. The first N-25s were rebuilt at Mt. Clare shops in 1932 from N-13 hopper cars. They had 50-ton capacity. Fifty more cars, class N-25A, were converted in 1933, and the 74 cars converted as N-25Bs in 1936 came from the Cumberland shops. (Greg Smith collection)

## B&O Covered Hoppers – The 2-Bay Cars

By Jim Rogers

For the B&O in the late 1920s, passenger trains provided the glamour and coal provided the bread and butter. But another important commodity for a growing America was cement.

The dry, powdered material had to be kept dry in transit. So whether packed in bags or moved in bulk, cement was hauled in boxcars. The loading and unloading process was labor-intensive and time-consuming.

Although a pioneer in so many aspects of railroading, the B&O was not the first to experiment with putting a roof on a hopper car for cement loading. But it was an early adopter of the concept.

Several railroads in Pennsylvania began experimenting in the early 1930s, among them the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh. After the B&O acquired a controlling interest in the BR&P, ownership of BR&P’s freight cars and subsequent B&O classification and renumbering became effective January 1, 1932.

The BR&P fleet included a group of 50-ton hoppers that were renumbered to



Everything started with BR&P 50-ton hoppers, classified N-23 on the B&O. The BR&P diagram says some had roofs, and this one appears to. The B&O converted 35 to N-23A covered hoppers between 1934 and 1940. (B&ORRHS collection)

720000–725398 and classed N-23. These cars were built, primarily by Cambria Steel, in 1907–1914. The BR&P diagram has a note indicating that some cars in this series have steel roofs.

The conversion was considered successful, and this would be the genesis of the B&O’s covered hopper fleet.

During 1932, Mt. Clare shops took 25 cars from (pre-USRA) class N-13 and rebuilt them into class N-25 cement cars, numbered 630000–630024. They retained the 50-ton capacity and featured sliding hopper doors, which provide more control of the flow when unloading. Roofs had 8 square hatches.

# RUNNING LIGHT

*Running Light is designed to provide a forum for amplifications of articles, corrections, updates and late news briefs. Mail them to Harry Meem, or e-mail them to Barry Rubin or Harry. We also steal from the Yahoo! chat room.*



The State of West Virginia celebrated the centennial of its Baltimore and Ohio Railroad heritage at a rail festival held June 25 - 27, 2010 at Petersburg, West Virginia. The 51-mile former South Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio's Cumberland Subdivision (Green Spring, West Virginia, to Petersburg), today known as the South Branch Valley Railroad (SBVRR) and home of the tourist line, Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad, was the scene.

Locomotives painted in livery from other roads such as the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and Western Maryland Railway were at the celebration, in addition to SBVRR's B&O classic blue and gray GP-9 Number 6604 and F-7A Number 722. As a replacement for the Western Maryland Scenic Railway's Number 734 Consolidation steamer that was unable to attend, their GP-30 painted in faux WM "Speed Lettering" livery was on hand (the Western Maryland never owned or operated GP-30s).

While the SBVRR's GP-9 Number 6604 was original B&O equipment that also operated briefly on the Central Railroad of New Jersey, F-7A Number 722 was former Bessemer & Lake Erie 722. The C&O F-3Au Number 8016 on hand was former Clinchfield RR Number 800 and later CSX Number 116.

Two steam tank o-4-os from the New Hope Valley Railroad (Number 17) of Bonsal, North Carolina and the Flag Coal Co. (Number 75, owned by Byron and John Gramling of Ashley, Indiana as a traveling "steam ambassador") were transported to Petersburg via heavy truck equipment to allow railfans an opportunity to briefly operate a steam locomotive and provide short, one-hour steam-pulled rides using vintage passenger equipment north a few miles from Petersburg. These one-hour excursions were the first time a steam locomotive had traveled these rails since the early 1950's.



Diesels in several variants of blue and gray lined up for a group portrait at the late-June centennial celebration of the B&O's links to West Virginia. The South Branch Valley Railroad (the B&O's former branch to Petersburg, West Virginia) provided its Number 100, the power for the Potomac Eagle excursion train, and Number 6604, its restored GP-9 that sees daily work. C&O Number 8016 is an F-3Au, originally Clinchfield Number 800.

*(Both photographs, Wade H. Rice)*



Company Store Manager **Craig Close** (foreground) kept his inventories up to date at the Petersburg festival while (left) **Bruce Elliott** touted the Society's wares to a passer-by and Archivist **Nick Fry** waited for the next potential patron.

Vintage passenger equipment painted in livery of the WM, C&O, and the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad was present to transport the large numbers of rail enthusiasts wanting to take the short or extended train trips on the SBVRR.

In addition to the rail equipment, present were model railroad layouts, equipment displays, railroadians vendors, and historical societies, including

the B&ORHS' Company Store, manned by **Nick Fry**, **Craig Close**, and **Bruce Elliott**. The Society had for sale an updated version of its comb-bound reprint on the SBVRR, inventory no. 72066.3, by **Dennis Fulton**.

Despite the unusually hot weather at the time, all participants appeared to be enjoying the train rides and displays throughout the town.—**Wade H. Rice**.



# Charles S. Roberts, B&O Publisher, Dies

By Joe Nevin



Charlie Roberts (right) and Bruce Fales at the Gaithersburg (Maryland) Train Show November 5, 1987. (Norman Nelson photograph)

Charles Swann Roberts, the great-grandnephew of Charles S. Swann, fourth president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and the son and grandson of B&O railroaders, died August 20 in Baltimore.

The founder of the Avalon Hill Game Co. and of publishing house Barnard, Roberts and Co. Inc., he was known for his extensive research and publications on middle Atlantic railroads, and was called the “Father of Wargaming” for the interest generated by Avalon Hill games.

Charlie was the 20th member of the B&ORRHS, joining in 1979, and Barnard, Roberts and Co. holds the second Institutional membership issued. For many years, he and his company shared generously of personal archive and published materials.

When approached by individuals destined to form the Society’s first Board of Directors, Charlie immediately provided the Barnard, Roberts list of B&O material buyers, and donated copies of books and other materials to grubstake the archives and use for public relations. Perhaps even more valuable was his endorsement of our efforts to his large, informal network of individuals working on B&O historical research, and some much needed advice on publishing material on the B&O.

A lifelong Baltimore County resident, Charlie worked for

local newspapers until his entry into the United States Army in 1948. After his discharge in 1952, he launched a career in advertising, working for Baltimore-based firms.

Almost as a lark in 1954, he decided to publish *Tactics* (a board game he designed as a study aid when applying for a National Guard commission) as a part-time venture under the corporate name The Avalon Game Company. A trademark issue led him to change the name to Avalon Hill Co.

The company, which he sold in 1962, was named for Charlie’s home on a hill overlooking the site of Avalon Nail Works on the B&O’s Old Main Line along the Patapsco River.

After a career change to publishing, Charlie and his wife Joan (Barnard) opened Barnard, Roberts and Co. Inc., primarily publishing materials for the Catholic community. As a small sideline, Barnard, Roberts issued an annual B&O photograph calendar, a line of B&O prints and greeting cards, and a series of photograph collections from well-known amateur railroad photographers under the name *50 Best of B&O*. These were followed by similar collections on other popular railroads.

Focus changed in 1978 with the publication of *Q*, a definitive history of one style of B&O steam locomotive, the 2-8-2, authored by well known locomotive data recorder Howard N.