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# The Sentinel



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# President's Report to Members

**EXPANSION** In my last letter I stated we were investigating a possible expansion of the archive facilities. Initial figures for a stand-alone metal building were around \$300,000. The grant money mentioned to us would be around \$20,000 after we have a developmental plan and start fundraising. Grant Berry, Vice-President, suggested adding to the back of the current building, eliminating the need for new electrical connections and restrooms; but adding on the back would take at least four parking spaces, moving HVAC equipment and security lighting, and enclosing some open areas. Also, we need to investigate the fire suppression for the building. Currently we are grandfathered to the current fire codes, but with an addition we may need to upgrade the whole complex. There will need to be more space in the future as donations roll in, so at some time in the

future this will need to happen. Some society officers and directors feel that to reach younger generations of humans we need some form of interactive activity, such as a historical model railroad, to get them involved in B&O RR history. This raises questions of staffing and security. These are just a few of the things we need to address before making any financial commitment.

**INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES** Speaking of interactive activities, I want to start a B&O Historical Society YouTube site with an introduction to the society, historical presentations, and modeling-the-B&O clinics. Volunteers are needed to develop these videos of approximately 15-to-20 minutes. Send me a note through the society's website when you have something developed. You do not have to be a historical expert to share.

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# The Sentinel

The official publication of  
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The Baltimore and Ohio Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving and disseminating historical information about The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

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Memberships, once accepted, cannot be returned.

## Call for Nominations

We are soliciting members to run for office in the B&O Railroad Historical Society. This year we will be electing four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) for a one-year term and two directors for a three-year term. If you would be interested in running for one of these positions, please contact Bob Hubler via email at membership@borhs.org, or regular mail at  
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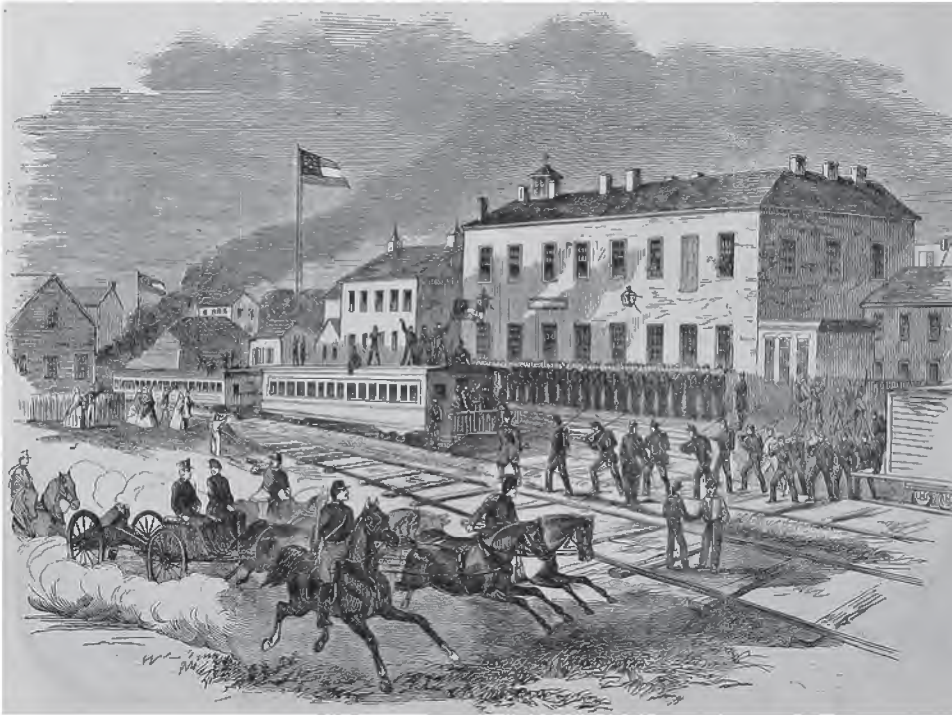
## On the Covers

**FRONT COVER:** "Night Train" painted by Charlie Amos depicts the scene on the tracks in front of the B&O's Queen City Hotel in Cumberland, Maryland. Engine 5232, a 4-6-2 P-6a Pacific, is ready on the headend of No. 5, the *Capitol Limited*. She will help the diesel-powered all-Pullman train up Sand Patch grade to the crest of the Allegheny Mountains on its way to Chicago.

(Painting image courtesy of Charlie Amos Collection, Allegany Museum, Cumberland, Maryland.)

**BACK COVER:** Johnathan Wright took this dramatic photograph, called *Shades of the Capitol's Past*, of CSX Office Car Special symbol P001-25 adjacent to the Martinsburg West Virginia train station featured in our lead story. The train is en route from Chicago Illinois to Waycross Georgia with some VIPs aboard August 26, 2021. The entire train is painted in scheme inspired by the B&O's 1950s passenger colors. Note CSX 1's brass capitol dome.





# B&O Hotels

## PART ONE

By E. Ray Lichty

Images courtesy of the B&O RR Historical Society archives unless otherwise noted.

The first depot at Martinsburg was a small shed-roof station. Shown here is the second depot, which was a combination station/hotel. It served the rapidly expanding economy of the area hastened by the arrival of the railroad and the building of the locomotive shop facilities. Built circa 1852, it included a hotel on the second floor, and station and dining facilities on the first floor. It was destroyed by then-Confederate Colonel Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson in his famous 1861 raid when he stole 17 locomotives that were hauled over the road to Winchester. (Image: *Harpers Weekly*, June 29, 1861; John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library collection.)

Some might think it strange that the B&O Railroad was in the hotel business. It was not peculiar, as it was a logical extension of the company’s business in several regards. The railroad was ahead of its time, vertically integrating the company’s activities. Some examples include its involvement in rolling its own rail, running sleeping cars, and creating a telegraph company.

Building, owning, or operating hotels fit that pattern and made sense. The concept was simple: provide an attractive destination along the railroad that can best be reached by the railroad and passengers will buy tickets. Also, stations at major railroad line junctions that include luxury, or at least convenient, hotel accommodations will improve the traveler’s experience and, thereby, attract more passengers.

This was a model established by the European railroads. The B&O built combination station-hotels at major cities and junction points for trains of their own lines or connecting lines as well as attractive destination hotels appealing to well-to-do travelers. All of B&O’s hotels were built in the sixty-year period from 1852 to 1912. Few survived past the 1920s.

The person most influential in the B&O’s hotel movement was John W. Garrett. He became president of the B&O in 1858 and most historians credit him as the force behind the hotel movement. He was involved with a little over half of the B&O hotel activities.

The B&O built, owned, or operated 18 hotels. This series of articles will examine these hotels chronologically. Extensive research has uncovered limited records of the hotels’ history or facts about operations. For this reason, some of the details of operation, ownership, and management are inferred, as will be highlighted in the story of each hotel. What is presented is the most current information uncovered to date. If anyone has more details, please contact the *Sentinel*.

## Martinsburg, West Virginia

The B&O’s first hotel was at Martinsburg, Virginia. Martinsburg was located in a part of Virginia that eventually became West Virginia during the Civil War.

When the B&O reached Martinsburg in May 1842, the company built a station that was a small, shed-roof building. It

incorporated an existing stone wall and platform from an earlier unrelated use. The agent was John Jamison.

Martinsburg was designated as a crew-change point. It was 100 miles from Baltimore—a logical place to change locomotives and crews. The line from Baltimore to Martinsburg was called the 1st Division. The line west from Martinsburg to Piedmont, Maryland, was the 2nd Division.

Martinsburg was becoming an important community in Virginia’s panhandle area. There were ample sources of water-power for mills. White flour, buckwheat, and flax were ground at numerous locations. Other business included tanneries, blacksmiths, distillers, merchants, and farming. Because of the large number of locomotives working around Martinsburg, the B&O built extensive shops there. These included: two roundhouses, a machine shop, and major repair facilities. The construction and operation of the shops added significantly to the growth of Martinsburg and the need for supporting services.

Although some residents converted their homes to boarding houses or even hotels, the city’s growth outpaced the supply of sleeping accommodations. Some



The Grafton Hotel was part of a combination station/hotel built at Grafton, Virginia, by the Northwestern Virginia Railroad, when they constructed the Parkersburg-Grafton line. The B&O bought the station/hotel when it was completed in 1857. The station portion of the building is in the forefront. There was also a large dining room on the first floor and the hotel office.

crews slept on their engines or in rail cars. For this reason, locating a hotel and dining house at Martinsburg made a great deal of sense.

In 1852, the railroad built a substantial depot that included a hotel. Buildings adjoining the depot housed dining rooms and a wash house. It is estimated that the hotel had at least 20 rooms. The Martinsburg hotel was built, owned, and operated by the railroad.

The Civil War had a huge impact on Martinsburg and its citizens. There was support for both the North and the South within the community. That's not surprising given its proximity to the Mason-Dixon line. The control of Martinsburg changed hands many times during the war. The B&O suffered losses with each shift of the battle lines.

One of the best known and most dramatic changes in control occurred in May 1861. That's when Colonel Thomas

"Stonewall" Jackson took over the town. His troops not only destroyed much of the B&O's property, but stole 17 locomotives, which they pulled with horses over the road to Winchester, Virginia. The B&O station and hotel were also destroyed in the raid, ending the story of the railroad's first hotel.

### **Grafton Hotel, Grafton, West Virginia**

Grafton is the location of two B&O hotels. The first was the obscure Grafton Hotel. The second was the well-known Willard Hotel.

The Current family, 17th century Irish immigrants by way of Baltimore, purchased (actually, traded a gray horse for) 1,300 acres of land in what was to become Grafton, Virginia (later West Virginia). They hired a 19-year-old surveyor, George Washington, to survey the land. The city of Grafton was chartered in 1856.

The B&O reached this area in 1852 and it became the terminus of the 3rd, or Piedmont, Division at Fetterman, West Virginia along the Tygart Valley River a couple of miles west of present-day Grafton, West Virginia. The location was named for William B. Fetterman who owned most of the land in the area. It was just a spot on the railroad's path to Fairmont and Wheeling, which was reached at the end of 1852.

The B&O built a few buildings at Fetterman in 1852, including an engine house and station. Soon thereafter, the B&O built a new station at the foot of St. Mary's Street in the community that was developing as the town of Grafton.

A group of Parkersburg businessmen developed a plan to build the Northwestern Virginia Railroad (NVR) from Parkersburg to connect with the B&O at Fetterman. The B&O supported this line as it would provide a better route to Cincinnati and St. Louis than the route by way of





The Grafton Hotel was a rather large facility, being three stories high in some parts. There were 60 guest rooms to serve the traveling public. It continued to operate as a public hotel until the Willard Hotel opened in 1912.

Wheeling. B&O Chief Engineer Latrobe surveyed the route. Construction, funded by the B&O, began in 1851, before the B&O had completed its line to Wheeling.

The NVR route required major bridges over the Tygart Valley River at Grafton and the West Fork River at Clarksburg. Those two rivers join at Fairmont, West Virginia to form the Monongahela River. B&O's Albert Fink's truss bridge designs were selected for both crossings, which meant that a lot of iron castings would be required. In part to meet this need beginning in 1852, the NVR built major machine shops, a half roundhouse, and foundry on the Grafton side of the Tygart Valley River. They were alongside the new B&O mainline to Fairmont at the point where the NVR would cross the Tygart Valley River.

Anticipating the passenger business that would follow the completion of the rail line, the NVR built a combined station and hotel in Grafton. Building a hotel in Grafton made sense. The new town was growing rapidly. In 1853, Grafton's population was 153. By 1900, it was 8,260. The Grafton Hotel was the second lodging



This west-looking view of the Grafton Hotel and station shows the Parkersburg Line passing on the left and the Wheeling line on the right. The 1890 footbridge can be seen crossing in the Wheeling line (in the background).

place in town. The Sentinel Hotel was built in 1854. There were six hotels in Grafton by 1887.

The building was placed on the opposite side of the Parkersburg mainline from the

shops and roundhouse, in the wye formed by that mainline and the Wheeling mainline.

Completed in 1857, the building was triangular in shape and fit snugly in the point of the wye created by the two main-





Washington Kroeson built this hotel (left) in 1849. The B&O leased his hotel to replace the station and hotel destroyed in Jackson's 1861 raid. The railroad added the wing on the west side of the hotel to serve as a station (right of the hotel). The B&O bought the hotel in 1866. It has served the B&O and its successors to this day as the Martinsburg passenger station. Some dining car department employees that were not needed on trains running between Martinsburg and Washington used sleeping quarters on the second floor of the station.

lines. It was the largest hotel in the state at the time and had 60 guest rooms on the second and third floors. A dining room on the first floor seated 200 people. The first-floor station was at the east end of the building in the point of the wye. The hotel was officially called "Grafton Hotel" although some references were to "The Grafton" or "Grafton House".

The hotel was up to date and included gas lighting. It quickly established itself as a first-class facility. A Cincinnati *Sentinel* correspondent wrote about the hotel, "A hotel par excellence, not to be surpassed upon any line of the country. It offered a gourmet menu. Its rooms were 'the acme of comfort.'"

Grafton had extensive railroad operations, which attracted travelers. Onboard train sleeping accommodations had not yet arrived, which meant many travelers needed a stopover for rest and refreshment.

Over time, Grafton became a major passenger transfer point for trains serving destinations radiating from that loca-

tion. The Wheeling line had four tracks that ran past the hotel, separating it from downtown Grafton. In 1890, a cast-iron footbridge was built over the tracks, giving guests and passengers easy access to town.

The NVRR was completed in 1857. Once finished, the B&O bought the shops, roundhouse, station, and hotel for \$1,200,000. While the station/hotel was built by the NVRR, there is no evidence that it opened or operated either facility before the sale to the B&O.

Meanwhile, the B&O closed its shop, engine facility, and station in Fetterman. It consolidated those functions with the superior NVRR facilities in Grafton. The original Fetterman buildings were destroyed by fire not long after the move. The B&O bought the rest of the NVRR in 1867.

The hotel's first manager was Horace Resley of Baltimore, Maryland. As was then the practice, the appointment of station agents was approved by the railroad's board of directors. Resley had been approved to be the agent for two Virginia stations, but the board, instead, appointed him as

hotel manager. His board appointment is evidence that the B&O did operate or oversee its hotels, at least for some time. It is also apparent that the man put in charge of the hotel had no hotel management experience.

It is believed that Resley also had responsibility for the restaurant's operation. The B&O hired John George Brinkman as the Grafton Hotel's baker when it first opened. A German immigrant, Brinkman was working as a baker in Baltimore. The appointment of this position is evidence of the B&O's involvement in the operation of the restaurant, at least initially.

It appears the railroad realized that it did not have the expertise for the day-to-day running of the hotel. Accordingly, a bid from Minerva Bean was approved by the board to operate the hotel. A lease agreement provided for her to supply all furnishings and pay the railroad \$800 for the first year of operation and \$1,000 per year for the next two years. Under this arrangement, she retained all revenue from hotel bookings.