

The Sentinel

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 47, NUMBER 3



\$12.00

THIRD QUARTER 2025



When the Atlas Came to Frederick

Herbert D. Stitt painting

President's Letter to Members

As we approach the midpoint of this year the society continues to be functional and efficient. The archives staff is doing an outstanding job cataloging, scanning, and locating more donations. We had a great Western Mini-Con in Bellaire Ohio thanks to Dan Frizzi and Andy White, and it was well attended. On a sad note, Bill Cramer, long time society member and Ohio sales representative for the society, passed away. His contributions going to shows, setting up Western Mini-Cons, and writing articles for the *Sentinel* will live with us for many years. Rest in peace, Bill. Grant Berry and myself attended the RPM in Youngwood and had some strong sales and recruited new members for the society. In February, a number of Baltimore members worked our tables at the Great Scale Train Show in Timonium Maryland, which produced more sales for the society. By the time you read this message, we will be approaching the Eastern Mini-Con at the society's headquarters on Saturday July 19th. Hope to see you there.

Membership recruiting has been successful with new members signing up, but with the aging out of the current membership, we lose more than we recruit. I am asking ALL members to spread the benefits of being a member and recruit people to join. Give us a few hours on a couple of weekends at various community functions to share the B&O's heritage and recruit new members.

Our Speakers Bureau needs one or more coordinators to help with the Bicentennial activities planned for 2027-2028. We now have a few PowerPoint presentations and speakers lined up to go out and spread the rich history of the B&O. We need people to communicate with communities interested in organizing history-focused local events, arranging for one of our speakers to go meet people, speak, and recruit members. Also needed is coordinating the provision of Society historical resources relevant to the communities' interest—the B&O in a particular community, or in a dominant industry in their area, such as coal—to support the creation of publicly displayed posters or other public displays. The coordination can all be done through emails and a few phone calls. Please consider volunteering. This could also be a team effort by state or region, so you don't have to sign up for the whole country to step up and help. The B&O Museum in Baltimore has established a website to promote Bicentennial activities for the next couple of years, and this can be a great tool for our purposes of promoting and recruiting. We are participating with the museum in this endeavor.

Publications activities are progressing with the completion of 2026 calendar, the soon to be released St. Louis Division book, and the 2025 convention book. Ken Wing

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)

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The official publication of
**THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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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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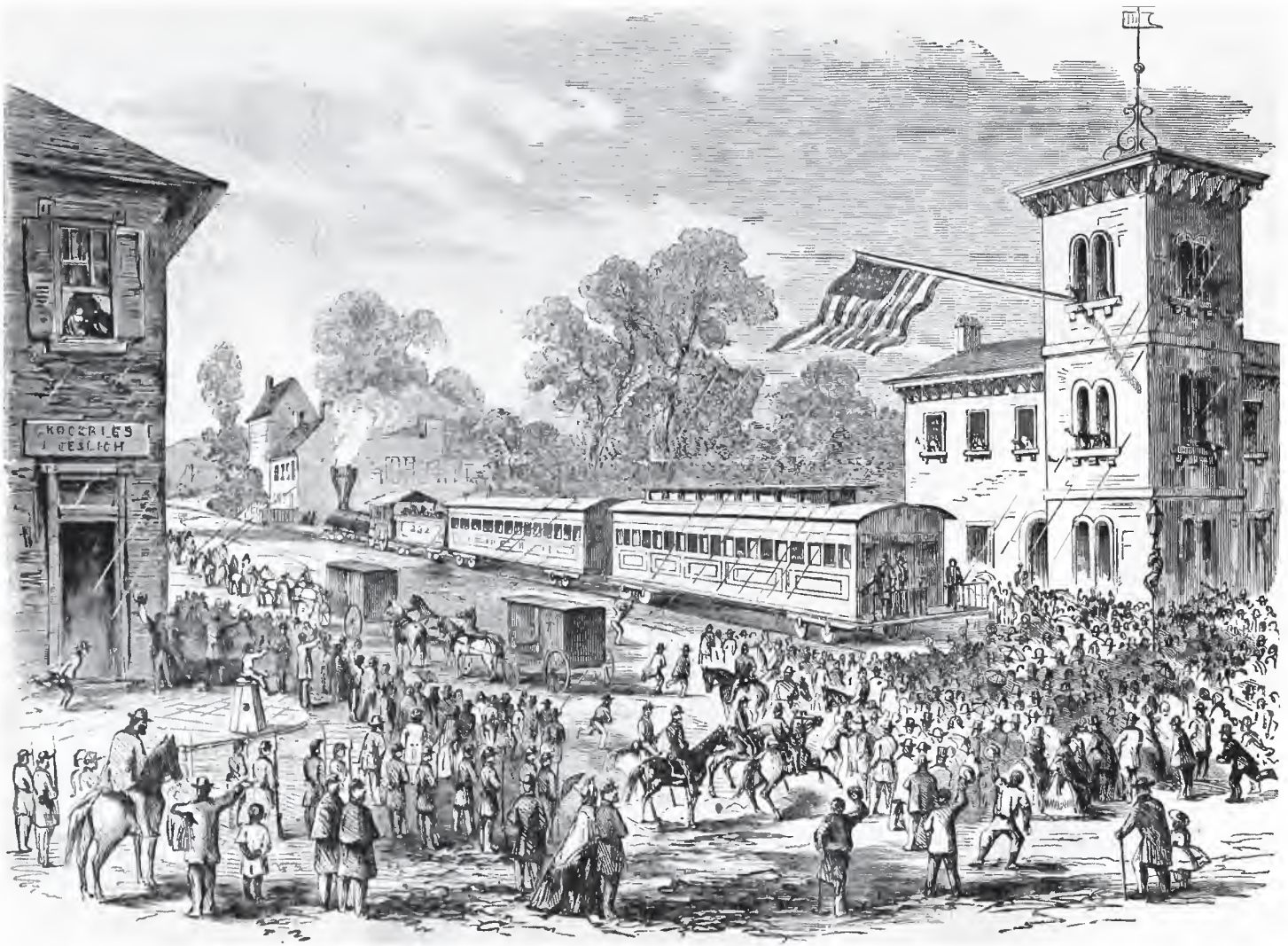
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FRONT COVER: Herbert D. Stitt painting titled "When the Atlas Came to Frederick" from the cover of the July 1927 Baltimore and Ohio Magazine. Stitt was an American painter and illustrator who painted a series of magazine covers for the B&O in 1927 and served as the official artist for the Fair of the Iron Horse that year. The locomotive Atlas was an early 4-4-0 and is shown in front of the original Frederick station and freight house. (B&O RHS Archives)

BACK COVER: Frederick Station, circa August 1981, much as it appears today,

(Charles Spence photograph, B&O RHS Archives)



President Abraham Lincoln giving an address in Frederick, next to the station at East All Saints and Market Streets, following the Battle of Antietam. From the October 25, 1862 issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

The Historic Frederick Branch

Part One

By Brian Rochon

Origins and Construction

In 1829, as the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) built west along the Patapsco River valley, the citizens of Frederick, Maryland eagerly anticipated the railroad's arrival in their town. Frederick is located in the rich farming country of the surrounding Monocacy and Middletown valleys, and served as the county seat for Western Maryland. The National Road passed through Frederick, Maryland's largest inland city with a population of 4,427 in 1830. It was an important trading center for agricultural products, with numerous mills, and its businessmen were enthusi-

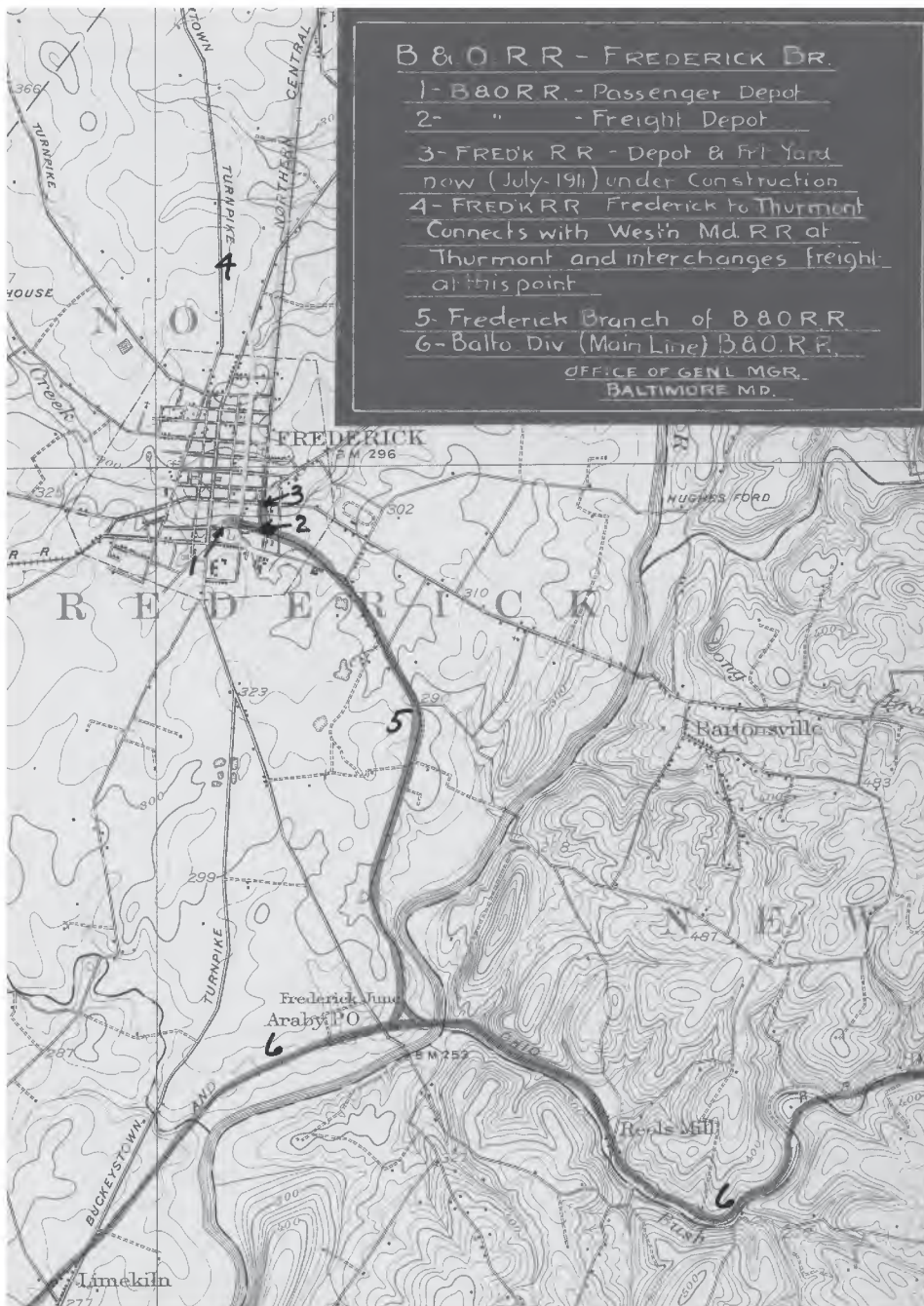
astic supporters of the B&O, purchasing substantial amounts of company stock.

As surveyors established the final alignment for the line, however, the railroad decided to bypass Frederick to take advantage of more favorable grades along Bush Creek, a few miles to the south.

The citizens of Frederick were very disappointed by this outcome and protested to the B&O's President, Philip Thomas, but to no avail. In an effort to bring the B&O to the city, they purchased three miles of right-of-way in November 1830 and donated the land to the B&O. The City of Frederick donated six acres of

land for a depot site at the city line on the southeast side.

Reports and surveys for what was to become the Frederick Branch were submitted by the B&O's Chief Engineer and Superintendent of Construction to the railroad's Board of Directors on January 18, 1831. The branch would begin just west of the Monocacy River at Frederick Junction (known variously as Araby, Monocacy Station, or Monocacy Junction at the time) and run northwest to Frederick. The facilities at the junction included a wye for turning the locomotives, the first of its kind in the United States. A station was



A July 1911 B&O map of the Frederick Branch showing the principal facilities and connections with other railroads in Frederick. (B&O RHS Archives)

built at Frederick Junction in 1831. It was expanded and refitted in 1848.

In 1831, the B&O reported to the Maryland Legislature that "the lateral road to Frederick of three-and-a-quarter miles, it is estimated, will be graduated and the masonry completed, at the average of \$4,500 per mile." The line was planned for completion by the end of the year.

Construction of the single-track branch began in July 1831 and was finished within five months. The branch used wooden rails, also known as stringers, topped with iron straps laid upon wooden cross-ties.

It entered the town from the southeast, crossing East South Street, and terminated at South Carroll Street, just south of Carroll Creek.

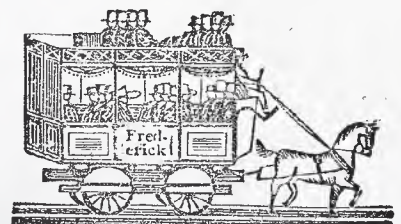
The effort to hire workers for railroad construction resulted in the B&O competing with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company—chartered in 1828 to provide a direct water route between the Potomac and Ohio Valley—for scarce labor. Newspapers ads solicited contractors and laborers during the summer of 1831. Trackmen was the term used for the men who laid the track, built bridges, and cut stone.

1700 LABORERS WANTED, At One Dollar per day.

THE subscribers, Contractors on the Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road, want to employ
1700 LABORERS,
To whom One Dollar a day will be punctually paid. This work is in one of the most healthy and pleasant parts of the United States. Mechanics, such as
Stone Cutters & Stone Masons
Will also find employment on this work, at very liberal wages.
Inquire at Ridgeville and New-Market, on the Frederick turnpike road, and at Frederick-Town.
James Fresh,
W. H. Fresh,
John Grey,
Christ'r Midler,
James Cosgrove,
David Lemmon,
S. F. Smith,
J. B. Cahoon,
D. K. Cahoon,
R. A. Clements,
Matthew Borland,
Lloyd Pumphrey,
Jesse Greenfield,
Simon Frieze,
Eduard Dawes,
Robert Williams,
John M. Horton,
Harvey Spalding,
Patrick King,
July 13 41
The Examiner Frederick MD August 3 1831

Advertisement for laborers, stone cutters, and stone masons to build the Frederick Branch from *The Frederick Examiner*, August 31, 1831. (Heritage Fredrick)

Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road COMPANY.



CARS will daily start from the Depot of the Company in Frederick for Baltimore, at 4 o'clock, A. M. and at 10 o'clock, A. M. For the Point of Rocks at 25 minutes past 12 o'clock, P. M.
For SEATS apply at the office of the Depot in Frederick.
Companies of ten or upwards can have a Car or Cars at any time during the day that will not interfere with the above arrangements, by applying to the Agent at the Depot.
January 4, 1833.

Newspaper advertisement for B&O service between Frederick and Baltimore dated January 4, 1833. Possibly from weekly Frederick newspaper called *The Citizen*. (Frederick County Public Libraries)



Floor plan of the first floor of the Frederick Passenger Station from a November 1908 B&O drawing. The ladies and men's waiting rooms opened to the track in All Saints Street at the top. (B&O RHS Archives)





Monocacy Junction, ca. 1872. This Monocacy Junction station building replaced the one that burned in 1864. Until 1873, all trains from the west heading to Baltimore or Washington DC went via Monocacy Junction. The location of the junction and the railroad and highway bridges over the river made it a strategic site during the Civil War battle. (Courtesy of National Park Service)



B&O Railroad bridge sketch, ca. 1896. The wooden railroad bridge across the Monocacy River was replaced by an iron bridge in the mid-1850s. The Union army placed their 24-pound howitzer to "defend the two bridges and cover the retirement and crossing of skirmishers" on the high bluff to the right. (Courtesy of National Park Service)



An eastbound freight train passing Frederick Junction, 1910. At the time there were three wooden water tanks there. (B&O RHS Archives)

Most B&O trackmen were recent Irish or German immigrants, enslaved Black persons, or native-born White Americans. They frequently lived in shanties along the route of the railroad. Shanty is derived from the Irish word shantee, meaning old house.

The *Niles' Weekly Register*, a local Frederick newspaper, printed this tribute to President Thomas, in October 1831: "He is a financier and engineer, mechanic and artist; he can direct the drilling to the laborers or a blast in a rock—ever fruitful in expedients and indefatigable in the application of them. In the language of a friend, he is 'up to everything' and if it were not for his straight coat, he would make an excellent commanding officer of an army."

Early Operations

The Frederick Branch opened on December 1, 1831 becoming the country's first branch line. It is still in use today, making it the world's oldest branch line in continuous service. Maryland's Governor, George Howard, and William Stuart, the mayor of Baltimore, were among the dignitaries who rode four carriages, each drawn by a single horse, the 61 miles from Baltimore to celebrate the event. The cars stopped at the Monocacy River to examine the new bridge with its three wooden arched deck trusses, and then proceeded to Frederick where citizens welcomed the train with bells and band music.

Service initially entailed two trains per day between Baltimore and Frederick. The freight consisted mostly of flour coming