

The Sentinel



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

\$8.00

VOLUME 39, NUMBER 2

SECOND QUARTER 2017



Message from the President

Fellow members, here we are now approaching the second quarter of 2017. Progress and changes are continuing to happen and here are the updates.

The Society building is progressing nicely with the basement record room now complete and most of the new shelving full with 174 newly acquired railroad records from Cincinnati. The library's shelving is completely installed and periodicals are now being shelved and later to be cataloged into the Past Perfect database. The drawing room is busy with new materials delivered from multiple sources, which will be inventoried and placed in banker boxes to comply with our new storage system. The workroom is abuzz with getting resources for the next convention and answering requests. Next on the list for Grant Berry's team is painting the interior hallway and the auditorium before April 3rd. Exterior work involving cleaning, minor repairs, and painting will start in May.

Fundraising for the building is slightly over 67% towards our goal of \$350,000. Enclosed is a donor form for the building fund. Please consider making a donation if you have not already, and if you have additional contributions, they would be greatly appreciated. Speaking of the donor form, the board of directors and officers realized that our current donor policy was fragmented and need to be revised. Since we are already into 2017, no changes will

occur to the building-fund donations this year. Starting with January 1, 2018 a new policy will start, with major changes to the policy and recognition to donors. More on these changes will be provided in the fourth quarter letter.

Elections will occur by the convention and a call for candidates is now being made. If interested, please notify director Michael Shylanski if you care to run for any of the officer spots or the two director positions up this year. Grant Berry, who is our building manager, has stepped forward to be our assistant archivist. Since he has moved and shuffled most of the collection these past eight months, he felt he could be a help to Nick Fry. We need more volunteers! George Stant is stepping down as webmaster at the end of the year. We need a new volunteer to take over this job ASAP so there is a period of transition over the next six to eight months. Volunteers are still needed at the building on Thursdays and the third weekend of each month. Work on the physical building will also move to Thursdays since Grant will be doing two jobs. If you can help in any capacity, drop me a line.

At the February board meeting, the date for the building dedication was set. The formal invitation dedication ceremony for political supporters, corporate/business supporters, donors, officers, and directors

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

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Sykesville, Maryland 21784

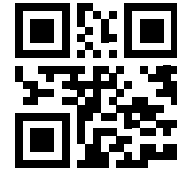
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The Baltimore and Ohio Historical Society is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving and disseminating historical information about The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

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On the Covers

FRONT COVER: As viewed from an overhead street bridge, this view of B&O's Rossford Yard in Toledo, Ohio, reveals a lot about the freight cars of railroading in October 1962. Two of B&O's early Geeps, GP-7s 6402 and 6405, amble north, back toward the roundhouse end of the yard. (H.G. "Hank" Goerke photograph, J. David Ingles collection)

BACK COVER: This poster, part of an award-winning set issued in 1930, was produced when steam locomotives required large numbers of shop personnel to maintain, train crews usually had at least five members, hump riders worked in classification yards, and record keeping and accounting were processed by hand.



A 1980s view of the Rossford Roundhouse, after yard closure. The tracks are still being used as rail to truck transfer tracks. For the first few years, the roundhouse served as part of the security fence, until expansion to the old north yard, and tear down of the roundhouse. *(Toledo Lucas County Public Library)*

B&O's Rossford Yard, Toledo, Ohio

By Jeffrey D. Brauer

My favorite railroad place is Rossford Yard near Toledo, Ohio. Although I never knew him, my paternal grandfather worked Rossford and died of heart failure in the roundhouse in 1938. As children, we visited Toledo on holidays. Our maternal grandfather lived near the B&O Rossford Yard, and took us there often. We viewed from either the Oregon Road bridge, or Oakdale Avenue's public sidewalks, where we could watch the roundhouse without the railroad police chasing us.

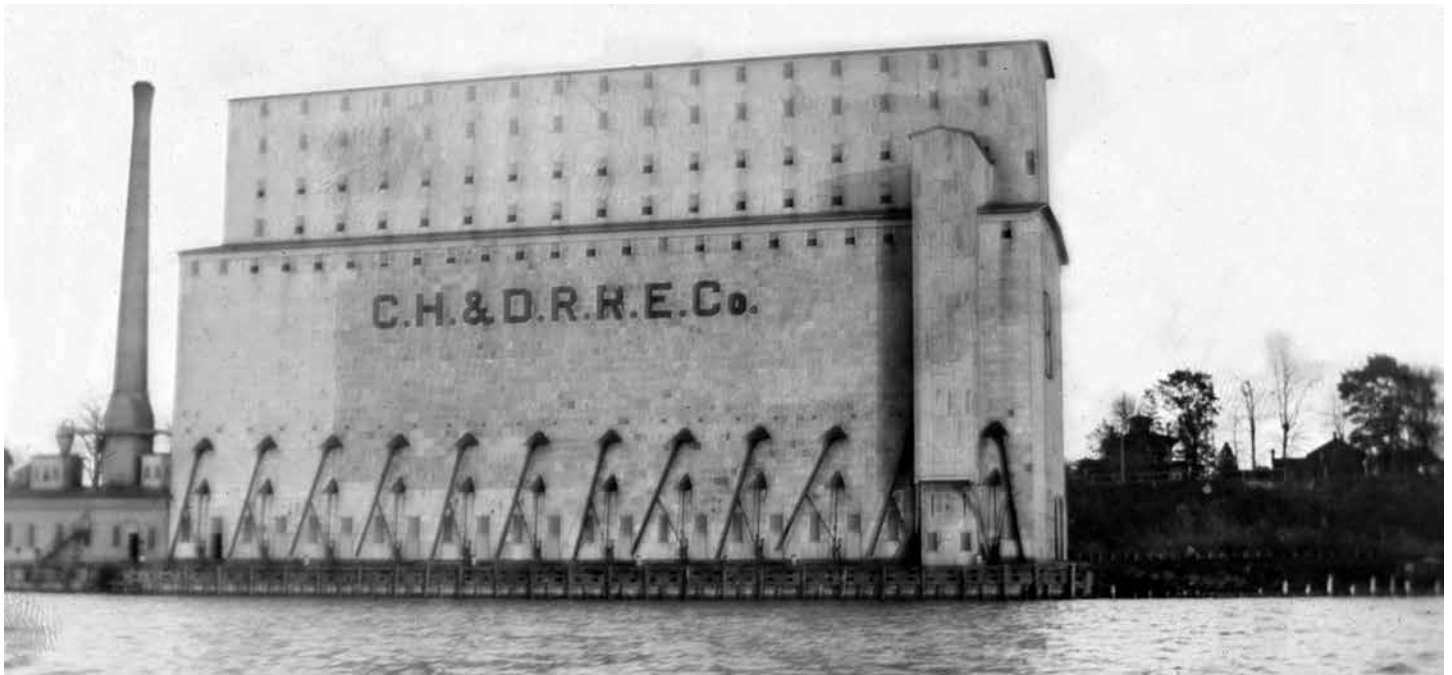
I was intrigued by Rossford's distinctive track arrangement, wondering how features like the pinwheel ladder on a curve to a dead-end siding at a grain elevator, or the yard widening out in the middle of the yard rather than the ends might have come to be. In researching Rossford and its track arrangements, it turns out that much of the unusual track pattern resulted from the famous B&O frugality and penchant for making do. Some corporate twists and turns also played a part.

Starting from the beginning, the Dayton and Michigan Railroad (D&M), began in Dayton in 1853, and progressed to Toledo on July 28, 1859.

The line ran through suburbs of Perysburg and Rossford, located on a ridge east of the Maumee River. This provided a straight route and good drainage in an area known as the Black Swamp. Since many farms and homesteads had been established fronting the Maumee River, it was also probably easier to acquire land



Smith Bridge Company, around 1870. It was located where the famous pinwheel ladder later stood. Smith sold the land to the railroad in the 1903 expansion, but sources vary on exactly when they moved their facility to Broadway Street. It may have been later, to accommodate the 1928 yard expansion. *(Toledo Lucas County Public Library)*



The B grain elevator at Rossford Docks, built about 1894. CH&D had its slightly smaller A Elevator downtown, adjacent to the Wabash RR grain elevator. Both were similar in style. This burned in 1898. (Toledo Lucas County Public Library)

behind the back of farms, leaving valuable river front land to the farmers.

The route came closest to the Maumee River (in location and grade) at Brown Road (now Oakdale Street) and Miami Street. The river was wide here, providing a good port and dock site, but development of port and yard facilities didn't happen right away.

The first addition to the D&M mainline was a siding located at what was later Dock Junction to saw mills built by the Tracy brothers about 1863. A bridge in approximately the same location as the current bridge carried Miami Street over the track. Later, the Tracys also opened a small commercial freight dock at the foot of Brown Road.

Initially, the road's goal was to reach the Middle Grounds on the west side of the Maumee River, at the base of downtown, since East Toledo hadn't developed significantly (and wouldn't until after 1900 after opening the Cherry Street bridge).

The D&M connected to the Cleveland and Toledo Railroad (later New York Central) just north of Rossford, at East Toledo near Fasset and Oak Street. The connection required a 90 degree left turn on a descending grade to align with the 1856 Maumee River bridge (It was modernized in 1902). The bridge was partially funded with bonds from the city, and was used by all eastern roads, with equal access probably being a condition of those funds.

Another 90 degree right turn after exiting the bridge took the tracks north to reach the freight facilities at the Middle Grounds. The Oliver family developed the Middle Grounds partially by filling in the river. Some called this Piling Yard for the piles driven and walls erected to hold up the fill. The Middle Grounds housed freight facilities, as well as the city's first passenger station in the Island House Hotel.

The NYC predecessors occupied prime river frontage, and the D&M developed yards, freight house, grain elevator, and ore dock over time on a back channel, just big enough for the Great Lakes schooners of the time. It was further from the river, but nearer to downtown—sometimes advertised as a customer advantage.

The following timeline, taken primarily from annual reports, captures the major events in the story of Rossford Yard.

1863 The Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton (CH&D) leased the D&M on May 1 (amended to perpetuity in 1870) and assumed full control.

1863–1871 The CH&D developed its facilities at the Middle Grounds over time. It eventually consisted of 8-9 tracks. Annual reports note that in 1871 ice floes destroyed the docks, and a new 300,000-bushel elevator was authorized for construction.

The CH&D facilities were always

smaller than the NYC predecessor lines, but the grain elevators had similar capacity. Later, the NYC built a state-of-the-art freight house that dwarfed the B&O facilities, an indicator that they garnered greater business in Toledo.

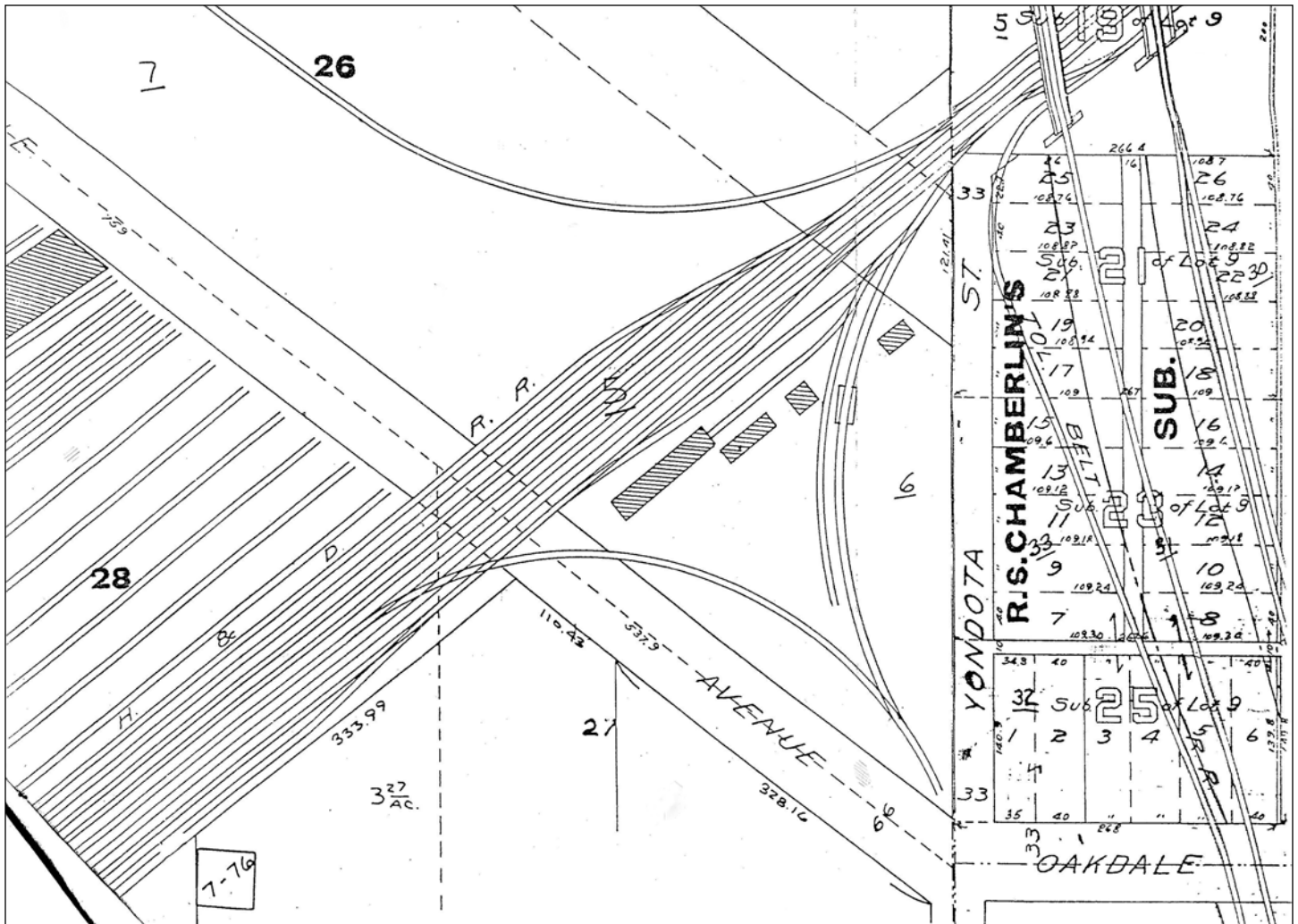
The 1895 Sanborn map shows the CH&D single stall engine house. By comparison, the NYC lines already had larger (nearly 180 degree) roundhouses just south.

The CH&D gradually expanded their facilities on both sides of the Maumee River in the 1870s.

1870 An early East Toledo industry was the Smith Bridge Company, built in either 1863 or 1870 in what later became the pinwheel ladder of Rossford yard. They later moved to Broadway Street on the NYC. Smith Bridge moved before 1915, leaving the land for B&O yard expansion in 1928. The hillside may have been leveled for fill to create land for the expanded coal and ore docks, built in 1910-1914.

The initial six yard tracks at Rossford were built entirely within the original 100-foot-wide CH&D right of way, built before 1876 to handle overflow traffic at the Middle Grounds. This small yard survived several expansions to become the North Side yard. The main and a few tracks still serve the current intermodal terminal.

Both the PRR and NYC predecessors built similar yards, starting just past Oak



Sanborn Map of the first engine house at Rossford. Note the crossover just south of Brown. When this was removed, it created the outer two belt tracks in the old north yard. The track swinging to the left of the photo goes to two small oil refineries, built in the 1885 oil boom in northwest Ohio. (Toledo Lucas County Public Library)

and Oakdale. And, like Rossford, each later expanded with much larger yards further out of town, the PRR with the aptly named Outer Yard, and the NYC with Whitmore and then Stanley Yards past Whitmore (now Andrus) Roads.

Rossford was unique in that Brown Road crossed the middle of the yard, as would later be repeated at the inbound Harris Yard several miles south, which was split by then-rural Glendale Road. Veteran railroaders described those road crossings as an operations nightmare, even before heavier street traffic.

1872-1876 The CH&D acquired the land that would eventually become the grain elevators, coal docks, roundhouse and industries bordering Oakdale Street in the name of F.H. Short, the CH&D Secretary/Treasurer from 1853, who also served as President for a few years before returning to the Secretary position.

Much of the land was owned by the Tracys. Some parcels were bought by an agent for the CH&D, who may have died after purchase, since a lawsuit forced his heirs to turn over the land to the railroad in 1876. The land for industries north of Oakdale Street was acquired via a Sheriff's Deed due to unpaid taxes by previous owners.

1873 Payments of \$7,885 towards the docks at East Toledo (Rossford). Payments of \$79,416 to buy grounds for depot at East Toledo. Purchase of existing grain elevator at East Toledo for \$22,064 (probably originally owned by the Tracy family as part of its commercial docks). Upgrade of Middle Grounds elevator at cost of \$25,539.

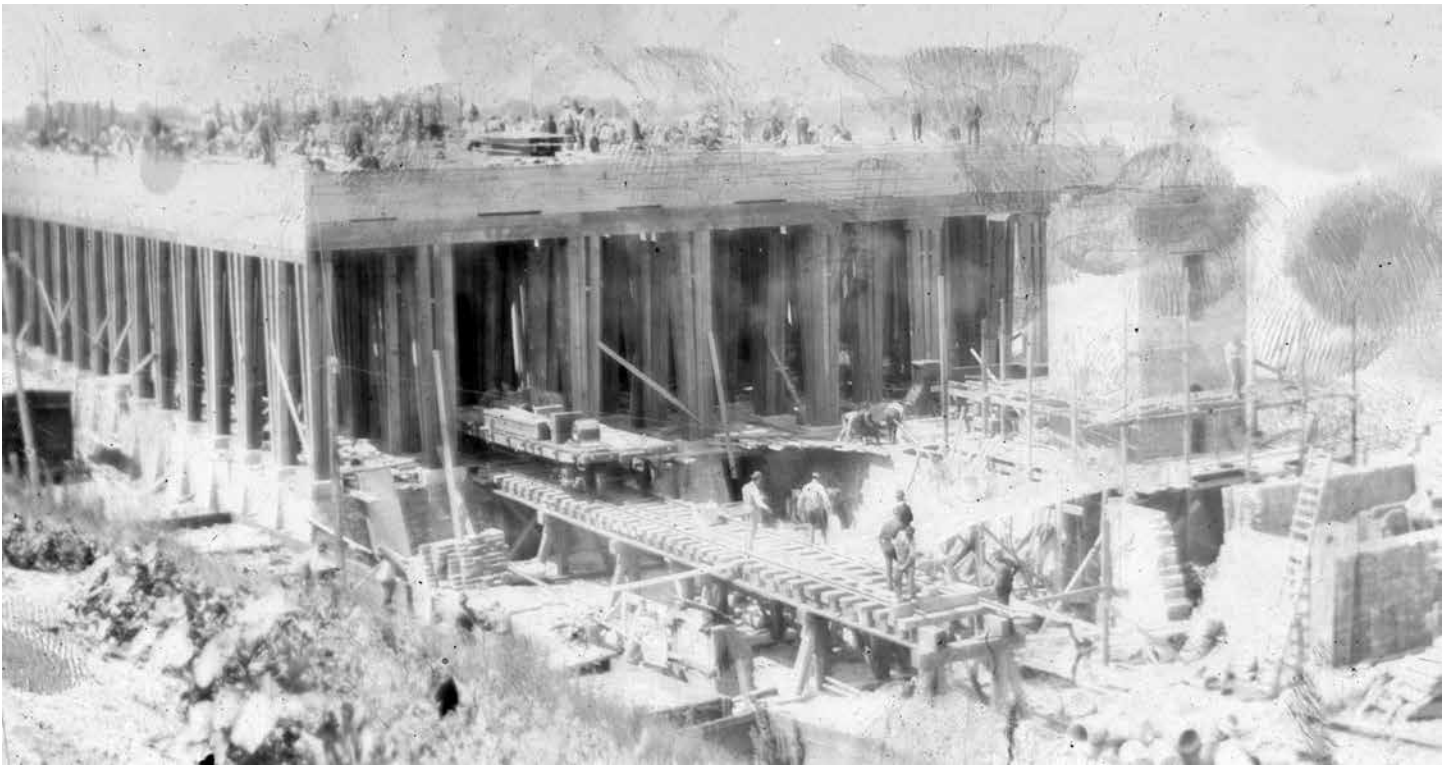
1876 Built 2,390 feet of new side tracks at East Toledo, probably on newly bought land for unloading local freight. Maps of the era show several stub tracks ending at Brown Road, similar to the arrangement that exists now. Also, repaired Middle Grounds docks.

1877 Grain crop failures reduced car loadings at Toledo by 1,500 cars. This was the only year the CH&D system didn't meet fixed charges. 1,885 feet of new side tracks were built at Toledo.

1879 On January 24, the smaller of two grain elevators in Toledo burned, and insurance covered \$15,000 of its \$21,000 value. New station offices in Toledo were built, totaling 3,600 square feet (60 x 60), including three rental units which offset the cost of the offices used by CH&D. There were repairs to lumber docks and some grading required in Toledo.

1880 An unspecified total of \$29,000 was spent on expanding freight terminals in Lima and East Toledo.

1883-1884 Toledo Belt constructed from north end of Rossford Yard to Wheeling and Lake Erie Homestead Yard, providing a second north-end interchange for CH&D. In 1946, this line extended to the



Construction of the second grain elevator, about 1900-1903. (Toledo Lucas County Public Library)



The Rossford Dock site looking south about 1900. The grain elevator has burned, and it appears they are extending the track north to supply construction material for the building of the new NYC bridge over the Maumee River. The three tracks left served the B grain elevator, and its replacements. They are in similar arrangement even today. In the distance, more tracks serve the ore and coal dock, with a large pile of material stored on the ground between the two. (Toledo Lucas County Public Library)

new lakefront docks, and was occasionally used for coal traffic in place of the Toledo Terminal (TT) route via Bates Tower. This line remained in service until the Rossford passenger main to the NYC/Conrail main

was taken out of service, before Rossford closure in 1982.

Note that on the 1895 map, the Toledo Belt extended under the PRR and NYC (Toledo and Ohio Central) bridges and

made an interchange connection to the T&OC between Oak and Oakdale (Brown) Streets. The NYC acquired control of the T&OC by 1910 (and leased it in 1922, then merged it in 1952), and this interchange track was taken out of service shortly thereafter, with transfers made at other nearby interchange points.

1884–1886 The Consolidated Rolling Stock Corporation was a Bridgeport, Connecticut company that bought freight facilities of local roads to build and lease freight cars. From 1884-86, it moved its headquarters to Detroit, and built a long four-track covered shed on leased CH&D land at the north end of Rossford Yard at Brown Road. The 1900 Sanborn Maps show these as belonging to the railroad and in dilapidated condition. They were removed in the yard expansion of 1902.

1885 The CH&D Elevator Company was formed and construction on Elevator B at the Rossford Docks was completed. 2,689 feet of side track was laid at new East Toledo Docks to serve the grain elevators. It appears the facility required land fill, perhaps started for the earlier Tracy Commercial Docks.

The City of Toledo started digging a \$3 million shipping canal in the Maumee River deep enough for ocean ships. It extended to the Rossford Docks, where the