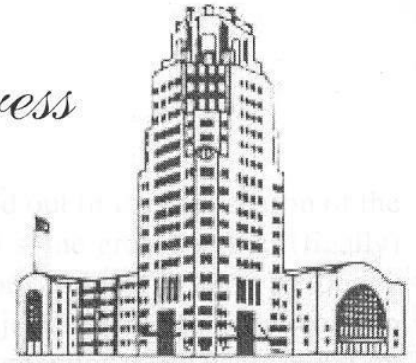


Empire State Express



MAY 2022

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

Editor: John C. Dahl Email nfcnrhs@gmail.com

The meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for Friday, May 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM at the Town of Wheatfield Community / Senior Center, 2790 Church Road, North Tonawanda NY. Follow Rt 62 north to Ward Rd, turn left onto Ward Road and turn right onto Church Road.



May's meeting program will be a travelogue to Switzerland presented by Tony Schill who says: "It is a small country in the heart of Europe yes, but one packed with fantastic mountain and pristine lakes scenery interlaced with railroads that can take you just about anywhere, on time, in comfort." As always Tony's first-rate photography and knowledge of all things railroad will be the hallmark of the program. If you like rail travel, don't miss this meeting.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR CHAPTER BBQ FUNDRAISER; SATURDAY MAY 14TH;
DINNERS - DRIVE IN, TAKE-OUT ONLY; \$14.00 EACH; READY @ 11 AM UNTIL
2:30 PM OR SOLD OUT! THANK YOU IN ADVANCE.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Every season has its own unique flavor. Spring is going outdoors again, renewing, planting. With the fading of the Covid Pandemic we feel a growing sense of “normalcy” to the warmer, longer days. There is a kind of “This is the way it’s supposed to be” feel to the days.

Since my physical activities were curtailed for a couple of weeks, I had time to look back at what we have been doing at the Museum. The first quarter of most years is lost to work there because we simply can’t get in to the building. This year we made an effort to change that, especially with so much going on. I tracked how many Saturdays we actually worked there during the first quarter

and found these facts. We lost one Saturday to the New Years Holiday, one to snow, one to the February train show, and one to the Banquet. That left 11 possible work days, of which we actually worked seven. This has been a tremendous benefit to all the projects. Whatever was done on those days would have been in front of us now. Not only that but we had visitors on at least two of those days.

By the time that you read this we will be working on the framing for the archive room again. Planning is proceeding in earnest to do track rehab where the boxcar sits. Randy and Neal will be in charge of that project. Randy is drawing up a proposal for the work. The big issue is getting ties.

Our Chicken BBQ will be on the 14th of May. We will need some extra hands that day as three of our regulars will be elsewhere. Call Becky at 716-434-5665 to volunteer.

We have received our portion of the Thomas Gascoigne slide collection. There should be material in there for several programs. Some of the slides are already digitized.

The S gauge modelers convention will be here the first week in August. They have asked to come visit our Museum on Tuesday August 2nd. We will need some folks on hand to greet them, answer their questions, and show them around.

Speaking of our Museum, the building the Chapter calls home was built in 1922 and opened in 1923. We are looking at a Centennial Celebration next year! Just to add some perspective, we have owned it for thirty-six years now! I think both the building and the Organization have mutually benefitted from our decision to buy it long ago. We will be entering “tourist season” shortly, if you want to be a tour guide let Becky know when you are available.

With that, I hope to see you at the meeting.

Jim Ball



“President Lincoln confers with General U.S. Grant at Curriers, NY.” The Annual Civil War tribute on the Arcade & Attica RR over the Memorial Day weekend is a WNY tradition. Take a ride down there, you’ll be glad you did.
Photo: John C. Dahl, May 27, 2017.

SCENE ON THE LINE



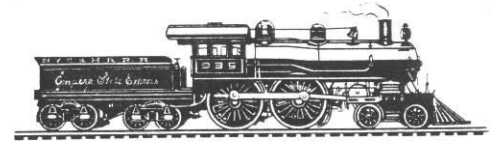
Shortly after stopping at downtown Buffalo's year-old Exchange St. station, here is Amtrak # 64, the Maple Leaf. The New York City bound train crosses the street the station is named for - heading for its next stop at the suburban Depew station. The wide right of way speaks of the historic nature of this location - which once had multiple, very busy tracks. Single track now suffices. March 16, 2022. Photo by Larry Gustina.



Erie's now venerable Cherry Creek, NY depot 48 miles south of Buffalo was almost brand new in this circa 1906 photo probably taken by J.E Bailey who documented the railroad's stations for the management. The local must be due soon with the milk cans in place. A creamery, perhaps in Jamestown, NY, is their destination. Photo posted on the Internet, part of the Steamtown National Park collection.

CHAPTER MEMORIES

July 1939, Jamestown, NY
Story collected by Geoff Gerstung



The Railroad Enthusiast – September 1939 issue

The Buffalo Division operated its largest fan excursion to date on Sunday, July 23rd, 1939 when a group of 119 made a trip over the Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern RR, the last remaining electric interurban in this part of the country.

The trip started from Buffalo on New York Central train 151 leaving at 8:20 AM. At Westfield the group boarded two special JW&NW cars, one of which was the famous No. 312, the only electric observation car in the East. Leaving Westfield at about 10:30 the cars proceeded to wind their way up through the scenic hills and ravines, and a stop was made to inspect the automatic substation at the top of the long grade. Shortly after that a stop was made at Mayville to meet a regular car, and during this time the signal tower at the Pennsylvania junction was visited. The cars then proceeded along the shore of beautiful Chautauqua Lake. At noon a layover of about an hour at Midway Park provide time for a picnic lunch in the park or in the cars which waited on a siding. After continuing along the lake, Jamestown was reached early in the afternoon.

Thirty-one of the rail-fans agreed to make a second-round trip over the line and the observation car was used on this extra run to Westfield and return. Upon arrival in Jamestown again, a stop was made in the yards and two JW&NW electric freight locomotives, electric express car, and four-wheel caboose were spotted for photographing. At 5:30 the entire group left Jamestown in the two special cars and then boarded the NYC at Westfield for the homeward journey.

This trip was a great success and was composed of railroad fans from widely scattered localities. There were good representations of the National Railway Historical Society, Rochester Chapter, and the Electric Railroaders Association, Cleveland Chapter. In addition to these there were fans from Pittsburgh, Pa., Ann Arbor, Mich., and one from Haverhill, Mass., Mr. Gerald F. Cunningham, a member of the New England Division of the Enthusiasts.

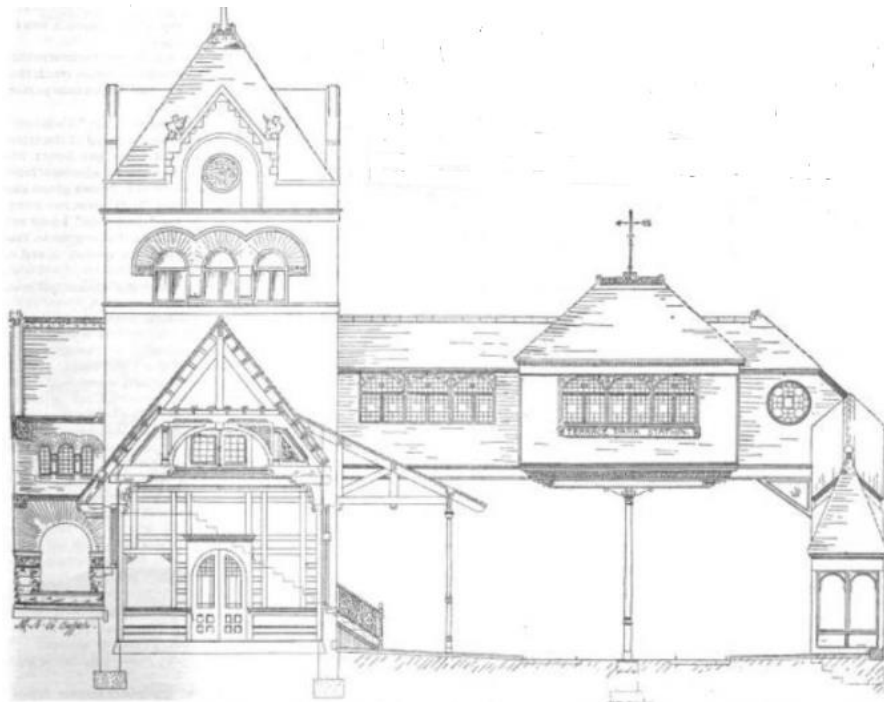
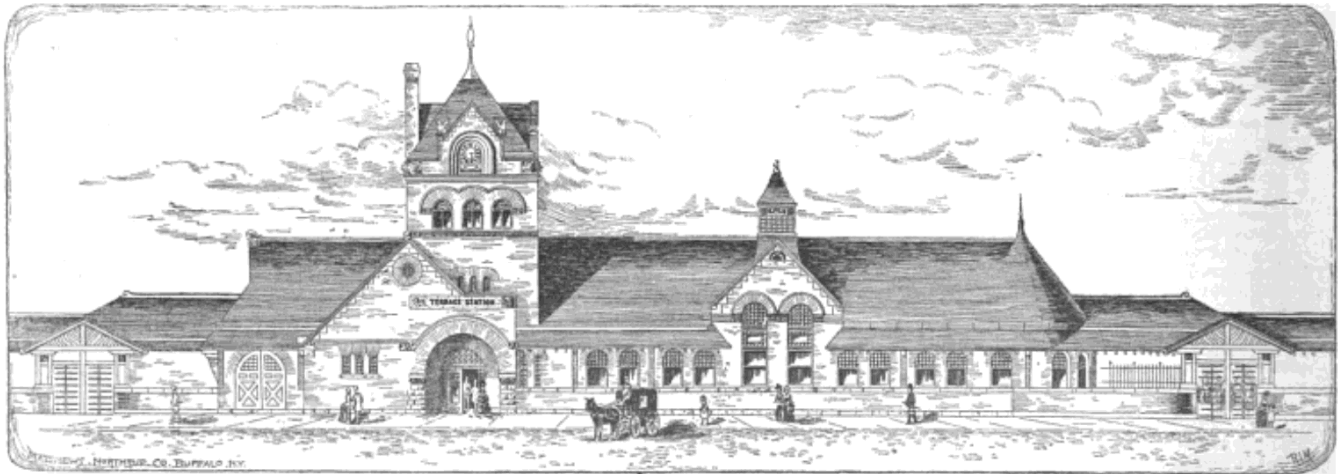
Editor's note: In July 1939 the Buffalo Chapter did not exist as such, it was the Buffalo Division of the RRE. NRHS National membership did not occur until 1942. So, the reference to NRHS Rochester Chapter is interesting. The fare for the extravaganza is listed as \$1.40. It's not documented which NYC train returned the group to Buffalo's Central Terminal, but I suspect it probably carried a diner and a good part of the group must have descended upon it right after boarding since no evening meal stop in Jamestown or Westfield was mentioned in the trip summary. The RRE and later, Chapter, visited the JW&NW, with its nickname of "Jesus Wept and No Wonder" many more times until the line's demise after World War II. Obviously, it was a unique treasure. If only we had a time machine to revisit it again! - JCD



THE TERRACE STATION AT BUFFALO

From The Railway Review, March 19, 1887

Terrace station at Buffalo, on the New York Central Railway, is about to be given a new building, which is shown in our cuts. The station proper will be built of pressed brick with terra cotta trimmings. The roof will be of tile terra cotta ornaments, as shown in the elevations. The arches over the doors and windows will also be of terra cotta. The east or main front has passenger entrances and exits, and a door to the baggage room at street levels. Terrace street, in front of the station, is several feet above the level of the tracks. The lower level is reached from the waiting room by two flights of stairs, one running directly from the waiting room, and the other descending from the westerly end of a covered passage or bridge, over the tracks. This will make unnecessary any crossing of the tracks by either arriving or departing passengers, and will enable the company to control admission to its trains. The southerly elevation – that of the end of the building toward Seneca street – shows an additional passenger exit at the lower level. The tower over the principal passenger entrance is an effective feature, and will contain a clock visible at considerable distance. The interior finish will be in hard wood, and all arrangements are designed after the most improved methods for the comfort of passengers, and for convenience in transacting the company's business. Altogether the new station will be an improvement to the appearance of the neighborhood and a boom to suburban travelers. When completed the building will cost about \$30,000, and it likely will be ready for use about July 1st of this year.



THE TERRACE STATION - continued

Despite what seemed to be wonderful and certain plans for a beautiful downtown station at the Terrace, the afore described building was never constructed. Wrangling among Buffalo's Grade Crossing Commission, the railroads and City scuttled plans for the new building. Instead, the rambling old wooden station, pictured below, survived into the early 1950's when the relocation of tracks off the Terrace to the former bed of the old Erie Canal was finally completed. New York State constructed the Skyway for Route 5 and Interstate 190 along what had been the railroad track corridor into downtown. The Terrace, after removal of the tracks, was soon obscured by the elevated viaducts carrying Interstate 190 and its access ramps. To this day it remains an ugly bit of urban wasteland. A new, very modest Exchange Street station, in a modern suburban style would be built to replace the long demolished historic structure which is pictured on the next page in a postcard view. The 1952 Exchange St. station would see the last of steam locomotives in Buffalo when it opened but would be in use only about ten years when New York Central abandoned passenger service to Niagara Falls, which by that time consisted chiefly of Budd-built RDC's, called "Beeliners" on NYC. The building sat in boarded up silence until 1979 when the revival (under Amtrak) of service to Toronto was initiated. A quick renovation reopened the tiny depot, but Central Terminal was closed that October. Exchange then remarkably served into 2019 when the new and beautiful station we enjoy today would be constructed. The latest building opened to service in November 2020.

*Editors note: A special **Thank You** to Larry Gustina for use of his copy of the Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, Vol VIII, printed in 1905. This book contains a history of the Grade Crossings Commission by Robert B. Adam, Chairman from 1887 to 1904. It is a tale of the decades of often exasperating effort it took to make Buffalo's numerous railway crossings a much safer place for both the ordinary citizen and the railroad companies. – JCD*



New York Central's Terrace station in downtown Buffalo, NY, center, seen about 1940, This view looks northwest. Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS archives

THE TERRACE STATION - continued



Buffalo's historic early 20th century Exchange Street station is seen in this postcard view about 1901 at the time of the Pan American Exposition. It was a massive affair, having been expanded a number of times. It was also inefficient and poorly located to handle the enormous amounts of rail traffic of those years. Today this same site is the location for the new downtown Buffalo Amtrak station.

**SWIFT-NEW
BEELINER
SERVICE**

**BUFFALO
NIAGARA FALLS**

Effective April 27, 1952

NEW YORK CENTRAL

BUFFALO • NIAGARA FALLS		681	207	683	685	687
Daylight Saving Time						
Lv. Buffalo (Central Terminal)		6:15a	9:30a	10:45a	2:55p	5:15p
Lv. Buffalo (Terrace Station)		6:24a	9:40a	10:54a	3:04p	5:24p
Ar. Black Rock		6:32a	9:49a	11:02a	3:12p	5:32p
Ar. North Tonawanda		6:42a	10:04a	11:12a	3:22p	5:42p
Ar. Gratiwick		f6:44a	....	f11:14a	f3:24p	f5:44p
Ar. La Salle		....	10:13a	11:21a	3:31p	5:51p
Ar. Echota		f6:59a	f10:18a	f11:29a	f3:38p	f5:58p
Ar. Niagara Falls		7:05a	10:31a	11:35a	3:45p	6:05p
Ar. Suspension Bridge		7:10a	10:55a	11:40a	3:50p	6:10p

NIAGARA FALLS • BUFFALO		680	358	682	684	246	386
Daylight Saving Time							
Lv. Suspension Bridge		7:20a	8:40a	12:50p	4:05p	8:55p	10:15p
Lv. Niagara Falls		7:25a	8:50a	12:55p	4:10p	9:17p	10:20p
Lv. Echota		f7:36a	....	....	f4:17p	....	....
Lv. La Salle		7:39a	....	1:09p	4:24p	....	....
Lv. Gratiwick		f7:46a	....	f1:16p	f4:31p	....	....
Lv. Tonawanda		7:48a	*9:14a	1:18p	4:33p	9:47p	10:38p
Lv. Black Rock		7:58a	....	1:28p	4:43p	....	10:51p
Ar. Buffalo (Terrace Station)		8:06a	*9:36a	1:36p	4:51p	10:18p	11:01p
Ar. Buffalo (Central Terminal)		8:15a	9:50a	1:45p	5:00p	10:30p	11:10p

NOTE: No. 207 has through sleeping cars and coaches from New York

* Stops only to discharge passengers from Welland, Ont. or beyond

NOTES: No. 358 is the through sleeping car and coach train from Chicago and Detroit
No. 246 has the through sleeping cars and coaches for New York

R&R - 9491 - 7M - 4/52 Printed in U.S.A.

THE TERRACE STATION - continued



SWIFT-NEW
BEELINER
SERVICE
BUFFALO
NIAGARA FALLS

NEW YORK CENTRAL SYSTEM
Effective April 27, 1952
NEW YORK CENTRAL

Economical Fares!

Example	One Way	26 trips (good for 1 year)
Between Niagara Falls and	Buffalo (Terrace Sta.)	89¢ \$14.95
	Buffalo (Central Term.)	95¢ \$16.90
Between North Tonawanda and	Buffalo (Terrace Sta.)	49¢ \$7.80
	Buffalo (Central Term.)	60¢ \$9.75
Between Buffalo (Cent. Term.) and	Buffalo (Terrace Sta.)	14¢

Federal taxes are included where applicable

Running Time (Beeliners) • 41 minutes Niagara Falls-Terrace Station
50 minutes Niagara Falls-Central Terminal

Streamlined, Air-Conditioned Travel Comfort

Beeliner schedule, April 27, 1952, New York Central.

New York Central introduced its RDC's as "Beeliner Service". Note on the schedule (pg.7) the listing northbound with a North Tonawanda stop but southbound as just Tonawanda. This must be a mistake in printing. The Central closed its station in the City of Tonawanda about this same time, and only the North Tonawanda facility is believed to have had Beeliner passenger service. Also take note of trains 207, 358 and 246. Number 207 was a through service with sleeping cars from New York City terminating at Suspension Bridge in Niagara Falls. It was making local stops along the Niagara branch. I have been told that executives from the Niagara Falls chemical companies often used the overnight sleeper from New York City. Time was money and in 1952 the Thruway was not yet completed, and the airline industry was still in its infancy. Besides, who would want to drive or fly, when one of NYC's comfortable streamliner trains was available? Alas, the golden years of train travel did not last and in about a decade the Beeliners were terminated along with all NYC service to Niagara Falls. And look closely at those fares...a trip from Niagara Falls and Buffalo's Terrace Station was a mere 89 cents, with a running time of 41 minutes. You can barely do that time today, certainly not in rush hour conditions! – JCD.



A general view of the Terrace right of way. The grade was fairly steep, and the curves were tight from Exchange Street station up to street level. The track was relocated south to the abandoned bed of the old Erie Canal in the early 1950s and this cut has been covered over and today is unidentifiable, being beneath the viaducts of Interstate 190. This view looks west, from around where Main Street crossed the line. Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS archives

ON THE TRACK AHEAD

Chapter board member and head of equipment restoration, Randy Bugucki, is slated as our presenter for June. We have not heard yet what he will present, so let's call it a mystery program right now and come prepared for a surprise. Note: due to ongoing construction at Central Terminal, we will NOT be able to hold the June meeting at the Terminal this year. Look for us at our new, regular meeting location at the Wheatfield Senior Center. Directions to the WSC are provided on Page 1.

CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER

Make sure you mark your calendar for our annual Chiavetta Chicken BBQ, Saturday, May 14th. Dinners are \$14, drive in, take out. Like everything else the price has gone up. But you still receive the most delicious chicken BBQ Western New York offers at a reasonable cost. And a special dessert is included too! This event helps sustain our railroad history museum project. Please come to the station on May 14, drive in and take out a BBQ dinner (or two or more!) and help the Chapter make this a sell-out event! Thank You in advance.

MARKERS



The only other surviving railroad interlocking tower in Western New York besides the Chapter's EL2 in North Tonawanda, is "AD" located in Ashford Hollow, NY deep in Cattaraugus County. The location marked the junction of the former Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh - Buffalo and Rochester branches. Baltimore & Ohio took over in 1932 and then it was a part of B&O/C&O/WM "Chessie System". Spun off by CSX over two decades ago, only a part of the line survives as Buffalo & Pittsburgh trackage. Sadly, much of the Buffalo branch has been torn up. But the old soldier still stands his ground. Relentlessly, time is taking its toll on the more than one hundred-year-old structure, seen here on November 6, 2021. *Photo by John C. Dahl.*

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- MAY 13** **Regular meeting. Program: “Up & Down in Switzerland” - Rail travel adventures with Tony Schill.**
- MAY 14** **Chiavetta Chicken BBQ at the Station. Drive in, Take Out only, please. Dinners \$14, Ready at 11:00 AM to about 2:30 PM or sold out.**
- JUN 10** **Regular meeting. Program by Randy Bugucki, topic to be announced.**
- JUN-JUL-AUG** **Station Open most Saturdays, 11 AM to 4 PM, volunteer docents needed!**

The Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) publicly supported organization. Contributions may be deductible for income tax purposes in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service.

***** IMPORTANT REMINDERS ***** If you receive hardcopy of the ESX and your mailing address changes, please send to the attention of Neal Kerin so that your Empire State Express can be addressed properly. Likewise, if your email address changes for any reason, please let us know by sending it to nfcrhs@gmail.com
THANK YOU

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