

THE Jefferson College Times

Jefferson College Historical Society, Canonsburg PA



VOL. XXXVII, No. 3 (Whole #141)

October 2004



News and Comments

Cover:

Canonsburg's brick railroad station, built in 1909, is shown in this undated photograph taken during its heyday. Part of the platform on the south side of the right-of-way is visible, as is the decorative fence between the tracks. We are grateful to Katherine Simpson for the photograph.

Society concerns:

Occasionally we get complaints that the *JCTimes* is not being received. Sometimes a member has moved and neglected to inform us. The post office will not forward this class of mail. So, if you move, please let us know.

Another reason is non-payment of dues. There is no date code on the label. So, the label for this issue will have a red mark if your dues are unpaid.

Mark on the label? Get out your checkbook.

Special Civil War number:

Extra copies of the 56-page July *Jefferson College Times* were printed. They are available for five dollars a copy. For mailing, add \$3.

Bradford House Symposium:

The Bradford House is sponsoring a symposium, "Life and Customs of Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1750-1800," at the Burnett Center, W&J College, on November 6, 2004. Registration includes breakfast and lunch and is \$25 before October 27; \$35 at the door. Call Kathleen Mitchell, 724-222-8821.

McMillan Log School:

The historical society, through the Log School Preservation Project, contracted with Fitly Joined, a company owned by the Stickovich Family that specializes in log structures, to replace damaged logs in the McMillan Log School on the Middle School campus. At press time the project is nearly done. Five logs were known to be hollow, and others were suspect. When the structure was disassembled, many more were found to be in poor condition. Still, most of the logs in the structure are original.

A photographic essay on the repair project is expected in the next *JCTimes*.

Lois Ahwesh:

First Phil; now Lois. Our president, and now our secretary.

Lois Ahwesh died August 10, 2004. She had been the society secretary nearly ten years. The office has no term limit, and Lois was so dependable, accommodating, and ready to help that she repeatedly was reelected. She took it upon herself to serve refreshments far more often than was her responsibility. She made no fuss, things just got done. And she did them cheerfully and well.

The Jefferson College Times is published by the Jefferson College Historical Society; 220 North Central Avenue; Canonsburg, PA 15317. The Jefferson College Historical Society is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to advancing knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of local history. Members receive the JCTimes by mail four times a year. Articles of local historical interest are earnestly solicited.

*Correspondence should be addressed to
Editor, Jefferson College Times, 117 S. Central Avenue, Canonsburg, PA 15317*

*Membership in the Jefferson College Historical Society is open to all. An individual active membership is \$10; student membership, \$5; contributing membership, \$15; business or institutional membership, \$25; sustaining membership, \$50; and life membership, \$150. Correspondence concerning membership should be directed to
Joseph A. Solobay, 514 Craighead Street, Canonsburg, PA 15317*

2004 Officers: James T. Herron, Jr., president; Eric Powell, vice president; Joseph A. Solobay, treasurer. Directors are Ralph Trax ('05), Ronald Cianelli ('06), and Albert Powell ('07). Immediate past president, Paul Katrencik.



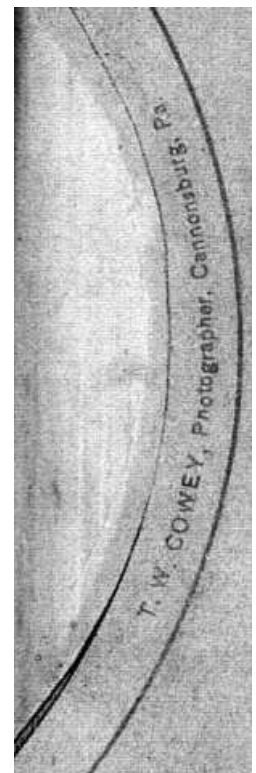
The Boon Brothers (possibly)

Carol Boone Olmstead, of Placerville, California, has a photograph that she believes shows the three Boon brothers, one of which was her great-grandfather. She hopes someone has a copy of the photograph with the names inscribed. She has provided biographical information on her relatives. The family name is spelled both Boon and Boone.

There were three Boon Brothers, John (1829-1897), Samuel (1831-1910), and Thomas (1833-1886). There also was a sister, Margaret, born in 1835.

John Boon and his wife, Ada (a daughter of Levi Griffith), married in 1874 and built the house located at 155 West Pike Street. Louise Scroggs Little, a niece, lived in the house nearly all her life. John Boone (Carol's father and a grandson of the John Boon probably in the photo) sold the house about 1989, after Louise Scroggs Little's death.

The image is the first cabinet photograph by T. W. Cowey that has been found. His other known photographs are cartes de visite of college students made around 1867. The photographer probably had departed by the time Canonsburg's first newspaper, the *Herald*, was published in 1872. This means the Boon brothers would have been about forty years old when the plate was exposed. Note that the edge of the backdrop can be seen. Cowey's identification on the mat is enlarged at right.



The Depot Becomes a Station

James T. Herron, Jr.

*Down by the station, early in the morning
See the little puffer-bellies all in a row
See the station master turn the little handle
Puff-puff, toot-toot, off we go.*

Lyrics by Lee Ricks and Slim Gaillard - © 1948



Martin Estep was down by the station, though they called the wooden structure the depot, when he took this picture of reflections in the ice pond. The depot roof dates the photo to no later than 1907. The photographer did not date the negative's envelope, but he numbered the exposure #210.

The Pennsylvania Railroad constructed the Chartiers Valley Railway through Canonsburg in December 1870. The project began at Mansfield (now Carnegie), which was on an existing right-of-way to Pittsburgh. To connect with Pittsburgh, a traveler had to change to a train on the Pittsburgh and Steubenville Railway, also owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The rails went through Bridgeville and Canonsburg, to Washington. The distance from Pittsburgh to Washington (which was reached in May 1871) was 32 miles.

At the time, Canonsburg was a borough with a population of 641. Its long-time economic base, the college (by then W&J), had been moved to Washington the previous year. There was only light industry: a flour mill, a saw mill, and a woolen factory. The buildings were concentrated along Central and Greenside Avenues.

The railroad approached the town from the east along the north side of Chartiers Creek. At first, the train went only to where the right-of-way crossed the turnpike (Pike Street) east of town. A hill east of Central Avenue had to be graded. Then, passengers got on and off the trains at Central Avenue until the first station was constructed, apparently in 1871.

To the west of Central Avenue were the flour and saw mills, then undeveloped land between the mill race and the creek. The Pennsylvania Railroad purchased part of the mill property just west of the saw mill from James Berry. During the winter of 1870, when Canonsburg was the terminus of the railroad, there was a turntable just east of present Jefferson Avenue so engines could be reversed for the return trip.

Caldwell's Atlas of 1876 shows the depot outside the borough limits. Accuracy of the drawing leaves a bit to be desired (Chartiers U. P. Church is shown too far

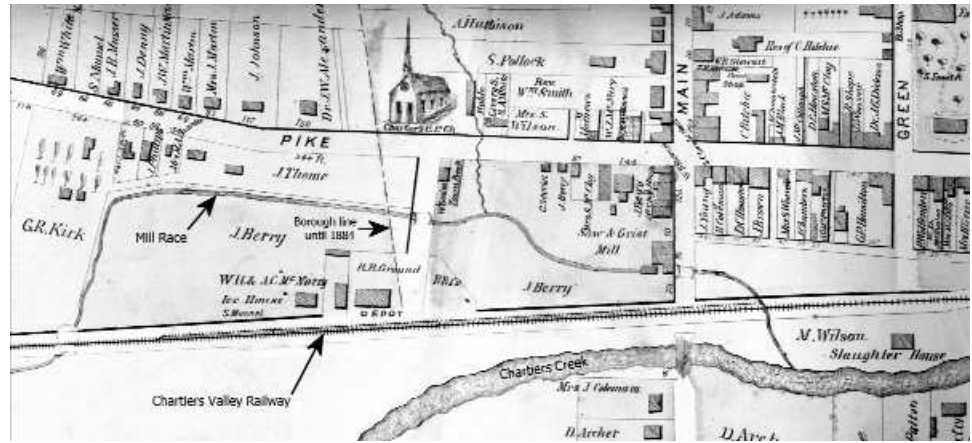
east), and the borough line was not accurate. In 1884 the borough annexed the adjacent land west of town north of the railroad tracks. By 1876, when the atlas was published, a road had been opened between Pike Street and the depot, but it was not yet a borough street.¹

The railroad did not follow the creek's meandering path, so the tracks were hundreds of feet from the creek at the depot. The atlas also shows a siding between the depot and the through track. Freight cars would be spotted for unloading.

During the railroad strike in 1877, the Union Depot and many railroad cars were destroyed in Pittsburgh. A box car on its way from Cincinnati was diverted to Canonsburg for safety. The car sat at the station until freight trains again began to run after a hiatus of ten days. It was disclosed after the car was again on its way to New York that it had been loaded with liquor.²

Passengers had to cross the freight siding, which was inconvenient, but in the early years there were only four trains a day each way. As more trains were added to the schedule and the freight business increased, the freight siding became a problem. An 1882, Maxwell Potts, owner and editor of the *Canonsburg Herald*, commented about "a common occurrence, just as the passenger train halted on the main track, the freight train came thundering in on the side track before passengers had time to pass from train to platform or platform to train, and those who were not swift enough to

This illustration from Caldwell's Atlas of Washington County shows the area around the Canonsburg depot in 1876. The drawing is inaccurate, as it places the church where Jefferson Avenue later was constructed. The borough line was west of the church, so the depot would have been in the borough. There was a road between Pike Street and the depot, but the street (Jefferson Avenue) was some years in the future.



cross in advance of the moving freight, have been compelled to scramble over the freight car platforms as best they could, at the risk of being knocked off by a sudden start of the freight.”

Editor Potts's solution to the problem was for the railroad to build a platform on the south side of the main track. In 1900, there was such a platform, but it was for freight and milk cans, and it was located where Jefferson Avenue was going to come through. The railroad's solution to the problem was to relocate the freight siding to the rear (north side) of the station and extend the wooden platform on the station side out to the through track.

The new platform wasn't needed for long. In 1900 the railroad began widening the right-of-way on the Chartiers Branch to make it double-track all the way from Pittsburgh to Houston, a distance of 24 miles. The fill was obtained from the hills of South Side Pittsburgh. Industrial development (including heavy traffic in coal trains) made the improvement necessary.³

In May 1901, the railroad announced it was going to fence the west side of its property. This created a stir, because Manufacturers' Gas and Weller's Stables, Potts Brothers' and Manufacturers' Gas warehouses, and Sam Munnell's building supply yard (later sold to Hardy & Rankin) were reached by crossing railroad property. Murdock Street did not exist. For that matter, Jefferson Avenue extended only to the northern edge of railroad property, at Eagen's Store (now the north-west corner of Murdock and Jefferson). A roadway owned by the railroad extended from there to the tracks. A cattle pen had been where the street is now, but an 1880 newspaper article said it had been torn down to build the "wagon road," and a cattle chute on wheels would be used. However, the photograph, below, taken after the Great Fire of 1898 shows cattle pens east of the station where Jefferson Avenue was built.⁴

Track work began in July 1901 when the iron railroad bridge over Chartiers Creek at the old mill dam west of town was replaced with a new bridge that would

This photo of the Canonsburg depot was taken shortly after the Fire of 1898. The rubble in the middle and left of the view is what remains of a livery stable (all the horses were saved). The white fenced area above the rubble is the livestock pen and loading area. Jefferson Avenue now runs through where the pens once were.



Copy of a photograph attributed to Force Dunlevy, 1898

SMALL RAILROAD WRECK

Engine of a Dirt Train and a Shifter Collide at Canonsburg.

CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE WAS DONE.

Canonsburg was the scene of a wreck on the Chartiers road on Friday morning which resulted in considerable damage, and blocked the road for several hours, but fortunately no one was injured. At about 9:30 engine No. 130, with engineer Jones, came up with the worktrain in tow hauling dirt from the South Side hills. Just as the engine had cleared the switch leading to the iron mill siding, engine No. 32, used as a shifter in Washington and Canonsburg yards, came down the siding running backwards, and just grazing the tender of No. 130, crashed into the car carrying the big crane, knocking it off the car, and smashing four cars, one or two of them into kindling wood.

The engine of the shifter was struck with such force that it was turned entirely over and landed bottom side up down against one of the ice house. The engine itself was derailed. Engineer Jones was not to blame it appears. He was running out on the siding with tender in front and the engine being small and the tender large he could not see ahead to the main line.

In a box car on the work train were some fifty Italian workmen. The car in which they were riding was thrown clear up on top of one of the flat cars and a hole stove in it. But strange to say none was injured but a minute after the crash they were pouring out of the cars like hornets out of the nest when it is hit by a brick.

The wreck train was dispatched for and arrived in a little more than an hour and began clearing the tracks. The train due here from Washington at 10:26 and that due from Pittsburg at 10:48 transferred at this point. By the time the noon train was due the tracks had been cleared and traffic resumed.

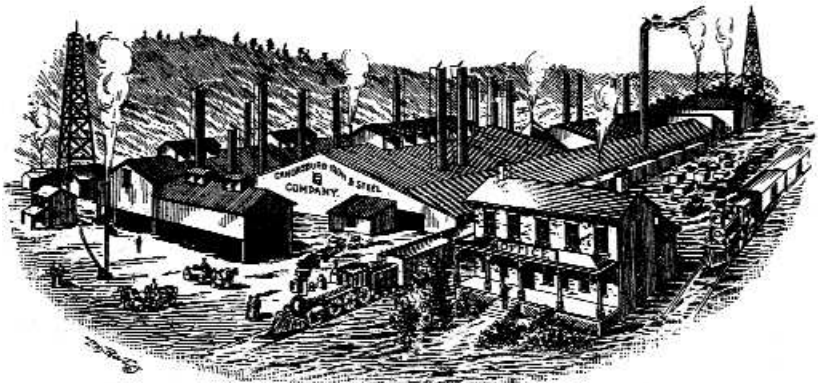
Large crowds of people visited the scene of the smash, and the wonder was expressed that the wreck was not attended with loss of life.

Daily Notes, Jan. 31, 1901

accommodate double track. The old bridge was raised several feet so the railroad could continue to run while the new bridge (known to the railroad as Twenty Bridge) was being erected. The new track was laid on the south side of the one in place between the bridge and Iron Street during the first week in August 1901. A new siding was constructed between the bridge and the station.

Another siding was constructed east of Central Avenue by "dumping a large amount of rock over the bank of the creek just east of the abutment of the Central-ave. county bridge." The newspaper noted that a wreck train had to be summoned from Carnegie when a "mud car," jumped the track near the iron mill.⁵

In August 1900 the *Notes* reported that plans had been prepared for a new passenger station and the wooden combination station would be moved and used



Plant of the Canonsburg Iron and Steel Company

The woodcut, above, appeared in an anniversary edition of the Daily Notes in 1899 and shows a single track and a siding into the mill. The view, below, is from an undated picture post card. The card is seen in colored and sky tint versions and the picture probably is circa 1910. Industry greatly increased the need for trackage. The sidings at the right go to the Canonsburg freight and passenger stations.



for freight. A description of the inside of the wooden depot has not been found, but a 1902 article says, “The usual number of loafers was lined up in the men’s waiting room Monday evening.” Probably the ladies had a separate waiting room.

The plan was to put the building where the stock yard (the animal pens east of the depot) was located. This could have been a problem. The station had been saved from destruction by the Fire of 1898, but after the fire, wooden buildings were prohibited in the business district.

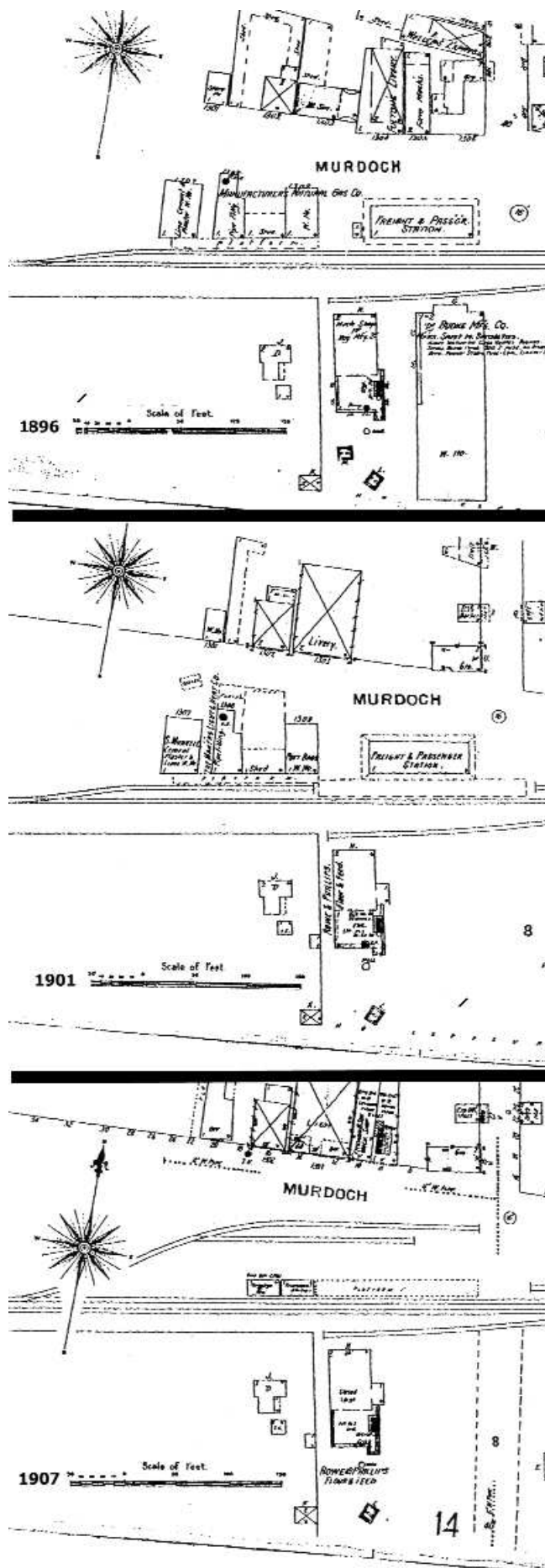
The Jefferson Avenue Bridge over Chartiers Creek was built by the county and opened for use in 1901. For this to happen, three municipalities and Pennsylvania Railroad had to cooperate. Canonsburg opened Jefferson Avenue through the railroad property to the right-of-way. The county court found the damages balanced the benefits and no money was due the railroad company. The cattle pen remained, and was on the east side of Jefferson Avenue adjacent to McDowell & Dickson’s lumber yard.

The railroad constructed the street across its right-of-way and closed a railroad crossing located near the planing mill east of the cattle pen. The street on the south of the bridge was the responsibility of the Borough of South Canonsburg. Chartiers Township was responsible for the narrow strip of land between the tracks and the bridge, and that delayed the opening of the bridge. The clerk of courts required the township to pay \$1.25 for a copy of the court order, but the township did not benefit from the bridge and refused to pay. Somebody slipped the folks at the court house the money, and the bridge and the street were opened.⁶

In 1903 the railroad purchased the lots to the west of the depot, occupied by warehouses owned by the Potts Brothers and Manufacturers’ Light and Heat Company. The stated reason was to build a new station. The wooden depot was to be moved to where the Manufacturers’ building stood. At about the same time,

The Sanborn Maps are a very useful tool for looking into the physical structure of Canonsburg. At right are portions of these maps that show the Canonsburg railroad station in 1896, 1901, and 1907. In 1907 the wooden depot had been moved, and the small “Temporary Station” can be seen at the western end of the platform.

These maps, from photocopies of maps in the collection of The Sanborn Library, LLC, courtesy Edward A. Kovacik of the Canonsburg Renaissance Group, show the building erected as the Colosseum Opera House in 1896 but it was gone in 1901. The smaller building, which has been mistakenly identified as the Colosseum or Budke Manufacturing Company, by 1901 was Rowe and Phillips, Flour and Feed.





Martin Estep negative N-81

This detail from a Martin Estep photograph shows the eastern and northern sides of the depot. The negative probably was exposed in 1902, because of the profusion of sewer pipe in the right foreground. The white fence of the animal loading chute can be seen. The spur north of the depot is in place, and a warehouse west of the station can be seen. Rowe and Phillips' Flour and Feed is across the tracks from the depot at the left edge of the photograph. The structures and inclined plane behind the warehouse are at Munnell's ice pond. Eagen's Grocery Store is on the corner of what are now Jefferson Avenue and Murdock Street. The large brick building at the right is a transfer and livery stable at the edge of the railroad property.

the borough decided to pave Jefferson Avenue between Pike Street and the railroad and see if the railroad would give what is now Murdock Street to the town.⁷

In the spring of 1904 the newspaper reported that the concrete base for the brick paving of Jefferson Avenue was being poured, but on upper Jefferson Avenue, between Pike and College, "the mud is so deep that teams [of horses] can hardly get through."

In May 1904 the double track between Carnegie and Houston was completed. The *Notes* trumpeted that the town was booming. Standard Tin Plate had just opened and already was shipping two railroad carloads of tin plate a day. Houses were being built for an increasing population. But, nothing was being done about building a new railroad station. The previous summer the *Notes* had reported there were nine passenger and about fifteen freight trains each way daily. A letter to the paper in 1905 complained about the inadequacy of the Canonsburg depot and called it an "old sheep-shed."⁸

Blueprints for a new brick station were received by the Canonsburg station master, I. B. Linn, in November 1906. It would be constructed on the site of the present station and would have a larger general waiting room with separate smoking and women's waiting rooms. A bay in the front of the building would contain a ticket counter and provide a view along the right-of way. Room was set aside for handling and storing baggage. Along with the station, there were drawings of a shed on the south side of the tracks. The article in the *Notes* said the Pennsylvania Railroad had set aside a large amount for building. However, at the time, Penn Station in New York City was under construction. Its cost was more than a hundred million dollars, so the budget for Canonsburg's station was peanuts in comparison.

In July 1907 preparation for construction of the new station began. First, a temporary waiting room and ticket office had to be built. It was expected that it would be located across the tracks from the depot, but instead,



RealPhoto post card attributed to Martin Estep, courtesy Arnold Cushner

This post card view shows the track side of the depot on a winter day about 1906. "JEFFERSON AVENUE" was added in ink. The casket factory building in the background was erected in 1905 and the depot was moved in 1907. Visible are scales and semaphore on the platform, the watchman's shanty, and two railroad employees protecting the grade crossing as a 4-4-0 locomotive, probably pulling a passenger train, approaches the depot from the east. The platform on the opposite side of the tracks can be seen, as can a walkway between the platforms.

a shack was erected at the end of the platform adjacent to the station. Part of the platform was removed for construction of the 30 by 16 foot temporary structure. The frame depot would be moved to the west end of the railroad property. The railroad telegraph office was moved to a small building near the Standard Tin Plate in East End. Western Union opened an office for the public in the Citizens' Trust Building (now the Colaizzo Building) at the intersection of Pike and Central.

W. J. Gowern met with the general superintendent of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad (a new name, but still part of the Pennsylvania Railroad) and was told that the railroad official had gotten the budget for the station increased to \$28,000. Superintendent McCarthy said the new station would be landscaped and a shed for passengers erected on the opposite side of the tracks.

The *Notes* ran an article in July 1907, "New Station Coming Soon," and it couldn't come soon enough. The

temporary building was too small, and people had to wait outside in bad weather because they all couldn't fit in what passed as the waiting room. In November 1907, an additional sixteen feet was added, but the *Daily Notes* thought even that was insufficient.⁹

The railroad began to prepare the site for the wooden freight depot in mid-July 1907. Concrete piers were constructed on which the building would sit. The railroad then brought carpenters to town to prepare the structure and two car-loads of timbers were delivered to support the building while it was being moved.

By the end of July, the old depot was vacant and demolition of chimneys and partitions was under way. The operation of jacking up the depot to a height of five feet came next, then wooden timbers were laid underneath and the building lowered onto them. The building was first skidded some 15 feet north to clear the temporary facility, then the move to the west end of the lot began. On August 15 the depot had reached its new



Martin Estep, 1907

This remarkable 1907 photograph by Martin Estep show the wooden depot being prepared for its move. The chimneys have been torn out and the bricks are piled on a baggage cart. On the ladder is a white-haired man with a flag, probably the watchman at the Jefferson Avenue grade crossing. A kerosene lantern hangs from the roof overhang, but no electric wires are visible other than to the arc street light at the watchman's shanty.



This Martin Estep exposure shows the depot on its way to the western end of the rail yard. The temporary ticket booth, waiting room, and baggage area are at the left of the platform.

The boys are sitting on cribbing. The depot has been moved slightly back from the platform and a fair distance toward the west.

Two scales and the kerosene lantern have been moved to the temporary facilities.



Attributed to Martin Estep, 1907

This probably is a Martin Estep photograph, but the print is poor. The depot has been moved farther to the west than in the photograph on the previous page, and it is now at an angle. The photograph shows the cribbing and wooden rails the building was slid along. The man in the center seems to be sitting on cables used to move the structure.

site and was being lowered onto the concrete piers. Then the building received a new floor and roof. An addition was attached to the eastern end. The inside was essentially one large room.¹⁰

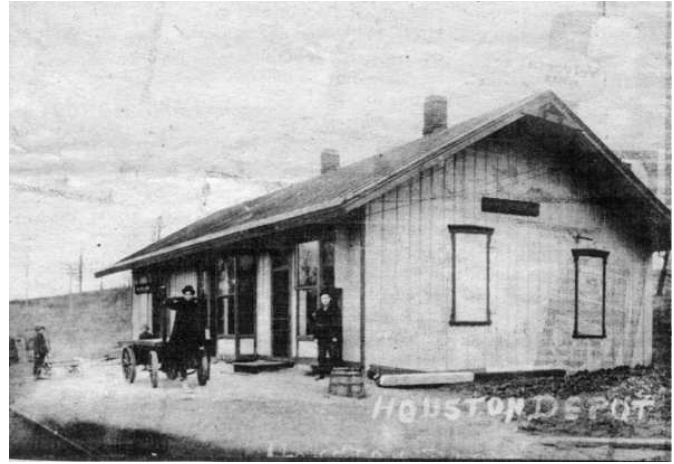
In October 1907, work on the old depot was about finished, but nothing had been done about constructing the new brick station. The newspaper noted, “The old station building has been cleared away and the ground has been in readiness for over two months.” Perhaps there was a question as to whether the expense of the brick passenger station was justified since the local trolley line had been bought by Pittsburgh Railways and was going to be extended to Pittsburgh.¹¹

There were two separate sets of plans, one with more lavish materials. The date for opening bids was August 24, 1908, and the contract specified a building 103 feet along the railroad tracks and 50 feet deep. It was to be of brick and stone construction with hardwood and tile floors. The ceilings were to be plastered. The superintendent was H. H. Pollock, of Carnegie.

The contractor for the new station was Stewart, Vester & Rossell of Washington, at a price of \$22,000. Within a week of getting the contract, a crew of men was on the site erecting a tool house. A few days later ditches were being dug (with pick and shovel) for the foundation, and the concrete was poured, but the effort did not continue. Connie Curran, of Washington, the brick contractor, was short of material. The *Notes* had reported that Mike Shepherd, of Canonsburg, was to supply the brick, but a later article mentioned that Curran was providing it. The delay was due to a lack of terra cotta.

Other improvements went on. A steam roller was employed to level the driveway at the freight station. Also, Murdock Street was accepted as a borough street. The brick walk on the south side of the tracks was extended to about a hundred feet west from Jefferson Avenue.¹²

Construction tends to cause inconveniences and sometimes accidents. Shortly before Christmas, about



The Canon, date unknown

Steam engines require a lot of wate, obtained from water tanks and stored in the tender. Canonsburg did not have a water tank; the closest one, seen at left, was at Houston. It was located on the Canonsburg side of where the Western Washington Railroad, which went to Westland and Midland, left the Chartiers Valley track.

At various times, Houston had a station on both sides of Main Street (Houston-Hill Church Road). No good photograph of either structure is known.

five o'clock in the evening, William Bird, of Elm Street was found unconscious on the side of the right-of-way east of Jefferson Avenue. At first it was thought he was dead. A freight train had just pulled out of the station, so it was assumed he had been hit by the locomotive.

His head was badly injured, but he regained consciousness in the hospital. It turned out that Bird was on his way home after work and found his way blocked by the freight train. He proceeded to climb over one of the cars, but the train started to move. He panicked and jumped. His landing was inexpert, at best, resulting in face and head lacerations as well as the concussion.¹³

The delays in receiving materials meant the contractor had to lay the brick in the winter. A dozen brick layers were on the job Christmas week. By New Years, some of the outside walls were six or more feet high, but it was not until February 1909 that the rafters for the roof were installed.

The *Notes* remarked that the pressed buff brick was being laid with care. "An Inspector has been constantly on the scene, and has watched critically every brick that has gone into the building. There are, also, a large force of self-appointed inspectors on the job, but for some reason or other these do not draw pay."

Brick laying had not finished by the end of March 1909. The station was the only building in town to have a tile roof, and sheathing had been laid for the roofing,

but the tile had not yet arrived. A month later, the scaffolding finally was taken down. The paper reported that the wooden platform would be replaced with one of brick that would be a little higher and extend much farther to the west.

The North Strabane Water Company laid a 4-inch main to the station, which had connections for fire hose. The freight sidings north of the station were moved closer to Murdock Street.

Brick for the platform finally arrived in June, when four carloads were received. Work on the interior still lagged, as the terra cotta did not arrive until August 17. The building had been under construction nearly a year. In October, the *Notes* ran an item that complained, "There is no fire in the waiting room of the shack which serves as a station for Canonsburg."¹⁴

The railroad's freight business, particularly coal, was greater than ever. The *Notes* reported that there were 195 freight cars in Canonsburg's various yards and sidings. Two switching engines and crews were required, one for day and the other at night. On one day in October 1909, the Pittsburgh-Buffalo's Hazel Mine brought 3,500 tons of coal to the surface, which required 111 railroad cars to transport.¹⁵

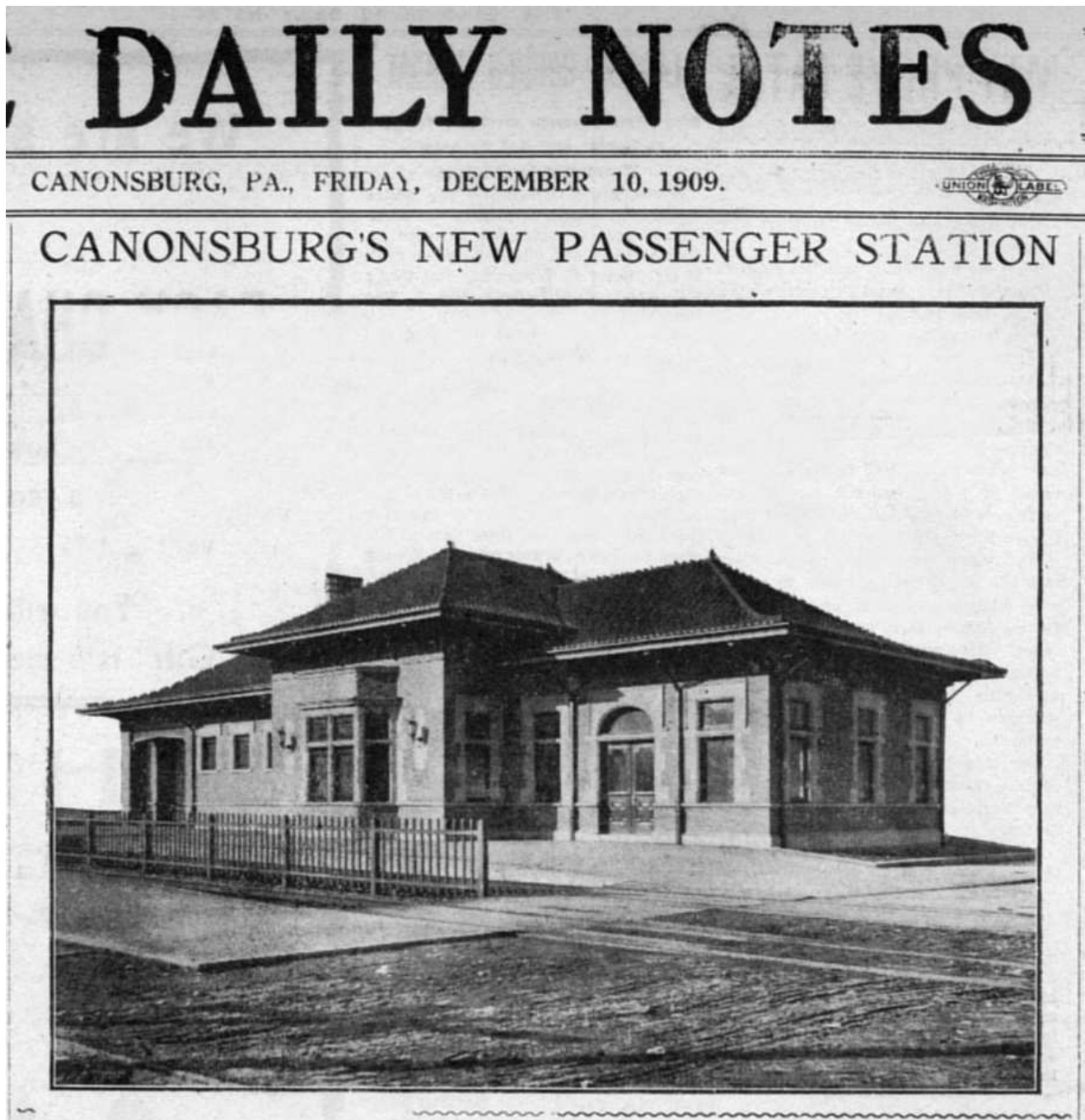
Work continued on the passenger station. As November 1909 began, workmen were finishing the floor in the waiting rooms, and the finish carpenters

were ready to begin work on the partitions. The woodwork was already cut to size. On November 23, the station-master reported that the furniture for the main waiting room had been received, and the office furniture and furnishings for the ladies' waiting room (which included rocking chairs) were expected any day.

The new brick platform was finished in November and was accompanied by a tragic accident. Seventeen-year-old William Smith and three friends were fooling around the unfinished station about 9 p.m. on November 16, 1909. It had been raining. The boys

were running along the platform as a train of some forty empty coal cars was passing. Smith slipped his leg fell across a rail and was amputated by a wheel of a freight car. He called to the other boys for help, but they thought he was joking so they took their time. Nobody was at the station at the time, so they ran for a doctor, and Smith was taken to the hospital. He died early the next morning.¹⁶

The station finally was ready for operation in December 1909. The project had seen many delays, and the temporary facilities had been in use more than



On December 10, 1909 the Daily Notes ran this retouched photograph on the front page. The brick platform on the opposite side of the right-of-way is evident as is the wooden fence separating the two sets of track. Jefferson Avenue was not yet paved.

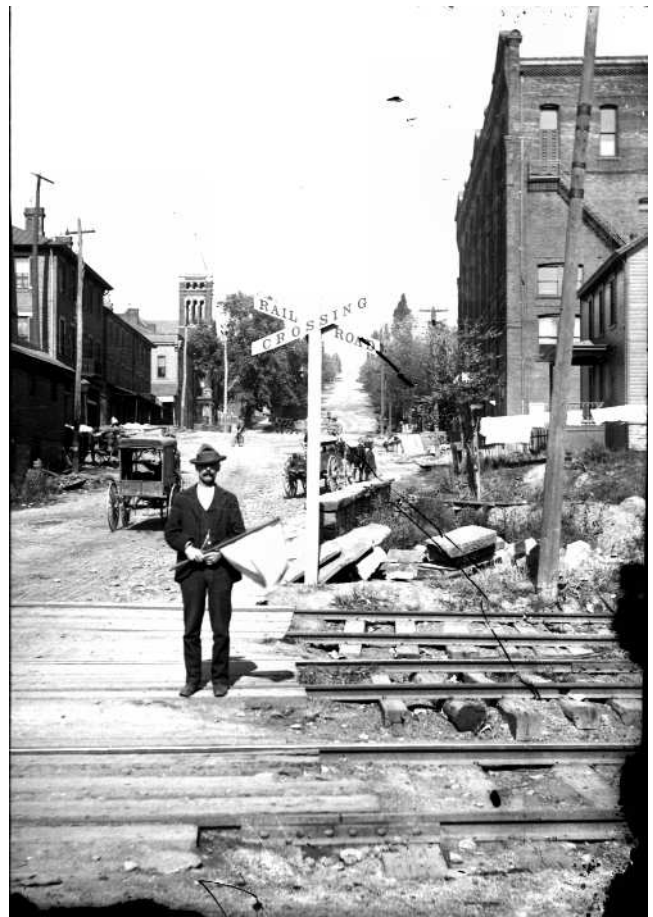
two years, since August 1907. It had taken a year for the contract to be let, and construction, 16 months more.

The building was 100 by 32 feet. The 25-foot square ticket office with a bay window protruded to the south. The main waiting room was 30 by 34 with a tile floor, enamel brick walls, and a paneled ceiling. The baggage room and express office were at the west end of the building. Steam heat was provided by a furnace in the basement.

The new building was opened to the public Monday evening December 14, 1909. The doors were thrown open at 6 p.m., and a good crowd gathered to examine the new facility. Railroad officials arrived on an evening train and the Canonsburg ticket agent (station master), I. B. Linn, was complimented and given a bouquet of flowers. He had held the post at Canonsburg for 32 years. The first tickets from the new station were sold that night. The first westbound ticket (to Washington) was bought by a traveling salesman. The



The upper view appeared on post cards, both black and white and colored. It shows the brick station from the west. Note the bare bulb on the fancy light pole. The lower photo (photographer unknown) was taken from the area of the Jefferson Avenue Bridge.



Howard M. Taylor copy of a Grubbs negative

This view is half a stereo pair exposed by one of the Horner boys of South Side around the turn of the century. Ernest Smith, flag in hand, is shown at the South Central Avenue grade crossing. The abutment behind him is for the mill race, no longer used to power the flour mill.

first eastbound ticket was purchased by Michael Eagen, who owned the grocery store across Murdock Street from the station.¹⁷

To the west of the station was a grassy area that was planted with flowers. The railroad had gangs of men who did nothing else during the summer but travel from station to station keeping the lawns and hedges trimmed and the flower beds neat.

Although the passenger and freight operations were on opposite ends of the railroad property, Israel B. Linn was both passenger and freight agent. He had come to Canonsburg in 1877 with the additional duties of telegraph operator. He had long since ceased telegraphy, and he gave up his duties as freight agent in 1915. He remained as ticket agent, one of eleven railroad employees located at Canonsburg.

The watchmen at Central and Jefferson Avenues also were railroad employees. E. C. Smith was at Central Avenue and George Cannon at Jefferson for



James T. Herron, Jr., 1967

These photographs of the freight station were taken in 1967; the upper ones in February, the lower in September. The upper left photograph shows the eastern end of the building. The others were taken from the west.

many years. In 1914, a man named Steadman, who had injured his legs when steel being transported in a box car fell on him, replaced Cannon, who had died. Smith retired in 1929 after forty years' service to the railroad. He also had been made a watchman after being injured.

After four high school students were killed at the unguarded Central Avenue crossing in 1935, the railroad installed flashing lights at Canonsburg's four grade crossings: College Street, Pike Street, Central Avenue, and Jefferson Avenue. The railroad watchmen were assigned to other duties.

I. B. Linn also was agent for the Adams Express Company at 21 North Jefferson Avenue. In 1915 the company moved its office to the station, and he remained as express agent. Illness forced I. B. Linn to retire in April 1921 after nearly 48 years with the railroad. His fellow railroaders presented him with "a large and handsome arm chair." He died on June 24, 1923.¹⁸

Most of the town's livery stables were within a block of the station. Five still stand, but it has been many years since horses have been stabled in them. Jeffrey's Drug Store, Bahr Hardware, and Brody's were

livery stables. Two that were directly across Murdock Street from the station are scheduled for demolition.

In 1914, a petition was presented to council requesting that the block of Murdock Street between Jefferson and Iron Streets be paved. The *Daily Notes* described the street as "one of the most traveled in town" because of the freight station and the stables, but it was in bad condition, "at times deep with mud."

Council voted to pave one block of Murdock Street, but the western two blocks, between Iron and Payne, had to wait. Work began in June when a traction engine was brought in to plow the street.

The brick railroad station was Canonsburg's portal to Washington and Pittsburgh until passenger service ended on July 30, 1952. The last scheduled passenger train to stop was from Pittsburgh, and it pulled alongside the platform at 6:27. The coaches were drawn by a K-4 locomotive, number 3489, a larger engine than usual. The engine with its tender had only about seven inches to spare on the turntable at Washington. After turning around, the locomotive picked up the passenger cars and dead-headed back to Pittsburgh.¹⁹



Joseph A. Solobay Collection

This 1947 photograph was taken from the grounds of Canonsburg Hospital, now Horizon Health Center. The long building on the left is the freight depot, with Hardy & Rankin's lumber yard behind it. The brick passenger station is at the right, partially obscured. In the foreground, grading for Canonsburg Memorial Stadium has begun.



Joseph A. Solobay photographed the station from North Jefferson Avenue at the time of the flood of August 6, 1956. Though unused, the building still has its "Canonsburg" sign-board.

Donaldson's Lumber Yard, beyond the station, had a siding where sand and gravel were dumped. The crane used to retrieve the material can seen in the photo.



Daily Notes, Aug. 7, 1952

The 1952 Kennywood Special is pulling up to the platform of the Canonsburg station, closed the previous week.



The old station is worse for wear in this undated view from Murdock Street. The double door that had led to the waiting room has been altered, and it looks like there has been a fire.

The Choo Choo Club announced its opening in the former railroad station in the Daily Notes of January 25, 1963. The club is long gone, but the Four Townsmen, then high school students, are still singing.

The advertisement on the right is for the Health Spa that was in the station when the March 2, 1973 issue of the Daily Notes came off the press.

DANCE – DANCE – DANCE

THE NEW AMVETS (CHOO CHOO) CLUB

Friday, Jan. 25th

LOCATED AT – THE OLD TRAIN STATION
JEFFERSON AVE. and MURDOCK ST.

11 P.M. 'til 3 A.M.

PRESENTING THE FABULOUS
"FOUR TOWNSMEN"

WITH COMEDIAN
"RUSS FITZGERALD" AS M.C.

FEATURING THE MUSIC BY THE
"HI-LITERS"



Shape Up!
Feel, Look Better

A slimmer, trimmer you is in the near future when you regularly attend our reducing classes.

AT THE
HEALTH SPA
1 Murdock St.
Canonsburg, Pa.
Phone:
745-9903

Even after the end of regular passenger service through Canonsburg, the Pennsylvania Railroad ran specials for the annual Community Picnic at Kennywood. The last, in 1958, consisted of two trains, at 9:15 and at 10:15 a.m., each of which had nine coaches. Fares were \$1.30 for adults and \$.65 for children, which included return trips. In 1959, buses contracted by McCarthy Lines of Canonsburg replaced the railroad trains. There were 15 buses in the first convoy and 12 in the second.

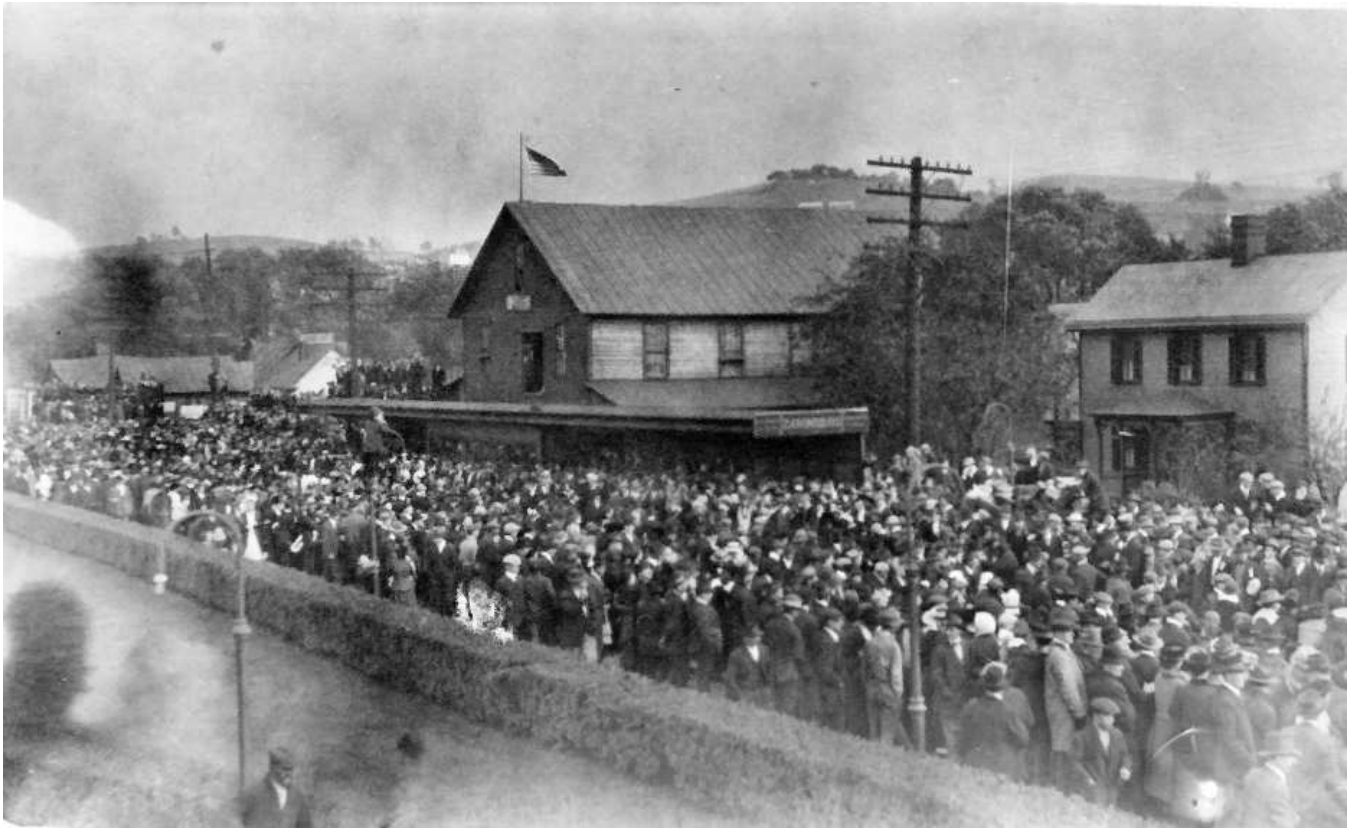
The old brick station was vacant for a long time. It was still vacant when the 1961 borough directory was compiled, but it soon was sold, and contractor Matt Taylor (a founding member of the historical society) remodeled it. The Choo-Choo Club opened there in January 1963. In 1973 the station was the Health Spa with the address 1 Murdock Street. About 1982, the Sons of Italy bought the building and moved their club from Ashland Avenue. The address in the telephone books is 3 Murdock Street.

There is no recollection of any more passenger trains through Canonsburg until August 2002 when the Ohio Central Railroad and Pennsylvania Trolley Museum sponsored excursion trips from Carnegie to the trolley museum at Arden.



J. Herron, August 2004

Top, the waiting room of the station as now configured by the Sons of Italy. Below, the "Chartiers Flyer" looks like it is heading east, but there was a locomotive on both ends of the train that ran between the former Canonsburg station and the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum at Arden.



This photograph from a RealPhoto post card appeared in the May 2004 JCTimes. It shows a crowd assembled for the departure of the first contingent to leave for Camp Sherman in 1917. Howard Taylor had the picture, but it was not up to his standards. The faint triangle at the left side identifies it as a projection slide, probably one of many taken for the Star Theater in 1917.

The picture shows the shed along the south side of the right-of-way and the peculiar light fixtures with naked bulbs. A boy is perched on the one closest to the tracks. The station is to the left, out of the frame. The large building, center, was erroneously identified in May as the Coliseum Building, which had been torn down many years before.



J. Herron, 2003

These photographs were taken in 2003. The one in the left, in February, shows the old station building in the snow from the Canon-McMillan Administration Building. The old livery and transfer stables on Murdock Street can be seen to the left of the station. At right is the north and east facades in July. The Sons of Italy sign is at the right. The photo was taken from Jefferson Avenue.

These were repeated in 2004 with the addition of two trips that originated at Canonsburg's old passenger station, now owned by the Sons of Italy. While there is no prospect of regular passenger service returning, there is talk of continuing, even expanding, the schedule of excursions on the old Chartiers Valley Railway.



Notes

1 J. T. Herron, ed., *Canonsburg Reflections: 1802-2002* (Canonsburg, 2003), 87; *Canonsburg Daily Notes*, "Chartiers Railway Opened to Traffic Fifty Years Ago," Dec. 15, 1920; "Improvements on the Chartiers Railway," July 18, 1903. Population figures are difficult to compare because of shifting borough lines. The *Canonsburg Herald* claimed in 1883 that 2/3 of the town's population was outside the legal borough limits. The Canonsburg census figures for the period are: 1870, 641; 1880, 699; 1890, 2113 (expanded borough line); 1900, 2714; and 1910, 3891.

2 *Canonsburg Herald*, "Sunday at Canonsburg," July 27, 1877; "Freight" and "For Safety," Aug. 3, 1877.

3 "Dangerous," *Herald*, Oct. 18, 1882; *Notes*, "Improvements at the Station," Nov. 3, 1900; "Town & Vicinity," Nov. 27, 1900; "Widening the Road Bed," Jan. 18, 1901; "Improvements on the Chartiers Railway," July 18, 1903. The 1913 *Sanborn Map* of Canonsburg shows the platform; the 1907 map does not.

4 *Notes*, "Railroad Company's Move," May 3, 1901; "Plans Prepared for New Station," Aug. 1, 1900; "Depot Improvements," *Herald*, Dec. 17, 1880.

5 *Notes*, "After the Loafers," Feb. 4, 1902; "Double Track to Houston," July 5, 1901; "Town and Vicinity," July 5 and 18, August 5, 1901; "Local Railroad News," July 30, 1901; "Woman Struck by Engine on Railroad Here," June 2, 1938. The first bridge at the mill dam was timber. It was replaced by an iron bridge in 1885 ("Home Notes," *Rural Notes*, May 7, 1885).

6 *Notes*, "Plans Prepared for New Station," Aug. 1, 1900; "The Local News," Jan. 8, 1901; "Business Men Protest Against Action of Council," June 20, 1902; "Viewers Report Approved," July 25, 1902; "Opening Jefferson Avenue," Sept. 26, 1902.

7 *Notes*, "About the Station," Aug. 8, 1903; "Council to Pave," Aug. 14, 1903; "Work on New Station For Canonsburg May Soon be Commenced," Aug. 14, 1903.

8 *Notes*, "Local Happenings," April 15, 1904; "Canonsburg Making Steady Progress," May 13, 1904; "Traffic on Chartiers Railway at Present Time Unprecedented," July 18, 1903; "Letter to the Editor," April 19, 1905.

9 *Notes*, "Plans for a New Station," Nov. 21, 1906; "New Station Coming Soon," July 10, 1907; "New Railroad Station at Canonsburg to Cost \$28,000," July 16, 1907; "Getting Ready to Move Old Station," July 22, 1907; "Temporary Station About Completed," July 27, 1907; "Station is Enlarged," Nov. 20, 1907; Edwin Alexander, *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (NY, 1947), 88.

10 *Notes*, "First Actual Work Done," July 18, 1907; "On New

Site by Friday," July 30, 1907; "Hoisting Up the Station," Aug. 5, 1907; "Moving the Old Station," Aug. 7, 1907; "Almost at Journey's End," Aug. 13, 1907; "About Ready to Let Station Contract," Aug. 15, 1907; "Repairing Old Station," Aug. 21, 1907.

11 *Notes*, "Local Railroad Business Heavy," Oct. 2, 1907. The first trolley trip to Pittsburgh was in February 1909. Though at first the trolley drained away nearly all the railroad's passenger business, within a few months the passengers were back and two new trains were added ("New Station Assuming an Air of Beauty," *Notes*, May 5, 1909).

12 *Notes*, "Railroad Co. is Asking Bids," Aug. 18, 1908; "Contract Awarded," Sept. 3, 1908; "About to Start on New Station," Sept. 9, 1908; "Work Begins on Canonsburg's New Station," Sept. 14, 1908; "Work to Resume on Station," Nov. 21, 1908; "Getting Ready to Build Station," Nov. 25, 1908.

13 "Bird's Close Call From an Awful Death," *Notes*, Dec. 19, 1908.

14 *Notes*, "Station Walls Rising," Dec. 22, 1908; "Station Walls Rising," Dec. 30, 1908 "Making Progress on the Station," Feb. 12, 1909; "Happenings of a Day in Canonsburg," March 30, 1909; "At the New Station," April 26, 1909; "New Station Assuming an Air of Beauty," May 5, 1909; "Brick for the Station," June 11, 1909; "Terra Cotta has Arrived for Station," Aug. 17, 1909; "From Notes Files," Oct. 5, 1929.

15 *Notes*, "Freight Business Heavy," Oct. 28, 1909; "Hazel Mine has Record-Breaking Day," Oct. 29, 1909; "Heaviest Freight Business in the History of Canonsburg," Nov. 2, 1909.

16 *Notes*, "New Station Finished in a Few Weeks," Oct. 2, 1909; "New Station About Completed," Nov. 23, 1909; "Boy Run Over by Freight Train," Nov. 17, 1909.

17 *Notes*, "Station is Ready for Occupancy," Dec. 10, 1909; "Open House at Station Monday Evening," Dec. 11, 1909; "New Station Open for Business Now," Dec. 14, 1909.

18 *Notes*, "Local Happenings," May 2, 1913, Jan. 6, 1914; "Changes to be Made Soon at Local Station," March 4, 1915; "Express Office to be Moved to Station," March 30, 1915; "Handsome Chair Given I. B. Linn," June 10, 1921; "'Smitty' Has Retired as Railroad Watchman," May 1, 1929; "Greater Crossing Protection (editorial)," Oct. 19, 1935; "Flasher Light System Placed in Use Today," Aug. 26, 1936. Linn replaced D. R. Bebout as freight, ticket, and express agent and also D. C. Dunlop, the telegraph operator. James Davidson was ticket agent when Linn divided his time between freight and passenger duties ("New Freight Agent," *Notes*, March 8, 1915).

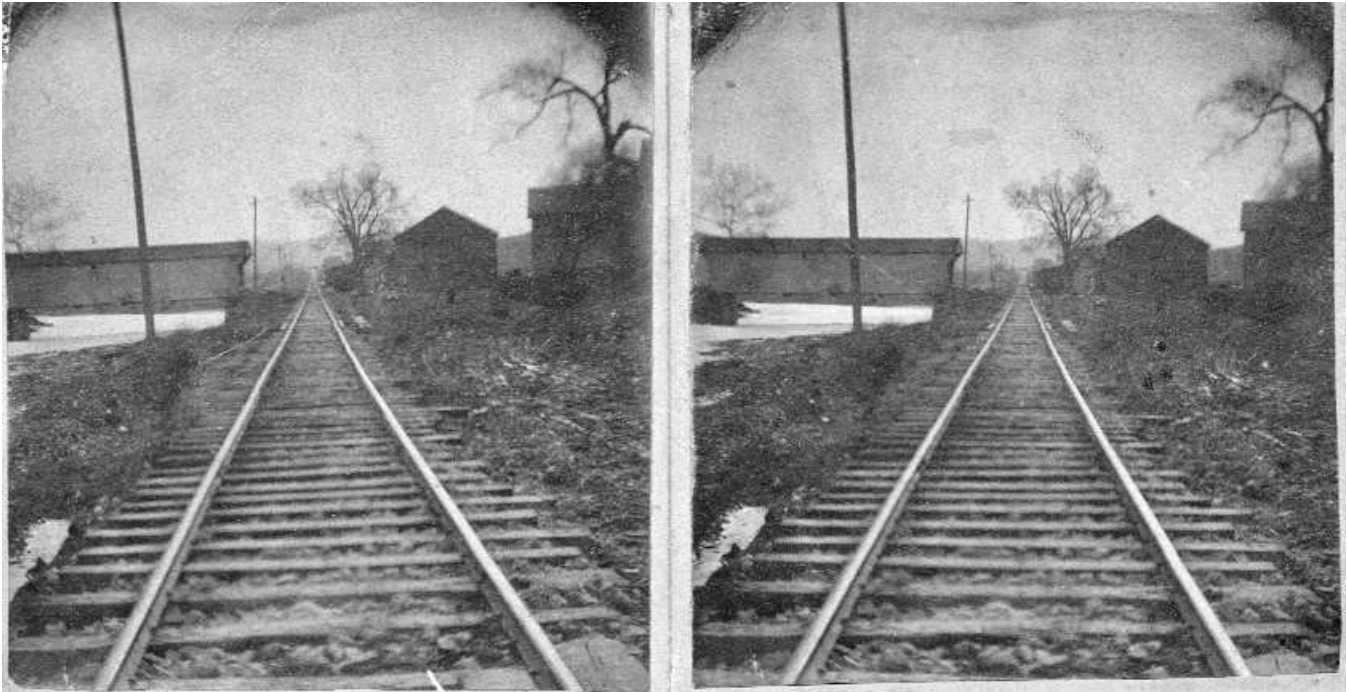
19 *Notes*, "Property Owners Petitioning for Paving of Murdock Street," March 2, 1914; "Council Passes Ordinance for Murdock Paving," April 21, 1914; "Contractors Begin on Murdock Street," June 23, 1914; "81 Years of PRR Service is Ended," July 31, 1952.

20 *Notes*, "Thousands Leave for Kennywood," July 23, 1958; "Community Picnic Bus Schedule," July 20, 1959; "Community Picnic Attendants Given Merchandise Awards," July 23, 1959.

Canonsburg Stereopticon Slides

We are thankful to Jean Bird Stanko for her thoughtfulness in giving Joe Solobay a pair of stereopticon slides for our perusal. When we think of stereopticon views, we generally think of commercial picture cards depicting natural wonders and far-away lands. These slides are not commercial; they are of Canonsburg, but who made them is a mystery.

The pair of photographs are offset about the width between a person's eyes to provide the stereo effect. The Viewmaster is a direct descendant. Stereo cameras with two lenses were made, but an amateur could duplicate the effect with two carefully calibrated exposures.



The view is westward along the railroad track looking toward Central Avenue. The photographic prints are dark with poor definition, but this is the first photograph of the covered bridge across Chartiers Creek to be published. The building on the other side of the tracks was Hoch blacksmith shop. The flour mill, located where the Law and Finance Building now stands, is hidden by the house at right.

The date the photograph was taken is not known, but it was after 1870, when the railroad came through. The 1876 county atlas (see page 5) shows a passing track, so the photograph must date to the early 1870s.

The covered bridge was torn down in 1881 and replaced by an iron bridge constructed by the Pittsburgh Bridge Company.



The photograph at left was taken from about the same position. The car is on Central Avenue. It appears as if the present track was laid to the north of the one that is in the 1870s photo.



The bridge had been erected by the county, as was its iron replacement. At the south end of the bridge was North Strabane Township, later the Borough of South Canonsburg.

The bridge would have been built before the railroad came through, so there are no windows to allow the driver of a wagon or buggy to see if a train was coming. It would have been easy to cut windows in the siding, but the sketch of the bridge in the 1876 county atlas doesn't show a window either. The driver's view of the track when entering the bridge may have been sufficient.

A short distance up the track are three light-colored rectangular objects. They are in the right location for a culvert for the tail race from the mill, which drained into the creek about there.

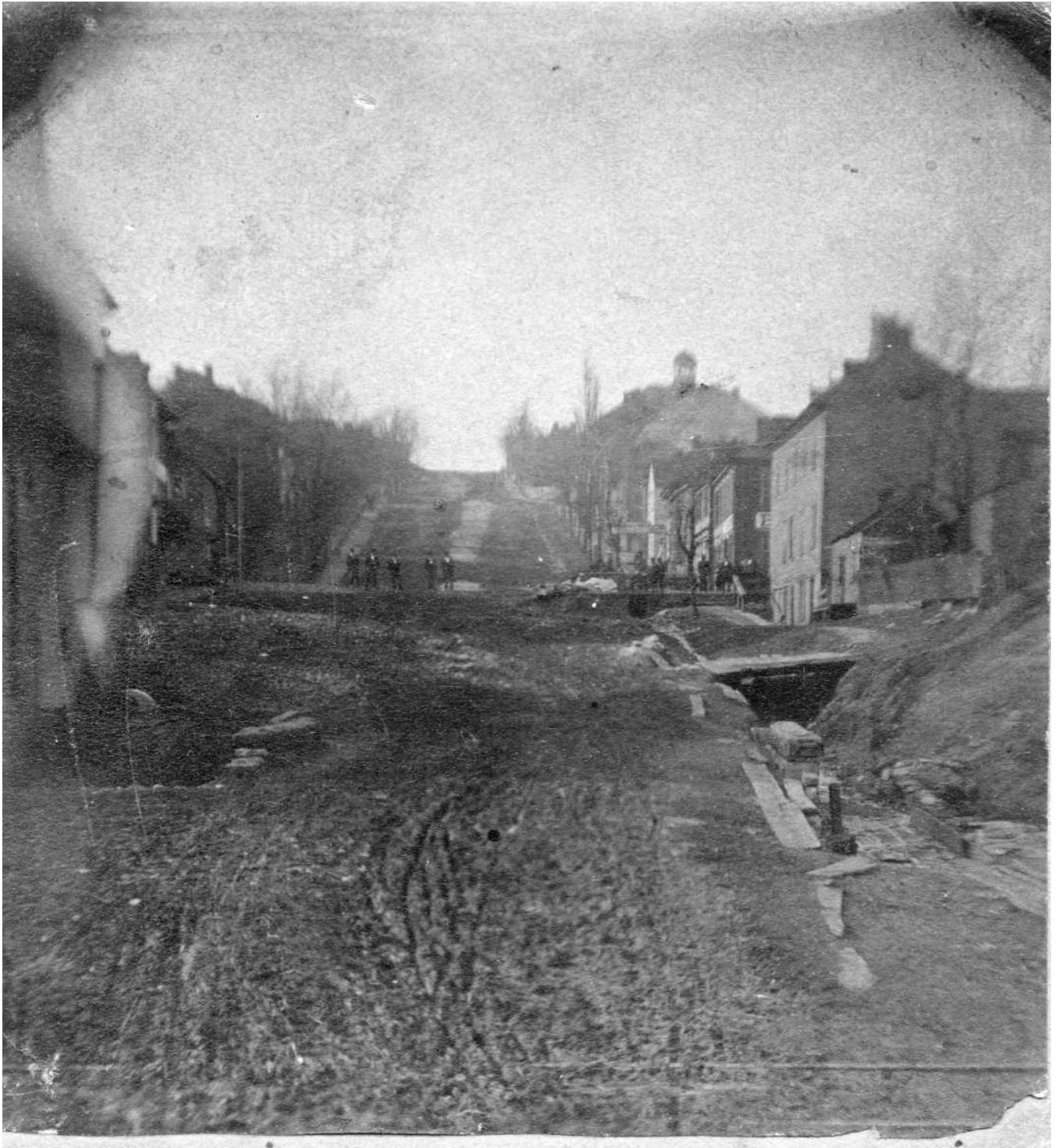
Note the horizontal shadow far up the track. It may be an artifact, but it could be the turntable near Jefferson Avenue, used while the railroad was being constructed.

The photograph on the right was taken from about the same location as the one above, but a quarter century later. Not only are there more rails, but the ties are much better. The grain elevator at the milling company is in the picture, but the old mill, to its right, is obscured.

The tool house in the photo was destroyed by fire in 1904. In it were a hand car and tools used by the section hands. The cause was believed to be someone dropping a lighted match on the oiled wood ("Tool House is Burned," Daily Notes, Feb. 25, 1904).



Attributed to Martin Estep



This stereo view was taken from the railroad track looking north on North Central Avenue, then known as Main Street. We can assume that this photo also was taken in the early 1870s.

A short distance up the street there are abutments flanking the roadway. These are for the mill race, which can be seen in the lower right corner. The crude bridge a short distance further carried Water Street over a deep gutter. There are a number of people along Pike Street in the middle of the photograph.



The above pair of photographs was taken some 125 years apart. The parking meters are about where the mill race used to be. The present Morgan Building is much larger than the 1870s version. It takes up the entire block between Pike and Water Streets. A dumpster for renovation debris (a new laundry room was being put on the second floor) obscures the ground floor storerooms. The three-story old college building (it was the dormitory when the academy used the campus) is recognized by its cupola. The one-story gymnasium that now occupies its place cannot be seen.



These photos were taken from different perspectives, but the c1900 view provides a better view of the buildings where Citizens Bank now stands. A retaining wall, culvert, and ditch can be seen in the earlier picture. In their place in 1900 was a steep sidewalk. The old college building was still standing, but it was obscured by trees.



Martin Estep, undated



J. Herron, Aug. 2004

On the envelope for glass negative number 190, Martin Estep wrote, "Train - full speed." He gave the shutter speed and opening, the make of the lens, and the time, 2:30. Unfortunately, he did not record the date. The companion photo was taken August 8, 2004 of the Chartiers Valley Flyer excursion train of the Ohio Central Railroad.