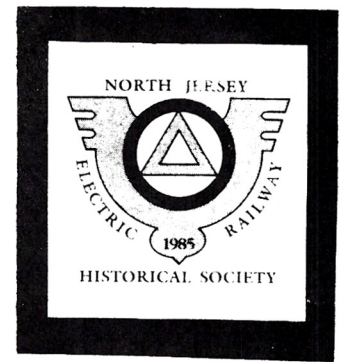
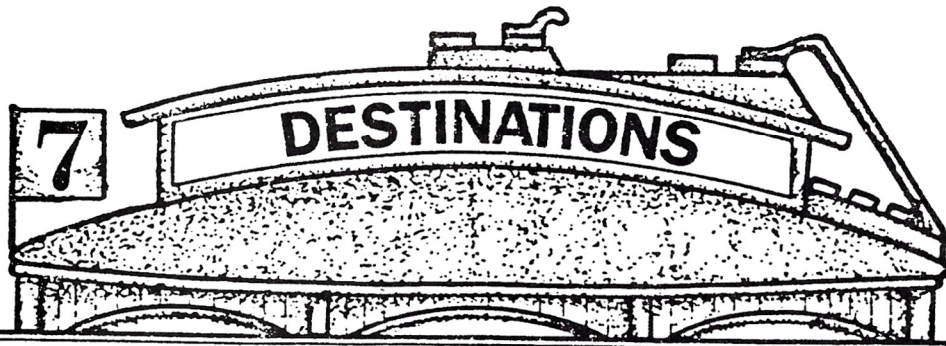


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The Newsletter of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society

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"Doodlebug" No. 4666 poses on the Raritan River bridge for a photo stop in conjunction with our "Summerfest-87" on June 20. This is one of the most scenic locations on the Black River & Western R.R.
photo by Tony Hall

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Membership Notes

We are pleased to announce that 100% of our members renewed for the 1987 year. This is something very few organizations of any type can boast, and we are grateful for this display of confidence in our preservation efforts.

Add the name of Les Whitfield to the list of those who included a contribution along with their dues renewal. Thanks Les, and to the others who continue to support us through dues, donations and labor.

Speaking of support, we are in need of volunteers to assist in staffing our cars at the Hoboken Festival on September 26, 1987. If you think you can spare an hour or more during the course of that day please call Tony Hall at (201) 388-0369.

Membership Meeting Report

Our second membership meeting was held at Whippany on Saturday, June 13. The turnout was somewhat less than there was at the first meeting, with only seven persons in attendance. Original plans had called for the meeting to be held in the MU motor car, and in fact the group gathered there in the afternoon. Extension cords were stretched from the Whippany station to the MU car (a distance of at least 500 feet) to provide power for a fan, a projector and some lights. In the course of the day, we were able to accomplish some cleanup work on the MU combine, with plans to hold the business meeting when more members showed up. By the time the work on the MU car was completed, it was time to think about dinner. In view of the day's heat and humidity, the decision was made to dine in the nearby air-conditioned "Whippany Junction" restaurant.

There was some talk about leaving the extensions in place for use after we returned from dinner, but the fear of theft convinced us that the wiser course would be to unplug them and lock them up in a secure place.

Once inside the restaurant we were seated at a large table. The service was good and we were not rushed. We then decided that since the management did not seem to mind us lingering after dinner, we would convene the business portion of the meeting there rather than returning to the MU car.

Among the topics discussed at the meeting were the needed repairs to the combine. The leaf springs on one of the trucks still need to be properly seated. Other work to be done includes the installation of a new pilot to replace one that was removed when the car was cannabolized. An electrical relay cabinet also needs to be installed under the car. It was decided to try to get this work done at the shops of the Morristown & Erie Railroad.

There was also a discussion about potential trips to generate revenue for the organization. Frank Miklos suggested a chartered bus

trip to the West Jersey Short Line Railroad which operates between Salem and Swedesboro. They have a couple of ex-Lackawanna MU cars and might be willing to haul them behind one of their diesels for a tour of their line. A side trip could also be included on the Delaware Avenue trolley line in Philadelphia. John Brinckman noted that the West Jersey Chapter of the N.R.H.S. was considering a trip over the West Jersey Short Line and he suggested that we might consider joining them in sponsoring that excursion. Those in attendance felt that this was a good idea and asked Mr. Brinckman to investigate this further.

By the time the business meeting ended, it was after 10 PM and it was decided to postpone the entertainment until another meeting.

Review and Preview

The major project for the 1987 Summer involved continuing work on the restoration of the combine.

When the truckload of spare parts was acquired in the Spring, there was no suitable storage area available, so they were hastily unloaded into both the combine and the Stillwell. A top priority, therefore was the removal of all spare parts from the combine.

In recent years, the Stillwell was used for training classes. Seats were removed from one end of the car with a partition dividing it down the middle into two "rooms". One half was used as a utility room with a furnace to provide heat for the half of the car which was used as a class room, and for an instruction car which was coupled to the Stillwell. The "furnace" room was well suited for use as a storeroom.

During the course of the Summer, the large fuel tanks which took up considerable space in the "furnace" room were drained of their remaining fuel and removed from the car. Shelving was installed along both walls in that half of the car. Large items were stored under the seats of the "classroom" with small parts assigned to shelf space in the "furnace" room.

Since the vast majority of parts were metal, the cartons that were fully-loaded were very heavy to move. In some instances, cartons were broken, and loose items had to be repacked into new ones. Pete Rodell provided a number of large heavy-duty buckets which proved to be ideal for storing large nuts, bolts and bushings. Tony Hall provided some heavy-duty cartons which were well suited to some of the larger items. During the month of July, the bulk of the parts were moved into the Stillwell. By the middle of August, the aisles and baggage section boasted a clear floor space for the first time in nearly two years. Many materials for the combine had been stored inside the car at Mahwah in anticipation of the move to Whippany. It was refreshing to be able to walk the length of the car without feeling that one was negotiating an obstacle course.

With the cleanup of the car, it is hoped that the combine will be made presentable for display at the Hoboken Festival. A concerted push will be made to give the car a cosmetic exterior paint job and an interior cleaning. We also need to install the ceiling lights and to repair several seats. Since we are racing the clock in this effort, only time will tell if we can accomplish all that we wish before September 26.



Wayne Scott's camera captures some of the "Summerfest" activities in the Ringoes picnic grove.

Summerfest - 87

Saturday June 20 was sunny and warm as the last-minute preparations for our "Summerfest-87" picnic and train ride were being completed.

The previous evening saw Beverly and Pete Rodell shopping for the hamburgers, hot dogs and other essential ingredients for any picnic. But more had to be done, so Frank Miklos met with the Rodell's early on Saturday to assist them in completing the purchase of the remaining items on the picnic shopping list.

In addition to the food, such items as paper plates, charcoal, plastic cups, knives, forks, spoons and napkins are necessary ingredients for any picnic. Then we still had to pick up the soda, watermelons, rolls, salads, ketchup, mustard, relish, and possibly the most essential item on a hot day--ice!

First to the discount drug store for the plates, cups and charcoal; then to the wholesale food center for the soda, rolls and plastic knives (the plastic forks and spoons were sold out); then to the PATHMARK for the condiments and remaining plastic utensils; then back to the Rodell's home for a last-minute review of anything else that might be required. Pete Rodell was waiting with a supply of ice and the watermelons.

After a determination that all was in order, a convoy of cars with trunks bursting with supplies headed for Ringoes. The after-

noon seemed to fly as the 4 PM hour for the picnic approached.

Meanwhile, more than 30 members and guests showed up during the course of the day. Many rode the regular train to Flemington on the Black River & Western, others spent some time photographing the B.R.& W equipment in the Ringoes yard, and still others took a turn at picking their own strawberries on the adjacent farm. It was the height of the strawberry season, and the B.R.& W. had its annual strawberry festival just the week before.

In addition to the regular charcoal, a bag of the quick-starting variety was also on hand. A handful of these was interspersed with the regular charcoal, and this proved to be very valuable in getting the grill fired up in no time. Soon the guests werelined up waiting for their helpings of hot dogs and hamburgers. After partaking in the salads and beverages, a slice of chilled watermelon was well received by everyone. We tried to estimate the amount of food required and were pleased that the supply was more than adequate. Tony Hall and Brian Hager shared the honors of grilling the hot dogs and hamburgers with a few others assisting in the cooking chores during the course of the day.

The picnic was still winding down when the 6 PM scheduled departure time for the "doodlebug" arrived. In a scene reminiscent of a silot movie, the remnants of the picnic were hastily gathered up. The trash was deposited in the nearby refuse cans; the leftover food was packed into ice coolers and loaded into the trunks of various cars, and the large galvanized metal "garbage can" which was purchased as a container for the beverages was loaded into the baggage section of the "doodlebug". Moving this required the services of several people because it was still loaded down with ice and dozens of cans of soda and beer.

The "doodlebug" departed Ringoes about 20 minutes late and proceeded north to Three Bridges. A cut of freight cars prevented us from operating as far as the Conrail interchange, but we were able to use a portion of the interchange trackage. Then we proceeded south to the grade crossing beyond the bridge over the Raritan River. A photo stop was provided at that point, and the car was backed up to the opposite side of the bridge for a photo runby.

Then it was on to Flemington with a photo stop at the old CNJ station. There was a ten-minute rest stop at Ringoes where the last vestages of daylight were rapidly vanishing.

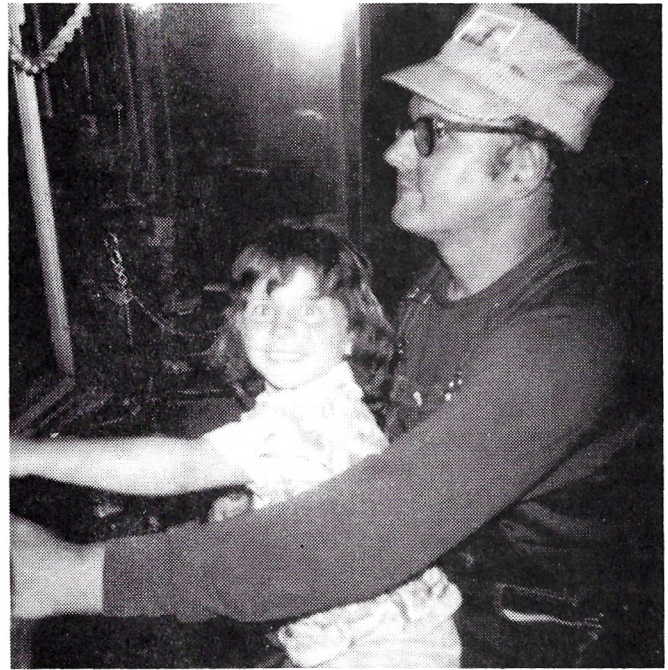
The trip resumed with the run to Lambertville. After flagging the busy Route 29 grade crossing, we switched onto the former Bel-Del line of the Pennsylvania Railroad and proceeded north to the end of track at the quarry. Then our engineer, Rich Adam decided to take advantage of the heavy mainline rail which remained for the days when the PRR would run 100-car frieghts over that trackage at speeds in excess of 65 MPH. He opened the throttle and it was full speed ahead as the "doodlebug's" Allis Chalmers engines responded with enthusiasm. Then it was on to Lambertville where we ran to the end of track and reversed to the station itself for another short rest stop.

The former passenger station at Lambertville has been transformed into an attractive restaurant which was filled with the Saturday night dinner crowd. An adjacent motel was constructed about a year or two after the restaurant opened and the two facilities have served as a catalyst for a renaissance of the old Lambertville business district.

Several of those on the trip wanted to make a brief inspection of the nearby area, so we were please to oblige them. When departure

time arrived, Rich Adam gave a few blasts on the "doodlebug's" horn to call everybody back to the train. A number of the patrons in the adjacent dining room of the Lambertville Station were observed being startled by the sudden sound of the horn, but they laughed good naturedly when they realized what had happened.

We returned to Ringoes after 9 PM with pleasant memories of an enjoyable day.



"SUMMERFEST-87" PHOTOS

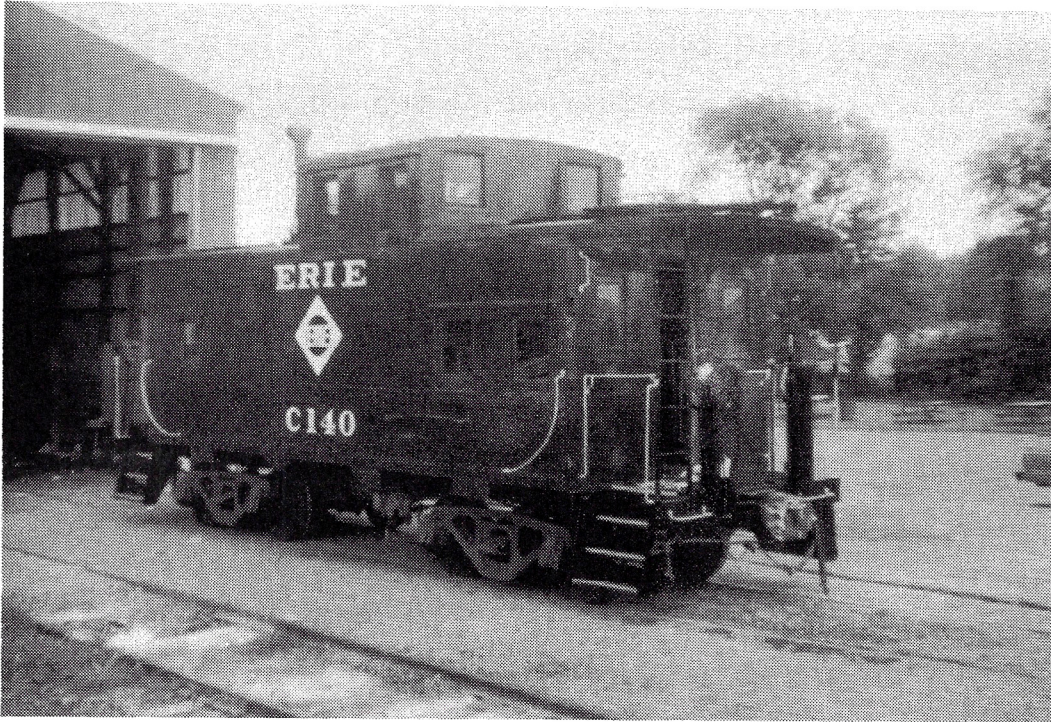
Upper left photo shows part of the gang around the watermelon table.

Upper right photo shows a happy young lady helping Rich Adam man the throttle of the "doodlebug".

Lower right photo shows some of the people inside the "doodlebug".

Tony Hall Photographer





Frank Capalbo's caboose brightens the scene at Ringoes with its fresh paint one weekend last August. photo by Tony Hall

CAPABILITY PLUS COMMITMENT EQUALS CAPALBO CABOOSE

Contributing member Frank Capalbo of Nutley, long a well known railfan, has distinguished himself again, and thereby, we hope, reflected a bit of credit indirectly on N.J.E.R.H.S. Over the past year, Frank obtained former Erie Railroad caboose No. 140 and restored it to splendid perfection. I say indirectly because this project was NOT any doing of our society, but it does show the level of commitment and capability which can be found among our membership.

Frank enjoys the hospitality of the Black River & Western Railroad, long the home of several railfan restoration projects. Ringoes has earned a reputation for being an incubator for many historic rail projects which probably would never have seen the light of day were it not for the generosity of the management of that well-known line. Number 140 benefitted from the talents of many of Frank's friends in the rail community, mostly staff and volunteers at Black River. Chief among these was the spray gun artistry of Steve Sweeney of the railroad's mechanical department.

Built by the Erie in 1940, the hack was in continuous service until retirement under Conrail. Upon arrival at Ringoes last winter the ravages of hard use and deferred maintenance began to emerge. Dirt, rust and dry rot had taken their toll. All glazing and most sashes required replacement. The entire car was sandblasted and primed. Custom-made new upholstery was provided throughout. Plumbing, lighting and electric service were all renewed. The interior was refinished in complimentary blue and gray, the new upholstery being in blue. Original Erie coach seats arranged at a compact table were retained. A new copy of a vintage caboose stove was installed. Storage provisions

were restored and augmented. Most of the comforts of home, and some not found there are found among the fittings on board. This new and most welcome addition to New Jersey's pool of privately owned restored vintage railroad rolling stock is certain to become a fixture on the railfan scene. Come to Ringoes (via B.R.& W. train of course) and see it. Watch for it on railfan excursions. Bravo and well done, Frank!

text by Tony Hall

Stillwell Story

The N.J.E.R.H.S. Stillwell car No. 24 began life in 1934 as car No. 2620. It was one of a group of 50 cars numbered 2600-2649 which were classed as semi-suburban, and were built by the American car and Foundry Company. Another 75 cars were built that same year and were classed as suburbans. Cars 2420-2469 were built by Pullman, while cars 2470-2494 were products of the Standard Steel Car Co. This represented the last order for Stillwell cars, and enabled the Erie to retire its remaining wooden cars.

Cars 2420-2494 came with trucks off retired wooden cars and equipped with 92 seats for suburban service. Cars 2600-2649 had 88 seats and two toilets with overhead water tanks. In later years the seating in car No. 2620 was reduced to 76. The 2600-series cars also were equipped with straight equalized cast-steel commonwealth 4-wheel trucks for non-deluxe long distance service. Cars 2635-2649 were later resealed to 72 seats and equipped with air-conditioning. They were renumbered 2650-2664 and painted in the "Erie Limited" two-tone green colors. Eleven of the 2650-class air-conditioned cars and four of the 2600-2634-class cars were the last Stillwells to operate in Port Jervis in 1974.

Car 2620 was one of ten cars which were converted to rider cars around 1967. They were renumbered R21-R30. Our car was given the number R24 at that time. These cars were assigned to mail trains which were replacing long-distance passenger trains. Car R24 was equipped with two coal stoves for rider use. Employees were carried in the rider cars after coaches were dropped from the passenger trains, as piggy-back cars on the mail trains had no steam heat trainlines.

Car R24 was converted to an auxiliary power car around 1970 to run with instruction car No. 10 (also a Stillwell car and one of only five built to a unique long-distance design). It was one of only two Stillwells repainted to the Erie Lackawanna's gray and maroon colors. Car R24 was equipped with a diesel power plant and air compressor for use with car No. 10. It was renumbered to 24 at that time.

Car 24 was retired by Conrail along with instruction car No. 10 in the late 1970's and was stored at the Elizabeth Regional Offices.

It was purchased by N.J.E.R.H.S. members in 1986 and shipped by Conrail to Lake Junction where the M & E delivered it to Whippany.

history compiled by Bob Sherwood