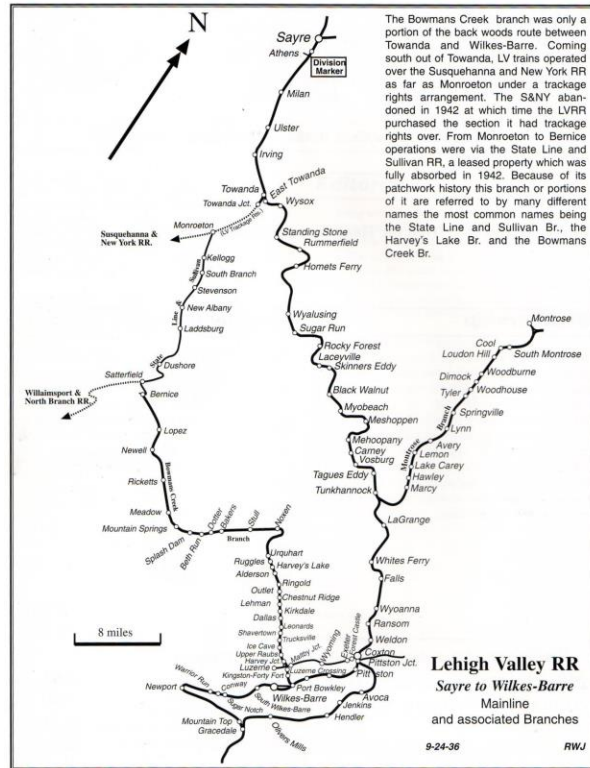


Nov. 6, 2013

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM ... while dusting

From a publication/magazine entitled *Flags Diamonds and Statues* of 1996, printed by the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society comes a wealth of information concerning the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Of particular interest to us is the section entitled *The Bowman's Creek Branch* by Harry D. Owens, Jr. "The Bowman's Creek branch was only a portion of the back woods route between Towanda and Wilkes-Barre. Coming south out of Towanda, LV trains operated over the Susquehanna and New York RR as far as Monroeton under a trackage rights arrangement. The S&NY abandoned in 1942 at which time the LVRR purchased the section it had trackage rights over. From Monroeton to Bernice operations were via the State Line and Sullivan RR, a leased property which was fully absorbed in 1942. Because of its patchwork history this branch or portions of it are referred to by many different names the most common names being the State Line and Sullivan Br., the Harvey's Lake Br. and the Bowman's Creek Br."



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Begun in 1893, the LVRR ordered all truncate stations (as shown on accompanying map) closed on Nov. 26th, 1963 and officially shut down on Dec. 22, 1963 – this one month after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This railroad had been a lifeline for the counties of Luzerne, Sullivan and Wyoming for seventy-six years. The LVRR, having reached Wilkes-Barre in 1867, went through tumultuous times in leaps and bounds to make what became the life giving network of communicating goods, both in and out of our region. On page 11 is a 1907 photo by Ranald Douglas of the Lopez station as it looked while in operation and then on page 15 the same station taken in 1940 during the dismantling operation of the LVRR section between there and Bean Run (Mountain Springs) that had actually closed in 1938. From a hand written note by Pat McGee: "The boy on the platform is my dad, Leo McGee, age 12. The Hotel was right across the street". Pat's father was the son of James McGee who had that hotel, which burned in the great fire of Lopez in 1982.

Until 1934, the through passenger trains ran the same tracks as log trains – each using sidings to avoid head on collisions but with shared efforts to transport people and goods. There were actually two of these mixed trains but the Towanda-to-Lopez run would survive almost two years longer (closed April of 1938) than the Wilkes-Barre-to-Noxen run.

In the center fold is an 1893 hand drawn map of the Harvey's Lake Branch with an insert of Lopez. While there can be difficulty reading this map, it is delightful in its detail of the locations along the railroad's routing. Another photo of curiosity is that of a J-25 gas-electric train in 1936 removing 14 foot snow drifts on the tracks from Dallas to Dushore. The plow itself is actually set on the tracks and then pushed by a caboose, followed by the engine.

Railroad enthusiasts will no doubt know much of the history that's been compiled within this volume but even they can admire the reproduction of photography included therein. For this and more, you can make an appoint to visit YOUR museum by phoning 570-946-5020 or going on the web site or email at scpahistory.com or museum@scpahistory.com or check us out on facebook.