

The Bulletin

The Railroad Station Historical Society

Volume 55-2

ISSN 0147-0027 March-April 2022

STATIONS AND OTHER STRUCTURES of the LEHIGH VALLEY RR

Part 8 Mainline west from Geneva, NY to Buffalo



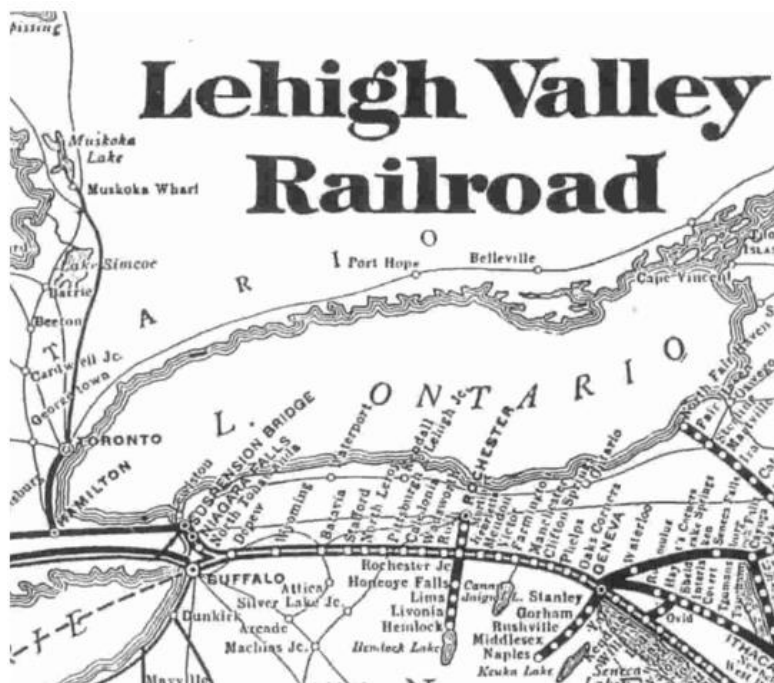
The very large, rambling Rochester Jct. station is seen looking west in the waning days of the railroad. Paul Templeton photo July 25, 1971, courtesy Jeff Kovacs. This building burned in October 1973. Today not only is the station gone, but also the LV Rochester branch (right) and double track mainline. A hiking trail, park, an old boxcar, and a small "railroad replica" restroom facility for the hiking trail occupies the site.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad for several years forwarded its westbound coal traffic via the Erie RR to Buffalo and beyond. Even before the company built its own line to the city, it had wisely purchased ample waterfront property along Lake Erie, what was known as Tift Farm. Here it would establish extensive rail yards. The railroad was a joint owner (with the Erie RR) of the Buffalo Creek Railroad which served the bustling lakeport, especially the grain transfer business from lake boat to railcar. The trackage rights rental agreement the railroad had with the Erie

continued from page 33

would expire in 1892. Thus, construction of the line west from Geneva, NY to Buffalo was being pushed to completion in 1891. The railroad established a major freight transfer yard in Manchester, 15 miles west of Geneva to handle expedited L.C.L. (less than carload) shipments. Car repair shops and a locomotive facility with a major roundhouse were also constructed here. The mainline bypassed Rochester, 3rd largest city in the State and a major manufacturing center. A branch line was built at the same time into the city and the downtown passenger station was uniquely situated on bridge piers over the Genesee River. In September 1892 the new route was opened, and the railroad acquired further mileage in Upstate with several branch lines in the Finger Lakes region including the old Elmira, Cortland & Northern in the next few years. Near Buffalo, the LVRR constructed a bypass around Buffalo to the north to gain access to Canadian traffic at Suspension Bridge just north of Niagara Falls. This subsidiary, the Depew & Tonawanda, was double track, opened to traffic November 15, 1896 and used a combination of new construction and trackage rights on New York Central's so called 'Peanut Line', the former Canandaigua & Niagara Falls, and Central's Niagara branch from Tonawanda Junction, through North Tonawanda and beyond to Niagara Falls and Suspension Bridge. The railroad had rapidly expanded and expected that its best days would soon follow.

- John C. Dahl, January 2022



Portion of LVRR system map, circa 1920.

This issue of The Bulletin was prepared by assistant Editor, John Dahl, with the assistance of Ted Xakellis. PDF copies of the Bulletin are available by contacting Jim Dent.

The Bulletin of the Railroad Station Historical Society, Inc. is published six times a year. Kent Hannah, Editor 1312 Woods Drive, Keller, TX 76262-9327 phone 817-431-8435, pkhannah@verizon.net Asst. Editors, John C. Dahl, jcdahl@twc.com and Ted Xakellis, theodorexakellis@juno.com, James Dent, Business Manager 26 Thackeray Rd., Oakland, NJ 07436-3312 212-818-8085 jdent1@optonline.net Membership is from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES AND DUES TO THE BUSINESS MANAGER.. RSHS web site: www.rrshs.org/ Board of Directors RSHS: Norbert Shacklette (emeritus); Kent Hannah 1312 Woods Dr., Keller, TX 76262-9327 (publications); James Dent, 26 Thackeray Rd, Oakland, NJ 07436-3312 (finance); Andy White, 6240 Bright Plume, Columbia, MD 21044-3791 (conventions); Mark J. Camp, Dept of Env. Sci., Univ. of Toledo, Toledo, OH 43606 419-530-2398 m.camp@utoledo.edu (Website and Archives); Art Peterson (emeritus). Dues: \$15.00 for US, \$20.00 Canada and \$25.00 Foreign (Please remit US funds).



Geneva, NY The former Lehigh Valley passenger station on North Genesee St. basks in the light of a soft spring afternoon, April 18, 2009. The one-of-a-kind station is now a private home. The mainline was located behind the building and has been removed. John C. Dahl photo.



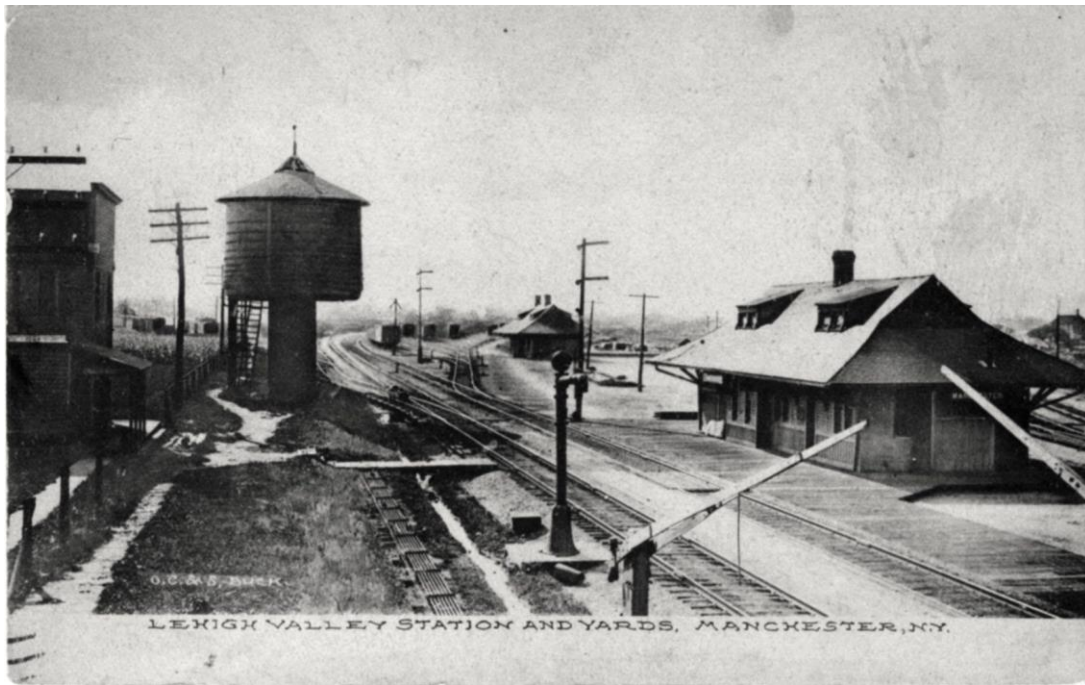
Geneva, NY – The LV Freight House was located near downtown Geneva on a spur track. September 13, 1978. This structure still stands, converted to local business use. Note old signage behind “T&G”. Photo, courtesy Jeff Kovacs.



Clifton Springs, NY – A unique framing for a depot picture, shot from the fireman's seat of a diesel cab unit. A considerable number of passengers appears to be waiting to board the train. Undated but circa late 1950s, Clyde Redfield photo, Paul Templeton collection, courtesy Jeff Kovacs.



Clifton Springs, NY – An unknown photographer captures a moment on May 11, 1959 from the last Black Diamond, train #10 as it departs eastward from Clifton Springs station. A few local residents and perhaps onetime patrons of the railroad take a long last look. Tomorrow, no more will the Black Diamond call. RRSBS archives.



Manchester, NY – A historic photo postcard view around 1915. Note the yard office structure in the distance is the basic same plan as the depot. A great number of the railroad's structures were built to this common style, a late Victorian design but none the less photogenic and not without embellishments such as stained glass sash in many of the windows and beautiful bead board interiors installed by expert craftsmen. Richard Palmer collection.



Manchester, NY – Tower and LV crew bunkhouse, right, is seen in 1953. It's telegraph call was "CH". Cal's Classics, John C. Dahl collection.



Manchester, NY – The ruins of LVRR’s massive locomotive roundhouse are seen in early spring, April 19, 2009. The building was expanded in the 1920s to accommodate the flood of traffic when the railway was at its peak of prosperity. Photo by John C. Dahl



Manchester, NY – An interior view of the roundhouse. April 19, 2009. A movement is underway to try to stabilize and eventually rescue this unique structure. Photo by John C. Dahl



Victor, NY – was this possibly the freight station located on a spur line, with what is identified as train RM-2? The structure is said to have been lost in a controlled burn in 1990. Jeff Kovacs collection.



Rochester Junction, NY – A historic trackside level view from a postcard, circa 1915. To the right tracks diverged on the branch that ran into downtown Rochester and the terminus of the line on Court Street at the passenger depot. Richard Palmer collection.



Rochester Junction, NY - In October 1964 the old depot is still in relatively good repair aside from needing a new coat of paint. Hemenway Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl.



Rochester Junction, NY - Around 1952, looking west with a train on the branch to downtown Rochester, perhaps these smartly dressed ladies will be boarding the eastbound Black Diamond to further their trip. Hemenway Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl.



Caledonia, NY - In a snapshot view, on July 18, 1971 the depot is still intact, probably in use by the railroads signal maintainers or bridge & building gang, if the Lehigh had much of any such staff left by that point in time. Someone is obviously patching the roof in a battle to arrest the onslaught of deterioration and time. Paul Templeton collection, courtesy Jeff Kovacs.



Pittsburgh & Lehigh Junction, NY – In a scene from around the late 1950s a freight train sweeps past the tower. Hemenway Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl



Pittsburgh & Lehigh Junction, NY – Above, marking the crossing of the former Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh (Rochester branch) with the LVRR, the station appears to be semi-abandoned in this September 1976 view. The BR&P was acquired by Baltimore & Ohio in 1932. Hemenway Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl

This station still exists and has been restored, having been moved to Mumford, NY and the grounds of the Genesee Country Village & Museum. The photo below is dated August 30, 1994. Paul Templeton collection, courtesy Jeff Kovacs.





P&L Junction, NY – The interlocking tower of typical LVRR design was opposite the depot, a corner of which can be seen just to the right of the tower. It is March 19, 1965 as the towerman waits for an approaching train to hand up orders. Brian Angevine collection.



Batavia, NY – Once a crossroads of several railroad lines, Batavia was a busy location. Larger than similar designed buildings of the LV, a good deal of freight traffic must have been handled out of this location. New York Central would later relocate its mainline in the early 1940's on a bypass of downtown Batavia to a place just a stone's throw to the north of the LV right of way. Photo is undated, but probably early 1970's. This station was the victim of an arson fire on Halloween 1978. Hemenway Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl



Buffalo, NY – The railroad opened this classically designed passenger station in late summer 1916 which faced west on lower Main Street, not far from the bustling waterfront. Just to its north was situated the New York Central's then main Buffalo station at Exchange Street (the NYC head building was east two short blocks). At right can be seen just a bit of the train gate concourse which fronted on Washington Street. A pedestrian tunnel with ramps connected the two buildings for the convenience of passengers. Seen about 1950, the building is still vibrant with rail service. That trolley car of Buffalo's International Railway Corp. (IRC) is heading south on Main Street towards the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western station. Sirman Collection, courtesy John C. Dahl.



A rare view of the Washington Street side of the main station headhouse. In the center is the roof where the underground tunnel & ramp passed under the street to get to the train gate concourse building. Photo dated March 21, 1917 Brian Angevine collection.

Buffalo Station, Washington St. Mar 21, 1917



Buffalo, NY - The Black Diamond in the care of Alco PA locomotives smokes it up exiting the trainshed circa 1950. The PA's were new to LV in 1948. The Erie Railroad also used the LV station from September 1, 1918 per USRA orders for the duration of WW1. In 1935 when the Erie closed their own smaller and obsolete facility located even further east on Exchange Street, they returned as a tenant. Collection: Lower Lakes Marine Museum.

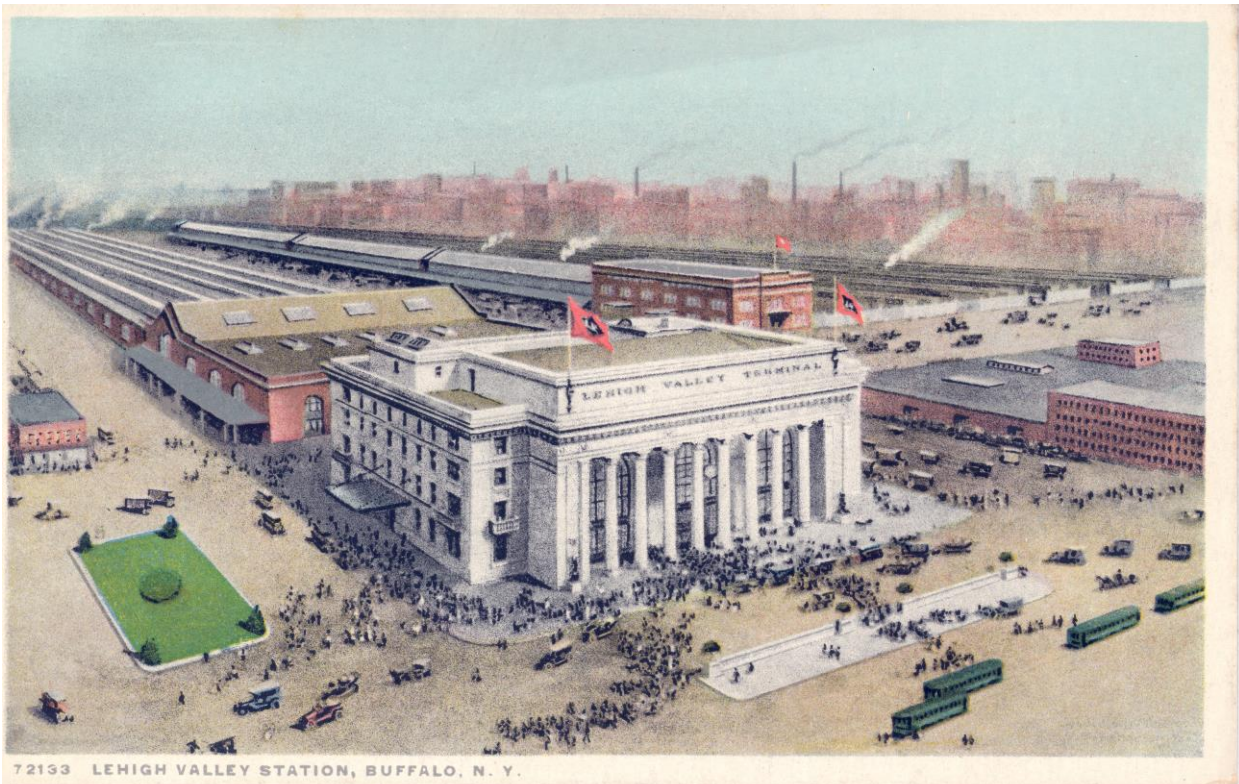


The main waiting room of the LVRR station about 1916 exudes the elegance and institutional stability of the early 20th Century embodied by the railroads. Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS.



Buffalo, NY – Stretching eastward, the ten track trainshed was photographed from the main station using an upper floor overlook window. At the extreme right was LV's downtown freight station. Below, we see the interior view of the track gate concourse. Both photos, Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS.





Well known among many eastern railroads was architect Kenneth Murchinson. He designed this Beaux-Arts building along a style similar to Scranton's Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Terminal. He also is the architect of Buffalo's DL&W station which stood less than a quarter of a mile south at the foot of Main Street on the Buffalo River. Construction began in January 1914 with extensive site preparation work and the project involved not just a passenger station but also the new freight facilities. The freight house opened in December 1915. The passenger terminal opened August 29, 1916. Four stories, it was built on a granite base and featured terra cotta details. With a frontage of 164 feet on Main Street, it extended back 102 feet. A fifty-foot street setback allowed room for the approach driveway. The pedestrian tunnel under Washington Street was 18 feet wide and 8 feet tall. This allowed patrons to reach the train gate concourse without having to go outside and cross busy Washington Street. In the main building were found smoking room for the gentlemen, men's and women's restrooms, a restaurant with lunch counter, and an invalids' room. Telegraph and telephone, parcel check, and ticket offices completed the amenities. The waiting room was spacious, 82 feet by 102 feet with a marble floor and marble wainscoting. It extended in height the full four floors of the building. Three great arched windows were set behind the eight-column portico. Inscribed above this in capital letters: "Lehigh Valley Terminal".

The postcard view gives us a perspective of just how extensive the facilities were with the ten track train shed stretching eastward 842 feet. The downtown freight house and its transfer sheds are just above and to the right-hand side of the picture. The huge crowds depicted in front and on the side of the station possibly indicate this image was made from a photo captured on opening day, or may just be an artist's imagination.

When New York Central opened its new station on the east side of Buffalo in June 1929, there was some discussion about it utilizing the Lehigh Valley station in lieu of replacing the downtown Exchange Street facility. The track connections would have been relatively easy to

accommodate as the LVRR's trainshed was just south of and parallel with NYC's Exchange Street facility. New York Central however seemed loath to have its downtown Buffalo station be anything except a company owned building. Discussions soon faded when in the Fall of 1929 Wall Street experienced the great 'Crash of '29'. No one was in a mood to do much of anything because of the sudden negative business outlook and downturn in traffic. The Great Depression was only getting started at that point and would deepen with each month that passed. Exchange Street lingered in use for the relatively few trains routed via the Niagara Falls branch until 1935 when it was closed and demolished.

The LVRR downtown station location today is unremarkable with some bland modern office buildings wedged between elevated viaducts and ramps of Interstate 190. The railroad conveniently sold its right of way into downtown to New York State for the new roadway as passenger service waned. The building closed in 1955 and the few passenger services that remained were diverted to a new station along the LV main tracks on the outskirts of the city at Dingens Street. The classical headhouse, built of Indiana limestone to last for the ages was demolished in 1960 after sitting vacant and abandoned. Postcard: John C. Dahl collection.



Collection: Lower Lakes Marine Museum

We will return to Buffalo, NY in the next installment of this series to see more of the Lehigh Valley Railroad facilities in the Queen City of the Great Lakes, and its Niagara Falls branch.