Next Meeting - 6:45 PM - Tuesday, May 14, 2019
Chippewa Valley Museum, Eau Claire, WI
Carson Park, Eau Claire, WI

April 2019 Update Highlights:
• No.19 work complete, ready for work
• Frank Garber reviewed training documents at April meeting.
• May 1 and 2. Chippewa Correction crews raked the depot - roundhouse grounds, moved the completed panel tracks to the new right of way, raked the entire right of way, sorted the rail pile, and re-organized the coal barrels.

No. 19 Tender
Al Brun completes the new copper water piping in the tender to deliver water to steam injectors. New hoses and fittings have been fitted also.

The tender new tender brake system is complete. It appears to work fine.

New Member
Ethan Winter began learning operation of the mill. He helped make parts for a new whistle control.
May 1st and 2nd, the Chippewa Corrections Facilities (CCF) sent 7 folks to help clean up the depot grounds and clear the track of pine needles, leaves, and sticks. They also helped out with various other tasks to ready the area for Memorial Day.

Sgt. Holm, the officer in charge, emailed me late in the day saying “I can tell you that the guys really enjoyed the experience, not only by helping out with work, but also learning some cool new events that they can be proud to be a part of. I did enjoy myself and look forward to the next time”.

I sent Sgt. Holm a picture of the track panel placement on the new right of way.

I responded “Glad to hear that all had a good time.” I attached a picture showing the panel track sections the crew placed for us for the West Branch Line which will greatly enhance the ride experience for our passengers. Pictures - Top - looking south. with CCF person blowing leaves. Bottom - looking north.

Sgt. Holm responded “ Very nice, they have been stopping by and telling me about everything yesterday. They are very proud to have been a part of it “.

Our volunteers, Frank Garber, Al Brun, Byron Bobb, Charlie Schaaf, Andy Stanton, Rob Brazeau, and Dave Peterson, supervised and worked with the CCF folks. All accomplished alot of needed work.

All photos by Dave Peterson
Memorial Day, May 27th

This is our opener. A good turn out is required. We will open up around 9:30 am. Ticket sellers - 11:30 is fine.

I will send out the Signup Genius form on the internet like last year. So look at your schedule please and decide when you can work.

Work Session, May 18, 2019. 9 am - 4 pm
West Branch Work

We may do a set up on Saturday, May 25th, or Sunday, May 26th. A notice will be sent out.

******* 2019 DUES *******
Please bring your $5 dues payment to the May 2019 meeting
OR mail it to
Dave Peterson
430 McKinley Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Picture of the depot area, May 4, 2019, after the city crews removed the piles of leaves and pine needles. Sunday is the big marathon, so the city cleaning the park for the event. Our timing was perfect.
Where did our G-16 stream liner train set come from?

Introduction
Often I am asked about the history of our equipment. So everyone and then I do research. Each venture turns up something. Our G-16 train is an example.

Amos Gohlish was our president in the early 1980’s. Among his talents, he was a researcher. Today, the internet would be his big toy. During one of his searches he found a G-16 train set of 1 locomotive, a passenger car, and an observation car for sale from “Choo Choo Charlie” in Green Lake, WI, for $12,000, complete with rail, ties, signals, and miscellaneous stuff. Charlie ran the train around his miniature golf course on his farm out side of Green Lake.

Amos and Bob Johnson drove to Green Lake to inspect the train. We decided to buy it. Asked the Hobbs Foundation to give us half and we would pay the other half. Our half was financed by 3 members each providing $2000 loans to the CVRR, which was paid back over the next few years. The train set and rail was move to Eau Claire over 3 weekends. The first brought the train set back. It was stored at Dell Construction since we had no place to store it. The next week end was pulling up all the rail and ties. The third was moving the rail and ties to to Eau Claire. The US Army Reserves provided manpower and transportation.

At that time, we were not concerned its history. Getting it running was the main goal. We needed a back up engine if No 19 was down for some reason. About the only thing Byron and I remember was the seller of the set to us mentioned in passing something about Memphis, Tennessee. We did not go any further.

Over the years, we began some research. investigation has been difficult since our set has no serial number. The first clue came from major inspection and overall of the locomotive. But first a little background about our type of train set. The following is a good, brief history of “Miniature Train”.

An Overview by Thomas Dyrek
Since the mid-1800s, toy and model trains have been a part of everyday American life. From wooden push toys to intricate layouts with detailed electricity powered trains and automatic accessories, model railroading has grown considerably since its beginning and now holds the title of the world’s greatest hobby.
For Paul Sturtevant, however, the toys and small models were not enough. A resident of Glen Ellyn, IL, in 1928 Sturtevant constructed a large model of a steam locomotive with custom track for his son. When it was discovered that the train
was large enough to ride, it became a neighborhood hit. In 1932, a Sears store owner approached Sturtevant with the idea of leasing the train to use at his store during the holiday season. Soon, more Sears owners requested trains for their stores too, and by 1940 Sturtevant had created the Miniature Train and Railroad Company.

With permission from General Motors, the MT&RC built their trains based on the streamlined diesel locomotive designs of the Electro-Motive Division of GM. The first was a model of an E unit, and soon the company was producing F units as well. Train production halted during WWII but resumed immediately after. In 1946, the “G-16” scale was introduced, which became the company’s most popular type. In 1948, the MT&RC relocated from Sturtevant’s Glen Ellyn machine shop to a factory in Rensselaer, IN and was subsequently renamed the Miniature Train Company. The factory was located on Cullen Street in Rensselaer and would remain open until 1956 when the MTC was sold to the Allan Herschell Company. Allan Herschell continued to produce MTC trains until 1963, when the design was scrapped for a modernized Allan Herschell model.

Even so the original MTC trains continued to operate in parks and other recreational places long after production ceased. The first trains to be retired from their original railroads in the 1970s were mostly sold to new owners for preservation. There are around 70 remaining, 50 of which are operational. Among the places that currently operate MTC trains are the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, GA, Bowness Park in Calgary, AB, and several amusement parks in Wisconsin. (Later, Chance Manufacturing acquired MTC, but only sold replacement parts - my addition).

**The First Clue**

The overhaul began because the wheels were badly worn. The flanges were so thin, the locomotive derailed occasionally. Also some passenger car wheels were wearing. We purchased 16 wheels from Chance Manufacturing. We replaced all the wheels on the diesel and salvaged its good wheels to replace worn wheels on the passenger car. We also repaired drive train components and replaced the seals on the torque converter.

While cleaning the power trucks, we found ticket stubs from an amusement park from which the name was Lakeland Playland and the rides at the park. The rides were helicopter, train, twister, mad mouse, paratroopers, flying coaster, ferris wheel, and merry go round.

We tried to contact Choo Choo Charlie, but he had passed away. Byron talked to his nephew once, but not much was learned. I called some contacts in Green Lake, but dead ends. The ticket printing company name was on the stubs. I contacted them, but no luck.

When the internet opened up ways to research almost anything, I searched for Lakeland Parkland, Memphis, Tennessee. Yes, they had a train, but the flyer picture showed a steam locomotive powered train that looked like the 1886 style that Allan Herschell sold.
Randy Lamburtus researched numerous parks. He found most of the active G-16’s. Nothing about a train with no serial number. I located a list of known G-16’s and their owners, November, 2018, form a web site.

Another clue is in our drawings that came with our train set. We have a set of blueprints for most of the components. Many are rubber stamped with 1959 meaning the date of printing. We also have prints for the S-16 “steam 1886” locomotive. Playland has an S-16. Maybe these plans were mixed in with our locomotive if ours was the first and then the S-16. All speculation, but curious.

So Where are We Now?

Recently, I found notices in “The Billboard”, a periodical on the music and entertainment industry which has included amusement parks and circuses, about Lakeland Playland:

“The Billboard, July 27, 1959, notice

Under the terms of the contract signed by Lakeland Development Corporation and Memphis businessman, about $300,000 worth of adult amusement rides planned at Lakeland Park here, EW, Ned, Cook and Charles R. Carlock, holders of the franchise have applied for incorporation and are seeking a name for the new organization, according to Cook. Other principals are EY Chapin III of Chattanooga, owner of Rock City, a tourist attraction, and Hubert Fisher, Vance Rile, an Frank Jones. “We hope to have the new rides installed by next July 4, tentative date for the opening.” Cook said. “work will begin immediately on a miniature train to convey Memphians on a tour of the park area.” Carlock and Garner are considering going to Switzerland in August to talk with cable car makers in hopes of installing cars at Lakeland. Louis E Garner, president of the firm which proposes to develop a 1,000 acre playground in east Shelby County between Seed Tick and Canada Roads, said Lakeland Park will get 25% of the gross revenues from the rides.”

The historical time for Lakeland Parkland indicates a miniature train began operating in 1960 and an S-16 train appeared in 1966. Our train may be the one in 1959 “The Billboard” and was replaced by the S-16. One could deduce the S-16 blueprints were mixed in with the G-16 prints.

As of April 29th, I have contacted the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce and the Memphis Heritage Society for assistance. Confirmation of a G-16 could confirm the connection. I will also contact the family of E.W. Cook that still is associated with Rock City, Chantanooga, Tennessee.

Stay tuned.

Prepared by Dave Peterson