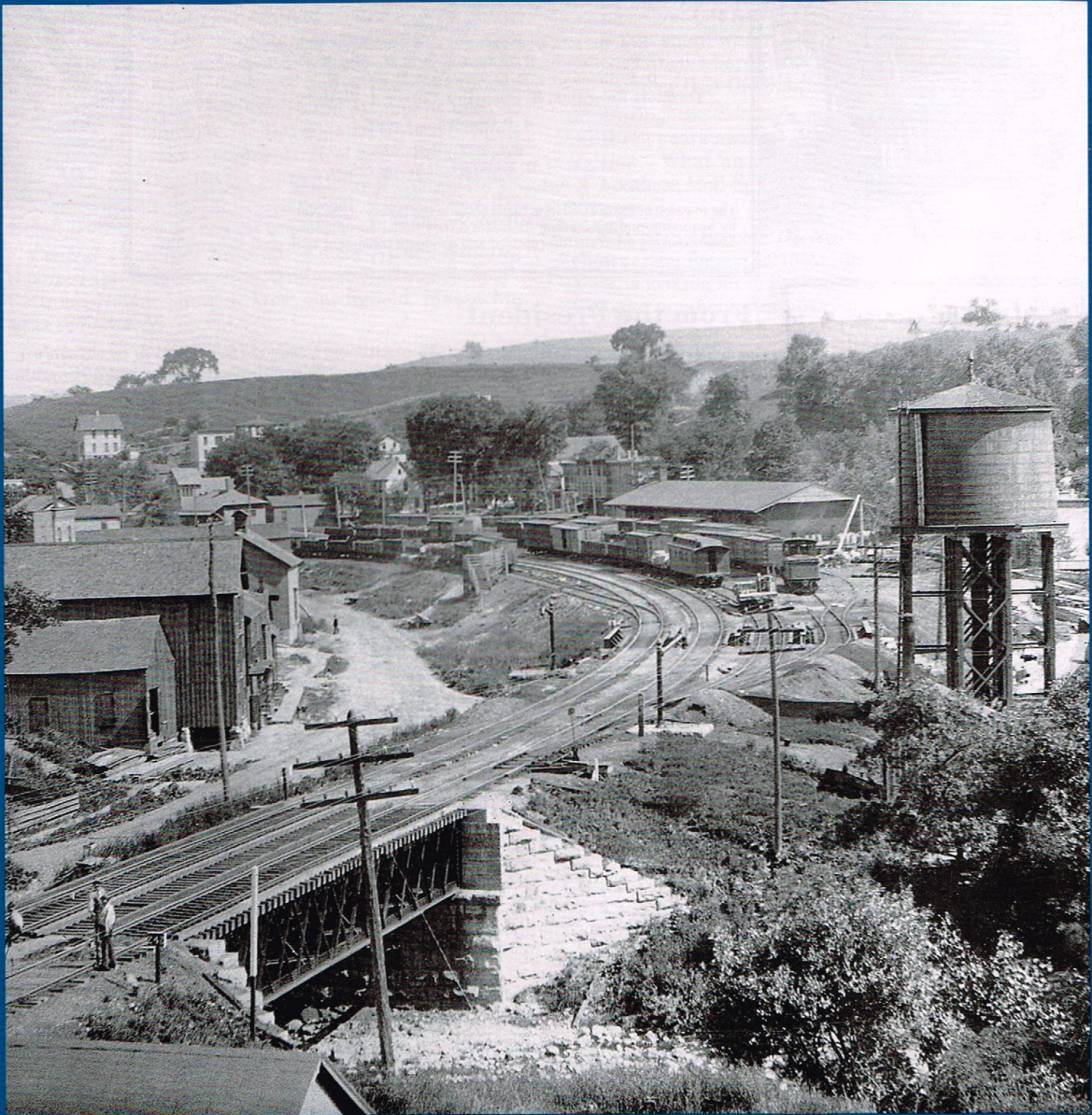


# CENTRAL HEADLIGHT

VOL. XLIV, NO. 2 — SECOND QUARTER, 2014



## MOHAWK VALLEY MEMORIES

# FROM STILTS TO STEEL

## CONSTRUCTING THE LAKESHORE LINES FROM CLEVELAND TO TOLEDO

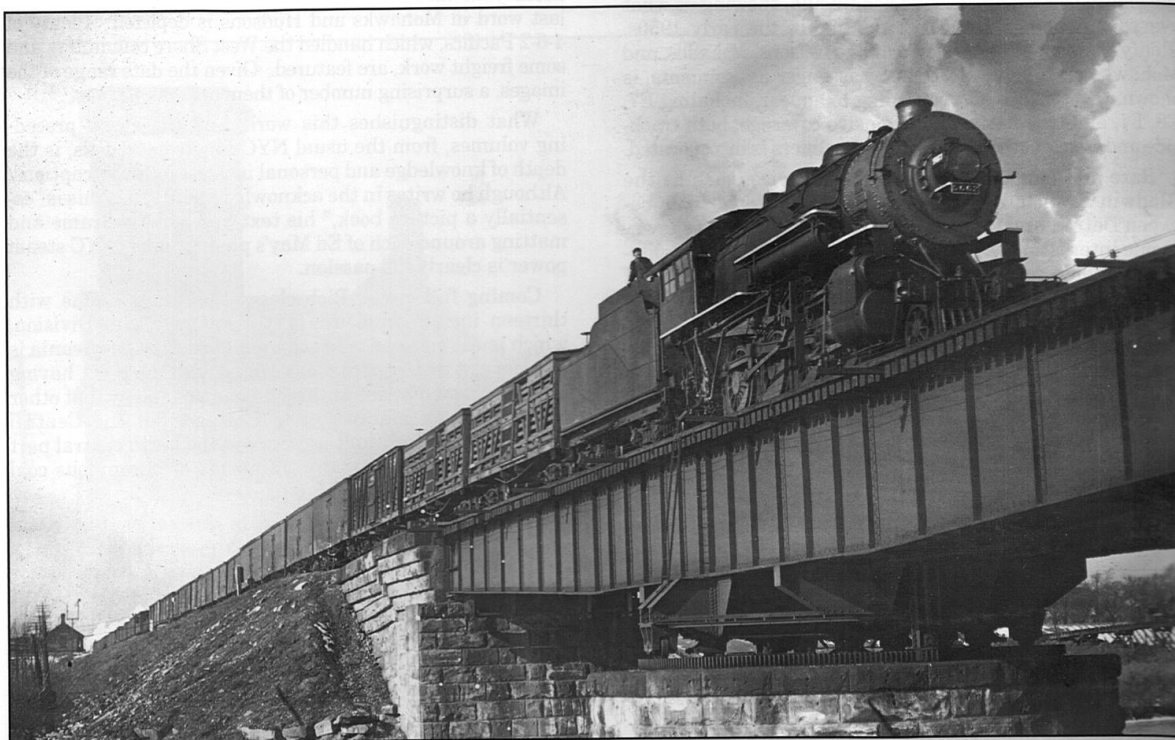
### PART 2 — 1850-1872

RON HELMECI

#### Forging the Link

Most new technologies have to go through a teething period before they become viable. Railroads were no exception. Lessons, some hard, were learned from the successes and failures of the 1830s and 1840s. Acting on these, railroad promoters, builders, and operators developed a more realistic understanding of the limits and potential of railroads. By 1850, as new and better techniques and tools for building and equipment were developed, capital started to flow into the industry, while the growth of supporting industries such as steel and coal started to feed an economic demand loop. The difficult of a decade before became the commonplace.

To everything there is a season, and the 1850s became the season for railroad building in Northern Ohio, as elsewhere in the Midwest. Rails were approaching Toledo from the west and Cleveland from the east. The TN&C was poised to close the gap between Cleveland and Toledo, binding New York City to Chicago with a chain of iron, and gaining a nearly insurmountable advantage over its only potential rival, the Junction Railroad. At the last minute, the Junction finally stirred to life, bursting back on the scene with a new president, a request for a new charter, and a greatly revamped and expanded construction program. Those associated with the Junction



LS&MS 5662, a G-6b built by Alco-Schenectady in November of 1907, leads a freight eastward across the Huron River swing bridge around 1910, with the head brakeman riding the coal pile. Note the three stock cars on the head end for watering stock, two with truss rods. By the time this photo was taken, the main line had been upgraded to a first-class operation. This beautiful and substantial bridge is testament to the changes. Photo by Ernst Niebergall. Charles E. Frohman Collection/Hayes Presidential Center.

Railroad knew that it was now or never.

The new Junction president was Judge Ebenezer Lane, resident of Sandusky and brother-in-law to Charles Boalt, president of the TN&C. His first move was to petition the legislature to revise and expand the charter, a task accomplished in January 1851. The company gained permission to extend rails to some point on the Maumee River south of Toledo from which they were authorized to transport passengers and goods by ferry or otherwise to Toledo. The "otherwise" could be a rail line. Soon afterward, on March 21, 1851, the charter was again amended to allow construction to the western border of Ohio. Finally, the charter was altered to permit counties, cities, and municipalities to incur debt for the benefit of the Junction Railroad. The same terms applied to the Junction as to the TN&C.

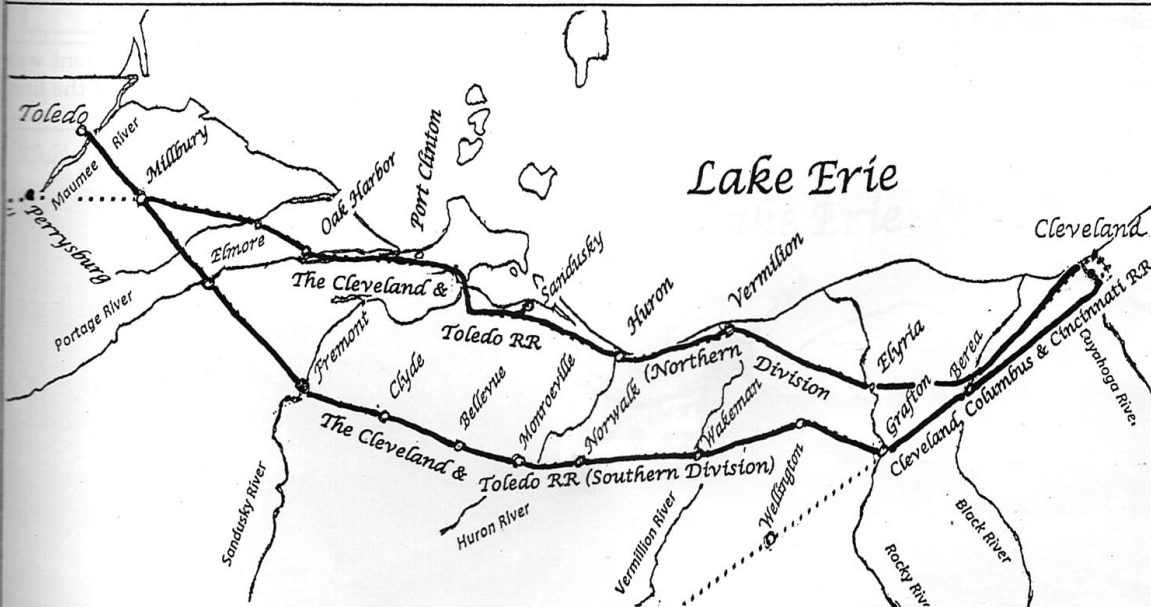
By building a line to the south of Toledo to connect to the Chicago routes near the Indiana border, the Junction would possess a shorter route than the TN&C for through freight and passengers. Toledo could still be served from a branch line, thus negating any advantage the TN&C would gain by reaching Toledo first.

By April of 1851 the Junction laid out a proposed route from Cleveland to Sandusky. To fund it, Ohio City pledged \$100,000, Sandusky \$50,000 and Portland Township another \$100,000. The Junction seems to have had an easier time raising money than the TN&C, although this may have been due to the threat posed by the TN&C.

Regardless, both roads had raised substantial sums and were ready to sell their bonds into the New York market by the end of April. Accordingly, Mr. Boalt and Judge Lane traveled together to New York City for this purpose. There, one final obstacle for the TN&C reared its head. Under the heading of "Infamous Forgery and Libel" in the May 13, 1851 edition of the *Huron Reflector*, the story is told of one final effort to sabotage the issuance of the TN&C bonds. In the April 24 edition of the *New York Evening Express*, and continuing for days afterwards, was a notice that "the owners of three-fourths of the taxable property of fifteen townships of Huron and Sandusky Counties, hereby notify the public that the Bonds of said townships, for stock in the Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland Railroad, are illegal

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## CLEVELAND & TOLEDO RR - CIRCA 1855



The C&T was the result of the 1853 merger of the TN&C, which became the C&T's Southern Division from Toledo to Grafton, with the Junction and Port Clinton railroads, which together formed the Northern Division. The Junction ran from Cleveland to Sandusky, while the Port Clinton ran from Sandusky across Sandusky Bay and on to Millbury, where it intersected the Southern Division. While the Port Clinton Railroad ended at Millbury, the intent at this time was to build straight west to an intersection with the MS&NI near Swanton, crossing the Maumee River at Perrysburg. This would allow through trains to completely bypass Toledo. The CC&C was leased from Grafton to Cleveland.

**From Stilts to Steel...** (Continued from page 29)

and void, and the payment of taxes will be resisted to the last; that an injunction bill is filed in the Supreme Court against the issue and a process served." It was signed by Messrs Fish and Williams of Huron County. When confronted, they denied all knowledge and reputed the entire claim, and no ill came of it. Ultimately, most thought it to be a desperate act by backers of the "Injunction Railroad" who knew the game was up if the TN&C received the bond money. With these allegations behind them, the TN&C gained the needed funds and pressed ahead with vigor.

The TN&C's proposed final layout had the line starting at Grafton, on the CC&C, rather than at Wellington. This both saved building to Wellington and shortened the distance to Cleveland on the CC&C by about ten miles. From Grafton the line would pass through Oberlin and Wakeman before reaching Norwalk. West of Norwalk the line would pass through Monroeville, Bellevue, Clyde and then Fremont, swinging through a gentle arc atop the old shoreline sand ridges parallel to and approximately ten miles inland from the lake. Through this stretch, the track would be built as straight segments with light curves in the vicinity of stations.

At this time there were no settlements within the Black Swamp. Accordingly, the TN&C, like the Ohio Railroad, planned to construct a 29.5 mile airline through the swamp anchored at Fremont on the southeastern end and the eastern bank of the Maumee at

the northwestern end. The only difference between the two was that the line for the TN&C was rotated slightly to the west of that of the Ohio Railroad. It would intersect the Maumee River across from Toledo's Middle Grounds, instead of across from Manhattan.

The distance from Toledo to Grafton would be 87.5 miles, and from Grafton to Cleveland on the CC&C would be 24 miles, for a total of 111.5 miles. The maximum grade would be 30 feet per mile, with the total ascent and descent being 1,129 feet. The highest elevation above the lake would be 320 feet. Ninety percent of the line would be straight track. Total curvature over the entire line would be 344 degrees.

W. E. Ferguson, the chief engineer, made clear that he proposed to build a road, in every respect, first class in its character. The bridge masonry and larger class of culverts were to be built of hammered dressed lime or sand stone and the smaller culverts of rubble arches. Hydraulic cement was to be used in both. Bridges would be Howe's patent trusses. Heavy T-rail would be laid on substantial cross ties, and the entire line was to be ballasted with good gravel easily obtained along the line. The entire road was to be fenced and cattle guards placed at each crossing. Gauge would be the Ohio Standard 4'-10", the same as the CC&C. At Toledo, the passenger ferry *Ottawa* would carry goods and passengers across the Maumee River to connect to the Michigan Southern terminal on the Middle Grounds.

The 29.5 mile section from Toledo to Fremont was put under contract in January 1851. Each of the first



On a bleak winter day in 1900, a westbound train approaches the depot at Elmore on the original TN&C track, the "Norwalk Branch" of the NYC. Built as a single track line, it remained so for its entire existence. This scene is typical of most of the towns and small cities along the way. In each town there would be a depot, a few sidings to service the local elevator and other small businesses, and a water tank and coal yard for the locomotives. The water tower on the right, deemed an eyesore by local residents, was removed in the following year. Photo courtesy of the Grace Luebke Local History & Genealogy Department, Harris-Elmore Public Library.

seventeen sections of one mile each, from Toledo to the Portage River (Elmore), were let to Messrs. Swigart, Griffin & Co. from Norwalk; the remaining 12.5 miles was let to various contractors from Fremont. They were to perform all work, including grading, masonry, bridging, and superstructures, up to the laying of the actual track. The work on the first three miles was to be completed by August 1851, and the remainder in three-mile segments each month, finishing in January 1852. The iron was to be laid as fast as the work was completed. The twelve miles from the Portage River to Fremont were to be completed by November of 1852. This work was covered by the funds from the Toledo bonds and the individual subscriptions in Toledo and Fremont, taken at par by the contractor.

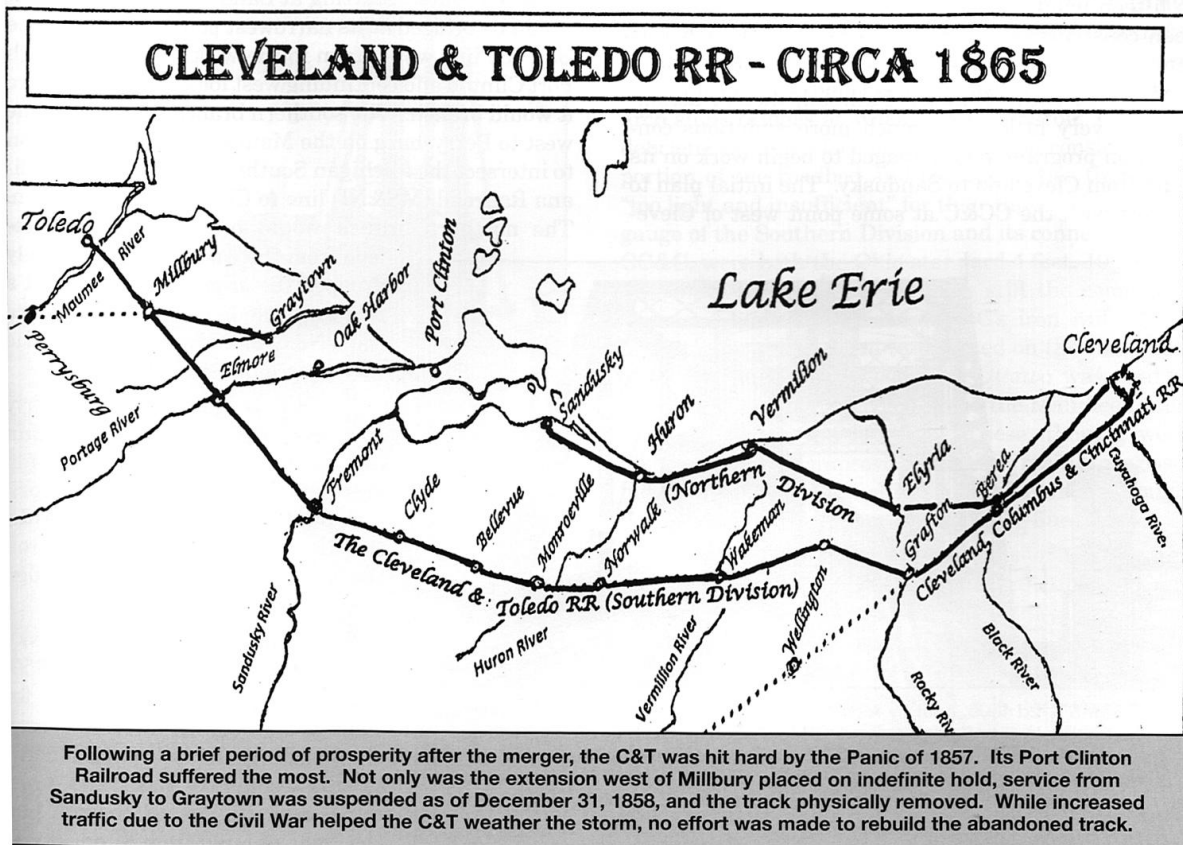
The remaining 57.5 miles, from Fremont to Grafton, were placed into contract in July 1851 to Messrs. Baxter, Brown, Reed, Redfield, and Chandler. This section was scheduled for completion in January 1853. Right-of-way was secured from Fremont to Grafton by the middle of September, and a Mr. Chandler arrived from the east along with men and equipment to begin construction. At the beginning of 1852, over 1,200 men were at work and more were being hired, many of them Irish who saved their money, purchased land,

and still have descendants living in the area today.

The work from Toledo to Fremont came in on time and budget. All that was needed was the iron, which was on the way. Mr. Boalt had traveled to England and purchased the needed amount by March of 1852. Notice was published that the first shipload had arrived at New York Harbor in the beginning of May 1852 and that the rest would soon arrive. It would be laid from Toledo to Fremont, as all the other work was completed on that stretch.

With the work over the entire line advancing and the iron arriving, the *Huron Reflector* followed the advance of the rails with keen interest. A notice in the December 14, 1852 issue stated that the line would be open from Toledo to Monroeville, a distance of 55 miles, for the conveyance of passengers. On the 20th of December, a red letter day in railroad history, the first regular train of 150 passengers traveled from Toledo to Monroeville. At Monroeville the TN&C connected with the Mansfield Road from Sandusky. This in turn connected 28 miles to the south with the CC&C, so that this train from Toledo could have continued straight through to New York City. So was forged the great chain of iron (a some-

*(Continued on following page)*



**From Stilts to Steel...** (Continued from page 31)

what circuitous one) from NYC to Chicago.

With the western end becoming operational, the eastern end, from Cleveland through to Norwalk, was scheduled to open around December 20, 1852. The remaining five miles from Monroeville to Norwalk would be completed sometime during January 10 to January 15. On Saturday, the 18th of December 1852, an iron horse, the locomotive *Toledo*, snorted and huffed its way into Norwalk from the east, hauling supplies needed to complete the last stretch.

At last, on January 24, 1852, the first trainload of passengers traversed the entire railroad from Toledo to Grafton. The *Huron Reflector*, in its Tuesday, January 25, 1853 issue, was proud to trumpet, "The last bar had been laid and the last link closed in the great iron chain which connects the Atlantic Cities with Chicago and the far West, and the 'Wheelbarrow-man' has departed on his way towards the Pacific." Shepard Patrick, Esq., one of Norwalk's oldest citizens, who had turned the first shovel of earth, had the honor of driving the last spike.

To Mr. Boalt was given full honors as the man who had pushed through the road in record time. In fifteen months the entire 89.5 miles of track had been constructed and made operational, which was remarkable at the time.

Meanwhile, the Junction Railroad, though accomplishing very little of its much more ambitious construction program, had managed to begin work on its route from Cleveland to Sandusky. The initial plan to connect with the CC&C at some point west of Cleve-

land was abandoned in favor of the alternate option of beginning near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River (in the former Ohio City) on the west bank. Although they would have preferred to continue across the Cuyahoga into downtown, Cleveland refused to give permission to do so. As a result, the company would be forced to ferry goods and passengers across the Cuyahoga for years. From the Cuyahoga, a direct lake shore route was rejected because of the expense of building a viaduct almost a quarter mile long and over 100 feet above the mouth of the Rocky River. Instead, the route would curve inland to cross the river at the upper falls in Berea, nearly at the same point as where the CC&C crossed. Despite owning the Ohio Railroad right-of-way from Ohio City, since they were starting from the north side of Ohio City rather than from the southern side as planned by the Ohio Railroad, they did not use it. From Berea the line would then go straight west through Olmsted to Elyria. From there it would follow the old Ohio Railroad right-of-way, swinging north to the lakeshore at Vermillion, and then west along the lakeshore through Huron to Sandusky.

West of Sandusky the route to be followed was still in the speculative stage. In his April 10, 1851 offering letter and accompanying map, Judge Lane laid out the proposed route. Starting at Sandusky, Sandusky Bay would be bridged at its narrowest point. Once over the Bay, the line would turn to the west, passing through Port Clinton and continuing west for a few miles, where it would branch. The southern branch would continue west to Perrysburg on the Maumee River and then on to intersect the Michigan Southern and Northern Indiana Railroad (MS&NI) line to Chicago near Wauseon. The northern branch would provide access to Toledo from the east. Lane completely dropped the original plan to build a line to Bellevue and Fremont, since the TN&C already was well on the way to accomplishing this.

The people of Perrysburg eagerly supported the building of the main extension through their city, seeing this as a way to bolster their position relative to Toledo. As a result, they subscribed \$100,000 to fund the construction of a railroad bridge across the Maumee River.

While the road east of Sandusky was put under contract in 1850, actual construction did not begin for some time because of controversy surrounding the Junction's right to cross Sandusky Bay. The Junction, under its revised charter, had the right to build from Sandusky to



LS&MS K-2d 4806, built by Alco-Schenectady in July of 1907, rolls over the Sandusky Bay Bridge around 1910. Curiously, the 45 LS&MS Pacifics in subclasses K-2a through K-2d, built between May and July of 1907, were numbered in reverse order, with K-2a 4844 delivered first, and K-2d 4800 delivered last. Photo by Ernst Niebergall. Charles E. Frohman Collection/Hayes Presidential Center.

Toledo. It did not necessarily have the right to bridge Sandusky Bay. Instead, at best it had the right to build to Toledo through Fremont, which was its terminus under the original charter. To gain the undisputed right to cross the bay, rather than again amend the Junction charter, a new entity, the Port Clinton Railroad (PC) was incorporated on October 12, 1852, with the wording in its Article of Incorporation, "The place of the termini of said road are as follows: beginning at Sandusky City and running by Port Clinton to Toledo passing through the Counties of Erie, Ottawa, Wood and Lucas." Capital was \$100,000. The subscribers listed were Eben Laree, J.H. Magruder, W.F. Stone, C.C. Keech, Earl Bill and H.S. Flynt. By specifying these termini, the charter assured the right to build across Sandusky Bay. It was under the PC charter that the Junction crossed the bay and built westward towards Perrysburg.

After all this planning and preparation, the Junction Railroad, as a stand-alone entity, never completed construction of a single section of track. By the time their



Sandusky Bay was the largest natural obstacle between Toledo and Cleveland. First bridged in 1855 by the C&T, then temporarily abandoned in 1858, the bridge was restored to service at the end of 1872 when the LS&MS rebuilt the track between Sandusky and Graytown. Here we see a pile driver and crew replacing pilings around 1910. Photo by Ernst Niebergall. Charles E. Frohman Collection/Hayes Presidential Center.

planned track between Sandusky and Berea was completed in August 1853, the TN&C and the Junction had signed and implemented a consolidation agreement. On July 15, 1853, they agreed to merge into the Cleveland & Toledo Railroad Company (C&T), a merger effected on September 1, 1853. Immediately after, on October 20, the C&T leased the PC for a ninety-nine year term. Post-merger, the TN&C became the Southern Division of the C&T and the Junction became the Northern Division.

While the Southern Division was operational, substantial work was needed to bring it up to the standards of a first-class road. Considerable deficiencies were hinted at early on in an article in the February 22, 1853 issue of the *Huron Reflector*, written about a month after operations started. "We passed over the portion of the Road between Norwalk and Fremont, last week, and found it in much better condition than we have supposed. Great care is taken to by those having charge of the trains, to prevent accidents, and consequently the greatest speed is not attained. Early in the spring, when the road shall have become settled and ballasted, we understand the trains are expected to pass over it in three hours." Since this distance is about 28 miles, this suggests that even when improved, the average speed would be about nine miles an hour.

Likewise, J.B. Waring, president of the C&T, in his *1857 Report to Stockholders*, noted that at the time of the merger, on the Southern Division, some very substantial work had been completed, including two arch stone bridges at Wakeman and Huron. The chief deficiencies were a lack of ballast over a "considerable" portion of the roadbed and the use of ties that were "too light and insufficient" for their intended use. The gauge of the Southern Division and its connection, the CC&C, were both the Ohio standard 4 feet, 10 inches, and the track of the CC&C was still the compound strap rail, rather than the TN&C's iron rail. Most importantly, the railroad terminated on the east bank of the Maumee River. The ferry *Ottawa* was used to carry passengers and goods across the Maumee to the connection with the MS&NI. These, though, were mere incremental improvements. The main story post-merger is the extent to which the C&T carried through the construction program begun by the Junction.

As mentioned above, at the time of the merger agreement on July 15, 1853, the Junction had not yet completed any track. The first segment, from Sandusky to Berea, was finished in September of 1853, and the remaining track to the west side of the Cuyahoga was completed and operational by July 1854. According to J.B. Waring's report, it was "imperfectly ballasted, and the slight trestle bridges erected for temporary use over the ravines and streams along its line, required that they should be

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**From Stilts to Steel...** (Continued from page 33)

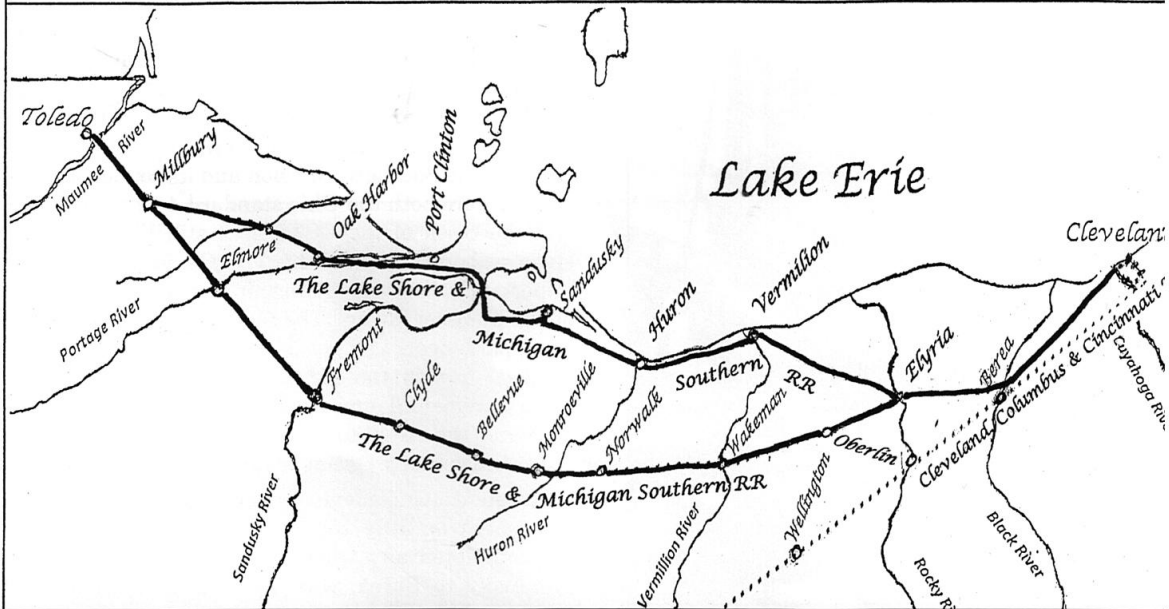
replaced early by safe and substantial structures. The fences along its entire length were yet to be constructed." At the Cuyahoga passengers and goods had to be ferried across the river.

West of Sandusky three major construction projects needed completion: a bridge over Sandusky Bay, a line to Toledo, and an extension across the Maumee at Perrysburg that would intersect the MS&NI at or near Swanton. The bridge over Sandusky Bay was completed in 1855 across the narrowest part of the bay. West of the bay the plan to build a branch to Toledo was dropped. Instead, after passing through Port Clinton and crossing the mouth of the Portage River just to the east, the line turned straight west to pass through Hartford (Oak Harbor). At Hartford it angled west by northwest toward Toledo until it reached Martin, which was directly west of Perrysburg. The line then swung due west and intersected the Southern Division at Millbury Junction, approximately fifteen miles from Toledo. At that point construction stopped on the Perrysburg/Swanton line, although it was not formally suspended. Indeed, in anticipation of future need, the money subscribed by

Perrysburg was used to construct a substantial 780-ft long trestle bridge at Perrysburg. Until construction could continue, though, trains on the Northern Division would operate over Southern Division tracks from Millbury to Toledo. For operational purposes, the Northern Division was complete, and trains began running April 24, 1855, almost two years after the merger.

At this stage the entire railroad was something of a sorry mish-mash and operational nightmare. The Northern Division was 4-foot, 8-1/2-inch gauge, while the gauge on the Southern Division and the CC&C was 4 feet, 10 inches. Hence, each division had to have its own maintenance facility, with the Northern Division at Sandusky and the Southern Division's at Norwalk. The Northern and Southern Divisions used iron wheels, while the double-tracked CC&C was strap rail. At Toledo, passengers had to be ferried across the Maumee to the MS&NI terminal. On the Northern Division ferries were used to shuttle people and goods across the Cuyahoga River, while the trains for the Southern Division entered downtown Cleveland over the CC&C. As a result, most through traffic was routed over the Southern Division.

### FINAL CLEVELAND TO TOLEDO LAYOUT - CIRCA 1872



Subsequent to 1865, three changes were made to the track layout. First, in 1866, the Oberlin to Grafton segment was removed and replaced with a new connection between Oberlin and Elyria. Then, after becoming part of the LS&MS system, emphasis turned to the efficient operation of through trains. Because the northern route had been shorter, it was decided to rebuild the Sandusky Bay bridge and the segment from Sandusky to Graytown. This was accomplished at the end of 1872. Finally, a short segment of track was built to the south of Sandusky, allowing through trains to bypass the congested lakefront. With these changes the northern route became the main line while the Norwalk Branch was relegated to secondary status.



One by one these issues were addressed. In 1855, the MS&NI completed its tracks to the Middle Ground in the Maumee River, and the C&T completed a bridge across the Maumee slightly south of its ferry terminal. On the Middle Ground the C&T shared a terminal with the Toledo, Wabash & Western Railroad (TW&W), while the depot of the MS&NI was located immediately next to it.

Intending to send more of the through traffic entirely over the Northern Division, the ferry *Ottawa* was transferred to Cleveland and put to use in November to carry passengers and goods across the Cuyahoga. However, before the consolidation, the TN&C and the CC&C had signed a traffic agreement, so that the CC&C complained about any diversion of through traffic over the Northern Division. According to the 1857 report to C&T stockholders, a "temporary misunderstanding arose between the two Companies at this point, which, however, was satisfactorily settled by the conclusion of an agreement and lease entered into July 30, 1856, whereby that Company leased to the C. and T. R.R. Co. an undivided half interest in its tracks, depots and property, at and between Cleveland and Grafton, for the term of 20 years, renewable for a like term at the discretion of this Company, for the sum of sixty-five thousand dollars per annum."

The C&T seemed to have gotten good value for its money, since this included not only the tracks and depots on the way to Cleveland but also half ownership of the Cleveland facilities. The C&T now had ownership rights to a continuous line between down-

town Toledo and Cleveland, with no need for ferries. Included in the agreement was the right to connect the Northern Division at Berea to the CC&C, where the lines nearly touched, thereby allowing trains from the Northern Division also to enter downtown Cleveland directly. As an added bonus, to reduce operating costs and confusion, the CC&C agreed that the C&T could, at its convenience, change the track gauge on the CC&C from 4 foot, 10 inches to 4 foot, 9-1/2 inches. This was a compromise which would allow trains of either gauge to operate over the same track, so that soon the Northern and Southern Divisions and the CC&C were all converted to this gauge. This in turn

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CCC&St.L C-63g 7065 leads two coaches south across the main line just to the west of Bay Junction, Sandusky. Photo by Ernst Niebergall. Charles E. Frohman Collection/Hayes Presidential Center.



Here is a rare action shot of one of the 35 J-41 2-6-2 Prairie-type locomotives built by Alco-Brooks between October 1904 and February 1906. The 4708 is heading east past Bay Junction Tower, where the LE&W crossed the main line just south of Sandusky. Photo by Ernst Niebergall. Charles E. Frohman Collection/Hayes Presidential Center.

**From Stilts to Steel...** (Continued from page 35)

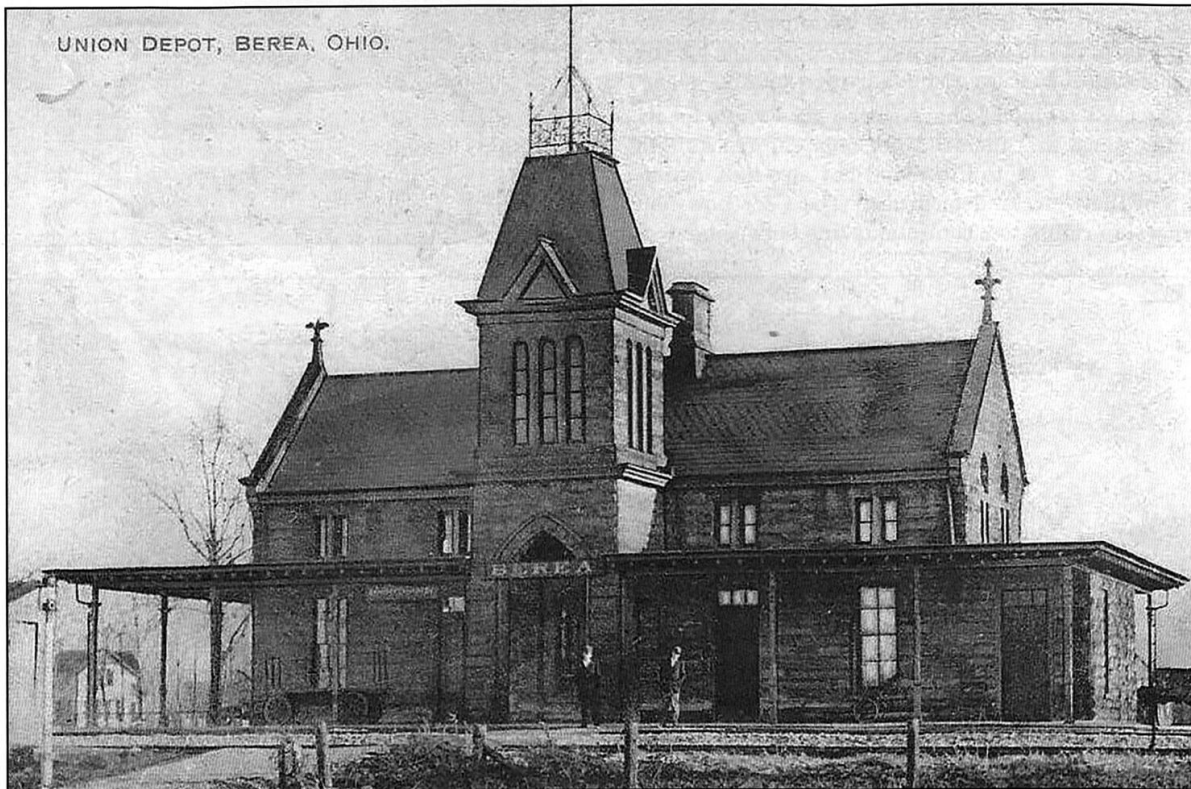
allowed the C&T to consolidate all its maintenance work at Norwalk. Once the agreement was struck, the C&T began replacing the strap rail on the CC&C with T rail. By the time the June 1, 1857 report was written, the majority of the needed ballasting, bridge upgrades, and fencing was completed.

Things looked promising at the beginning of 1857, but demand for the products of the Great Lakes region was declining worldwide. With the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company in August 1857, a financial panic set in, and the economy plunged into a severe two-year downturn. The C&T was hit hard and was forced to cut back on its operations. After failing to strike an agreement to route trains on the Northern Division through Sandusky to Clyde over the MR&LE Railroad, they decided to formally abandon their effort to build to Perrysburg and Swanton. More drastically, they elected to shut down the Port Clinton track west of Sandusky in 1858. These actions embroiled them in lawsuits with the town of

Perrysburg and the stockholders of the Port Clinton Railroad. Perrysburg wanted either to have the extension built or to have its money back. The Port Clinton stockholders wanted the division maintained.

The C&T prevailed in both cases and the line to Perrysburg was tabled. The bridge sat unused until it was finally sold in 1866. On the Port Clinton Railroad service was suspended on December 31, 1858 and the track was physically removed from Sandusky west to Graytown. While Port Clinton suffered badly from the loss of the railroad, Oak Harbor was completely isolated again except for river traffic on the Portage River when water levels permitted.

With the onset of the Civil War, traffic rebounded and the C&T began to return to relative prosperity. No changes were made to the track layout at this time. In 1866, a new Union Station was built in downtown Cleveland, used by the C&T and the other railroads in the city. Also, the eastern terminus of the Southern Division was switched from Grafton to Elyria, ending the use of CC&C to reach downtown Cleveland.



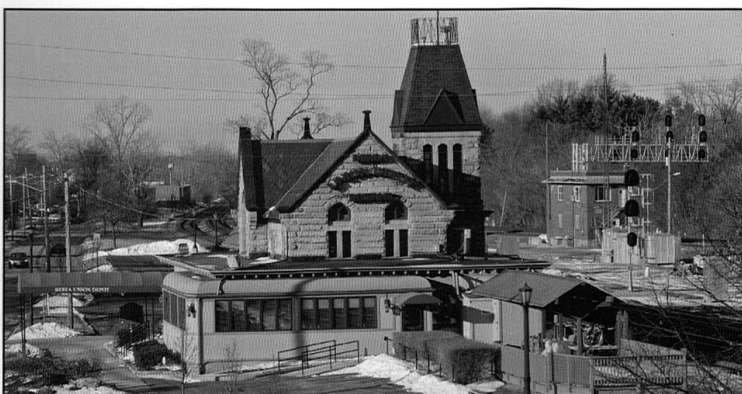
Dedicated May 3, 1871, Berea's new Victorian Gothic Union Depot paid tribute to the sandstone and railroad industries. Berea sandstone, mined in local quarries, was used both for premium grindstones and as dimension stone. Located on the south side of the CC&C (later the CCC&St.L.) at Berea Junction the depot is constructed of massive sandstone blocks from the local quarries. Berea Junction itself could be regarded as the linchpin of the NYC system. Through here passed all the Big Four traffic to and from the Ohio Valley as well as the Water Level Route traffic to and from the Great Lakes. Collection of Joseph Epperson.

## The Lake Shore

In 1867 the C&T was leased for 99 years to the Cleveland, Painesville & Ashtabula Railroad (CP&A), forming a lakeshore line from the eastern Ohio boundary to Toledo. This prompted the CP&A to change its name to the Lake Shore Railway in 1868 to reflect this new reality. On February 11, 1869 the Lake Shore and C&T agreed to merge. On April 6 of the same year the Lake Shore and the MS&NI agreed to merge to form the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern (LS&MS).

Soon after the merger, the directors of the Port Clinton Railroad petitioned the LS&MS directors to rebuild and operate their track, including a new Sandusky Bay bridge. The LS&MS directors agreed, with one modification. A new 3.37 mile main line, from Bay Junction to Sandusky Junction, would be constructed south of Sandusky, allowing through trains to bypass the waterfront. When rebuilding was completed on May 5, 1872, this northern route, being several miles shorter than the Norwalk Branch, gradually became the new main line and the Norwalk Branch fell to secondary status. A second petition from the directors of the Port Clinton Railroad, in 1875, to complete the section from Millbury to Perrysburg was never acted on.

With control of the LS&MS passing to Vanderbilt interests in 1869, these lines became part of the NYC family, where they were operated intact and virtually



Seen from the new Front Street overpass on a sunny but cold March 2014 morning, here is Berea's Union Depot as it now appears, adapted for use as a restaurant. The tracks of NYC's former Cleveland Division from Linndale pass immediately in front of the depot, while the tracks from the lakefront pass beneath the signal gantry. NYC's classic brick BE Tower still stands between the mains. BE marked the western end of the Cleveland Division, with the Toledo and Ohio divisions extending westward. On warmer days, an almost constant stream of rail enthusiasts visit Berea to watch and photograph the frequent passage of both CSX and NS trains, and, when open, the Berea Union Depot Tavern provides satisfactory refreshment for those who are hungry or thirsty. Photo by Joseph Epperson.

unchanged until the end. Today Norfolk Southern trains roll over the main line, while bicyclists roll over the Norwalk Branch roadbed.

Little about the construction of the NYC Lakeshore lines between Toledo and Cleveland was planned or went smoothly. Happenstance ruled this entire endeavor from the first. But few would dispute that the resulting segment of the Water Level Route between Cleveland and Toledo was and is one of the finest pieces of track ever built.

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