

# Locomotives—Made in Lancaster

By M. LUTHER HEISEY

As stated in the constitution of this Society, its object is, among other ramifications, to mark the growth and progress of population, wealth, education, agriculture, arts, manufactures and commerce in the city and county. "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than those of war"; but have we not always hastened to heap encomiums upon our famous sons outstanding in wars or in the forefront of political affairs and statecraft, often forgetting to honor the craftsmen of the shop and forge and record their achievements?

Lancaster has recognized to some extent her geniuses in arts and manufactures. The skill of her craftsmen and the quality of their work have been fully recognized throughout the country in two particular lines of industrial endeavor. I refer to the makers of the famous Lancaster County rifles and the grandfather clocks. But ere the clocks had stopped their "tick-tock," or the billows of smoke had evaporated from the muzzles of her guns, Lancaster County artisans had turned to another field of enterprise to display their skill and to maintain the fame of the county.

## OF SUPERLATIVE QUALITY

It is a fact well known to the older inhabitants of Lancaster that locomotives were made here, but is it as well known, or proudly stated, that these sturdy steeds of steel of local manufacture were those that "*performed the most service with the least cost,*" and that *her craftsmen "were not excelled in this profession in the country,"* and that the *local engines "were equal in finish and superior in speed to any others in the country"?*

While these locomotives were mere pigmies compared to the moguls of the modern era, they had an attractiveness of finish in shining brass, and ornamentation in colorful designs about the cabin and sides, that created a positive pride in the hearts of their operators and crew. To them the names given to these engines were mentioned as a term of endearment. All this sentiment in what seemed a living, pulsating thing of iron was lost when modern improvement and expansion turned from the sentimental to the cold, meaningless tag of a numeral. Casey Jones might have run the old "99," but Jefferies ran our "Breckinridge," and Franciscus ran our "Clearfield"; others

ran the "Wheatland," "Young America," "Uncle Toby," "Fingal's Baby," "Buchanan," "Hiawatha," etc.

### FIRST LOCOMOTIVE IN 1839

We date the years of active manufacturing from 1853 to 1870, but it is a surprising fact to learn that in the very earliest years of railroading on the pioneer Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, a Lancaster firm was called upon to turn out a locomotive. About July 24, 1839, the firm of Pennell and Lehner, located on the northeast corner of Duke and Chestnut Streets, was given an order to complete a first-class locomotive for that line. Search through the newspaper files failed to reveal any further reference as to the actual completion and service of such an engine in that year.

### SELECTION OF THE FACTORY SITE

The first activity of the new manufacturing concern, known as the Lancaster Locomotive Works, was the selection of a suitable site, and that was conditioned upon the location of the railroad tracks. About April 13, 1853, "the lot of John H. Duchman, adjoining William F. Millar's lumber yard, in the northeastern part of this city has been bought for \$3,500, for the purpose of erecting the proposed Locomotive Manufactory."

In January, 1854, the stockholders of the Lancaster Locomotive Engine and Machine Manufacturing Company met and elected the following directors: John Black, David Cockley, John N. Lane, Michael Malone, C. Hager, Benjamin Eshleman, Henry Musselman, James B. Lane, James Black, George T. Lane and Abm. Russel. David Cockley was re-elected president and M. O. Kline, secretary-treasurer. The shop opened on the 15th of February, 1855.

The *Daily Evening Express*, of December 23, 1856, states: "These works are in a highly prosperous condition, and the demand for their Locomotives, being greater than their facilities for manufacturing, they have a bright future before them."

This prosperous condition was reflected in an announcement by the directors that the Works would declare a dividend of five per cent., payable at the Farmers Bank on or after the 2d day of January, 1857, signed by M. O. Kline, treasurer.

At another meeting of the stockholders, held on January 8, 1857, the following persons were elected: Directors, John Black, David Cockley, C. Hager, M. Malone, A. W. Russell, Benj. Eshleman, James B. Lane, Henry Musselman, James Black, G. Taylor Lane; President, James Black; Secretary-treasurer, M. O. Kline.

### BRANDTS—THE FIRST BUILDERS

Eleven or more locomotives were manufactured in the first year of operation—1853-1854. We quote in full the following account for its complete,

detailed description of a locomotive of that era: "These works under the superintendence of Mr. John Brandt, Sen., have just finished [January 24, 1855] for the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, another engine named 'Uncle Toby.' It is a first-class freight engine, combining all the latest improvements with a degree of finish and ornament heretofore, we believe, unequalled in this country.

"The 'Uncle Toby' has 16-inch cylinders, 22-inch stroke and 4 combined drivers of 5-foot diameter.

"The frame is 4x2½ inch wrought iron, with wrought iron wedges and pedestals of the same.

"The boiler is of the wagon top form; the cylinder part of which is 44 inches in diameter, containing 180 copper flues, 1¾ inches inside diameter, having a large proportion of heating surface and steam room, while the steam pipes and parts are of ample dimensions. There are two steam domes, covered with gracefully formed brass jackets, as are also the cylinder and steam chests. Two steam balances and one of Ashcroft's steam gauges, all under the eye and easy control of the engineer. The pumps are all of brass with copper connections, and with capacious air chambers on both sides.

"The tank will hold 1900 gallons of water and two cords of wood, and is beautifully ornamented.

"The valves are linked by what is called the Link Motion, which produces a variable cut-off with a single valve, which is considered one of the most important improvements that has been made in the building of Locomotives for many years, and we believe Mr. Brandt is one of a very limited number of persons who have been able to apply it with entire success. These are a few of the details of the 'Uncle Toby,' and we have no hesitation in saying that it will prove one of the best working engines on the road."

## NAMING THE LOCOMOTIVES

Before placing the locomotives upon the tracks, they must, by custom, bear a name. Here sentiment and current events, following deliberate consideration, governed the choice. Engine No. 162, built in 1853, was called "Minnesota," for it was the year in which statehood was granted to that territory. From the year 1853 until the panic of 1857, John Brandt, Sr., with his sons, Abe and John, Jr., conducted the Works, and manufactured the following twenty-seven engines for the State Railroad, which later came into the control of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. This list,\* brought to our attention by Mr. Leon R. Franks of the Railway Historical Society of Lancaster, mentions:

---

\* The names listed were shrewdly chosen. Attila was a leader of the Huns; Alaric was king of the Visigoths. Several represent characters in English literature. See explanations on page 10.

NAME	NUMBER	DRIVER DIAM.	BUILT	SCRAPPED
Keystone .....	159	60	1853	1877
Conowingo .....	160	60	1853	1884
Utah .....	161	60	1853	1869
Minnesota .....	162	60	1853	1884
Clearfield .....	163	60	1853	1869
Clinton .....	164	60	1853	1876
Atlanta .....	165	66	1853	1884
Wheatland .....	166	66	1853	1869
Shanghai .....	172	66	1854	1869
Jno. Gilpin .....	175	66	1854	1877
Tam o' Shanter .....	176	60	1854	1877
Uncle Toby .....	177	60	1855	1876
Bardolph .....	178	60	1855	1881
Old Foggy .....	179	60	1855	1869
Young America .....	180	60	1855	1881
Attila .....	181	60	1855	1879
Alaric .....	182	66	1856	1875
Tony Weller .....	183	60	1856	1869
My Son Samuel .....	184	60	1856	1882
Yorick .....	185	54	1856	1874
Alert .....	186	60	1856	1884
Corporal Trim .....	187	54	1856	1875
Fingal's Baby .....	188	60	1856	1875
Falstaff .....	189	60	1856	1870
Buchanan .....	193	60	1856	1870
Hiawatha .....	194	66	1857	1882
Breckinridge .....	195	66	1857	1882

Of this long list, possibly the engine that received the greatest distinction was the "Wheatland," because of the fact that this engine was chosen to draw the train upon which the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, eldest son of Queen Victoria, rode when traveling through Pennsylvania, from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, and then on to Baltimore and Washington, in 1860. He actually rode in the cabin of the locomotive, so that he might obtain a better view of the famous Horseshoe Curve and the scenic grandeur of the Alleghenies. Of further interest to Lancastrians is the fact that there awaited in Washington, D. C., our fellow-townsmen, President James Buchanan, with his niece, Miss Harriet Lane, to greet in proper manner the royal party. President Buchanan, personally known to many in the Prince's retinue through his service as Minister to the Court of St. James's, was the one person who could most fittingly entertain the distinguished guests. Thus (and, perhaps, not without design) were the locomotive "Wheatland" and the occupant of the homestead Wheatland brought together.

#### GOING ON THE RAILS

It was big local news when a new locomotive was put on the rails, and the local papers gave due prominence to the event. We reprint several items:

May 30, 1855—The locomotive "Bardolph," built at the Lancaster Locomotive Works [this year], went through Lancaster with 105 loaded cars attached. This is the largest train ever hauled by one engine over the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad. If any further proof were wanting of the ability of the Lancaster Locomotive Works, to furnish engines equal in finish and superior in speed to any other works in the country, it has now been furnished.

December 18, 1855—Another new locomotive from the Lancaster Works, called the "Attila," was placed on the State Road. It is a first-class passenger engine.

February 6, 1856—Annual report of the superintendent of the Columbia Railroad to the Canal Commissioners: "The engines that have performed the most service, with the least cost, are those manufactured under the superintendency of John Brandt, Esq., who, in the opinion of the undersigned, is not excelled in his profession in the country."

February 13, 1856—Left the shop yesterday for the State Road, first-class passenger engine, the "Alaric."

February 13, 1856—A few days since, the freight locomotive, called "Tony Weller," was placed on the State Road.

April 23, 1856—Placed on the State Road, a new powerful first-class freight engine, bearing the name of "Fingal's Baby."

During the summer [1856], the Works expect to turn out an engine a week. They expect to receive a large order for furnishing a number of engines for a road now building in Egypt. [We fear this order was secured later by a locomotive works in Taunton, Mass.]

November 15, 1856—Three new locomotives for the Steubenville and Ohio Railroad are ready to ship, *as soon as the water rises sufficiently in the Ohio River*. First-class passenger engines, weighing twenty-six tons, with 5½ feet drivers; burning bituminous coal. Named:

"James Means," No. 14

"The Cincinnati," No. 15

"The Philadelphia," No. 16

What a paradox! Engines traveling by boat!

November 15, 1856—Another freight locomotive of twenty-seven tons, with 5 feet drivers, turned out, for the Williamsburg and Elmira Railroad.

The Works have already turned out thirty locomotives since they commenced operation. Engines have gone into all parts of the country, have been severely tested on several roads, and in every case they have given entire satisfaction.

November 28, 1856—Another locomotive turned out, for the Catawissa and Williamsport Railroad. It is a first-class freight engine of twenty-six tons. This company now turns out two engines a month.

January 13, 1857—A splendid locomotive, named the "John C. Breckinridge," was turned out of the Lancaster Locomotive Works this morning. It is to run the Express Train on the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, and is pronounced to be one of the handsomest engines ever run upon the road. It is a first-class passenger, coal-burning locomotive.

April 3, 1857—Built for the Catawissa Railroad, the "M. L. Hallowell," a large freight engine. Its beauty of finish and splendid mechanism were greatly admired by the attaches of the Pennsylvania Railroad, said the *Harrisburg Telegraph*.

#### ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

On April 6, 1857, between Downingtown and Oakland, on the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, near Valley Creek bridge, the locomotive "Governor" stalled, and a freight train, drawn by the locomotive "James Buchanan," crashed into it. One fireman, a Mr. Houston, Gap, Pa., son of Jos. H. Houston, was killed. (Oakland was a station four miles east of Downingtown.)

#### THE NORRIS COMPANY

From 1863 until October, 1868, the Norris brothers, Edward and James, secured the Works and conducted a prosperous business. They built locomotives for the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Millholland camel-back types for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and in 1865 some for the Western Pacific Railroad, which were shipped by way of Cape Horn. In 1869, a Mr. Tyng re-opened the Works, but after a year's operation, work was discontinued. The plant in 1874 passed into the hands of the Lancaster Manufacturing Company, which made railroad supplies but not locomotives.

The Norris brothers were successful, and on September 22, 1864, "Our enterprising friend, Edward S. Norris, Esq., of the Lancaster Locomotive Works, finding the buildings too small for convenience and accommodations, is erecting several fine buildings in addition. One has already been erected for the driving wheels, and there is now in process of erection one for a hammer shop, when the Works will be enabled to do their own forgings." From the newspaper of March 1, 1865, "We learn that Mr. William Miller has sold the Fulton Iron Works, which are in close proximity to the Norris Locomotive Works, to the Messrs. Norris, for the sum of \$18,000. This will enable the Messrs. Norris to enlarge their premises to such an extent as to make their Locomotive Works one of the most extensive establishments in the country."

In 1866, the Works covered six acres, and consisted of a group of buildings and departments as follows, with Frederick C. Curie, superintendent:

Finishing Shop, facing on Plum Street, in close proximity the Blacksmiths' Shop, with nine fires, and also a Tank Shop.

**Erecting Shop, James Devine, foreman; Gustave Curie, foreman of the lathes.**

**Foundry, Benjamin Strickler, foreman; a large Blacksmith Shop adjoins the Erecting Shop, and is fitted with seventeen fires; Mr. A. Brown, foreman.**

**The Forge is of six tons capacity.**

**The Boiler Shop, Mr. Deininger, foreman.**

**The Carpenters' Shop, William Harding, foreman.**

**The Pattern Shop, Henry Barclay, foreman.**

**The Designing Room.**

**The Paint Shop.**

**We cite the completion of three Norris engines:**

**September 22, 1864—Another very fine, large engine, with 4½ feet drivers, calculated for passenger or freight trains, was shipped on Friday [16th] from the Lancaster Locomotive Works, under the supervision of our worthy and estimable friend, Mr. F. C. Curie, superintendent of the Works. The engine is named "The Wasp," and was manufactured for the Reading and Columbia Railroad.**

**July 26, 1865—On Tuesday, 11th inst., and Tuesday last [25th], two handsome, large engines were turned out, belonging to a series of twelve now under construction for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, named, respectively, "La Crosse," and the "Kenosha," capacity of drawing 160 loaded cars. They are ten-wheelers, with six 4 feet drivers, cylinder 18 by 22; grade of track 4 feet 8½ inches. On Tuesday next [August 1], the third of the series will be turned out.**

**The Norrises were now employing four hundred hands, and were building locomotives at the rate of one each week.**

**June 21, 1866—A passenger engine, with elegant decorations, completed for the Allegheny Valley Railroad. It has 16½ inch by 22 inch cylinder, and 5 feet driving wheels. It is a four wheel connected and a truck. It will burn bituminous coal. Theodore Moffit, the firm's traveling engineer, will accompany and test the engine.**

**Back of the successful operation of any enterprise lies a reason. There was another Norris brother—Septimus—who, it appears, was not only a practical mechanic, but a thorough technician, having a scientific knowledge of machine and structural work. His handbook is highly technical, and deals in tables, weights, measures, tensile qualities, etc., for constructional work. Two books are in the Library of Congress. TJ607 N85. Septimus Norris' Handbook for Locomotive Engineers and Machinists. Phila., H. C. Baird, 1852, 302 pp., front., illus., pl., 19½ cm. TJ640 N85. Septimus Norris' Patent Guide Wheel Truck for Locomotives. Phila., E. Ketterlinus, printer, 1860, 8 pp., folded diagrams, 24½ cm.**

## MARCHING FOR MCCLELLAN

When not building locomotives, the employees of the Norris Locomotive Works had time for politics. That was their recreation. We print here an interesting bit of correspondence between their secretary and former President James Buchanan.

Rooms of the Democratic Club,  
Lancaster Locomotive Works,  
Lancaster, October 11, 1864.

To the Hon. James Buchanan:

Dear Sir: The Democrat Club of the Lancaster Locomotive Works, sensible of your liberality and sympathy with its efforts in the gift of the very fine old hickory pole from Wheatland, desires to express its gratitude and thanks for same. Hoping ever to merit the good opinions of our Party, I am,

Respectfully,

Your Obt. Ser't,  
Septimus E. Norris,  
Corresponding secretary.

Wheatland, October 15, 1864.

My dear Sir: I have received yours of the 11th instant communicating the thanks of the Democratic Club of the Lancaster Locomotive Works, for the hickory pole which I presented them. I prize this highly as a token of their regard, and trust that they may long continue to rally round it as an emblem of Democratic principles.

Yours, Very Respectfully,

James Buchanan.

Septimus E. Norris, Esq.,  
Corresponding secretary.

The Club marched in the parade on Saturday, October 6, 1864, in this formation:

Assistant Marshall,  
Octavus J. Norris, mounted.  
Carriage, containing Officers of the  
Locomotive Works Club  
Marshall, F. C. Curie, mounted  
Foot Marshall, James Lane

Assistants—Luke Meekins, Harry McManus, Jeremiah O'Toole, Henry  
Barclay, Louis Abry, Lewis Hess, Bernard Fitzpatrick, Neal  
McGrady, John Clare, David Russell.

The Locomotive Works Club  
Conestoga Band



## LOCAL ENGINEERS

To give some of the experiences of the men who actually drove these locomotives will add color to the story. To tell of two such engineers will give a picture of their times and labors.

John Franciscus gained his first experience in mechanics in the smith shop of John Brandt at Parkesburg, later becoming master mechanic there. In 1840, he became a fireman on the railroad, and eventually an engineer of a locomotive on the old State Road. As a thriller, he ran the "lightning" train from Philadelphia to Dillerville in two hours and five minutes—an astounding feat for that day. He was the trusted engineer of the "Clearfield," one of the fastest locomotives of the line. His fireman, William F. Lockard, later became a high official of the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1850, Mr. Franciscus was employed by the New York and Erie Railroad, and later was engineer at the Lancaster water works. From 1861 to the time of his death in 1886, he conducted the Conestoga House at 345 South Queen Street.

When C. Augustus Jefferies died in 1913 (December 13) at the age of ninety-one years, America's oldest engineer and oldest pensioner of the Pennsylvania Railroad passed from our midst. He started as a fireman on the state-owned Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad in 1846, and then years later became an engineer. When the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, in 1857, took over the Columbia and Philadelphia line, it acquired Mr. Jefferies also, and he continued to serve as engineer until 1883, when he was made a signal repairman. He delighted in recalling his experiences in all kinds of weather, summer's heat and winter's snow, in the early days of railroading, when engines had no cabins, when there were no block systems, even when "wood burners" chugged along.

Mr. Jefferies possessed a large picture in water colors of the John C. Breckinridge locomotive, and how he delighted to display it before his friends! We can still hear him, with pride in his voice, describe it: "There she is, just as she looked the day she came from the shops" [January, 1857].

Mr. Jefferies, with other engineers, in the early days, received \$2.00 a day as pay, which was increased slowly as the years passed. It is interesting as a sidelight to read in the *Columbia Weekly Courant*, of May 31, 1871, the appreciation of the character of the work and the men essential for the exacting and responsible position of engineer:

"His position is one of the most responsible, terrible and exacting that man ever filled. He must combine muscle, mind, endurance, courage and that kind of watchfulness, which, more than all, racks both body and mind. Yet for all these qualities, the locomotive engineer receives but a pittance. His courage is not appreciated. His enduring zeal has never been fully understood by travelers, and the consuming taxation levied on all his powers, is a drain on life which early unfits him for self-support. Now in all candor, these men should be better paid, or railroad corporations should devise some

plan to pension such employees when they are disabled for service. The subject is one eminently worthy of consideration by railroad men."

Thos. Whitson, Esq., when a boy, lived near Christiana, and told how he and the other boys in the neighborhood were entranced as the slick, new locomotives traveled by in all their splendor and speed. In closing, we will, because of their fitness, use the words of Mr. Whitson's farewell to the old engines:

"The thing which wrenched my heart most of all was to see those gilded letters come off of those beautiful caparisoned engines and the cold and pitiless business-like figures placed there instead. But we boys, one and all, gave them a long, lingering and tender farewell as they dashed around the curve and up along the dam for the last time bearing their christened names; we said farewell to 'Shanghai,' to 'Tam o' Shanter,' and 'John Gilpin,' too; farewell to 'Fingal's Baby,' to 'Uncle Toby,' and to 'Hiawatha'; farewell to 'Keystone,' to 'Utah,' and to 'Wheatland; a long farewell to all your greatness, and from the full meridian of your politics, you hasten now to business. But in the visions of my imagination I see you yet, dashing past in form as palpable as ever."



#### NAMES GIVEN TO SOME LANCASTER LOCOMOTIVES AND THE SOURCE FROM WHENCE TAKEN.

**JOHN GILPIN**—A citizen of London, whose adventures are found in Cowper's humorous ballad, "John Gilpin's Ride."

**TAM O' SHANTER**—A drunken farmer, hero of a poem by Robert Burns.

**UNCLE TOBY**—A retired captain, hero of Sterne's novel, "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy."

**BARDOLPH**—Corporal of Captain Sir John Falstaff in Shakespeare's "Henry IV" and in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." In "Henry V" he is promoted to lieutenant. Bardolph is a low-bred, drunken swaggerer.

**OLD FOGY**—Character in Michael Angelo Titmarsh's "Our Street." Titmarsh was Thackeray's pseudonym.

**ATTILA**—Leader of the Huns.

**ALARIC**—King of the Visigoths.

**TONY WELLER**—A character in Dicken's "Pickwick Papers;" he is a fat, broad-brimmed, great-coated, many-waistcoated, mottled-face English stage coachman.

**MY SON SAMUEL**—The son of Tony Weller.

**YORICK**—King's jester; character in Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

**CORPORAL TRIM**—Uncle Toby's attendant.

**FINGAL'S BABY**—Fingal was an Irish hero.

**FALSTAFF**—A character in Shakespeare's "The Merry Wives of Windsor."