

# The Reading and Columbia Railroad

John D. Denney, Jr.

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One hundred years ago, on March 15, 1864, the first train ran from Columbia to Reading over the newly-built Reading and Columbia Railroad. At its height, the world of the Reading and Columbia extended from Sinking Springs on the North to Columbia on the South and from Chickies and Mt. Hope on the West to Lancaster and Quarryville on the East. The famous "camelback" locomotives of the Philadelphia and Reading, manned mostly by Pennsylvania-German crews, steamed importantly back and forth over the busy little system.

The author's earliest railroad recollections are of the R. & C. as its location in Columbia made it practically his own back yard railroad. As a very small boy, watching from his home the arrival of the eight o'clock evening passenger train, was always an event before bed time. Later, as a grade school boy, he was probably one of the last passengers on the Reading's "mixed" passenger and freight train between Columbia and Cordelia, which was the stop nearest to the swimming pool at Irondale. During his college vacations, he worked as a freight clerk at the Columbia and Lancaster freight stations, so the author has a valid claim to being a former R. & C. man.

Today, the whistle of the "camelback" has given way to the sound of the diesel horn, but as an important part of the Reading Company, the Reading and Columbia Branch still serves an important and growing section of Lancaster County.

May its signals always be green!

The author wishes to acknowledge the generous help of George Heiges and Jack W. W. Loose, both of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Mr. Heiges supplied photos, data and other assistance. Mr. Loose loaned his valuable files of the **Columbia Spy** from his portion of the Wisler collection for the use of the author.

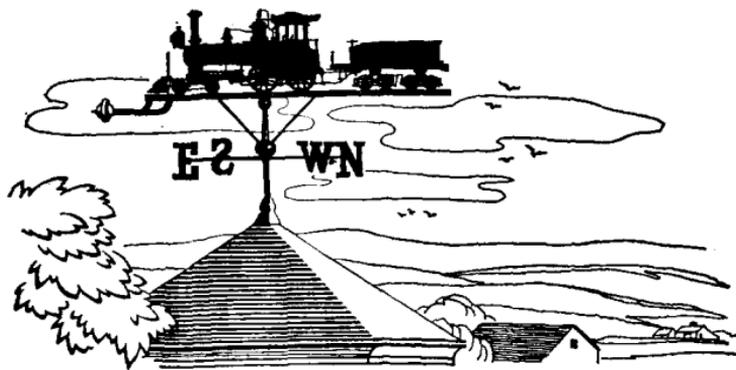
Marlin C. Holland, of Ardentown, Delaware, kindly supplied photos taken by his late father, Ralph Holland, who was one time agent at Millway. Mrs. Elsie Fry of Lancaster and Mrs. Breneman, both natives of Lancaster Junction, supplied photos and data on that area.

Benjamin Rohrer, retired Reading agent at Lancaster; Walter M. Sherer, retired Reading agent at Manheim; E. K. Shollenberger, retired R. & C. operator and dispatcher; as well as R. H. Elder, advertising agent of the Reading Company and B. Howarth, secretary and treasurer of the Reading; and Harvey McKinne, present Reading agent at Lancaster, supplied photos as well as other pertinent information.

Railroad historians, F. Stewart Graham of Bennington, Vt., and George M. Hart ("Mr. Reading") of George School, Pa., supplied much needed data on locomotives and other technical information. Earl Strickler of Columbia loaned negatives from his portion of the Wisler collection.

Mrs. Charles Pike of Coatesville supplied photos of Ephrata when her father, Charles Jones, was agent there. Mrs. Albert Heistand of Salunga, Pa., supplied information and a photo of the legendary "Spook House." Rodney C. Good of the West Hempfield Township Lions' Club supplied details on the Lions' Club excursions. Mrs. Ruth Macley of Manheim; Robert Mearig of Lititz; and Samuel Stape of Lancaster also kindly assisted the writer in his search for information on the R. & C. The newspaper files of both the Berks County Historical Society and the Lancaster County Historical Society were a valuable source of information.

If the author has forgotten anyone, it is accidental. Without the wonderful help of all of those who gave so generously of their time and those who so patiently answered the author's many questions, compiling the story of the Reading and Columbia would have been impossible.



## THE BEGINNING OF THE READING AND COLUMBIA

The development of transportation in Pennsylvania, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had progressed to the point that there were two main arteries of railroad transport between the cities of Philadelphia and Harrisburg. One line passed through Lancaster while the other route followed the Schuylkill River and the Lebanon Valley by way of Reading. The communities along these two important east to west lines of transportation quickly became centers of commerce and industry.

However, in all the rather vast area of Pennsylvania between the Delaware River at Philadelphia and the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg, there were not any railroads running from north to south through the state. Consequently, the growth of northern Lancaster County was seriously handicapped. Communities such as Manheim, Lititz and Ephrata were urgently in need of better transportation facilities. It was for this reason, primarily, that the Reading and Columbia Railroad came into being.

Shortly after 1850, the idea for a railroad between Columbia and Reading, that would link Lancaster and Berks Counties, began to take form. Besides hauling the agricultural products of the area, a railroad from Reading, on the Schuylkill, to Columbia, on the Susquehanna, would provide an outlet for anthracite coal from the coal regions to tidewater by trans-shipment to the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal at Columbia. It was even envisioned that such a railroad would form a link in a new route for passenger travel between New York, Allentown and cities as far south as Baltimore and Washington.

If anyone crystallized the need for a railroad through northern Lancaster County, it was Joseph Konigmacher. Born in the town of Ephrata in 1805, Konigmacher had by 1846 opened the Ephrata Mountain Springs Hotel, which soon became a popular and fashionable resort for vacationists from New York, Philadelphia and other eastern cities. Active in state politics, Joseph Konigmacher was one of the first supporters of the movement to build a railroad between Columbia and Reading and it was through his efforts that the Reading and Columbia Railroad was located to pass through Ephrata.

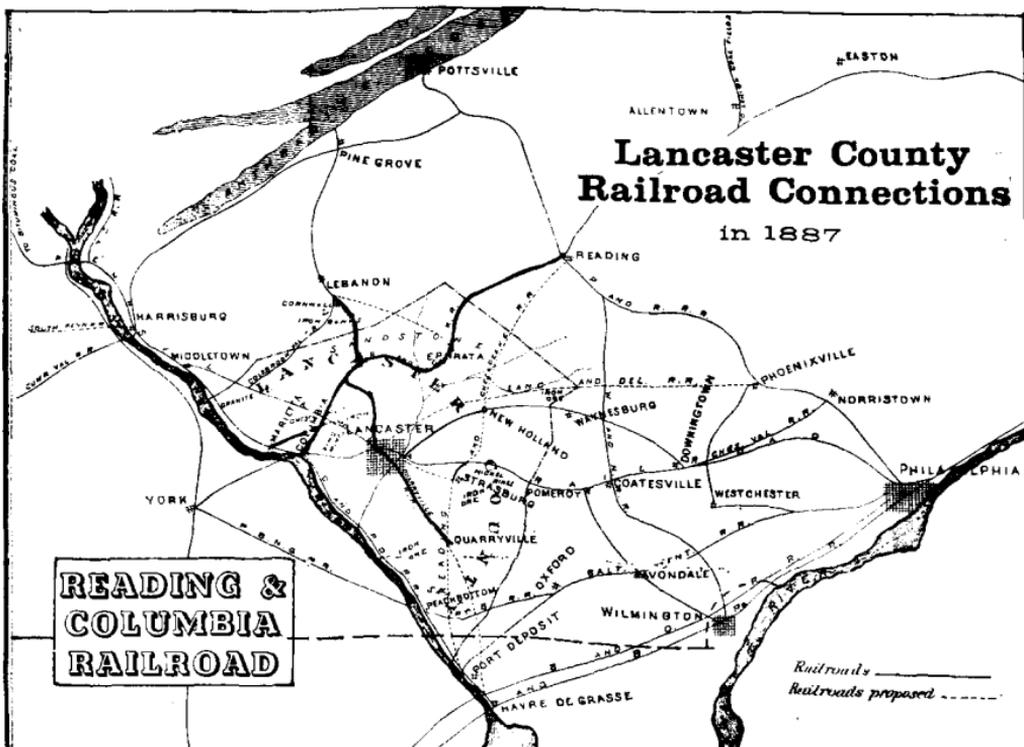
Sufficient interest in a railroad between Reading and Columbia had been generated by 1857, that a group of influential citizens from Lancaster and Berks Counties secured the passage of a charter creating the Reading and Columbia Railroad, which was signed by Governor James Pollock on May 19, 1857. The legislation authorized commissioners for the railroad to open books and to receive subscriptions to the capital stock of the company.

The charter fixed the capital stock of the Reading and Columbia Railroad at \$600,000. Even at this early stage, it was evident that the promoters of the project had rather ambitious plans. Besides authorizing the company to build a railroad from any point in the city of Reading to the east

end of the Columbia Bridge in the borough of Columbia, the company was also enabled under its charter to purchase the Columbia Bridge for its own use, if it so desired. This would enable the railroad to build across the Susquehanna and on to York, Baltimore and Washington. It was further required that the construction of the line be started within two years and the project be completed within ten years from the passage of the act.

Although enthusiasm ran high, the sale of the stock of the Reading and Columbia did not go as had been anticipated. Even after a mass meeting on June 24, 1857, in the old town hall in Columbia, where C. S. Kauffman and William Patton urged citizens to buy shares in the project, only subscriptions to the amount of \$25,000 were received. The sale of stock languished through 1857 and 1858 and it was necessary to obtain a supplemental act from the Legislature extending the time for commencing and completing the railroad for a period of five years beyond that originally set.

Finally in 1859, renewed interest in the railroad was aroused and enough stock was sold to warrant the formal organization of the company. A stockholders' meeting was held on November 2, 1859 at the hotel of John M. Gross in Ephrata, at which Jacob Konigmacher was elected the first president of the Reading and Columbia Railroad. Another meeting followed at John Michael's Hotel in Lancaster on November 21, 1859 at which Peter Martin was elected secretary, Samuel Shoch, treasurer, and M. E. Lyons was appointed chief engineer for the new railroad.



M. Evelyn Lyons was well qualified for his task of running the survey and planning the location of the Reading and Columbia Railroad. A native of Ireland, he had lived in Reading and had been the first associate engineer for the Lebanon Valley Railroad between Reading and Harrisburg and had also been the chief engineer for the East Pennsylvania Railroad between Reading and Allentown.

Lyons had by December of 1860 completed the survey and location of the route for the railroad. He decided upon Sinking Springs, where a connection could be made with the Lebanon Valley Railroad, as the starting point and ran the line by way of Black Horse Tavern (later Reinholds), Stevens, Ephrata, Lititz, Manheim and Landisville to Columbia, a distance of 39.8 miles.

When the railroad was being surveyed, there was considerable agitation to build the line through Adamstown, but this would have necessitated heavy grades. Because of the easier climb, the route by way of Black Horse Tavern or Reinholds finally won out.

The change of the northern terminus of the line from Reading to Sinking Springs required a revision of the company's charter which was approved on May 1, 1861. This supplement to the charter also gave the company the right to build branches to Lancaster and to a connection with the Cornwall Railroad near Cornwall.

The gathering clouds of war had made financing of the project increasingly difficult. Finally, Caleb S. Maltby and William G. Case of the iron manufacturing firm of Maltby and Case of Columbia, Penna., proposed that if \$600,000 worth of stock were sold, they would invest in an additional \$100,000 of stock and take the bonds of the company for any amount above that sum that would be required to complete the railroad.

As it developed, it was practically impossible to sell a sufficient number of shares of the capital stock, so in 1862 a first mortgage was placed upon the property to secure the payment of an issue of \$650,000's worth of 7% bonds. Again in 1864, a second mortgage had to be placed to cover \$350,000 of bonds required to finance the completion of the project. The majority of the bonds, in both cases were taken by the contractors in payment for their work.

## BUILDING THE "MAIN LINE"

A contract was awarded on February 25, 1861 to the firm of Moore, Balch, Danforth and Company, who agreed, for the sum of \$200,000 in cash and \$400,000 in capital stock of the company, to grade the Reading and Columbia, build the masonry and superstructure and prepare the line for track from Sinking Springs to Columbia. Although the major construction was started at the Columbia end of the line, the actual ground breaking was done by the contractors on March 28, 1861 at a gap in the South Mountains about four miles south of Sinking Springs, Penna.

Fate then struck the project a severe blow. Joseph Konigmacher, the first president of the R. & C. and the railroad's staunchest supporter, died

suddenly in Lancaster on April 4, 1861. Eight days later, the Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumpter — and the nation went to war.

William G. Case assumed the helm of the R. & C. on April 15, 1861. The war immediately caused a shortage of labor and materials, but in the middle of May of 1861, the actual work of grading a right of way for the line was started near the present Lancaster County community of Ironville. The Reading and Columbia, at last, was under construction.

The ridge known as Chestnut Hill located immediately to the north-east of Columbia presented no easy task to the railroad builders of the Civil War period. Leaving Columbia in the Susquehanna River valley, it required almost a complete horse shoe curve and a long grade to reach the deep cut at Ironville, the summit of Chestnut Hill. The climb out of Columbia even to this day remains a formidable task for the most modern diesel locomotives.

M. E. Lyons, the chief engineer who first surveyed the railroad, took a leave of absence in June of 1861 and was replaced by Coleman P. Fisher. Lyons never returned to the R. & C. but went to Mexico to become the chief engineer for the Mexican Railroad. While surveying with his party between Mexico City and Vera Cruz, he was severely wounded by guerrilla outlaws and died several months later in the city of Vera Cruz.

Construction had progressed, more or less spasmodically, that by the end of 1861, there was a right of way in various stages of completion from Columbia as far north as Ephrata, but the company was having difficulties. There had been disagreements with the contractors and in August it had been necessary, for lack of cash, to pay the sub-contractors in script, which was issued in one, two and five dollar denominations. Still, the project went on and in November of 1861, chief engineer Fisher was ordered to complete the survey and final location of the remainder of the line from Ephrata to Sinking Springs.

Then, in March of 1862, an event occurred which had the potential of giving the R. & C. national prominence. The Confederate ironclad, "Merrimac," had attacked Union shipping in Hampton Roads, Virginia with disastrous results and a case of the jitters seized the North. Fleets of Southern iron-clads were pictured coming up every river. Even worse was the realization that the vital railroad linking New York and Philadelphia with Baltimore and Washington was within shelling range of vessels in the Chesapeake Bay or on the Delaware River. Newspaper editors in northern cities pictured Rebel iron-clads taking pot-shots at vital supply trains running close to the shores of the Delaware and the Chesapeake between Philadelphia and Baltimore.

National attention suddenly focused on the need for an improved railroad route between New York and Washington and one that would be less vulnerable to attack. A Congressional committee met to solve the problem, which appeared to have two solutions. One was an entirely new "military" railroad, built at government expense, between New York and Washington and the other solution was what the representatives of the Reading and Columbia proposed when they arrived in the halls of Congress armed with their maps and plans.

What the R. & C. suggested, although it did have a lot of "if's," did sound practical. There was already in operation a 133-mile railroad route from Jersey City to Sinking Springs, by way of Allentown and Reading. If the 38-mile link was completed from Sinking Springs to Columbia and if a link were built from a point on the Northern Central north of Baltimore to the B. & O.'s Washington line at Relay, Maryland, there would be a continuous 272-mile railroad line between the New York City area and Washington. The route would cross the Susquehanna River at Columbia and use the already existing rails of the Wrightsville and York Railroad and the Northern Central to reach Baltimore.

The "Allentown Route", or the "Reading and Columbia Short Route", as its promoters liked to call it, was only thirty miles longer than the "direct" route by way of Philadelphia, which involved several transfer points, and R. & C. officials somewhat curiously deduced that the time involved at one transfer point was equal to thirty miles of travel so their calculations made it appear that the quickest and best route from New York to Washington was by way of Allentown and the Reading and Columbia and its connections. If the Federal government would guarantee the bonds of the Reading and Columbia, the railroad could be quickly financed and the whole project completed within ninety days.

But the proposed subsidy for the Reading and Columbia seems to have languished and finally died without getting out of Congressional committee. Then, too, the appearance of the "Monitor," and other Union iron-clads greatly eased the fears of northern cities along the coast line, but the Reading and Columbia continued to hold onto its hope of becoming part of, what it then chose to call, a new "direct" route between New York and Washington.

There was now a desire to complete the R. & C. as soon as possible. A contract was awarded to Caleb S. Maltby in April of 1862 for grading the remainder of the line from Ephrata to Sinking Springs. The first rails were laid under the direction of A. S. Green and Thomas McGovern on Monday morning, May 19, 1862, near Mill Street in Columbia, where the R. & C. connected with the Pennsylvania Railroad's line to Lancaster.

The Columbia Mission Sunday School held their annual picnic at Heise's Woods on Chestnut Hill, near Columbia, on Wednesday, July 16, 1862. As a special treat for the children, the railroad contractors fitted up seats on the flat cars of the tie train and took the party up to the woods, which was about a mile and a half from town, over the newly laid railroad. This was, indeed, the first excursion over the Reading and Columbia and, in all probability, the most decorous. No one even fell off the cars!

Coleman Fisher resigned as chief engineer of the R. & C in October of 1862 and was replaced by John E. Sheaff of Lancaster. Railroad officials made an inspection trip from Columbia to Manheim on December 3, 1862, but in a borrowed Pennsylvania Railroad coach. The Reading and Columbia's brand new coach, which was to have been used for the occasion, had been destroyed by fire several weeks previously.

Finally, came the long awaited. The first regular train service over the Reading and Columbia commenced on Monday, January 5, 1863, with two trains in each direction between Columbia and Manheim. A Mr. E.

Hershey was the first passenger conductor on the line. The stations between Columbia and Manheim were Kauffman's, Silver Spring, P.R.R. Crossing, Spook House, Sellers' Mill and then Manheim.

The Reading and Columbia was probably the only railroad in the country to have a station stop named "Spook House." A short distance north of Landisville, there was a small house along the tracks that was supposedly haunted. The house was vacant for many years and one story was that one night some sheep found their way into the vacant building. Their bleating gave rise to the theory that the building was haunted. The quaint building with its thatched roof was finally torn down about 1899, but the legend of the "Spook House" remained. Although "Spook House" and "Sellers' Mill" are long gone from Reading timetables, there is still today a "Spooky Nook" road at the site of what was once "Spook House."

Caleb Maltby had agreed to have the Reading and Columbia completed by January 1, 1863, but with the labor shortage caused by the Civil War and other problems that beset the railroad, he had to ask for three extensions of his contract. During February of 1863, there was a breakdown at the Columbia Rolling Mill, which supplied the rails for the project, and track laying had to be suspended about three quarters of a mile south of Lititz. After about a month's delay, production resumed at the mill and the track layers reached Lititz in time for the Lititz Male Seminary to run an excursion to Columbia on April 6, 1863.

The Columbia Bank and Bridge Company had subscribed to stock in the R. & C. in the hopes that the railroad would buy the bridge across the Susquehanna to extend its line southward. Then came the sudden Confederate thrust into Pennsylvania. Fortifications were erected in Wrightsville under the direction of John A. Sheaff, the R. & C.'s chief engineer, but on June 28, 1863, the Columbia Bridge was burned to prevent the Southern army from entering Lancaster County. The bridge company not only lost its bridge, but a potential purchaser of the structure as well. The Reading and Columbia was not interested in the smoldering ruins that lay in the Susquehanna.

Following the opening of the Ephrata Mountain Springs Hotel for the season, regular train service was commenced between Columbia and Ephrata on June 29, 1863, but the event was overshadowed by the terrible conflict which was about to erupt at Gettysburg. A few days before the great battle, the R. & C. had advertised that an excursion would be run to Lititz on the Fourth of July of 1863, but because of the crisis, no record has been found to indicate that the trip was ever run.

Trains began running as far as Reinholds on November 6, 1863, but the digging of the deep cut through the South Mountain, about four miles south of Sinking Springs, again slowed the progress of the line. The cut, a half mile long and ninety feet deep, had been almost completed when a landslide occurred delaying the opening of the railroad for several more months.

The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, which owned the Lebanon Valley Railroad, began, in the meantime, to lay a third track to accommodate the R. & C. trains between Sinking Springs and Reading. The P.&R. station was then located at Seventh and Chestnut Street in Reading.

# READING AND COLUMBIA RAILROAD. TIME TABLE NO. 1.

On and after Monday, January 5, 1863, Trains will run on this Road as follows:

TRAINS SOUTH.		STATIONS.	TRAINS NORTH.	
PASSENGER.	ACCOMMOD'N.		ACCOMMOD'N.	PASSENGER.
LEAVE 6,40 A.M.	LEAVE 4,20 P.M.	<b>MANHEIM,</b>	ARR. 9,40	ARR. 7,50 P. M.
6,55	4,30	SELLERS' MILL,	9,30	7,35
7,05	4,45	SPOOK HOUSE,	9,15	7,27
7,10	4,50	P. R. R. CROSSING,	9,10	7,22
7,18	5,05	SILVER SPRING,	8,55	7,15
7,30	5,20	KAUFFMAN'S,	8,40	7,05
ARR. 7,50	ARR. 6,00	<b>COLUMBIA.</b>	LEAVE 8,00 A.M.	LEAVE 6,40 P.M.

ROBERT CRANE, Superintendent.

First Reading & Columbia Timetable — January 5, 1863  
(Courtesy of George Heiges, Lancaster, Pa.)

During this time, the Philadelphia and Reading was extending its system by the building of branches and through the purchase of existing independent lines. W. G. Case, the president of the R. & C. and Caleb S. Maltby, the contractor who built the major portion of the road, were the owners of the majority of the capital stock of the company. Desirous of liquidating their holdings, they offered their stock to the Philadelphia and Reading and it was purchased by that company on March 14, 1864. Although after that date, the Philadelphia and Reading controlled it through stock ownership, the Reading and Columbia Railroad retained its corporate identity for many years.

"The R. & C. is finally finished" announced the newspapers and the long awaited became reality. A special train carrying officials and invited guests made the first trip from Columbia to Reading on Tuesday, March 15, 1864. A morning train from Reading and an afternoon train from Columbia inaugurated the first regular passenger train schedule between Columbia and Reading on April 1, 1864. The new rail link between Lancaster and Berks County, needless to say, quickly became a popular route of travel.

## THE "GRAND" EXCURSION

A century ago, the holiday known as Whit Monday was still being observed in Lancaster County, but it had fallen into disrepute. The **Columbia Spy** observed, "Whit Monday will be religiously observed in Lancaster County and elsewhere by the consumption of ginger bread, pop, peanuts, whiskey, etc., and will otherwise be observed by primitive amusements including the flying horses and festive dances."

So, during the pre-dawn hours on Whit Monday, May 25, 1863, the R. & C. dispatched from Columbia, accompanied by the Columbia Band and Keiffer's Orchestra, an eleven car special to Cocalico, north of Ephrata, to bring Whit Monday excursionists from northern Lancaster County to Columbia, where they would take the morning Pennsylvania Railroad train to Lancaster for the festivities. The holiday was wild and unruly as attested by a report in the Lancaster paper commenting that, "Returning from Lancaster, a skirmish started on the Pennsylvania cars below Mountville and lasted until the train arrived at Columbia."

The rails had been hardly spiked to the freshly-laid ties in July of 1862, when the Columbia Mission Sunday School took to flat cars for a hastily improvised trip to Heise's Woods, but it was the forerunner of bigger and better excursions to come. The completion of each section of the Reading and Columbia called for a celebration in the form of an excursion or at least an inspection trip by members of the press.

Mr. Rambo, the editor of the **Columbia Spy**, decided to take a better look at the progress of the R. & C. and went as a guest on a special to Ephrata on Sunday, July 25, 1863. "We left Blacks' Hotel at 8:15 A.M., and arriving at the P.R.R. crossing (Landisville), we stopped a few minutes and had a view of the new passenger depot now in the course of erection." The train next made a stop at Lititz where apparently a drink from the Lititz Springs wasn't enough to get the cinders out of the editor's throat.

Looking east towards the Reading's famous "Main Station," at Reading, about sixty years ago. Trains from Lancaster and Columbia used tracks in foreground to covered train shed on right of picture, which was the southwest platform or "R&C" side of the station.

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)



# READING & COLUMBIA RAIL ROAD.

LANCASTER BRANCH.

TIME TABLE No. 7.

Takes Effect Monday, May 4th, 1874.

A. M.	P. M.	92	Philadelphia.....	100	5.40	P. M.	P. M.
9 15	3 40				12 40	9 10	8 15
A. M.	P. M.	A. M.			2 00	P. M.	
9 00	4 30	88	Pottsville.....	77	12 00	7 40	
A. M.	P. M.	A. M.			5.40	P. M.	P. M.
8 45	4 30	5 60	Allentown.....	78	12 10	7 55	5 30
A. M.	P. M.	A. M.			P. M.	P. M.	
8 45	3 50	5 25	Harrisburg.....	84	1 20	8 30	

Down Trains Going South.

Up Trains Going North.

5	7	8	3	1	STATIONS.	2	4	8	6	5
A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	READING.....	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.
11 40	6 15	7 40	6	6	.....	42 10	25	5 50	3 20	
11 35	4 40	1 35	7 55	9 38	JUNCTION.....	8	8 45	4 10	1 20	7 05
11 40	4 45	1 39	8 00	8 34	Mechanicsville.....	6	8 39	4 04	1 14	7 00
11 45	4 55	1 43	8 05	9 40	PETERSBURG.....	5	8 33	3 58	1 08	6 55
12 00	5 10	1 53	8 15	9 50	Dillerville.....	1	8 23	3 48	12 58	6 35
12 05	5 15	1 55	8 20	9 55	LANCASTER.....	0	8 20	3 45	12 55	6 30

All trains run daily except Sunday.  
 The Standard Time is that kept by the Clock at the Philadelphia & Reading R. R. Co. at their Upper Station at Reading. Conductors and Engineers must conform to the Standard Time when on duty at any Station.  
 \*Trains will not be faster than 18 miles per hour on any part of the line.

Photo reproductions of two 1874  
 R. & C. timetables.  
 (Photo Credit: George M. Hart, George School,  
 Bucks Co., Penna.)

# Reading & Columbia

RAIL ROAD.

## Summer Arrangement.

On and after MONDAY, MAY 4, 1874, Passenger Trains will run on this road daily, except Sunday, as follows:

### NORTHWARD.

Lve. Columbia,	8.15 A.M.	1.06	and 3.25 P.M.
" Lancaster,	8.20 "	12.55	" 3.45 "
" Manheim,	8.55 "	1.45	" 4.20 "
" Lititz,	9.10 "	2.00	" 4.34 "
" Ephrata,	9.33 "	2.25	" 4.59 "
Arr. Reading,	10.25 "	3.20	" 5.50 "
" Philad'a,	12.40 P.M.	6.15	" 9.10 "
" Pottsville,	12.00 M.		" 7.40 "
" Allentown,	12.10 P.M.	5.30	" 7.55 "
" Harrisburg,	1.20 "		" 8.30 "
" New York,	3.50 "		" 9.45 "

### SOUTHWARD.

Lve. New York,		12.50 P.M.
" Philad'a,	9.15 A.M.	and 3.40 "
" Pottsville,	5.55 A.M.	9.00 "
" Allentown,	5.50 "	8.45 "
" Harrisburg,	5.25 "	9.45 "
" Reading,	7.40 "	11.40 "
" Ephrata,	8.35 "	12.34 P.M.
" Lititz,	9.10 "	12.59 "
" Manheim,	9.22 "	1.12 "
Arr. Lancaster,	9.53 "	1.55 "
" Columbia,	10.00 "	2.00 "

Current Print.]

B. VAN LEW,  
 Superintendent.

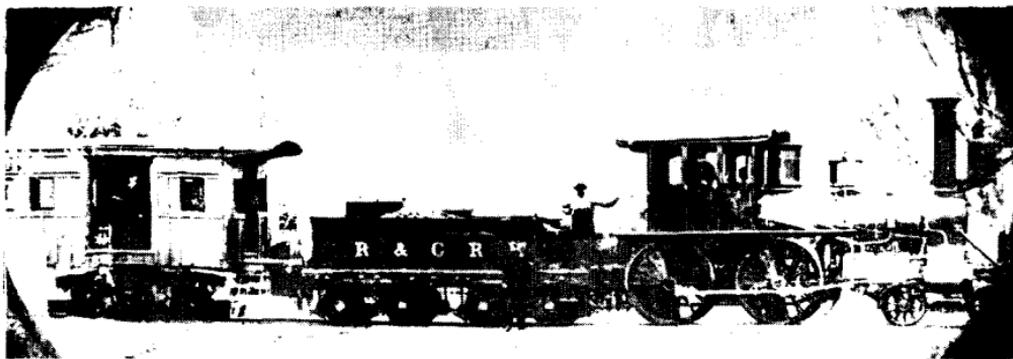
"We were invited by Mr. Tshudy to the offices of the R. & C. Railroad" reported editor Rambo. "All appeared to be interested in the directors' room and upon stepping inside, we were invited to indulge in a glass of Mr. Tshudy's beautifully decanted premium currant wine which, we must agree, is the nicest and best flavored we have ever tasted." This apparently slacked the thirst of the group sufficiently for them to go on to Ephrata and the Ephrata Mountain Springs Hotel "to enjoy the bounteous hospitality of Mr. U. S. Newcomer, the gentlemanly and accommodating proprietor."

The guests on the special train that made the inaugural inspection trip from Columbia to Reading on March 15, 1864, were entertained at a banquet at Borbon's Mansion House Hotel in Reading, but the newspaper report was more concerned with the operations of Lauer's Brewery, which the party visited, than with the details of the trip itself. Mr. Lauer was a director of the Reading and Columbia and it seems that his visitors from Columbia came away from the brewery quite impressed!

Reading newspapers gave scant publicity to this tour from Columbia, but waited until June 21, 1864, to make an inspection trip of their own over the R. & C. ably represented by the editors of the Berks County Zeitung, the Adler, the Gazette and the Berks and Schuylkill Journal along with his honor, Mayor Hoyer of Reading. Lititz was the object of their journey where they were "lunched" by Jacob B. Tshudy and were "dined and coffeed" by Mr. Samuel Lichtenthaler, who ran the hotel in Lititz. The members of the press were "lagered" by Mr. Lauer who had thoughtfully sent along on the train from Reading, "a keg of his very best." During the visitation to Lititz, the newspaper men visited Mr. Tshudy's park "with its quaint water works, revolving eagle, American flags, gold fish, trout and deer."

“Passengers will have ample time to return to the cars following the fireworks presentation” read a Lititz excursion announcement. Even during the Civil War, it was the Fourth of July celebration that drew the biggest excursion crowds over the R. & C. The July 4th celebration in Lititz in 1864 was held as a benefit for the sick and wounded soldiers of the war. Crowds brought picnics to the park and listened to speeches by Rev. A. C. Weidekind of Lancaster and by Col. J. W. Fisher and enjoyed the concert by the Lancaster Band. Then, in the evening, came the lighting of the park grounds with over 3000 candles followed by the fireworks display.

The Reading and Columbia carried even larger crowds to Lititz for the following year’s July Fourth festivities. There were the usual picnics, speeches and band music, but then at about nine in the evening, a thunder storm broke over Lititz and a contemporary newspaper article reported,



First R.&C train passing through Ephrata, Pa., June 29, 1863. Engine believed to be the R.&C.’s “W. G. Case.”

(Photo Credit: Author’s Collection)

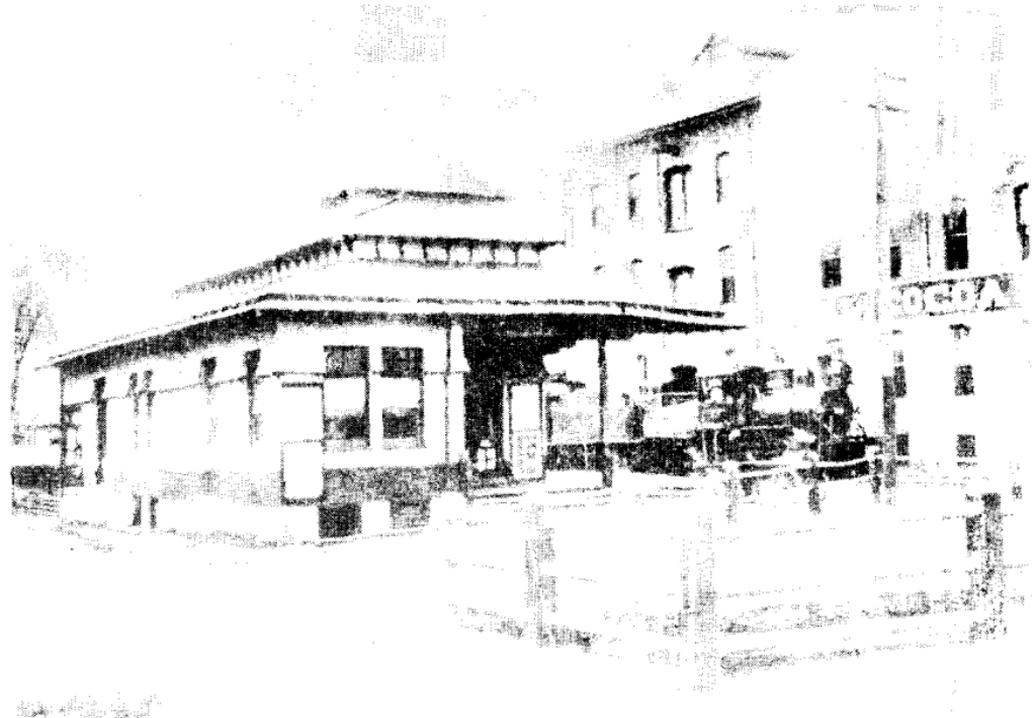
“The sight at this time eclipsed anything during the day. A perfect rush was made for the hotel, houses and the cars. Women were squeezed, hoops were mashed, men were swearing and all was confusion.”

Apparently on the return from Lititz that evening, the R. & C. trainmen had neglected to light the lamps in the coaches on the rear of the train. In an article headlined, “Nice,” editor Rambo of the **Columbia Spy** commented:—

“No one can say aught against the Reading and Columbia Railroad. On the 4th of July, they were particularly accommodating, for on both the night trains from Lititz to Columbia, two cars were arranged for ‘hugging and kissing.’ Such a time was never before witnessed on that line. Ye saints! But didn’t some revel in the bliss and martyrdom! The martyrs were those who were witnesses and could not participate.”

Then, the **Spy** editor, so as not to offend his Columbia subscribers, added, “The majority of the actors were from Manheim and Silver Springs.”

Over a thousand passengers took the cars of the R. & C. from Columbia on September 9, 1865. Their destination was Heise’s Woods which was the scene of a Soldiers’ Dinner and “Grand Gala.” Chicken, ham, summer vegetables and desserts of every description were piled high on the picnic tables. “Dinner call” was at noon. There were two “sittings.” The first sitting was for the soldiers, their wives, parents and sweethearts and at the second sitting, the others, who had come for the affair, apparently ate what



View of the R.&C. station at Lititz many years ago. "Ideal Cocoa Co." in the background.

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)

was left. Keiffer's Orchestra provided music for dancing, but the dancing had hardly started, when there was a cloudburst. There was little shelter from the rain and, worse yet, the R. & C. was somewhat slow in dispatching a train up to Heise's Woods to rescue its wet and bedraggled passengers stranded on Chestnut Hill in a heavy summer rain storm.

A later Whit Monday excursion to Heise's Woods found that "lager beer was there with its frothing temper imposing on a large number of the participants in a rude manner," according to a report in the Columbia newspaper and it was necessary for two Columbia constables to be on duty to maintain order on the dance platform.

Excursions, however, weren't always limited to the summer months. February 22, 1866 was the occasion for a "Grand Ball," in honor of Washington's birthday, at Col. Jesse Reinhold's Hotel at Reinhold's station on the R. & C. The **Lancaster Evening Express** commented, "Col. Reinhold is a whole-souled and accommodating landlord and is making every arrangement to make this a grand affair." Guests from Lancaster took the Pennsylvania Railroad to Landisville, where they transferred to the R. & C. train for the trip to Reinholds.

However, there were few excursions, during the early days of the Reading and Columbia, that excelled the outing that was reported as follows in the June 23, 1866, issue of the **Columbia Spy**:

"On Thursday last, a party left Columbia at 3:45 P.M. bound for Lititz for the purpose of having a lively time. Without any detention, they arrived there at 5:15 P.M. and found Keiffer's celebrated orchestra awaiting their arrival.

"After a partaking of a sumptuous repast at the excellent hotel of Lichenthaler & Sons, all adjourned to the Springs and appeased their thirst with some of the best water that flows in Lancaster County. While promenading through the park, Keiffer regaled the party with some good music. Who e'er beheld a sight more grand than the sunset promenade? The ladies—God bless them — decked in angel robes, the gentlemen not very angelic and the music heavenly — it surpasses our pen to give it the description it deserves.

"Again they return to the hotel and find the spacious dining room cleared and a perch erected for the musicians and everything in readiness 'to chase the glowing hours with flying feet' Hark! What do we hear? Sanderson of the "Intelligencer," and doubly honored by being floor manager of the greatest party of the season, calls out, 'Gentlemen, Take your ladies for the grand march.' Then came the auspicious moment. The ladies appearing on the scene transformed as if by magic in robes more angelic than before (for be it known, that the party was so extensive, that each lady had her trunk.) The gentlemen also went through a transformation. In place of black suits, they appeared with white pantaloons and vests and black coats. The scene on the ball room floor was sublime.

"The dancing was kept up until the small hours when Mr. Gage, the accommodating and gentlemanly superintendent of the R. & C., accompanied by Messrs Keever and Vanlew arrived with a special train, in which all well disposed persons returned home."

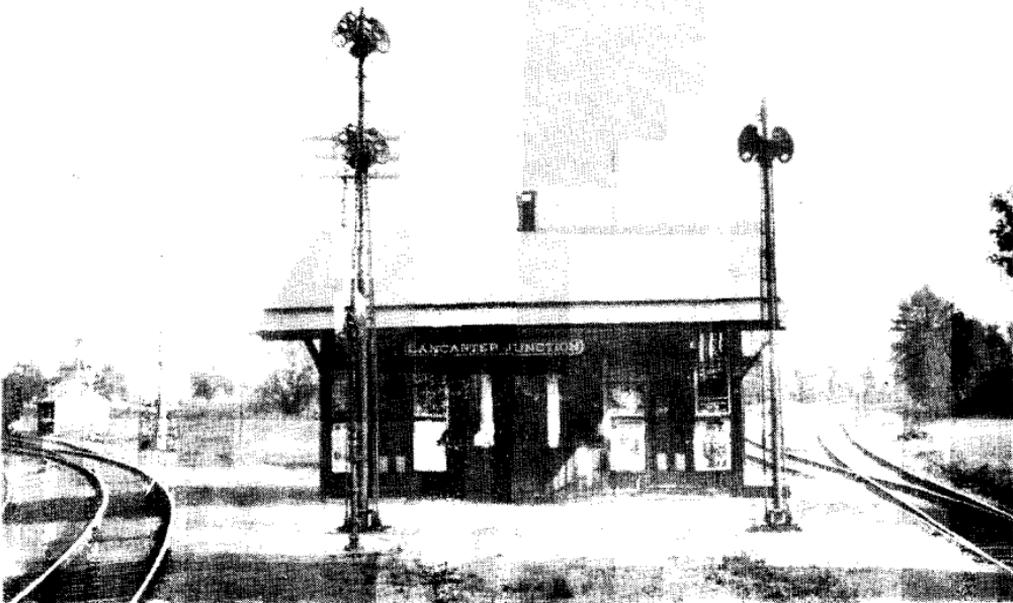
The historian only regrets that the medium of color film and flash photography was not available in those early years to record such an event. The most serious railroad historian, in this day of modern automobile travel, may find it difficult to imagine a train chugging over the rails from Lititz to Columbia in the pre-dawn hours with a load of passengers returning from a fancy dress ball, but the early years of the Reading and Columbia were, indeed, the era of the grand excursion!

## BUILDING TO LANCASTER AND QUARRYVILLE

Shortly after the completion of the main line from Columbia to Sinking Springs, it was decided to build a branch from near Manheim to Lancaster. During the early part of 1865, Samuel W. Mifflin, a well known engineer, was employed to survey and locate the eight mile line that would give the R. & C. an entrance into the city of Lancaster.

Contracts for building the line were awarded on August 29, 1865 to H. R. Hawmen and Company of Reading and to James Marsh and Company of Lebanon. Ground was broken on September 25, 1865, at a point two and a half miles south of Manheim, where the new branch diverged from the main line. Although it was first called simply "Junction Station," this later became known as Lancaster Junction.

Eastward from the junction, the line ran through Mechanicsville and passed about a quarter of a mile south of East Petersburg. It paralleled the north side of the Pennsylvania Railroad main line from what is now Flory's Mill into Lancaster. It was planned that a station be located in Lancaster on North Queen Street about a half a block from the Pennsylvania Railroad's station, which was at Queen and Chestnut Streets, but the R. & C. station was finally established on North Prince Street near Frederick Street.



Lancaster Junction station looking south. Line to the left goes to Lancaster. Line on right of station heads for Columbia.

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)

The Lancaster Branch was completed in the summer of 1866 and on August 24, 1866, the first regular train service commenced between Lancaster and the "Junction," where connections were made with the trains running between Columbia and Reading. Two trains a day, in each direction, were scheduled over the branch and an omnibus line, connecting with all trains, ran between the station on North Prince Street and Reese's City Hotel in Lancaster.

For some unknown reason, the R. & C. during the early days of the Lancaster Branch used a rather unique numbering system to identify trains. One westbound train was known as number "5½" and the opposing eastbound train was identified as number "8½". Although built as a branch of the main line, it was the trackage into Lancaster that was to become the heaviest traveled portion of the R. & C. in later years.

The Reading and Columbia highly valued its rail route between Lancaster and Reading, so it was not too happy with the incorporation in May of 1871 of the Lancaster and Reading Narrow Gauge Railroad. Headed by Rudolph W. Shenk, Esq. of Lancaster, the new company planned to build a railroad, with a gauge of four feet or less, between Reading and Lancaster with branches to Quarryville and Safe Harbor.

George H. Arms, the company's chief engineer, in the summer of 1871, ran a survey from Reading to Lancaster by way of Mohnton and Adamstown and then surveyed an extension from Lancaster to Quarryville. It

was decided, that since the section between Lancaster and Quarryville was without railroad transportation facilities, the branch to Quarryville would be completed first and the line to Reading would be built at a later date.

The firm of Keller and Reilly contracted in October of 1872 to build the 15-mile line from Lancaster to Quarryville. Progress was slow and with the panic of 1873, the whole project foundered for lack of capital. What construction, that was being done, had to be suspended on January 1, 1874.

The directors of the Lancaster and Reading Narrow Gauge then turned to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, which controlled the Reading and Columbia, for assistance in completing the line to Quarryville. An agreement was reached in March of 1874, whereby the Philadelphia and Reading would construct the railroad to Quarryville, and the Reading and Columbia in turn would lease and operate the line on a rental basis of thirty per cent of the gross receipts.

Some grading for the proposed track gauge of four feet had been already done by the Lancaster and Reading Narrow Gauge. By the middle of May of 1874, William H. Bines, the contractor for the Philadelphia and Reading, with about seventy men were busy widening the road bed and re-aligning the curves to accommodate the standard gauge track required by the Reading and Columbia.

Water Street, in Lancaster, was used as the route of the Quarryville Branch, from the junction with the Reading and Columbia Railroad, north of the Harrisburg Pike, to the southern end of Lancaster. R. W. Shenk, the president of the L. & R. N. G., drove the first spike on Water Street, between Walnut and Lemon Streets, in Lancaster on July 24, 1874.

The building of the line was slowed by the construction of the Water Street sewer and the building of the bridge over the Pennsylvania Railroad at Mulberry Street. The Mulberry Street bridge was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in return for the Lancaster and Reading Narrow Gauge relinquishing its right to cross the Pennsylvania tracks at grade. An interesting report on the Quarryville line appeared as follows in the Jan. 25, 1875, issue of the "Lancaster Daily Express,"

"P. & R. engine #100 is now hauling supplies on the Quarryville Railroad. Its engineer is Al Maltzberger from Pottstown. The engine takes water at West King Street. The line passes the cotton factories, the new dye house, the furnace and a few minutes later crosses the Conestoga on a substantial wooden bridge. It passes Levan's Woolen Mill and the flour mills north of Mill Creek. Beyond the Kreider residence is a grade of 104 feet to the mile. Pequea Creek is crossed at Pine Hill on a timber trestle interlaced with iron beams."

The first trip to New Providence was made with a P. & R. inspection engine on February 18, 1875, and at 3:30 P.M., on Wednesday, March 17, 1875, the last spike was driven at Quarryville by Mr. George W. Hensel followed by a large dinner served to the members of the construction crew by the citizens of Quarryville.

The Philadelphia and Reading had desired a station closer to the center of Lancaster than the Reading and Columbia depot on North Prince Street. With the opening of the Quarryville Branch, a second station was established in Lancaster and known as King Street. This was housed in the new Stevens House Hotel at West King and Water Streets. The sta-

tion facilities in the Stevens House consisted of a ticket office, a telegraph office and an express and baggage room.

George Crane, the son of Robert Crane, the R. & C.'s first superintendent, was the first ticket agent at the Stevens House and, so the story goes, he walked from Columbia to his new job at Lancaster. The first telegraph operator, when the King Street station was opened on May 10, 1875, was John C. Reilley.

The Quarryville Branch was officially opened on May 11, 1875, when city officials and other invited guests boarded three special trains at the Stevens House for the inaugural run to Quarryville. John Copeland, the caterer, provided refreshments, both solid and liquid, and the City Coronet Band "delivered their sweetest strains," during the ride.

Stations on the Quarryville Branch southward from Lancaster were Conestoga Furnace, Harnish, West Willow, Baumgardner, Pequea, Refton, New Providence, Cabeen's, Hess and then Quarryville. When the branch was being operated by the R. & C., trains coming into Lancaster from Reading would first stop at the Prince Street station, then back into the yards to a switch known as "Quarryville Junction," and then run down Water Street to the station at the Stevens House.

Apparently, there was even a little local business done between the two Lancaster stations! An 1876 passenger tariff of the R. & C. indicated that a fare of five cents should be charged local passengers riding between the North Prince Street station and the station at King Street.

The Quarryville operation never came up to expectations. Finally, about 1895, the R. & C. gave up its lease of the line and the Quarryville Branch was acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Although Lancaster's famous old hostelry, the Stevens House, has disappeared [1964] from the scene, Pennsylvania Railroad freight trains still rumble down Water Street passing the site of what was once the R. & C.'s King Street station.

## BUILDING TO CHICKIES AND TO MT. HOPE

During the great era of railroad development in this country, there were few railroads, no matter how short or obscure, which didn't indulge in dreams of expansion. The Reading and Columbia was no exception. As mentioned before, its first hope was to become part of a "through" route between New York and Washington and when that dream vanished with the burning of the Columbia Bridge, the promoters of the Reading and Columbia began envisioning the line as becoming part of a "trunk" route linking the East with the Central States.

In order to provide southern York County with a more direct line to Philadelphia, a railroad had been chartered in 1872, known as the Hanover Junction and Susquehanna, to build a 34-mile line from Hanover Junction, south of York, to a connection with the Reading and Columbia Railroad near Landisville. The proposed line was to cross the Susquehanna River at Chickies, a short distance south of Marietta.

However, the objectives of the Hanover Junction and Susquehanna soon became a bit cloudy. When the H. J. & S. started grading along the Susquehanna opposite Marietta, the Pennsylvania Railroad did likewise. The H. J. & S. then withdrew, announcing that it was going to devote its efforts to the completion of that portion of the line in Lancaster County east of Chickies. C. G. Darrich was the chief engineer and Henry E. Wolf of Columbia was the contractor. Other than a few trestles being in the process of erection east of Chickies during the summer of 1874 and a few miles being graded in 1875, little else was done and the project languished. The Hanover Junction and Susquehanna was forced into bankruptcy in 1880.

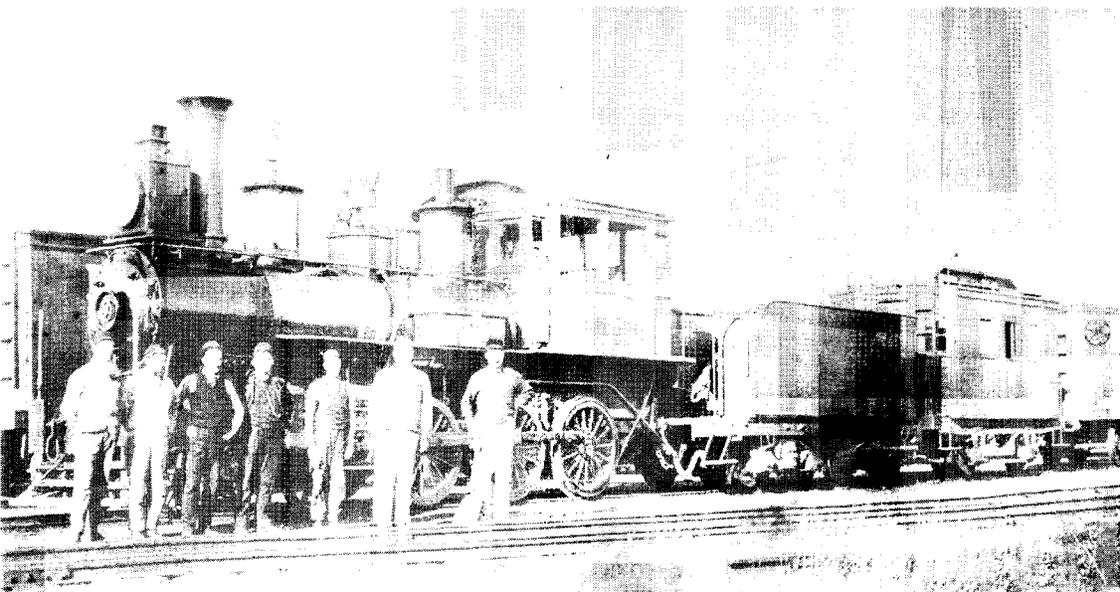
The Hanover Junction and Susquehanna was sold at public sale on September 25, 1881 and was purchased in the interest of the bondholders. The company was reorganized as the Reading, Marietta and Hanover Railroad with a capital stock of \$250,000. Through an agreement with the owners, the Reading and Columbia Railroad purchased the controlling stock of the Reading, Marietta and Hanover on March 21, 1882 and proceeded with plans to complete the railroad.

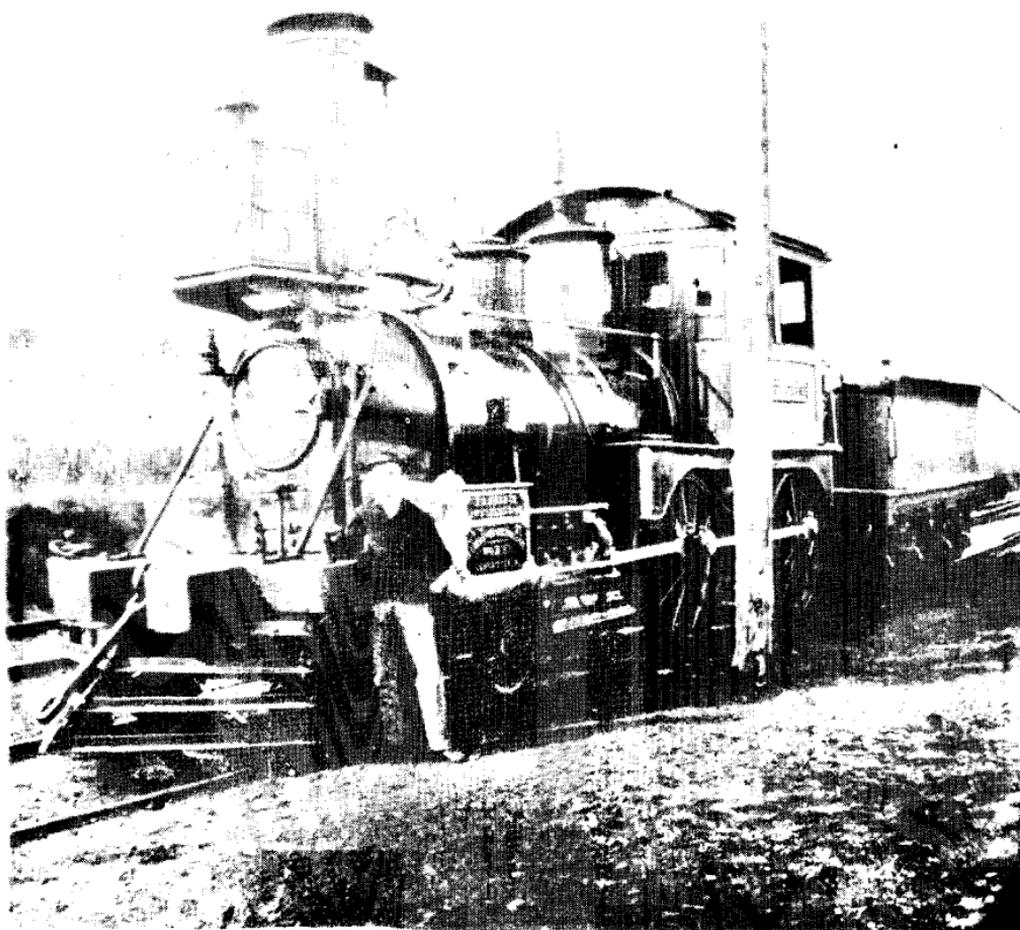
The Reading and Columbia started laying ties on parts of the line that had already been graded between Marietta Junction and Chickies in June of 1882, but a month later the work halted, apparently while a proposed extension to Chambersburg was under consideration. Little came of this, but in January of 1883, another survey was run from Chickies to York. Finally, it was announced on March 1, 1883, that the tracks were laid from Marietta Junction to as far as the "Brick Tavern," about a mile and a half from Marietta.

The residents of Chickies saw a Reading locomotive for the first time on April 19, 1883, when an inspection tour was made of the new line by

**Reading and Columbia engine "Ephrata." Originally built for the P.&R. and known as the "Fernandina." Became R.&C. "Ephrata" and later P.&R #1090.**

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)





Reading & Columbia locomotive "Robert Crane." Built by Norris Locomotive Works, Lancaster, Pa., 1864. Became Phila. and Reading No. 1088. Scrapped December 1897.

(Photo credit: Collection of the late J. Jay Wisler; Earl Strickler, Columbia, Pa.)

Superintendent Wilson of the R. & C. and G. A. Nicholls, president of the Philadelphia and Reading. The tour was made on board the inspection engine "Transit."

The "grand opening" of passenger service over the R. M. & H branch was on August 12, 1883. That Sunday was the opening day of the Landisville Campmeeting and passenger trains were scheduled to leave Chickies at 8:45 a.m., and 1:45 p.m., returning from Landisville at 12:00 noon and 7:45 p.m. The first shipment of anthracite coal arrived at Chickies by way of the R. M. & H branch on September 12, 1883, consigned to E. L. Reinhold. A small station and telegraph office was erected by the R. & C. at Chickies in January of 1884.

Even in that era of railroad prominence, one cannot imagine a more unlikely journey than the schedule shown in the P. & R. timetable for 1885 which shows train connections between Chickies and New York City! The fact that two passenger trains in each direction, between Marietta Junction and Chickies, were scheduled on week days for several years after the line was opened is amazing in itself. The passenger found that Chickies was at least a mile from the center of Marietta and the freight to and from the Chickies Furnace was hardly enough to sustain the line. The station of Chickies was remote to say the least.

Stations on the Reading, Marietta and Hanover Branch southward from Marietta Junction were Farndale, Copenheffer, Florinel and then came Chickies. An interesting feature of the line was the long wooden trestle located north of Silver Springs. By 1899, the branch had completely disappeared from the R. & C.'s passenger timetable, but freight service remained with one freight train going into Chickies on week-days.

Strangely enough, now and then, rumors would be revived about extending the line into York County. When the Western Maryland completed their line into York, hopes again ran high that the long awaited link between Chickies and York would be completed, but the rails never bridged the river.

The line crossed the Marietta trolley tracks near Chickies. About 1929 while riding the trolley to Marietta, the author, then a small boy, recalls seeing a Reading locomotive at the trolley crossing. This was during the last days of the R. M. & H branch. Shortly afterwards, the line was abandoned and during the fall of 1930, the rails were removed.

The last years had seen only an occasional train on the branch, but once a year, the Reading dispatched a track gang to row across the river to cut weeds to maintain the line's franchise in York County, so the R. & C.'s hopes of expansion never really died until the Reading, Marietta and Hanover Branch itself disappeared behind the receding wheels of a track removal train. All that remains today of the line are a few culverts and several stretches of embankments, but it is still interesting to ponder what might have been the results if the line would have reached York County!

**Work gangs and steam crane removing timbers of trestle on Reading, Marietta and Hanover Branch near Chiques Creek.**

(Baughey Collection, L.C.H.S.)



The Cornwall Railroad was in operation between Cornwall and Lebanon as early as 1855 and in 1863, the Reading and Columbia gave serious consideration to building a branch between Manheim and the Cornwall ore banks, but quite a few years were to pass before there was train service linking Lancaster and Lebanon by way of Manheim.

The Reading and Columbia ran a survey between Manheim and Cornwall in 1863, but little else was done until 1868 when there was renewed interest to build a line from Manheim to the Lebanon County line to connect with a branch of the Philadelphia and Reading that was proposed to run southward from Pine Grove and Lebanon primarily as an outlet for the anthracite coal regions.

The proposed branch of the R. & C. known as the Lebanon Branch, included what was to be known as the Mt. Hope Branch running from White Oak to Cornwall. Some grading was done on the Lebanon Branch in 1870 and in June of that year a contract was awarded to White and Watson of Manheim for laying track, but the project was never carried out. There was an attempt to revive interest in the line again in 1873, but without any success.

Quite a bit of grading had been done in the Hammer Creek area when the project came to a standstill in 1870. There was a renewal of interest in the early eighties to complete the direct line from Pine Grove to Lancaster. There was even talk of extending the proposed line from Lancaster to Delaware City, Delaware, where a coal shipping port on the Delaware River would be developed, but still the project lacked support.

Finally, the Philadelphia and Reading, the Reading and Columbia, and the Cornwall Railroad reached an agreement in September of 1883 whereby the Reading and Columbia agreed to complete the branch from Manheim to Mt. Hope, a distance of five miles, while the Cornwall Railroad agreed to build a six-mile extension, known as the Cornwall and Mt. Hope Railroad, from Cornwall to Mt. Hope.

Construction work started once again from Manheim, but with more success than the previous attempts. By March 27, 1884, the tracks reached as far as the cut north of White Oak. The day, previously, a shipment of flour was made over the new line from White Oak to Manheim. The rails finally reached Mt. Hope on July 15, 1884.

The Cornwall Railroad extension from Cornwall to Mt. Hope was built under the direction of Carl Von Schmalensee, a young Swedish engineer, and it was completed in the summer of 1884. The first through train, a lodge excursion, ran from Lebanon to Lancaster on August 16, 1884, and two days later regular train service commenced between the two cities by way of the R. & C. and the Cornwall Railroad, which became known as the Lebanon and Lancaster Joint Line.

The Lebanon and Lancaster Joint Line branched off the R. & C. in Manheim at what was known as "Joint Line Junction." The line ran northward to White Oak and Mt. Hope and then followed the Cornwall Railroad stations of Penryn Park, Overlook, Miners Village, Cornwall, North Cornwall, Midway, Donaghmore and Lebanon. Penryn Park was a mecca for excursions and Sunday School picnics for many years and rivaled Lititz Springs in popularity.



Station at Manheim, still in use today.

(Photo credit: George Heiges)

Passenger trains originally ran through from Lebanon to Lancaster with both the R. & C. and the Cornwall Railroad supplying the locomotives and passenger cars. For a short period in the late eighties, a sort of "cross line" service was operated with a through train from Lebanon to Quarryville, but this was not a success and the Lebanon trains were terminated at Lancaster. Later through service between Lebanon and Lancaster was discontinued and passengers had to change cars at Manheim, where was heard the familiar call "All Aboard for White Oak, Mt. Hope, Cornwall and Lebanon."

The Lebanon and Lancaster Joint Line was a popular route of travel for many years but it finally fell victim to the automobile and the hard surface highways. Finally, on January 23, 1929 Cornwall Railroad engine number two pulled out of Manheim with the last passenger train for Lebanon. The Reading still retains the line from Manheim to Mt. Hope, now simply known as the Mt. Hope Branch, which is operated for freight service on an irregular basis.

## ALONG THE LINE

The Reading and Columbia entered Columbia from the northeast descending Chestnut Hill and following westward along the Shawnee Run to near Second and Mill Streets, where a track connection was made with the Lancaster line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. During the road's first year of operation, the R. & C. trains used the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks to reach Black's Hotel on Columbia's North Front Street. Black's Hotel served in the dual capacity of a hostelry and ticket office for both the Reading and Columbia and the Pennsylvania Railroad. E. K. Boyce was the agent at Black's and sold tickets for both roads.

Black's Hotel did not prove too satisfactory as a station, so the R. & C. extended their tracks in Columbia from Mill Street to Union and opened a station in a converted building at the Union Street crossing in October of 1864 with William Clark as the first ticket agent. Two years later, the

tracks were further extended to Front and Locust Streets and in August of 1866 the Reading and Columbia moved their station once again — this time into a building at Front and Locust Streets known as “Carpet Hall.”

It was about this time that a Mr. Greider from Mountville was attempting to cross the railroad tracks at Locust Street with his horse and wagon. An approaching engine on the Reading and Columbia so frightened his horse that it dashed up Locust Street upsetting the wagon and injuring Mr. Greider. When the crossing watchman was asked why he didn't warn Mr. Greider of the approach of the engine, he replied that he was only paid by the Pennsylvania Railroad and if the R. & C. would pay him, the crossing would be completely safe!

The Reading and Columbia erected a coal wharf near the foot of Locust Street in Columbia where coal could be transferred to canal boats for shipment on the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal. The tracks leading to the coal wharf or chutes crossed the Pennsylvania Railroad at Mill Street and ran along the west side of the P.R.R.'s Lancaster line to near Locust Street where they ascended a trestle to reach the wharf. Operation of the coal chutes at the wharf began in November of 1867.

The R. & C. engine house and turntable was located east of the Fourth Street crossing in Columbia. Beyond, the railroad had extensive sidings into the various rolling mills and furnaces. A spur known as the Shawnee Branch ran to Eighth and Union Streets in Columbia to reach the upper level of the Shawnee furnaces.

The most prominent and best remembered R. & C. landmark in Columbia was the large passenger station and train shed erected in 1883 at

**Reading and Columbia Station at Columbia, Pa., 1912.**

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)



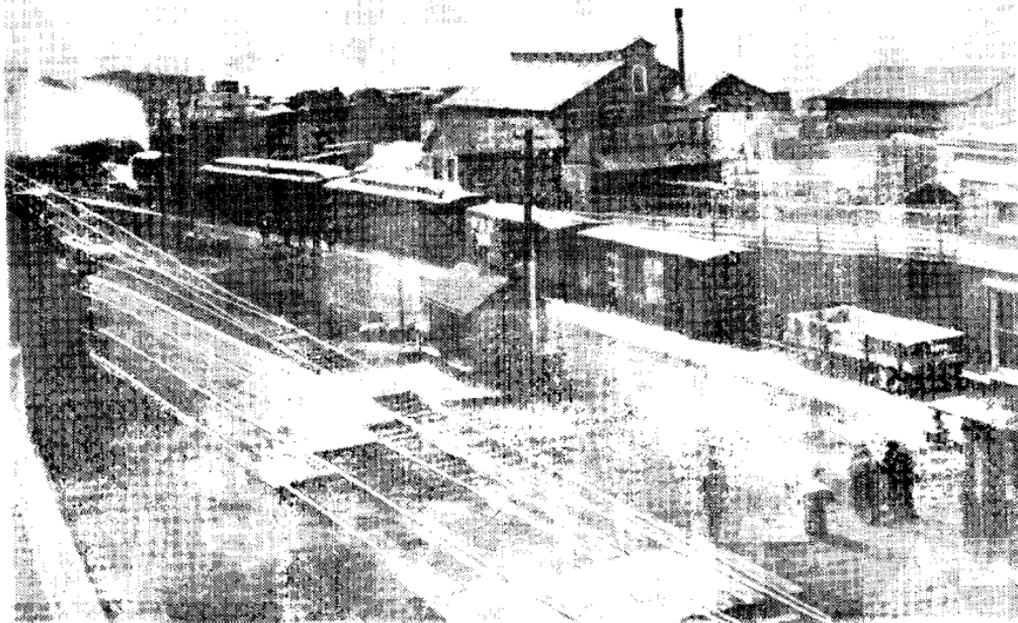


Photo of Columbia yards with Carpet Hall in extreme right of picture. Susquehanna Planing Mill is to the center rear, and the river is in the background.  
(Collection of late J. Jay Wisler;  
John Ward Willson Loose Archives)

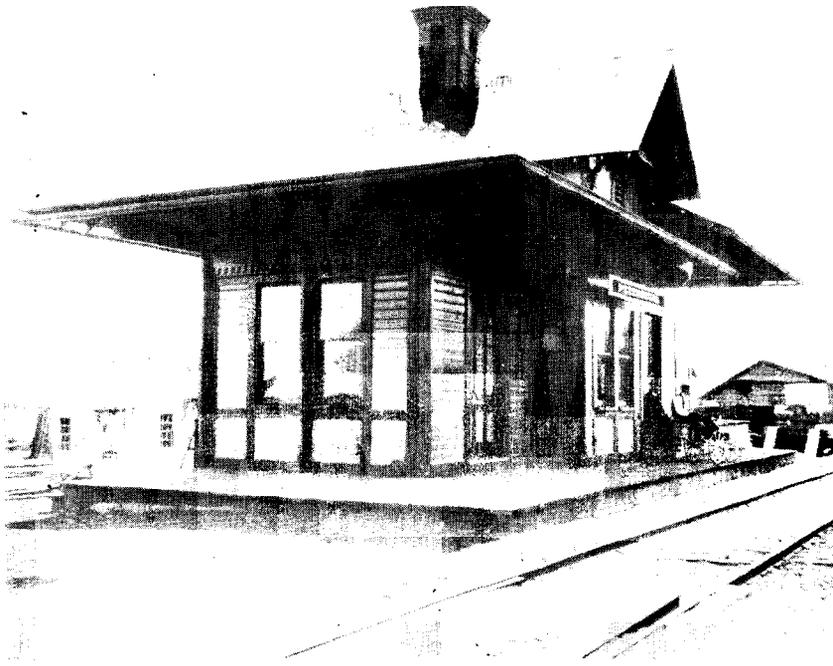
the corner of Locust Street and Bank Alley, to replace the outmoded depot in the "Carpet Hall" building. Designed by Frank Furness and Captain DeMorainville, railroad architects, the huge brick and frame "L" shaped building contained waiting rooms and ticket and telegraph offices on the first floor while the second floor housed the offices of the Reading and Columbia Division of the Philadelphia and Reading.

The building, with its two-track, covered, train shed, was built along an architectural style which was a combination of the "Eastlake" and "Queen Anne" pattern, now often referred to by modern day railroad historians as "Philadelphia and Reading Gothic." The passenger station was opened for use on Monday, November 26, 1883. The brick freight station, immediately to the rear, was also built in 1883 and was placed in service on September 4th of that year, with Samuel Stape as freight agent and Samuel Berntheizel as assistant agent.

The station which served the community of Ironville was originally known as "Kauffman's" but was later named "Cordelia." When business declined at the Cordelia furnace, the station building was moved to Landisville where it is still in use today. Years later when the Reading closed the station at East Petersburg, it, too, went traveling. It was purchased and moved to Strasburg, Penna. to become the station for the Strasburg Railroad.

Station at Petersburg, later known as East Petersburg. Building now in use as station for Strasburg Railroad.

(Photo Credit: George Heiges)

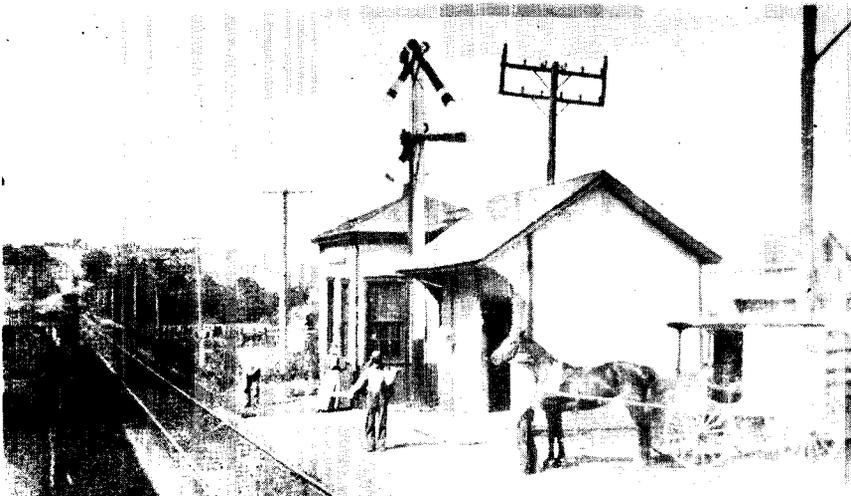


Shortly after the R. & C. was opened, Silver Springs station was given the name "Bruckarts." Today, there is little to mark the location of Marietta Junction. Located between Silver Springs and Landisville, the Rail and Industrial Equipment Company now stands on the site where the trains to Chickies diverged.

Landisville, at first, was simply known as "P.R.R. Crossing." The first R. & C. station at Landisville was on the northwest side of the P.R.R. cross over. On the northeast side of the crossing was Newcomer's Hotel also known as the Railroad House. A small stream flowed near the hotel and the owner had erected a water wheel which operated little miniature figures — a miner picking coal, a chain of buckets and other objects. People on the passing trains enjoyed seeing the display. Many old timers still recall the dining room at "Newcomers" which was located in the basement of the building.

An interesting study of a "flag stop" in rural Lancaster County, sixty years ago. P. R. Shellenberger's grocery wagon pauses at the Bruckart's station on the R.&C. at Silver Springs, Pa. In the distance is the rear of the passenger train bound for Columbia.

(Photo Credit: Mrs. Josephine Stone, Columbia, Pa.)



Two and a half miles north of Landisville was the important station of Lancaster Junction. Here, the R. & C. line coming southward from Reading divided. One branch turned eastward to reach Lancaster while the main line continued southward to Columbia. The station building stood at the junction surrounded by the "Y" track on which the Columbia trains were turned after making their trip to the junction. There were also coal and water facilities at Lancaster Junction as well as stock loading pens.

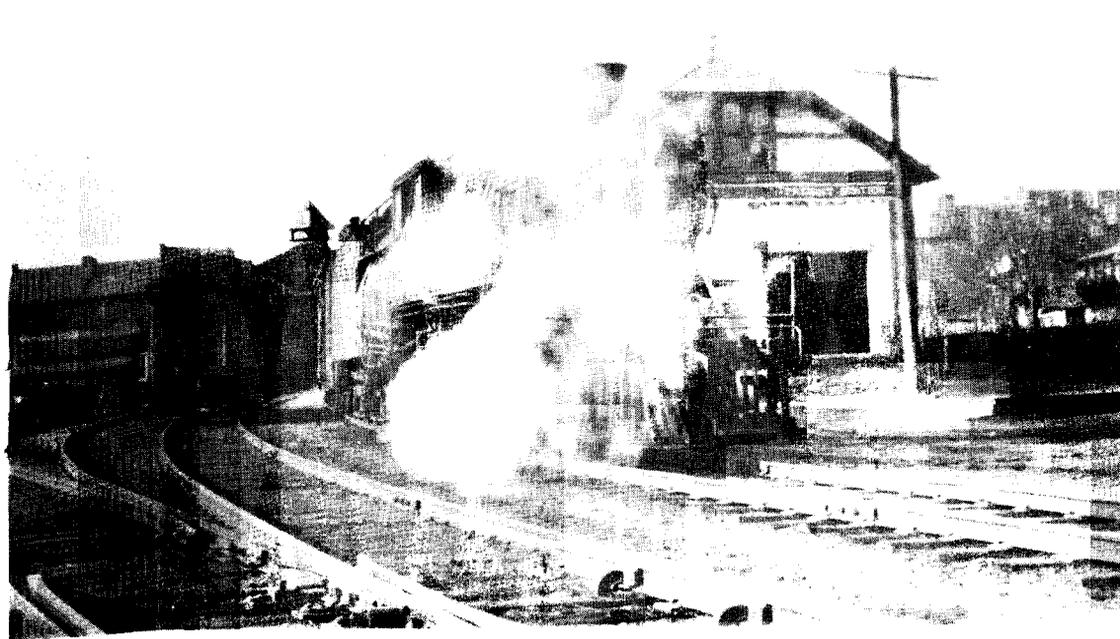
After completion of the line to Mt. Hope, Manheim became a busy transfer point for passengers going to the famous picnic resort known as Penryn Park and on to Cornwall and Lebanon. Lititz Springs drew great crowds during the summer with the Fourth of July celebration, of course, being the highlight of the season. Ephrata, too, with its Mountain Springs Hotel was also a tourist attraction during the summer months.

Millway, south of Akron, was the site of an oil pumping station which created business for the railroad as car loads of pipe and other supplies were delivered there. Millway also was the site of the R. & C.'s last attempt at expansion. A line was proposed to run eastward to the Pennsylvania Railroad's main line. A few rails were laid in 1909 and then the project called the "B & O" for "Brownstown & Oregon" was given up.

The station first known as "Reamstown" was later changed to "Stevens" and the early stop designated as "Black Horse Tavern" became "Reinholds." Many passengers from Philadelphia and New York would ride the R. & C. to Vinemont in the summer to spend their vacations at the nearby "Park Mansion" which was a resort operated by a Dr. Blank. Near "Shearer's" station, there was a large duck farm. Here, thousands of ducks were dressed, packed in ice in barrels and shipped out over the R. & C. to city markets.

The story of the Reading and Columbia would be incomplete without mentioning the Reading's famous "Main Station" or "Outer Station" as it was sometimes called, located in the city of Reading where the Lebanon Valley and the East Penna. branches intersected the Reading Railroad's main line. Opened in August of 1874, the station's platforms were arranged in the shape of a huge triangle. The "east" platform used by the main line trains running between Philadelphia and Pottsville was the base of the triangle. One side of the triangle was the "northwest" platform for Allentown and Harrisburg trains, while the other side of the triangle was the "southwest" platform where trains from and to Columbia, Slatington and Wilmington arrived and departed.

The station, itself, was situated in the center of the triangle. Atop the large, two-story, brick building was an elevated clock tower with dials facing north, south, east and west. The first floor contained waiting rooms, ticket offices, dining room, telegraph and dispatcher's offices. The second floor contained railroad business offices. At one time, in 1884, seventy-four passenger trains a day used the station. It was literally the nerve center of the Reading Railroad. Reading conductors with their Pennsylvania German accent would announce to passengers on R. & C. trains entering the station, "Ot-ter Sta-shun! Chanch for Philadelphia, Pottsville, Awllentawn and New York!"



On a March afternoon in 1935, this camelback locomotive #1601 and the wooden, open-platformed, combination coach on the left, was the last evidence of passenger service between Columbia and Lancaster Junction. It was discontinued the fall of that year.

(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)

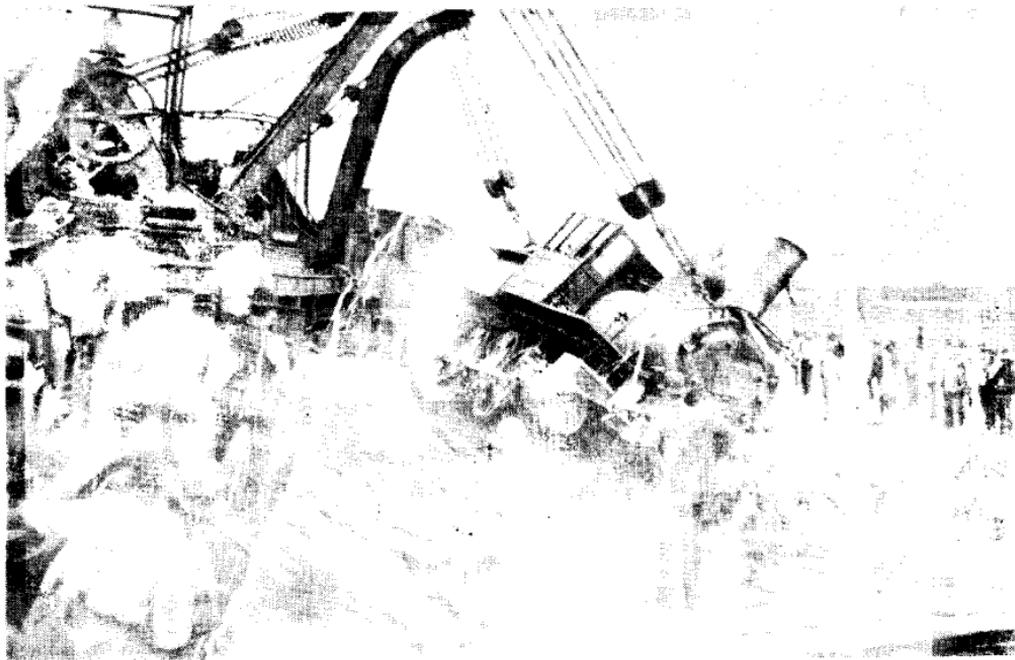
## THE GLORY YEARS

Regretfully, a lack of records makes a description of the early locomotives of the Reading and Columbia rather difficult. The contractor supplied locomotives during the first year of operation or while construction was in progress. The R. & C. locomotives, "W. G. Case", "Robert Crane", "Ephrata" and the "Oshkosh" were built by the Norris Locomotive Works. The "Lititz" was built by Hayward, Bartlett & Company of Baltimore, while Baldwin constructed the "C. S. Maltz", the "Allegheny" and the "Union". The locomotives "Raleigh", "Columbia" and the "Lancaster" were built by the Philadelphia and Reading in their own shops at Reading.

The original Reading and Columbia Railroad engines were later assigned Philadelphia and Reading engine numbers being renumbered in a series from "1086" to "1096" inclusive. The R. & C locomotive "Lancaster" was built in the Reading shops in 1876. It was renumbered "1093" by the P. & R. in the eighties. It was renumbered "87" in April of 1900 and was interesting in the fact that it was the last locomotive to carry the "R & C." lettering on its tender and was the last locomotive to be specifically assigned to the R. & C.

It was during its operation by the Philadelphia and Reading, that the R. & C. saw its greatest development — as an important part of the Reading system. It was John E. Wooten, the Reading's general manager, who in 1877 developed a type of locomotive that was to become so familiar on the Reading and its branches — the anthracite burning "camelback," so named because of the cab being placed directly over the boiler.

Many stories could be told of the early days of railroading on the Reading and Columbia. Before the days of air brakes, electric headlights and other modern safety appliances, wrecks and derailments were common.



View after the wreck on the R.&C. at Manheim, Pa., April 21, 1896.  
(Photo Credit: Author's Collection)

Then, too, there were floods, wash outs and snow storms to further add to the perils of railroading.

One of the more tragic accidents on the R. & C occurred on May 16, 1883. The southbound local freight from Reading, pulled by the engine "Raleigh", had just left Ephrata and where the line goes on to a curved embankment, the engineer saw a plank on the rails, but was unable to bring his train to a stop. The locomotive struck the plank, was thrown from the rails and then rolled down the embankment fatally injuring master mechanic George W. Hain who happened to be riding the locomotive to Columbia that day.

Engineers, years ago, believed in sticking to their guns! It seems that on the afternoon of June 22, 1883, the northbound passenger train for Reading, pulled by the "Robert Crane" and the Pennsylvania Railroad's "Chicago Limited Express" both got to the Dillerville crossover at the same time — with the inevitable results. The Reading train came out second best with the "Robert Crane" being badly damaged. The R. & C. engineer later argued that he was on his scheduled time and had the white signal to go ahead when he was "slammed into by the P.R.R. man" to put it in his own words.

Like the other eastern railroads, the Reading and Columbia had its troubles with the blizzard of 1888. The main line to Reading was tied up but the worst drifts were on the Quarryville Branch. A train left Quarryville at 6:40 a.m. on Monday, March 12, 1888. It got as far as New Providence where it got stuck in the drifts. Another locomotive from Quarryville was added to the train to buck the snow, but to no avail. About

eleven o'clock that morning, an engine from the Lebanon train started down towards Quarryville, but could not get to the snowbound train until the latter forced the drifts.

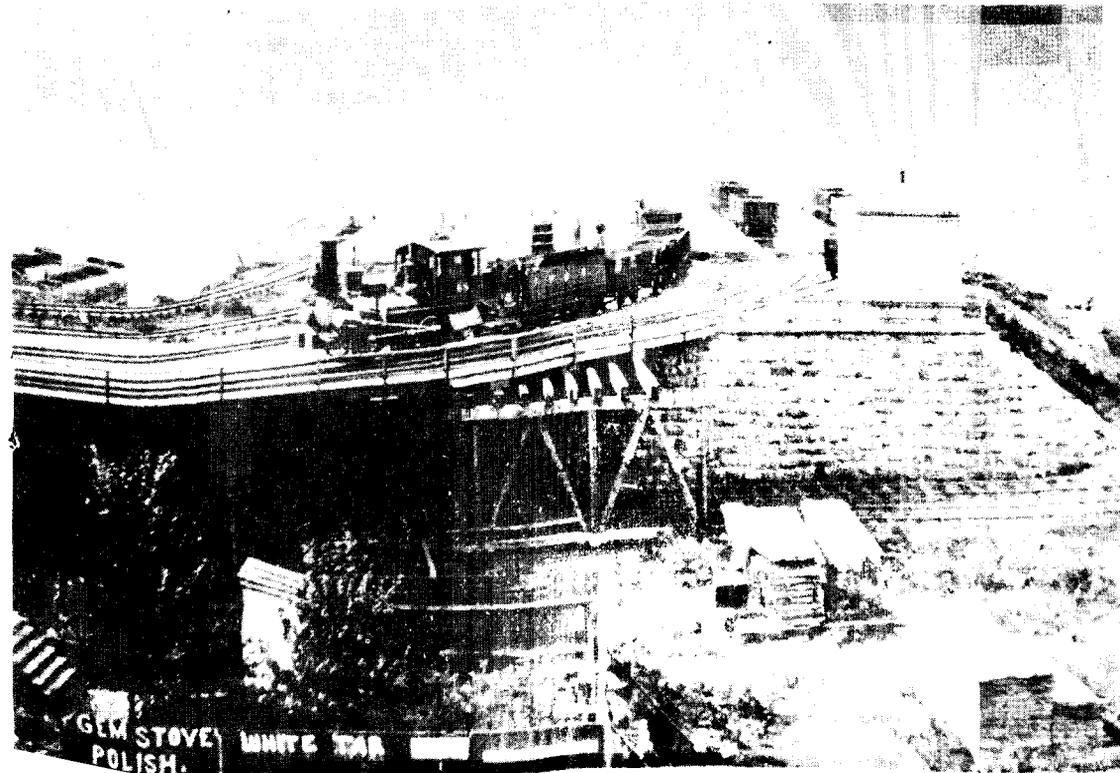
With three engines, the train reached the Pequea bridge where another drift was encountered and there the train remained until 7:30 Tuesday evening. A work train carrying 125 men to shovel snow on the Quarryville line was dispatched from Columbia, but that, too, had its troubles reaching its destination. The work train's locomotive, the "Ephrata", was derailed by a snow drift near Landisville, being thrown on its side. Then, there was more delay until the "Robert Crane" battled its way out from Columbia to take the place of the "Ephrata" on the work train.

By Tuesday evening, the Quarryville train had been dug out, but it had to return to Refton to allow the work train, which was going further down the line, to pass around it. Then, to top things off, the engine "Lititz" which was pulling the Quarryville passenger train, became disabled on the Pequea bridge and had to be towed along with its train into Lancaster. The train finally arrived at the King Street station in Lancaster at 9:30 on Tuesday evening. Elapsed time from Quarryville — 38 hours!

One of the strangest accidents in the history of the R. & C. happened early in the morning of April 21, 1896. An empty box car had been standing on a siding at White Oak on the Mt. Hope Branch. It is practically all down grade from White Oak to Manheim. During the night, a heavy wind developed which was strong enough to put the empty box car in

Philadelphia and Reading No. 68 switches coal cars on the R.&C.'s coal loading wharf at the canal in Columbia about 1880. Wharf was in use until near the turn of the century.

(Photo Credit: Collection of the late J. Jay Wisler; Earl Strickler, Columbia, Pa.)



motion. Its momentum increased rapidly on the down grade and the car drifted out of control all the way to Joint Line Junction, at Manheim, where it went through a spring switch and out on to the R. & C.'s main track.

The "night buck", as the night freight from Reading was called, was nearing Manheim about 3:30 a.m., with Amos Lewis as the engineer. Suddenly, Edward Johnson, the conductor, who was riding the engine at the time, yelled, "My god, there's a car on the track!" The car being less than 30 yards away the conductor's warning came too late. The locomotive struck the car and then upset and toppled down an embankment. One of the members of the train crew, the brakeman, Abraham Bretigan of Columbia, lost his life in the accident.

However, not all was tragedy on the railroad. There were many interesting human interest stories connected with the R. & C. Mr. Marlin Holland, now of Wilmington, Delaware, recalls when his father, Ralph Holland, was agent at Millway and his grandfather was a Reading engineer at Lebanon. The Holland family at Millway always received a "special" shipment on Fasnacht Day. Early in the morning, his grandmother in Lebanon would bake fasnachts. She would give a box to his grandfather who delivered them to the engineer of the Cornwall Railroad train that left Lebanon for Manheim at 7:07 a.m. On arriving at Manheim at 7:42, the Cornwall engineer would give the box of fasnachts to the engineer of the Reading passenger train leaving Manheim at 7:45 and the "special" shipment would be handed down at the Millway station at 8:05 a.m., just in time for breakfast!

Sam Meyers, the agent at Lancaster Junction, was a familiar figure there for forty years. Those who recall him never knew him to wear a raincoat or long overcoat and he walked every day to work — from Manheim to Lancaster Junction. Always with him was his pet dog named "Mr. Brush." Mrs. Elsie Fry, daughter of a railroad family who lived at Lancaster Junction, recalls that manure from cattle cars that came in from the West was used to fertilize the family's sweet potato patch. One year rattle snakes appeared and it was always believed that they had come in the cattle cars from the West.

When the Chiques Creek would overflow its banks, the area around Lancaster Junction would be flooded and the trainmen would have to carry the female passengers from one train to the other when they had to change cars at Lancaster Junction during periods of high water. A familiar person on the Columbia run was George Wilson, the passenger engineer, who could always be identified by the high white celluloid collar he always wore while running his engine.

During the eighties and nineties, the Reading and Columbia Railroad, the Lebanon and Lancaster Joint Line, the Reading, Marietta and Hanover Branch, and the Schuylkill and Lehigh Branch, between Reading and Slatington, comprised what was known as the "Reading and Columbia Division," of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. Later, when the Reading Railroad acquired the Wilmington and Northern running between Birdsboro and Wilmington, this line was also included in the group and the division was reorganized as the "Wilmington and Columbia Division."

There were three trains a day between Lancaster and Reading in each direction with three connecting trains each way between Lancaster Junction and Columbia as well as three trains each way between Manheim, Mt. Hope and Lebanon. Besides these, there were the many Sunday School picnic trains and other outings to Penryn Park and to Lititz, which was always the great Fourth of July attraction. The Philadelphia and Reading also ran excursions over the R. & C. to more distant points such as Gettysburg, Philadelphia, New York, Mauch Chunk and Niagara Falls.

Strangely enough, the "high spot" in Reading and Columbia passenger train service did not come in the eighties or nineties, but as late as 1926, in the automobile age. On February 23, 1926 an express run, known as train number 992 and 999, was inaugurated between Lancaster and Reading carrying a through parlor car which was transferred to the Reading's fast "Queen of the Valley" for New York City.

The R. & C.'s "Flyer" made the 42-mile run from Lancaster to Reading in one hour and ten minutes including stops at Manheim, Lititz, Ephrata and Denver. The Reading assigned some of its fastest "camelback" passenger locomotives to the run and the passengers found that they were in for a real ride when they took the parlor car from Lancaster to New York. Regardless of all the sharp curves and grade crossings on the R.&C. the express dashed over the twenty-two miles between Lancaster and Ephrata in as little as 37 minutes with stops at Manheim and Lititz!

However, even with all its speed, the express service to New York did not receive the patronage that was expected. The through parlor car from Lancaster to New York, in fact, was rather short lived; it was withdrawn in November of 1926. However, the fast run to Reading to connect with the "Queen of the Valley" for New York did continue for a few years. Lack of patronage finally resulted in the Lancaster connection for the "Queen of the Valley" being discontinued on April 27, 1929.

## THE MODERN ERA

The Philadelphia and Reading, which operated the Reading and Columbia, was merged with the Reading Company in 1923. The Reading Company assumed the operation of the Reading and Columbia, but the R. & C. still retained its corporate existence. It was not until December 31, 1945 that the Reading and Columbia was merged with the Reading Company after which the R. & C. as a corporate identity ceased to exist.

Well-filled passenger trains chugged over the Reading and Columbia for many years. As late as 1927 there were as many as four week day and two Sunday passenger trains each way between Lancaster and Reading. There were also three week day and two Sunday passenger runs in each direction between Columbia and Lancaster Junction besides three week day and two Sunday trains, both ways over the "joint line" between Manheim and Lebanon.

The frequency of service on the Conestoga Traction trolley lines between Lancaster and Manheim, Lititz and Ephrata took passengers from the R. & C. but more serious competition came in the form of private automobiles and improved highways. In fact, this combination proved to be the undoing of both the R. & C. and the county trolley lines.

With the decline of Penryn Park as a picnic resort, patronage dwindled on the passenger trains between Manheim and Lebanon and they were the first runs to be eliminated. The last train pulled out of Manheim for Lebanon on January 23, 1929. By the end of 1930, the Chickies Branch had been torn up and passenger trains between Lancaster and Reading had been cut to three each way on week days and two on Sundays. Only two week day passenger runs in each direction remained between Columbia and Lancaster Junction.

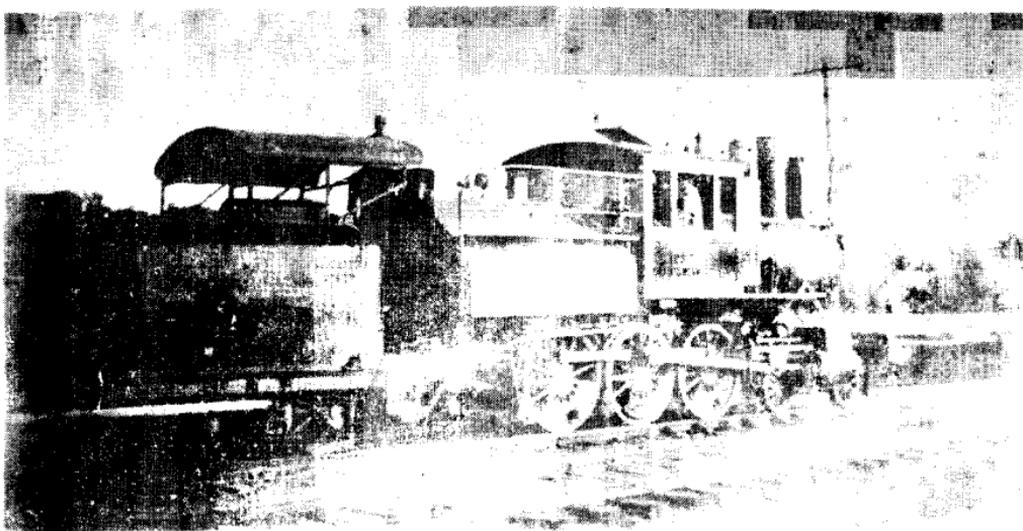
The Wilmington and Columbia Division was reorganized in 1932 and became part of the Reading Division. By 1933, buses of the Reading Transportation Company, a railroad subsidiary, had replaced all passenger trains between Lancaster and Reading with the exception of one week day train in each direction. A "mixed" train, which was a freight train trailing a coach on the rear, still made one week day round trip from Lancaster Junction into Columbia.

The Columbia mixed train was dropped from the time table on September 29, 1935 but the Columbia freight continued to carry a combination passenger and baggage car for handling express shipments. However, the combine coach was finally discontinued about 1939 and the Columbia Branch became an all freight operation.

The one remaining passenger run on the R. & C. was usually a gas-electric train, but when the gas-electric car was in the shops for servicing, a regular steam-powered Reading "camelback" took over on the run. The train actually served two branches of the Reading. It left Coatesville at 6:13 on week day mornings and ran to Reading over the Wilmington Branch. Leaving Reading at eight in the morning, it then ran to Lancaster over the R. & C. The return to Coatesville by way of Reading was made in the afternoon.

During its last years, the Lancaster passenger run saw few riders except railroad fans. The Railroad Post Office car kept the train running, but when the railroad lost the mail contract about 1947, it meant the end of the passenger train. True, the timetable still showed a "mixed" train between Lancaster and Reading, but this freight train with a coach attached required four hours to cover the forty-two miles between Lancaster and Reading and even this schedule was a matter of some conjecture because of the delays due to switching freight cars enroute. Of course few rode such a train, so this, the last vestige of passenger service on the Reading and Columbia, was discontinued on November 5, 1950.

Freight business on the R. & C. has changed over the years. The once important commodities such as anthracite coal, ore, lumber, pig iron from the blast furnaces and agricultural products have given way to shipments of modern industrial products. During 1925, the Lancaster freight yard was rebuilt extensively and on January 20, 1926 the Reading opened a new freight station on North Prince Street in Lancaster.



R.&C. No. 87. Built in the Reading Shops in 1876. Originally named "Lancaster." Renumbered "1093" by the P.&R. Renumbered "87" in April, 1900. Last engine to carry the R.&C. lettering. Locomotive scrapped in 1920.

(Photo Credit: Mrs. Charles Pike, Coatesville, Pa.)

The development of Lancaster County in recent years has resulted in various new industries being located along the Reading and Columbia. The more efficient diesel locomotive has replaced the steam locomotive and now the latest thing in freight service is the "truck-train" or highway motor truck trailers being hauled on railroad flat cars. Today the Reading and Columbia Branch is an up-to-date freight operation of the Reading Company.

The automobile era brought to an end the days of the railroad excursion. One of the last specials out of Columbia over the R. & C. was a trip to Hershey Park in 1930 carrying members of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. With the exception of a few railfan specials operated over the R. & C. from Philadelphia and Reading, by the late thirties, the old fashioned excursion, as such, had vanished from the R. & C. When the Reading and Columbia Branch became a freight only operation, the possibility of an excursion became even more unlikely.

So, by all odds, the idea of a 12-car excursion loading on the R. & C. in Columbia in the 1960's seemed impossible, but the impossible happened! On October 29, 1961 a 12-car train with over 700 passengers pulled out of Columbia on the first of a series of "Rail Rambles" operated by the West Hempfield Township Lions' Club of Silver Springs, Pennsylvania. For many, it was their first ride over the R. & C. The all-day trip to Reading and Allentown and then over the picturesque Perkiomen Branch was quite a success.

The second trip over the R. & C. out of Columbia on May 27, 1962 carried another 700 passengers northward over the Reading to the anthracite coal regions around Tamaqua. Probably what was the first train "hold up" in the history of the R. & C. was staged on the return trip when the train was stopped by masked riders at Manheim and the engineer had to buy a wooden nickel before the train could continue on to Columbia. The stunt was put on to promote the Manheim Bi-centennial celebration.

The Lions Club's third trip from Columbia carried 600 passengers destined for a ride over the Reading's Wilmington Branch on October 28, 1962. When the 12-car special returned to Columbia that evening, it marked possibly what might be the last passenger train arrival on the R. & C. in Columbia. Shortly afterwards, the Reading Company announced that it would no longer be possible to operate passenger trains over the R. & C. branch between Lancaster Junction and Columbia.

However, it took more than this to dampen the spirits of the West Hempfield Township Lions Club. A trip from Columbia to Gettysburg, in connection with the Civil War Centennial, was planned for June 30, 1963. When it was found that the train could not be operated out of Columbia, the starting point was moved to Manheim. The organization even has plans for future trips over the R. & C. so apparently in this age of the jet and the sportscar, the old fashioned excursion still has its appeal.

Now the Reading and Columbia enters its second hundred years of operation. What will be its future? Will it be affected by the various railroad mergers now being proposed? No one can predict, but we can be sure that the Reading and Columbia Branch of the Reading Company will continue to contribute to the development of the area it serves.

Strangely enough, on the afternoon of November 8, 1962 a long forgotten sound echoed through the hills along the Reading and Columbia Branch. It was the whistle of a steam locomotive — the last Reading "camelback" in existence. It was riding the rails of the R. & C. enroute to the railroad museum at Strasburg. The sight of the camelback coming down the line and the sound of its whistle brought back many memories to veteran Reading railroaders. They were memories of old times on the Reading and Columbia.

#### APPENDIX I.<sup>1</sup>

Freight and Passenger Business of the Reading and Columbia Railroad for August, 1875, on the Columbia to Reading main line only.

Number of passengers carried .....	27,004
Number of passenger trains run .....	217
Number of freight trains run .....	222
Total number of trains run .....	439
Number of coal cars received .....	5396
Number of coal cars returned .....	5323
Total number of coal cars handled .....	10,719
Highest number of coal cars on the road at any one time during the month ....	1,066
Number of freight, stone and ore cars received .....	1,741
Number of freight, stone and ore cars returned .....	1,742
Total number of all kinds of cars moved on the R.&C. during the month, not including passenger cars .....	14,202

<sup>1</sup>Columbia Spy, 18 September 1875.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John DeWitt Denney, Jr. has been a serious student of railroad history throughout his life, and has written frequently articles for publication on railroads and trolleys. He operates his own insurance agency in Columbia, where he is active in historical and civic affairs. A native of Columbia, Mr. Denney is the son of Dr. John D. and Anne Libhart Denney, who also have an abiding interest in local history. His grandparents, DeWitt C. and Clara Patton Denney, and his great-grandfather, John Q. Denney, were residents of Columbia. John Q. Denney designed, erected and managed several iron and steel industries in Columbia, Marietta and Harrisburg, and was the founder of the electric street car system in the latter place. His wife was Rachel Mathiot, daughter of Samuel Mathiot, of another ancient Columbia family.