

# The Liggie

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## RESTORATION PROJECTS AWAIT FUNDING

Two significant projects are on hold until sufficient funds are available to begin them. Three antique railroad signals acquired from Russ Lowden in February 2006 have been lying outside on concrete supports ever since they were moved to the station. Also, although from a distance the LVRRA caboose looks to be in relatively good shape, an up-close view reveals its dire need of restoration, especially the roof which is now covered with canvas.



*The high ball signal visible in the background in this vintage photograph of the Wells River Railroad Station, Vermont, now awaits restoration at the LVRR Museum.*

One of the three signals is a high-ball signal, dating from the early days of railroading around the mid-1800s. After controlling rail traffic for 100 years in Wells River, Vermont, it was retired and sold to Bill Smith of Latrobe in the mid-1950s.

The Wells River ball signal was positioned at the intersection of three railroads. The number of balls visible above the cylinder indicated which train had the right-of-way. Although such a signal was never used by the LVRR, it is a significant piece of railroad history, which the LVRRA is proud to own.



*The two semaphore signals and the high-ball signal as they stood in Lowden's back yard in 2006 before LVRRA purchased them*

The two semaphore signals awaiting restoration at the station are from two different time periods. One dates back to the mid-to-late 1800s and was illuminated by a kerosene lantern. The history of this signal is unknown. The second semaphore dates back to the early 1900s. This signal, lit by electricity, was built by the Union Switch and Signal

Company in Swissvale, Pennsylvania, and was used in Brownsville on the Pennsylvania Railroad line.

All three of the signals need to be disassembled, sandblasted, and painted. If any parts are unusable, they will be replaced. Once this phase of the restoration is paid for, the LVRRA will erect the signals on the museum grounds. The cost of the total project is estimated to be approximately \$10,000. The completion date is contingent upon funding.

Even though some improvements have been made to the caboose since its acquisition in 2007, rebuilding the roof remains a major priority. The exact cost of replacing the roof on the caboose cannot be determined until the roof and ceiling are removed so that the amount of damage underneath can be detected. At this point, the estimated cost is set at \$10,000.



*The roof framing is rotting away.*

Once the roof is repaired, the LVRRA plans to replace the siding and restore the metal components on the caboose platform, including the railing, whistle, brake wheel, and ladder.

The last phase of the caboose restoration will involve the interior. Already it has been painted and replacement bench seats have been installed. Later, the LVRRA hopes to install a chimney for the stove and replace the water reservoir.



*The corner of the fascia board is split and hanging loose.*

Work will begin immediately on both projects once the funding has been attained. Contributions toward these restoration projects may be mailed to: LVRRA, PO Box 21, Ligonier, PA 15658. Please earmark any checks for artifact restoration.

**NEW MEMBERS  
SINCE September 1, 2011**

Wayne Aguilo  
John Brodahl  
Felix Brunot  
Bruce & Peggy Gideon  
Jack Harris  
Malcolm Mather  
Bill Myers  
Laura Reed  
Patrick Ritchey  
Dr. Joseph Turek  
Judith Wilson  
Jason Young

## VOLUNTEER DONATES LAYOUT

Peggy Gideon, a life-long resident of Ligonier Valley, volunteers four hours, two days per week at the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum. Gideon is currently scanning photographs in the LVRRA collection, which will then be catalogued. Once this project is complete, LVRRA will be able to locate a photograph of a person, place or event upon request.



*Peggy Gideon has found a new home for her sons' layout.*

In addition, Gideon gave the LVRRA the HO model train layout that had been in her family room for the past 17 years. This layout will be a special attraction for younger visitors.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

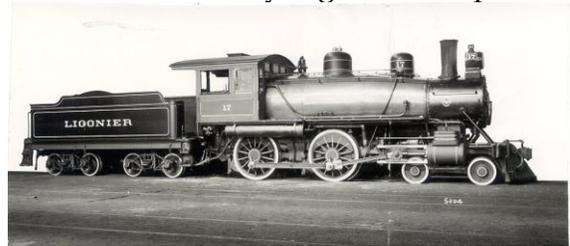
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## LVRR STEAM LOCOMOTIVES CHANGED WITH THE TIMES

During its standard gauge era (1882 to 1952), LVRR owned between 18 and 20 steam locomotives. The LVRR operated with only two or three until 1905, but began to purchase additional locomotives once the coal and coke business north of Ligonier began to prosper. Between 1906 and 1949, the LVRR had in operation between four to six locomotives at any given time. In the final three years that the LVRR was still operating, it had reduced its number of locomotives to three.

Although during its operation, the LVRR owned different types of locomotives, two favorites stand out. The most common method of classifying locomotives then as well as now is the Whyte System, which categorizes locomotives by the number and arrangement of wheels, dividing them into leading, driving, and trailing.

From 1882 to 1914, the LVRR bought five 4-4-0 locomotives, which had large drive wheels designed to pull passenger trains as well as lighter-weight freight trains at a relatively high rate of speed.



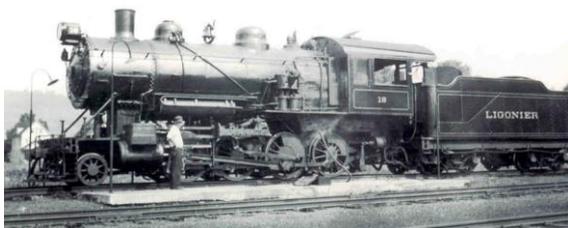
*Engine #17 4-4-0 purchased new from Baldwin*

Although information does not exist on the first 4-4-0, between 1893 and 1910 LVRR purchased from the Pennsylvania Railroad three used 4-4-0 locomotives, which had been built at the Altoona Works. The fifth was purchased new from the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia.

The 4-4-0, known as the American type, was the dominant new locomotive in the United States from 1840 to 1880. Henry Campbell patented it in 1836 and Joseph Harrison improved its design in 1837. Although Mathias Baldwin resisted this innovation at first, it is Baldwin who is given credit for perfecting the existing design of the 4-4-0.

Baldwin died in 1866 but the Baldwin Locomotive Works continued to operate and by 1950 had produced 80,000 steam locomotives. The 4-4-0 was the main general service locomotive into the 1880s and remained in service until the end of the steam-locomotive age.

In 1905 the LVRR purchased its first 2-8-0. It was popularly known as the Consolidation, named so after the consolidation of the Lehigh and Mahanoy with the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Alexander Mitchell, the master mechanic of the Lehigh and Mahanoy, drew up the plans for the 2-8-0 in 1865 and convinced Baldwin to build the prototype. As the coal, coke, and lumber industries began to thrive, the need for a new locomotive became apparent.



*Engines with the 2-8-0 wheel configuration, as seen in this photograph of Engine #18, were designed for pulling power.*

The 2-8-0 design put greater weight on the drive wheels, thus creating a higher adhesion to the tracks. This locomotive was designed with smaller wheels and more power to accommodate trains carrying heavier freight. The power allowed such trains to move at a more reasonable speed up steeper grades.

By 1950 the LVRR had purchased ten Consolidations, two used ones from the Pennsylvania Railroad, five new ones from the Baldwin Locomotive Works, and another two used locomotives from Southern Railway. Information about the one bought in 1907 is unclear.

Once the Consolidation was adopted by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1875 as one of its "standard types," other railroads took notice. By 1900 approximately 9,000 had been built and by World War I, the Consolidation was being used all over the country. The Consolidation was the most common type of locomotive used in America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sources:

Aldridge, James. Roster of LVRR Locomotives.  
Solomon, Brian. Steam Locomotives. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Lowe and B. Houldt, 2002.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Editor — Bob Stutzman

Associate Editor — Carolyn H. Dillon

## LVRRA IS INDEBTED TO EARLY COLLECTORS OF LVRR MEMORABILIA

Fortunately, long before the LVRRA organized, individuals saw the value of collecting artifacts, memorabilia and photographs related to the LVRR. Once these collectors became aware of the LVRRA's intent to build a museum, numbers of them have offered to share their LVRR keepsakes with the LVRRA.

One such collector is Ray Kinsey, a Ligonier native, who began collecting anything related to the LVRR since it shut down in 1952. Bill McCullough, co-founder and president of the LVRRA, over a period of many years has collected numerous LVRR photographs. Both of these men have shared their collections with the LVRRA.

Probably the pre-eminent collector of all things LVRR was Bill Smith, the founder of the Penn-Ligonier Railroad Club, who died in 1977, leaving his extensive railroad collection to his daughter Virginia, who, in turn, passed it on to her husband, Russ Lowden. The museum is indebted to Smith who recognized the value of preserving LVRR artifacts as well as to Lowden who enabled the LVRRA to purchase Smith's coveted railroad collection.

In 2004 Jack Emory, another collector, agreed to sell to the LVRRA four pieces of hardware removed from LVRR Engine #19 before it was scrapped in 1949. Emory had bought these artifacts from Smith for \$1,000 in the 1970s and generously sold them to the LVRRA for the same price.

The museum is greatly indebted to all of these people as well as to so many others who have helped to preserve the

history of the LVRR, which played such a vital part in the development of the Ligonier Valley.

## RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

*Thanks to all contributors for the following items that have been donated to the LVRRA since the last Liggie publication:*

**Walter Berko** — Western Electric magneto telephone, circa 1900, and collection of DVDs pertaining to the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and the West Penn Railway

**Ora Dalton** — 1926 Pullman towel

**Ed Fritz, Jr.** — Souvenir hat from the Last Run

**Bruce and Peggy Gideon** — HO model-train layout

**Richard Kiehart** — Extensive collection of PRR memorabilia, including a railroad conductor's watch and an authentic caboose mattress (These items were inherited from Kiehart's father and grandfather, who both worked for the PRR.)

**Bill and Deborah Moore** — Image of Moore's home alongside the LVRR tracks in 1950s

**Don Neiderhiser** — Pocket first-aid kit for railroad employees

**Jim Ramsay** — Portable carport to be used for venues such as the Fort Days booth

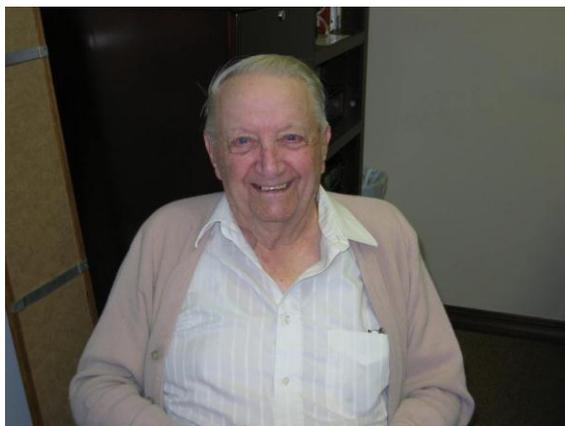
**Bob and Carolyn Stutzman** — Collection of railroad books

**Joe Yarger** — Spikes used to date railroad ties

## LOCAL MEN LEAVE LEGACIES

The LVRRA lost four Friends in recent months. As the older generation passes, the LVRR will be only a notation in history books unless the memories of individuals with first-hand knowledge of the railroad are recorded.

Buss Gilman (1913-2011) lived all of his life in his family's house on W. Vincent Street near to the LVRR engine house. From the time that he was a young boy until 1952 when the railroad shut down, Gilman observed the operation of the LVRR and became acquainted with many of the employees who worked there.



*Buss Gilman in a 2007 interview*

Gilman had close ties also to the Darlington Station where he delivered milk and ice cream to the convenience store located within the station. Gilman described how the blocks of ice delivered to the station had to be shaved to keep the milk from spoiling. He remembered also that during the 1930s the station agent was McMahan but could not remember his first name.

It was Gilman's recollection of the color of the Darlington Station that confirmed that the original color of the station was buff. Gilman was the one who also pointed out that the original bridge spanning the Loyalhanna Creek at Longbridge was a one-lane bridge at grade level with the railroad tracks.

Bill Holmberg (1934-2011) was born in Elstie, Pennsylvania, before moving to Ligonier in 1968 where he opened the Frontier Zoo, an attraction at Idlewild Park that he managed until 1985. In his later years, he was known for his flower gardens, which he planted and maintained at his home and also at several estates around Ligonier Valley.

Holmberg, who was a charter member of the Friends of the LVRR, lived on the Darlington Road overlooking Buttermilk Falls. He volunteered to be a first responder to any emergency that might occur at the Darlington Station since he lived so close.



*Holmberg's home overlooked Buttermilk Falls.  
(Photograph dated 1936)*

Holmberg donated to the LVRRA an original cast-iron Ligonier station sign that was given to him as a

retirement gift by the Macdonald family. He also gave his antique glass-bottle collection to the museum. Since he had collected these milk and pop bottles from former dump sites on Idlewild property, he speculated that at least some of them had been bought at the local convenience store in the Darlington Station and should be returned there.

Carl Mattioli (1924-2011), often referred to as "Mr. Latrobe," was a long-time president of the Latrobe Historical Society. His interest in history led him to share any information he found about the LVRR with the LVRRA. He regularly donated news clippings about the railroad, which he found while perusing microfilms of past local newspapers. Mattioli also invited the LVRRA to present its PowerPoint program, "Come Along With Us and Ride the LVRR," at one of the historical society's meetings, further promoting the LVRRA.

Tom Weimer (1930-2011) retired as superintendent of Linn Run State Park after 30 years of service. Weimer's contribution to the LVRRA was a folder containing a number of original documents from the 1912 wreck on the Ligonier line. Around 1953, when Weimer was a member of a work party contracted to clean out the Ligonier Station prior to its sale to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Weimer found the folder, which had evidently fallen behind a file cabinet many years before. After safeguarding the file

for more than 50 years, he donated it to the LVRRA.

A few of the items in the folder Weimer found included admission slips for those taken to Latrobe Hospital, an invoice from St. Vincent Archabbey for burials, and a letter to the LVRR from Justice of the Peace E. G.

Nicely, filing for expenses incurred while summoning help from Ligonier to the accident site.

It is through such contributions as these four men made to the LVRR Museum that the history of the LVRR will remain alive for future generations.

**Friend forever – in memorial**

**Clarence "Buss" Gilman**  
**William Holmberg**  
**Carl Mattioli**  
**Tom Weimer**

**2012 CALENDAR OF LVRRA EVENTS**

- April 28 — Model Train Tour
- May 26 — Annual Dinner
- June 30 — Field Trip to trace the Mill Creek Branch of the LVRR, which includes the site of the 1912 train wreck

**THE MISSION OF THE LVRRA  
Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association  
Organized in 2004:**

**To Preserve** the legacy of the LVRR  
**To Conserve** vestiges of the LVRR  
**To Collect** memorabilia of the LVRR  
**To Educate** the public about the history  
of railroading in Ligonier Valley

**FORT DAYS INFORMATION  
BOOTH PROMOTES THE  
LVRR MUSEUM**

Over Fort Ligonier Days in October, twenty-three Friends helped to distribute literature and answer questions at the LVRRA information booth located in front of the school's administration building, formerly the Ligonier Station. Many people who stopped by the booth showed an interest in visiting the museum and some even stopped there on the way home that day. Thanks to all of the volunteers, especially those who worked Friday during the stormy weather.



*Zinta Jacob, age 3, of Pittsburgh takes her turn  
ringing the bell from Engine #19.  
(Photo by Bill Pribisco)*

**CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT THE  
LVRR MUSEUM**

Anyone looking for a unique Christmas gift should consider visiting the gift shop at the Darlington Station. Several options are available:

Wilpen DVD originally filmed in color during the 1940s by Pete Picadio

Picadio, who was born in Wilpen, captured the time period through a video focused on the town, coke ovens, coal cars and the LVRR. For those interested in the coal and coke business in the Ligonier Valley, it is a treasure.

Denim shirts with LVRR Museum logo for men and women in sizes small to XXL

Baseball caps, steins and lapel pins with the LGV reporting mark

Model-train cars in both O and HO gauge with Ligonier Valley markings

O gauge doodlebug, which announces the stations between Latrobe and Ligonier, custom-made by MTH Electric Trains for the LVRRA

Original artwork of restored Darlington Station painted on one of its original roof slates by local artist Lynn G. Byers

Post cards and gift cards

**E-VERSION OF THE LIGGIE**

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