

LEWISTOWN STATION AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE STATUS AND OBJECTIVES – FEBRUARY, 2008

By Robert L. Johnson, Chairman

This report is an outline of accomplishments since January 2001 and both near-term and longer goals. The goals are listed to the right of a double vertical line (||). Current year goals follow a bold face 2008. Future goals follow the expected years to completion in bold face (1-5, 5-10, or 10+). For more details on accomplishments, please see the quarterly Station and Archives reports in *The Keystone* and on the Society's website or the monthly reports in *Keystone e-News*.

ADMINISTRATION

An Archives Committee was formed by the PRRT&HS Board of Directors. It was later renamed the Lewistown Station and Archives Committee. The Committee reviewed information on the collection gathered by the volunteers, surveyed potential archive users, and made numerous recommendations on how to proceed. A policy on acknowledgments of donations to the collection and large financial donations was developed and put to use. A general emergency procedures document was obtained. The station building was appraised and the proper amount of insurance was purchased. The PRRT&HS By-Laws were revised to reflect current realities in providing for the future maintenance of archives. A draft of donation guidelines was completed and adopted. An Accessions Manager was appointed. A draft donation form was generated. || Goals: **1-5** – Adopt a donation form. Find volunteers to manage all or part of the following underlined areas. **5-10** – Prepare a detailed manual of all systems and equipment on site. Write and implement detailed emergency procedures.

LEWISTOWN STATION AND GROUNDS

1. **Station Building, General** – Bird guards have been installed to prevent the roosting of pigeons and the resulting unsanitary conditions. Ridge and eaves vents were installed to prolong the life of the roof. All wiring was inspected and a small amount of temporary wiring was replaced with proper industrial grade wiring. Canopy roof repairs were completed at the East End of the Station in compliance with professional engineering design and applicable building codes. Snow guards were installed on the new canopy roof. || Goals: **1-5** – Replace the water heaters and the main roof as needed.
2. **Safety Equipment** – A second telephone line was installed, separate from the Amtrak Room line. An alarmed emergency exit was installed on the interior door of the Amtrak Room. All the fire extinguishers are inspected annually. Smoke detectors were installed in the bunkhouse. Existing exit lights and emergency lights were repaired. Additional exit lights and emergency lights were installed to bring the entire building up to code. All fire extinguishers were properly mounted. Modern types of fire suppression systems have been investigated. || Goals: **1-5** – Hire a professional engineer to design a fire suppression system. **5-10** – Install the system.
3. **Security Equipment** – A high-security lock system was installed in the Station. Stronger windows were installed in the Amtrak Room. A burglar and fire alarm system was installed with 24-hour a day monitoring by a professional service.

4. **Climate Control** – Information was gathered to help specify a system to protect the collection. || Goals: **1-5** – Hire a professional engineer to evaluate options for the system. **5-10** - Install the system.
5. **Amtrak Room** – The Middle Division Chapter provides volunteers to staff this waiting room for our tenant, Amtrak. A room air conditioner was installed.
6. **Attic** – There are no plans for use of this unheated, uninsulated space.
7. **Basement** – Tower model boards were removed. Unwanted materials have been removed and storage of remaining material has been improved.
8. **Dark Room** – The glass plate negatives were removed. Room is now used for donations. || Goals: **10+** – Decide and implement the best use of this room.
9. **Flattley Room** – The three large bookcases were moved in here. The room currently houses the microfilm cabinet, the copier for microfilmed drawings, a microfilm viewer, one Xerox copier, donated books, and donations not yet integrated into the collection. The glass-front bookcases have been filled with books. || Goals: **5-10** – Depending on the recommended climate control system, decide the future use of this space.
10. **Keystone Room** – A small room off the back hall was cleaned out, shelving was built, and the back issues of *The Keystone*, books and other Society products were moved in.
11. **Lower Archive Room** – Empty filing cabinets were removed and the rest of the cabinets were consolidated to the West End of the room. Shelving was built to hold the Mechanical Files. A ramp was installed to permit book trucks to haul materials in and out. The shelving has been determined to be stable with its present loading of archival cartons. || Goals: **1-5** – Verify that shelving is stable with additional loading of rolls of drawings on the upper shelves. Build more shelving as needed.
12. **Lynch Library** – Currently holds filing cabinets from Lower Archives Room, donations, Society records and a display case. || Goal: **5-10** – Depending on the recommended climate control system, decide the future use of this space. If it will be air conditioned, convert it into the archives search room, for use by members and the public doing research.
13. **Middle Division Room** – The former waiting room was renamed to honor the employees of the PRR Middle Division, as well as the members of the Middle Division Chapter who worked on the restoration of the Station. It is currently used for wall-mounted displays, Middle Division Chapter meetings, volunteer archiving sessions and occasional research. || Goal: **5-10** – If the Lynch Library will be the search room, install coat rack and lockers for briefcases for additional use as the anteroom for the Archives.
14. **Tower** – Currently holds several of the interlocking station model boards. || Goal: **10+** – Create a working display of these boards.
15. **Upper Archive Room** – Currently used to house most of the collection. || Goals: **10+** – Expand shelving into this area. Install a “dumb waiter” or similar device to move heavy boxes to and from this area for use in the search room.
16. **Vault** – Currently holds four sets of archived copies of *The Keystone* and other Society publications, the film negative collection and the Lynch slide collection. || Goal: **1-5** – Define and implement the best use of this space.
17. **Tool House** – Construction of a new tool house (begun earlier) was completed and the old mower storage shed was removed.
18. **Bunkhouse** – Reconstruction of the basement of the former baggage building (also begun earlier) converted the space from a damp garage to a clean, well-lighted and dry storage area.

Currently being used for book storage. The upper level of the former baggage building is used as a bunkhouse for archive volunteers. A room air conditioner was installed.

19. **Grounds** – Volunteers from the Middle Division Chapter handle grass cutting and maintenance. Repairs to the platform curbing were completed. A new grass-cutting tractor was purchased. A new illuminated flagpole was installed. Patching and sealing of the platform was completed. Sealing and relining of the parking lot was completed. || Goal: **10+** – Obtain a position light signal and install as a working display. Repave platform and parking lot when needed.

THE ON-SITE ARCHIVING PROJECT

1. **Mechanical Department Files** (comprising correspondence, drawings, instructions, and photographs) – Brief descriptions of some 21,000 files have been written and entered into a computer database. Loree decimal classification numbers have been assigned to all of the files. The computer database was organized in Loree Number order. A shelf and carton numbering system was implemented. About 62% of the correspondence files have been processed into archival folders and cartons. A summary of the processed files was placed on the Society's website. || Goals: **2008** – Continue processing the files. **1-5** – Finish processing the files and generate the final version of the database. Place a searchable file on the Internet and exchange databases with other archives.
2. **Donations** – All the donations from individuals have been inventoried and brief descriptions written. The 2007 accessions have been entered in a computer. || Goals: **1-5** – Enter prior donation descriptions in a computer. Process the donations into the main collection and into the database.
3. **Valuation Maps** (original tracings) – About 75% of these maps have been indexed. The remainder of the maps have been obtained and 63% have been flattened and placed in the map files. || Goals: **1-5** – Index the rest of the maps. Obtain and install neutral pH folders, and make a database of the descriptions.
4. **Equipment Drawings** (blueprints) || Goals: **1-5** – Organize, index and archivally store all the equipment drawings. Make a database.
5. **PRRT&HS Archives** (*Keystones*, books, centerfolds, recordings and Society records) || Goals: **1-5** – Organize, index and archivally store the *Keystones*, books, centerfolds and recordings. **10+** - Organize and store the Society records.
6. **Maps and Plat Books** || Goals: **5-10** – Organize, index and archivally store these items.
7. **Engineering Department Drawings** (from Pittsburgh Station) || Goals: **5-10** – Organize, index and archivally store these drawings in related groups.
8. **Valuation Maps** (update blueprints) || Goals: **5-10** – Organize, index and archivally store these maps.
9. **Consolidated Files** || Goals: **10+** – Organize, index and archivally store these files.
10. **Lewistown Files** || Goals: **10+** – Organize, index and archivally store these files.
11. **Engineering Department Drawings** (from Chesapeake Region) || Goals: **10+** – Organize, index and archivally store these drawings.

MICROFILM

1. **Equipment** – The printer was cleaned and repaired by replacement of the drum and several smaller parts, restoring it to like-new operation. A microfilm viewer was placed in operation.

2. **Microfilm** – A cabinet was purchased to hold all the microfilm. Eight rolls of microfilm were purchased from the State Archives to complete our collection of equipment drawings.
3. **Lists of Tracings** – The originals of the Society’s lists were organized in a filing cabinet. The computer files were transferred to Excel. Ordering information and lists of general arrangement and lettering arrangement drawings were made available through the Society’s website. || Goals: **5-10** – Obtain more Lists of Tracings and make them available. **10+** - Make the lists available through the Society’s web site, perhaps as shorter versions.
4. **Catalog** – || Goals: **10+** – Produce catalogs of the most useful drawings for each class of equipment, similar to the current lists of general arrangement and lettering arrangement drawings for freight cars, but including more types of drawings. Produce a digital catalog of all the drawings on the microfilm.
5. **Service** – Volunteers handle sales of copies of Lists of Tracings and copies of equipment drawings from the microfilm. An early version of an improved finding aid has been put into use. || Goal: **1-5** – Complete this finding aid.
6. **Policy** – Income and costs are monitored to make sure the service is viable. A tentative policy for furnishing copies of drawings to on-site patrons was developed. || Goals: **2008** – Adopt a policy for over-the-counter sales at Lewistown.

PHOTOGRAPHS

There are numerous photographic prints in the collection in addition to the ones in the Mechanical Files. A total of 1688 PRR official photographs have been scanned and placed on CD’s. || Goals: **5-10** – Extend the photographic storage method to include all the photographs in the collection, both color and black & white. Make a digital index of all the photographs. Determine policy for making copy negatives, digital images, etc.

GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES

The glass plate negatives are being cleaned, indexed, and placed in archival envelopes and boxes. About 49% of the 5300 negatives have been processed. Also, 1,523 copy negatives (4 by 5 size) have been made. || Goals: **2008** – Continue processing the glass plates and making copy negatives. **1-5** – Complete the cleaning, indexing and archival housing of the glass plates. Complete the production of copy negatives of the best images. **5-10** - Produce a digital catalog and offer prints for sale from copy negatives as part of the film negative project. Consider how best to allow use of these images in Lewistown.

SLIDES

A slidefile system was selected to archivally store the slide collections. It will provide the best dust protection, while minimizing cost and space. || Goals: **2008** – Continue indexing the various collections. **1-5** – Complete indexing of now-existing collections. Determine which images we own and which are copies. **5-10** - Decide how to make copies available. Set policy for use of the images in Lewistown. Integrate collection indexes into a general index.

FILM NEGATIVES

1. **Housing** – The main collection is in new glassine envelopes in metal cabinets. Additions to the collection are in archival sleeves in acid free envelopes, which are in acid free boxes. || Goal: **5-10** – Decide how we want to store the main collection and implement.

2. **Database** – The main collection database has been converted from dBASE 3 to Excel. || Goals: **5-10** – Enter additions in the Excel files. Create a working database.
3. **Catalog** || Goals: **5-10** – Decide what sort of catalog is wanted and implement.
4. **Photographic Prints** || Goals: **5-10** – Write an RFP for people to make and sell prints or digital images for the Society. Select one or more such people and begin sales. Make decisions on pricing, publication of images, and viewing of images at Lewistown.

MOTION PICTURES, VIDEOTAPES, DVDs and SOUND RECORDINGS

|| Goals: **10+** – Determine best methods to store these items and implement. Determine the need to convert them to other media or formats. Determine policies for duplicating and for use in Lewistown. Acquire needed equipment.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

|| Goals: **5-10** – Make a catalog. Set policies for how many copies of each to retain in the collection, how books may be used in Lewistown, and what may be copied.

ARCHIVES OPERATIONS

1. **Opening For Research** – The original plan had been to open the archives for use as soon as the Mechanical Department Files were archivally arranged. The processed portion of the Mechanical files were declared open for research in May 2007.
2. **Equipment** – Two Xerox copiers have been placed in operation for use by volunteers. A laptop computer has been placed in service. A new desktop computer was obtained for exclusive use in the archives. Search room furniture sufficient for two researchers was obtained. || Goals: **1-5** – Obtain a copier for large drawings and tracings. Investigate digital scanning, storage and printing of drawings.
3. **Procedures** – The Board decided that four sets of publications would be adequate for the archives, with one set for use by researchers. The Board decided that loan of any archival material requires a prior written request to be approved by the officers and directors upon recommendation by the Archives Director. Material for use in *The Keystone*, *The Keystone Modeler*, and Society books may be signed out and back in by the Editor and a responsible archives person. The rules and procedures needed to operate as an archive were completed. || Goals: **1-5** - Determine how and when to sell unwanted items from the collection.
4. **Staffing and Hours** – It was determined that the archives will be open by appointment only when a volunteer archiving team is present. Practice sessions were held to train the staff.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

If you have read this far, perhaps you share our concern over the passage of time and the long times yet needed to prepare certain portions of the collection for use. We have hard-working volunteers. What we need are a few volunteers to manage different projects. If you see an area of interest to you that is not expected to be ready soon enough to suit, please consider taking on the management of that area. The volunteers are not trained archivists. All of us have learned on the job. You can, too. Please contact Archives Director Bob Johnson, 5000 Northlawn Circle, Murrysville, PA 15668 or bojohnson@alltel.net for information on volunteer management opportunities. We need you.