

"From Our Collection"

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road (LVRR) Museum is home to artifacts from the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset railroads. This column will appear in subsequent issues of the Liggie and will explore some of the many artifacts we have at the Museum. Our collection policy sets guidelines for what we collect. In broad terms the policy states:

"We collect items for the Museum that were associated with a person, place or event pertaining to the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, or to a limited extent are typical or representative of objects related to railroading which are of a historical, cultural, or aesthetic nature; and which should fall in the period of operation of the LVRR. This can include items from the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad."

This month we will take a look at railroad china. One of the first dining cars was introduced in 1863 on the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad by converting a 50 foot day coach into a diner. By the 1890's all railroads had added diners to their long distance trains and although dining cars lost money, railroads had them to attract riders.

Along with the development of dining cars came the development of railroad china, often decorated with the railroad name or logo. Sumptuous meals and unique menus were a way to attract riders from competing lines. Railroad china, like many other collectibles, was held in little esteem until recent years when it became relatively scarce.

For some examples of the menus of different railroads see *"Dining by Rail"* by James D. Porterfield.

A sample of the menus listed in the book:

- Avocado Cocktail from the Southern Pacific
- New Corn Chowder, Southern Style, from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe
- Roquefort Salad Dressing from the Great Northern
- Deviled Roast Beef with Mustard Sauce from the Pennsylvania
- Potatoes Romanoff from the Illinois Central
- Peas in Butter from the Pullman Company
- Hot Strawberry Sundae from the Fred Harvey Company

In the days before Air Force One, the President of the United States traveled by private rail car. On one such occasion in 1901, when President William McKinley and his party was en route to the Pacific Coast, the Pullman Company Dining Car Service prepared this menu for lunch on May 28:

Sliced Tomatoes	Tongue	Preserved Fruits
India Relish	Ham	Golden Gate Fruits
Roast Loin of Veal	Sardines	English and Graham Wafers
Lamb Stew with Vegetables	Pickled Lamb's Tongue	Fresh Fruit
Baked Potato	Boston Baked Beans	Canadian and Edam Cheese
Browned Potatoes	Chicken Salad	Bent's Water Crackers
Asparagus, Buttered Beets	Ice Cream	Coffee
Spring Beans, Roast Beef	Cake	Tea
	Marmalade	

L. C. Armfield, Pullman's Commissary manager, perhaps understated it to the press when he said, "The presidential party was well fed."

(The above is an excerpt from *Dining by Rail* by James D. Porterfield)

In order to serve the meals a lot of items were required, such as silver, flatware, glassware, china, menus, menu holders, linens, sugar bowls, coffee carafes, glasses, cups and saucers, finger bowls and more. Railroad china was heavier than standard china since it had to be durable enough to withstand a lot of use which included washing, stacking, temperature extremes, and heavy use of utensils. It also had to stay in place on the table of a rocking dining car.

For the Pennsylvania Railroad our collection at the museum has examples of several different patterns including Keystone, Liberty, Purple Laurel, Allegheny and Broadway. For Pullman we have the Indian Tree pattern, and for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) we have examples of the Centenary pattern. The B&O introduced the "Centenary" pattern of china for its dining cars in 1927 for the railroad's 100th anniversary.

The Pennsylvania Railroad items have a PRR Keystone Logo printed on the bottoms of the tableware. In the cases of the Sugar Bowl, Menu Holder, and Coffee Carafe, which were in Sterling silver, the logo is a raised imprint on the item. These last are Holloware, which is tableware such as sugar bowls, creamers, coffee pots, teapots, soup tureens, hot food covers, water jugs, platters, butter pat plates and other metal items that went with the dishware on a table. It does not include flatware.

There were several firms that produced railroad china, among them were Buffalo, Scammell's, Lamberton, Shenango, Interpace, Syracuse, and Sterling.



Figure 1

Figure - Pennsylvania Railroad 8 1/4" plate with the Purple Laurel Pattern. This was manufactured by Scammell's of Trenton, NJ.



Figure 2

Figure 2 - B&O China Butter Pat. Centenary Pattern. Shenango, Capital Logo. We also have a butter pat for the Pennsylvania Railroad



Figure 3 - PRR Coffee Carafe
Holloware International Silver
Company

Figure 3



Figure 4 -PRR Sugar Bowl with
Lid International Silver Company
47 Holloware

Figure 4



Figure 5 - B&O Tall Creamer,
Centenary Pattern, made by
Shenango.

Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 6 - PRR Egg Cup
Liberty Pattern

Sources:

"Dining on Rails" by Richard Luckin.

"Dining by Rail" by James D. Porterfield

www.railroadiana.org

Pennsylvania Railroad Museum *"Milepost"* April 2013



Figure 7

Figure 7 - PRR Finger Bowl
Holder, Holloware, International
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