



# *The Liggie*

Published by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association for Friends of the LVRR  
June 2018

---

---

## Why Narrow Gauge?

When the Ligonier Valley Rail Road began revenue service in 1877, it was a narrow gauge common carrier. Between the inside vertical surfaces of the rails it measured three feet.

But why did the Ligonier Valley Rail Road begin life as a narrow gauge carrier and not a standard gauge (4 feet, 8 and ½ inches) one? It was because the Ligonier Valley Rail Road's principal financial backer, Judge Thomas Mellon, wanted to save as much money as possible in constructing and operating the line. To construct a narrow gauge railroad was less expensive than building a standard gauge system. This includes smaller rails, ties and switches. Locomotives and cars were also less costly than their standard gauge counterparts.

By 1877 many railroads laid narrow gauge trackage and the little Ligonier Valley Rail Road was not going to be left behind. Thus, for the first five years of its existence, the Ligonier Valley was a narrow gauge pike that served the freight and passenger needs of the Ligonier Valley. It was relatively easy for a passenger to transfer to a Pennsylvania Railroad standard gauge coach or parlor car, just across the platform at the Pennsylvania Railroad's Latrobe Station.

Transferring freight, however, was a more costly and time-consuming operation. Either freight had to be manually offloaded and placed in a standard gauge car or the trucks (wheel assemblies) had to be removed and standard gauge trucks placed

under the car. Narrow gauge railroads used various devices to accomplish this as quickly as possible. The Ligonier Valley Rail Road was the first narrow gauge company to use the "Ramsey Car Transfer Apparatus" where it interchanged with the PRR at Latrobe.

A reproduction of a "Ramsey Car Transfer Apparatus" ad, found on page 271 of George W. Hilton's American Narrow Gauge Railroads, states, "Ramsey's Car Transfer Apparatus. Only Principle by which cars are transferred between railroads of different gauges or trucks removed and replaced for repairing WITHOUT RAISING THE CAR BODY."

The ad lists the carriers using the devise. They include the Toledo, Delphos & Burlington; Connotton Valley; Dayton & Southeastern; Cincinnati Southern; Memphis & Little Rock; Wilmington & Weldon; Virginia Midland; Pennsylvania; Ligonier Valley; Bell's Gap; Paw Paw & Toledo & South Haven; Atlantic & Great Western.

Superintendents were invited to write to R. H. Ramsey at 110 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, for "... particulars as to cost, operation, etc."

Although the transfer from narrow gauge to standard gauge trucks could be done in about 8 minutes, it soon became apparent to many narrow gauge operators that converting to standard gauge was a more practical alternative. As a result, the Ligonier Valley Rail Road was converted to

Standard Gauge (4 feet, 8-½ inches) in December of 1882.

The Ramsey Car Transfer Apparatus in Latrobe was located alongside the Pennsylvania Railroad mainline near the wye that was maintained by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road to “turn” entire trains.

Now here’s a bit of historical trivia. How did the Pennsylvania community of Transfer get that name? It was where the Broad Gauge Erie Railroad (6 feet) and the Standard Gauge Pennsylvania Railroad transferred freight.

Hang on to that one! It may on Jeopardy sometime!

### **Free Museum Day in Ligonier**

Tom Hunter, Vice President of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association Board of Directors, reported that the Museum had 723 visitors (188 children and 535 adults) on Sunday, May 6, 2018. This was a very respectable attendance given the fact that it rained most of the day with temperatures ranging between 55 and 60 degrees.

Tom thanks all the volunteers who greeted our visitors and told the story of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road. He expresses special appreciation to two AFROTC students from Ligonier Valley Senior High School for their participation. Those young people are Nick Jablonski and Molleigh Henderson.



*Despite the weather, the trackless train, sponsored by Tom and Nancy Donchez, was a hit with the kids.*

## **All Aboard!**

LVRRA’s next bus trip is scheduled for December 1, 2018. It will include the Western Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum in Gibsonia and the train layout at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh.

The model railroad museum in Gibsonia features an HO layout modeling the Baltimore & Ohio, Western Maryland, and Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroads. Numerous scenes portrayed on the layout will be easily recognized by western Pennsylvanians.



*This Ohio pyle scene is depicted at the WPA Model Railroad Museum in Gibsonia.*

The Carnegie Science Center features a huge “O” gauge layout modeling the Pittsburgh area in the 1900s. Scenes include Fallingwater, a working incline, the Ship Hotel, farm scenes and Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood House.



*20,000 fans are cheering for the Pirates at Forbes Field in this scene at the Carnegie Science Center.*

***See insert for additional details and reservation form.***

## Memorial Brick Walkway

To date, 111 engraved bricks have been purchased for the walkway leading to the caboose. Additionally, the board of directors purchased bricks to honor the five foundations which have been most instrumental in the success of the LVRR Museum. They are:

Allegheny Foundation  
Ligonier Valley Endowment  
Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation  
Richard King Mellon Foundation  
R. K. Mellon Family Foundation

Although many bricks have been purchased, more are available to buy and inscribe per your wishes. It is a fine way to support the museum, while at the same time honoring or remembering loved ones. An order form is located on the back page of this newsletter.

## Donors of Bricks

(Since last publication of "The Liggie")

Tamela M. Corcoran  
Helen Craig  
Derry RR Days  
Paul Fry  
Janet Hudson  
Thomas B. Hunter, Jr.  
Martin Palguta  
Nancy Richards  
Fran Robb  
Paul Trimeloni

### Correction!

In the March issue of the "Liggie," I mentioned the three railroads that were controlled by the ball signal at Wells River, Vermont. They were the Canadian Pacific, the Barre & Chelsea, and the Boston & Maine. I miss spelled Maine as Main, like in a street. As a New Englander I should have caught that one. It is Maine, as in State of Maine!

Bob McKie  
"Liggie" Editor

### The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association Board of Directors

Dave Byers – President  
Tom Hunter – Vice-president  
Doug Kurtz – Secretary  
Bill McCullough – Treasurer  
Bob McKie – "Liggie" Editor

Bob Burcin  
Kerry Byers  
Armour Mellon  
Donna Richards  
Adam Storey

#### Previous Directors

Jim Aldridge — Tom Donchez — Paul Fry  
Lisa Hays — Janet Hudson — Art McMullen  
Mimi Owens — Al Pilz — Bill Potthoff  
Fred Potthoff — Ralph Scalise  
Bill Stablein — Bob Stutzman  
Pat Wallace — Carole Wright

### The Mission of the 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  
railroading in Ligonier Valley

**LVRRA Museum**  
at the restored Darlington Station  
3032 Idlewild Hill Rd  
PO Box 21  
Ligonier, PA 15658

**Museum Hours of Operation**  
Saturdays, year round, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Contact Information**  
724-238-7819 info@lvrra.org  
cnemckie@gmail.com for editor, Bob McKie



# LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD ASSOCIATION

## Brick Memorial Walkway

Help to establish a capital fund to upkeep and maintain the restored Darlington Station by buying a brick(s) to honor or memorialize loved ones. The brick walkway originates at the parking lot and leads visitors to the vintage bobber caboose. A prominent marker in the path recognizes Judge Thomas Mellon and his sons as the founders of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4"x8"     \$50.00     3 lines of engraving up to 17 characters per line, spaces, numbers and letters

*(Please photocopy this form to order additional bricks)*

Purchased by: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Engraving: *PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY/ ALL ENGRAVING SUBJECT TO COMMITTEE APPROVAL*

LINE 1																	
LINE 2																	
LINE 3																	

Bricks will be randomly placed in the walkway. Contributions may be tax deductible, contact your financial advisor.

Please return completed form along with check payable to:

LVRRA  
C/O BOB STUTZMAN  
605 WALNUT STREET  
LATROBE, PA 15650

QUESTIONS: ?????  
Contact: Bob Stutzman  
lvrra@verizon.net  
724-537-2647