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TREDYFFRIN EASTTOWN HISTORY QUARTERLY



**A Brief Overview of the Main Line of Public Works,
and its Successor, the Pennsylvania Railroad,
from 1827 to the 1890s**

The Stop at Paoli

“My First Ride Behind a Locomotive”

**The Amazing Climb of the Norris Locomotive
*George Washington***



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From the Editors

Starting in the summer of 2019, Society members, colleagues and frequent contributors Roger Thorne and Mike Bertram began working together on a project involving in-depth research on the history of the relationship of the railroad to—and its impact on—the western Main Line, and especially the stations in communities located along its course. The first of the two main articles in this issue provides an overview that introduces the project and its subject, and is followed by the detailed story about the station stop in Paoli. This is the first installment of what is imagined to be a serialized publication that will feature the other station stops and their communities as the work is completed. In addition, there are several short pieces that provide interesting contemporary commentary.



A melded pair of images from the same perspective, comprising the c.1890 photograph of the first signal tower, and a 2018 image taken during the construction of the Paoli Transportation Center, provides a ghostly look into the past. *Courtesy of Roger D. Thorne.*

Trash or Treasure?

It is not uncommon for us to hear from or about people who are in possession of some items that they may be uncertain how to value, but for which they would like to find a new home.

If you (or people you know) have photographs, drawings, maps, letters, documents, books, or other items of possible (or definite) historic interest that might be donated to the Society, please visit the Archives page of our website (<http://www.tehistory.org/archives.html>) and review our Collecting Policy, or contact us directly for more information. Email: archives@tehistory.org

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Recollection of a First Railcar Journey, 1831

Judge J.L. Gillis recalled his first railcar journey in 1831:

“The trucks were coupled together with chains ... leaving from two to three feet slack, and when the locomotive started it took up the slack by jerks, with sufficient force to jerk the passengers, who sat on seats across the top of the coaches, out from under their hats, and in stopping they came together with such force as to send them flying from their seats... There being no smoke or spark-catcher to the chimney or smoke-stack, a volume of black smoke, strongly impregnated with sparks, coals, and cinders, came pouring back the whole length of the train. Each of the outside passengers who had an umbrella raised it as a protection against the smoke and fire. They were found to be but a momentary protection... all having their covers burnt off from the frames... [and] the deck-passengers, each whipping his neighbor to put out the fire.”

Quoted from: *The History of the First Locomotives in America from Original Documents and the Testimony of Living Witnesses*, by William H. Brown, 1871.

Cover Descriptions

- Front Cover: This extraordinary photograph, believed taken in 1890, shows the first railroad signal tower in Paoli. (More detailed information may be found on page 29). *Courtesy of Ann Seybert, as received by her grandfather Roy Jones.*
- Back Cover: (UPPER) This highly-cropped aerial photograph of Paoli, taken by the Dallin Aerial Survey Co. in 1926, looks north across the Lincoln Highway (foreground) as it intersects with Valley Road. (More detailed information may be found on page 25). *Image courtesy of Hagley Museum & Library.* (LOWER) A similar but more recent view of the Paoli station vicinity, from an aerial photo taken on 31 October 2020 by Roger Thorne while flying in a WWII-vintage Piper J3 Cub. *Photograph courtesy of © Roger D. Thorne.*



Aerial photos of the Paoli railroad station vicinity taken in (ABOVE) 1926 and (BELOW) 2020, with the locations of several significant historic landmarks indicated: **1** Approximate location of the 1769 Paoli Inn, destroyed by fire in 1899; **2** Location of the 1846 Paoli Hotel; **3** Location of the 1834 Canal Collector's Office; **4** Location of the Paoli railroad station. More information about these photos and the indicated landmarks may be found in this issue.

