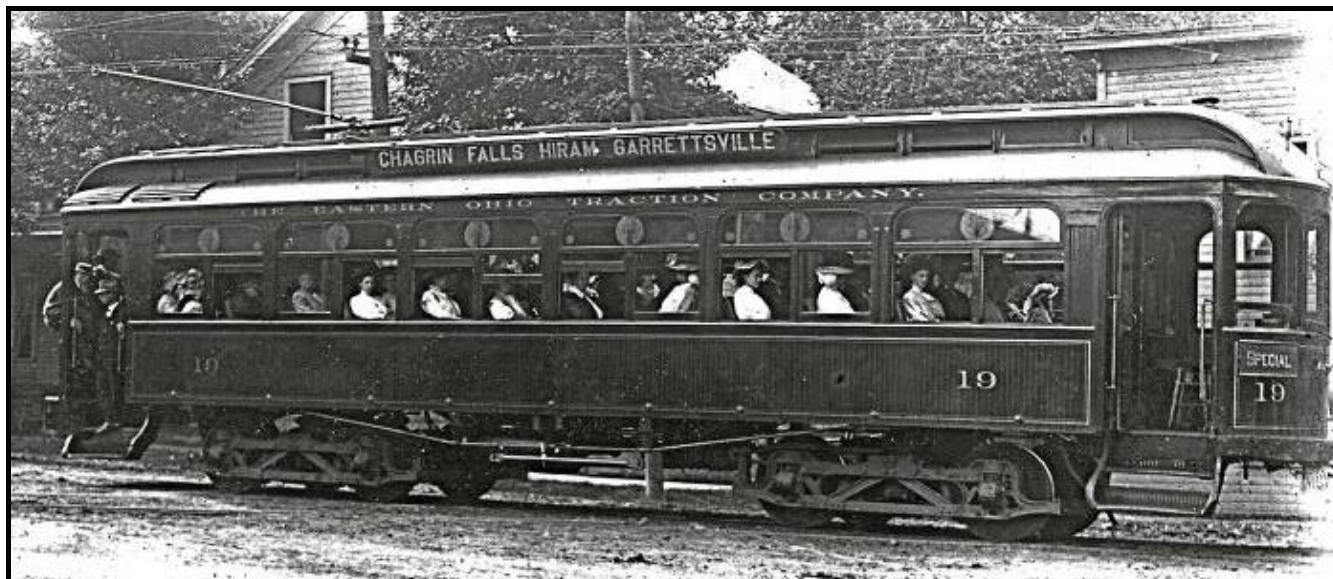


Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter

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Bainbridge Township, Ohio, 44023

Spring 2008

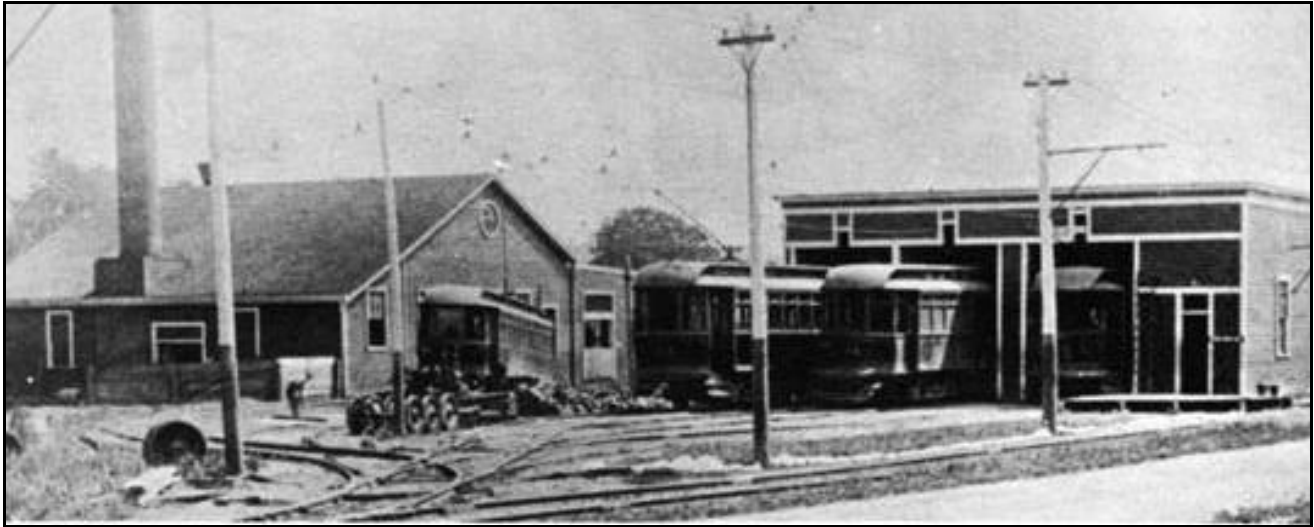


HISTORY OF THE INTERURBAN TRAINS IN GEauga COUNTY AND ITS IMPACT ON BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP

The harnessing of electric energy in the late 1800s gave rise to the development of the electric car. Within the cities, streetcars replaced horse-drawn trolleys; and as tracks branched farther in all directions, the interurban train was born. In Geauga County, this phenomenon began about 1897 and was nearly over by 1925.

Entrepreneurs all over America seized upon this concept, and soon each city wanted a line from its borders to the next sizable town. A huge boom occurred but lasted only 30 years. During this period there were many economic recessions and a world war that made funding difficult. Often a small group of individuals set up a company and sold shares. There are many tales of how these companies went bankrupt and small investors lost their money. Frequently the same core group of men would start up anew or merge with another company (that also might be in financial straits), go bankrupt, and the process would be repeated again and again.

Unlike the large coal-driven, steam-powered locomotives that first began service to northeast Ohio about 1850, the smaller interurban cars provided service between cities and local villages; and in October, 1895, the first electric car rolled into Cleveland from Akron. These cars were popular -- there was frequent service and no soot. (Of course, it was not mentioned that the necessary power stations along many lines burned coal to produce electricity, which created a layer of soot over large areas). Besides passengers, many of these cars carried mail and much needed supplies from the urban areas to rural towns and re-



Car barn and power station on Miles Road Chagrin Falls

turned with milk, produce and other freight from outlying areas. As passenger trains became shabby, they were refitted to haul freight.

In addition, many excursions from greater Cleveland were arranged so passengers could go to maple sugar festivals or visit the Geauga County Fair (the entry booth with its small tower was once the train station), and some excursions even brought a brass band. Other trains had beautifully decorated funeral cars, and larger cemeteries provided spur lines.

Laying tracks in Geauga County often presented difficulties because of the hilly terrain and the many creeks and branches of the Chagrin River, and sometimes there was excitement when a runaway train raced through a village and overturned or when one of the many bridges collapsed under a car during a flood (this happened in Lake County).

In Cleveland, six major lines developed. The Cleveland & Chagrin Falls Electric Railway Co. began work on a line from downtown Cleveland through Chagrin Falls with the hope of continuing all the way to the Pennsylvania border. The company's first train arrived in Chagrin Falls on May 1, 1897. A power station and car barn were built on Miles at Bentleyville Road. In Chagrin Falls, the train ran along E. Washington Street

and then slightly northward at Daisy Lane just south of Bell Street. The tracks crossed Chilli-cothe Road and continued eastward to the north



Freight Car loading Milk

end of Haskins Road were a platform was built for the Haskins family and others to ship their milk. The train continued east along the Bainbridge/South Russell border to a station at Snyder Road on the Takacs property and on to Munn Road. There the line turned north and ran along Bell Road through South Newbury, crossing Route 44 traveling east through what is now Eldon Russell Park (where the roadbed and bridge abutments are visible) and on to Route 700 (Steele's Crossing) where the line turned south to Hiram and Garrettsville.



Picture taken in 1991 of "Waiting Shanty" at Stop 57 on Snyder Road in Bainbridge. It was also labeled the "Facey Stop" because of being on Facey property at Snyder Road. Remember a couple issues back—Snyder Road got its name? Sarah Snyder relinquishes her authorizing and empowers Jacob M. Snyder as Executor to make such sale selling one-half of the property to pay the debts. The property, 130 1/2 acres, was purchased by John & Thirza Facey who came with their son Samuel from England. John then transferred 80 1/2 acres to Sarah Facey and her new husband Samuel Facey. Property is now owned by the Takacs family since 1909.

Building was moved near house and was used as a wood shed for many years with the addition of a front side and door added. Building is now owned by the Cleveland & Eastern Interurban Historical Society & Museum.

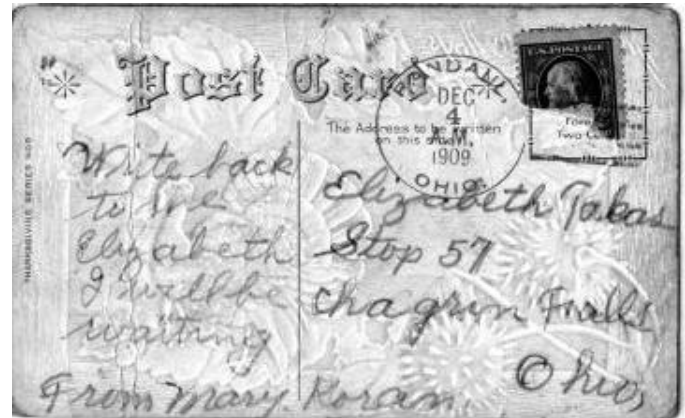
posh express car called the "Bankers Special" reserved for local businessmen and leaving Gates Mills at 7:05 am to arrive in downtown Cleveland before 8:30 am.

From Gates Mills, the east-bound train passed into Geauga County to Caves Road, where on summer Sundays excursionists

could visit the cave and dance hall. A short distance onward was Scotland Station and its



Bell Vernon Dairy Bldg. as it stands today



Takacs family had their mail delivered at "Stop 57"

Another line into Geauga County was the Maple Leaf Line whose Gates Mills Division went from Cleveland to S.O.M. Center Road in Mayfield Heights with several stops. Then it made the steep descent to the Chagrin valley floor to arrive in Gates Mills by crossing the steel bridge (which still exists) over the Chagrin River. Here the dispatcher's office was right on the track so the train had to travel directly through the building. The steep hills in this area were responsible for a number of mishaps when heavy freight was hauled, pushing the cars fast on the downward grades into the curves; and on one occasion, the company's funeral car derailed during a blizzard, stranding the mourners for the day. In 1904 and continuing for 20 years, the company instituted a

nearby general store (that until recently stood next to Bloom Brothers Hardware). You can view the station house and store at Chesterland Historical Foundation's campus at the corner of Mayfield and Caves Roads where a one-room brick schoolhouse stands.

The train continued making various stops including the Belle Vernon Dairy on Chillicothe Road, and on into what is now Geauga County's Rookery Park (where remains of the roadbed can still be seen). Here at a "Y" junction, a line split off to Burton and Middlefield while the main line continued to Chardon to make a loop on the square for its return journey.

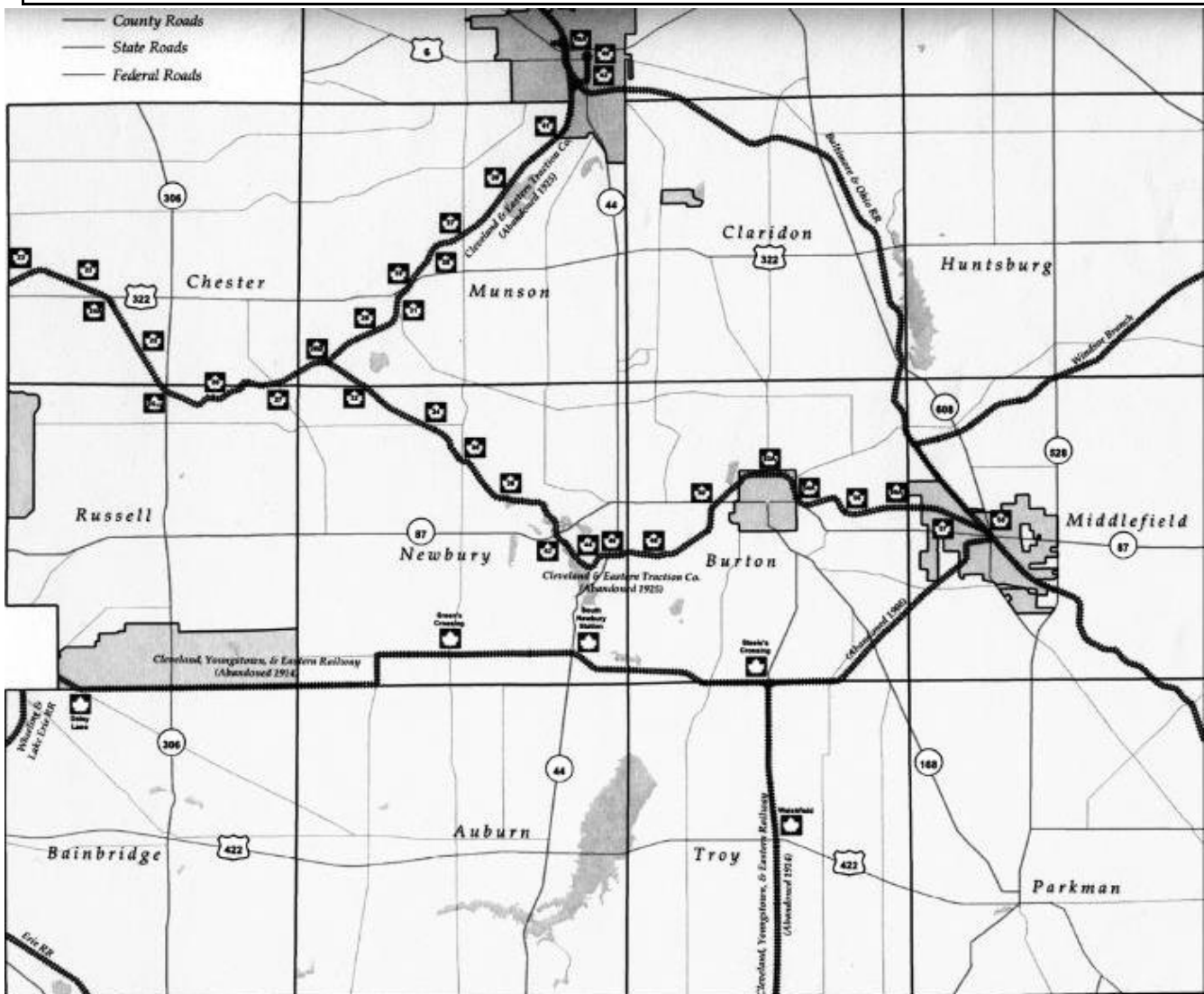
While these trains were the basis for our present

public transportation systems, the interurban lasted only a short time. With the advent of affordable vehicles, the need for these local trains slowly ceased. By 1924 almost all of the rural tracks had been abandoned; and today we view with regret the remnants of the great systems that crisscrossed our country.

Information for this article came from books by Harry Christiansen (Northern Ohio's Interurbans and Rapid Transit Railways) in several volumes, from the Geauga Magazine (Fall 2007/Winter 2008 issue) an article by Bill Jackson of the Cleveland & Eastern Interurban Historical Society and Museum and from other articles, maps and local historians.

Geauga County, Ohio, Railroads from the Early 1900's.

This map was prepared by the Geauga County GIS System on behalf of the Cleveland & Eastern Historical Society and Museum. Complete colored 11" by 17" maps listing some of the stops shown may be purchased at the Auditor's office in Chardon, OH



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Editor & Publisher

Bill Takacs

Meetings of the Bainbridge Township Historical Society are held the second Wednesday of the month (September through June) at 7:30 p.m. in the Burns-Lindow Building at the corner of Route 306 and Bainbridge-Solon Road.



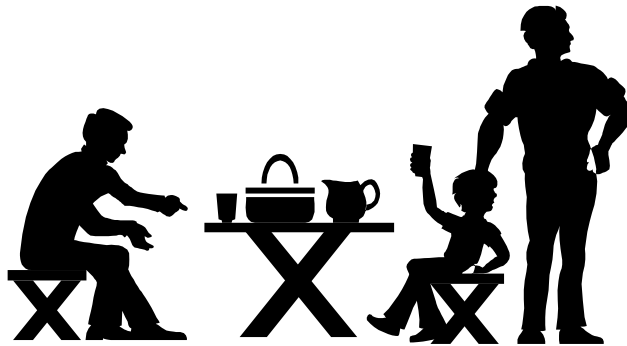
Town Hall—Circa 1914
Now—Burns Lindow Bldg

**Visitors Are Welcome at
BTHS Meetings**

One of the best ways to increase your knowledge of your local community is to become active in a local historical society. The Bainbridge Township Historical Society supports a variety of programs designed to expand and amplify your abilities to enlarge your family history information. We cordially invite you to attend our meetings as a visitor and share in our hospitable atmosphere. As a further enticement, we serve GREAT refreshments!!! Plan to attend our next meeting.

Mark your calendar:

June 11th, Picnic at
Bear Town, Geauga Parks



* **Just a Reminder— Annual dues are Payable in September but no later than December-\$10.00 for singles, \$20.00 for family. Life Membership-\$100.00. Make checks payable to *Bainbridge Township Historical Society*. Pay Marge Cook at the meeting or mail to her at 116 Leaview Ln., Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.** *

No meetings in July and August. See everyone on September 10th, our fall meetings begin. Have a great Summer.

June 11th, 2008 at 6 P.M.: Our annual picnic will be at Bear Town, Geauga County Park in Auburn, Township. Please bring a dish to pass (Main, salad or dessert), beverage, table setting and service.

May 14th, 2008: Sylvia Wiggins, well known throughout Geauga County, will speak about old Geauga County Schools. She is a author and curator.

Spring/Summer Meeting Schedule

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter
Marjorie Cook
116 Leaview Lane
Chgrin Falls, Ohio 44022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY
