UNLOCKING THE UNKNOWN-BASIC HANDBOOK FOR DOING RAILROAD RESEARCH
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The Goal
For an article or book to be of interest to the greatest number of people, it needs three things: 1. Facts and figures for those who want to be educated, 2. Human interest and names of people for those who want to be entertained, and 3. Big clear pictures for those who prefer not to read. Being able to find these three basics is the purpose of this paper.

Preface:
It is intended that this pamphlet succinctly start your researching any railroad or railroad subject. It ties together the most important sources for initial approach to researching a subject.
I have been an active researcher for 65 years, beginning at age 15. For the past twenty years I have been involved in locating and making known railroad information. However I have long felt that there was something missing. When I received questions requesting help, I know where to find it from my reference library, general knowledge and elsewhere, but someone else would not. Therefore this handbook to unlock unknown knowledge available to interested people. Space limitations eliminated the biography section listing the names. Companies, both railroad and non-railroad, to be researched cannot be listed. However the reference index books listed below included just about every railroad and many non-railroad affiliated companies.
There is one important missing ingredient from below. The knowledge gained over many years of other people to whom you might turn for help.

Starting Point Sources
Several books I refer to by an abbreviation. They tell you where to find information, but they do not have it such as an encyclopedia.
Bib.* Railroad Book and Thesis Bibliography, 1800s-2003, Books, theses and reports of over 24 pages are organized by title, company name, state or region and foreign and then author’s name and by subjects. Railroads, interurban railways and street railways are included. Locations of where to find copies are given of which WorldCat database at universities is the best. This Bibliography also includes articles from miscellaneous publications not in the Railroad Periodical Index.
Guide* Guide to Railroad Historical Resources. Gives the locations and type of material at each place organized by company name of which there are about 20,000. Includes railroad suppliers and industrial railroads. Nine types of material are indicated for each location: negatives, prints, miscellaneous information, annual reports, timetables, passes/archives, corporate records, maps, locomotive records.
A list of three hundred periodicals and dates of publication along with where they can be found is given: 50 proceedings of technical societies, 18 railroad professional clubs, 19 union magazines, 54 railroad employee magazines, 125 major and 70 minor miscellaneous publications, 20 publications frequently having railroad articles, Numerous railfan club magazines. p. 171-178. 220 biographical collections are listed on p. 183-186. Also list of corporate and major private collections now at reference libraries. A list of disposition of privately owned and corporate collections and archives is given on p. 267-268.
Predecessor companies of 84 major railroads included in the Guide are given on., p. 187-208. A list of railroads by state is given on p. 209-239, for electric railways on p. 240-252, Canadian Railways by province p. 253-255, and non railroad companies, such as car and locomotive builders, private car company, suppliers, equipment dealers, miscellaneous companies, museums and tourist railroads, p. 256-262.
Index * Railroad Periodicals Index 1831-1999. Includes 84 of the several hundred periodicals (listed in the Guide, p. 171 – 178. The periodicals have about 16,000 railroad and
railroad related companies indexed from 84 periodicals and journals. It is organized by periodical, with each periodical indexed by railroad name and then by subjects. Locations of the periodicals are given, as is a brief history of each publication. The subjects are listed below to which are added items of the same subject from other reference books.


Neg. - Railroad Negative Collections for Ninety Four Railroads - Individual Negative Listings of 87 Collections: This 800+ page listing of 200-300,00 non redundant negatives covers all former class I railroads. Unfortunately, it does not include several (possibly seven) huge collections such as Gerald Best and Warren McGee whose catalogs were too costly to buy. It has bare information needed - engine number, wheel arrangement, or station or car number/type, year photographed. Collections mostly predate 1960. However the value of the book is diminished in that prints without negatives of pre 1900 subjects are not cataloged. However, they can be easily scanned at a cost less than making a print from a negative, which make negatives unnecessary. A copy of this volume is only at the Strasburg Railroad Museum. Individual railroads can be obtained.

Ency. - Encyclopedia of North American Railroads compiled by Wm. D. Middleton. This is not an index, but a location to find brief articles on numerous subjects. Most articles, if applicable, are of a historical nature for the subject.

* These reference sources have a CDrom included for hunting specific words such as pon-toon bridges. Hopefully someday these will all be on the Internet. Copies of these books can be purchased from T. T. Taber, 504 S. main St, Muncy, PA. 17756, ttaber1@comcast.net.

Book locations: The books in this pamphlet will be on file at the Pennsylvania State RR Museum, Strasburg, Pa. Barriger Library, Univ. of Missouri, St. Louis, Calif. State RR Museum, Sacramento, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University Dallas. Additionally college and university libraries have the WorldCat database, which give book locations. The library will get you started.

I have divided my comments into two groups. One is the search for specific railroad or railroad related company names. The other is a subject search.

Company Researching

Large Railroads: Many companies have had their corporate records transferred to a university. The Guide will tell of these museums. The Guide gives holdings at 700 locations for every railroad, supplier, and industry railroad for which material was found, about 20,000 names. It also lists predecessor railroads for 80 major railroads for which material was found, (vol. 1, pages 187-208.) The New York Times annual index of its articles will give current developments. The Times is on Microfilm at numerous major libraries.

The Bib. lists books by title, by company name or state or region and university for theses of the United States and Canada. Books on foreign countries are in English. The annual reports of the I. C. C. are on file, but I am not sure where — Denver or Washington. State P.U.C. annual reports usually are the same as the I.C.C., are often on file at the state library, the P.U.C. or in archives such as the state historical society. The other useful I.C.C. publications are accident reports and Valuation Reports and Financial Reports.

The Index for the larger railroads often lists 20 or 30 different publications - an ordeal to check the dates of finding something, particularly as the periodicals are scattered at numerous locations with none concentated at one place. (However at Chicago most can be found at five different locations reached by subway (Univ. of Chicago, Northwestern Univ., Illinois Technical Institute, Chicago Public Library and the Center for Research Libraries.) It therefore behoves the researcher to know what basically each publication is. This is given in the introductory periodical's listings. The periodicals with the most number of pages in the Index are the best generally. These are American RR Journal 1830-1887, RR Gazette 1870-1908, and RR Age Gazette (Ry. Age) 1908-1999.

Small Railroads and Electric Railways including streetcars: Local newspapers on file in city libraries, state, and railroad societies are a must for initial planning, construction, accidents, trains, depots, etc., also county court houses for deeds, mortgages, bankruptcies. The Guide gives locations of holdings on 20,000 railroad and railroad related companies. The Index gives information in 84 periodicals 1831-2000, Bib covers 15,000 entries. The Ency doesn't include most of these railroads.

The company division office records, when thrown out, have in some cases been salvaged by railfan groups. They are now held by the railfan group specializing in the railroad or a chapter of a larger group in an area served by the railroad. These are mostly operating records and not considered the corporate records that a railroad donated to some library.

The Guide has checklist of publications before 1841, p. 119-120 and detail list of this checklist organized by railroad, p. 121-170.

Antebellum Railroad Compendium 1830-1860 organized by state and then railroad, history and equipment, timetables, maps.

Personnel Records: Railroad company records are almost non-existent, having been kept at a division headquarters and thrown out whereas corporate records at corporate headquarters went to various libraries. An Exception is the Pennsylvania RR's Benevolent Society records. Most employees belonged to it. The Railroad Retirement Board has that type of record from the 1910s although some of it may have been destroyed by fire.

Miscellaneous Sources: Company libraries, county court houses for deeds, maps, bankruptcies, foreclosures unless the latter are kept at the state court house, state court houses and the Secretary of State office for incorporations, local historical societies, local libraries, local newspapers, some railroad hobby societies, state archives and state libraries, college and university libraries, and old timetables for the company see Guide vol. 1, page 5 and 6. The court houses have incorporations, mortgages, deeds, and bankruptcies.

Non-Railroads: The Guide and the Index both list these in the alphabetical index of companies and also in appropriate subject listings.

Examples of actual searches are given on pages 5 - 8 for four types of railroads.

Subject Researching

Abandoned Railroads and Tracks: Bib. p. 317; Index p. 642
Accidents: Index, p. 821; Bib p. 384 (in Safety listing), 397-398; Ency. (overview history) p. 87-96
Accoauding: see Financiers and Finance and Economics in the Index and Office Procedures in the Bib. p. 336; Ency. p. 96-98
Advertising: See Public Relations and Marketing; also Index p. 202
Air Brakes: See Brakes
Annual Reports: The locations are given in the Guide and for those prior to 1912 also in Bureau of Railway Economics Catalog, 1912, p. 300-331.
Annual statistics (passengers, freight tonnage, train miles, revenues, expenses, bankruptcies-foreclosure dates, incorporation dates are in Poors Manuals. Also the different states produced annual public utility volumes, which are in large university libraries of the state and state libraries. Certain Poors are better than
Elevated Railways—see Electric Rys
Encyclopedia: Bib. p. 383
Employee Relations—see Labor Relations
Engine terminal and shops—see Terminals
Engineering: Bib. p. 391-392; Ency. p. 247-274; civil eng'g p. 898-899; electrical eng'g p. 900; mechanical eng'g p. 899-900
Equipment leasing companies—Index p. 828
Expositions: Index p. 828; Bib. p. 378-379; Ency. p. 538 Hungerford
Express Companies: History and individual companies Bib. p. 329; Index p. 828
Finance & Financial—Monopolistic Practices—Index p. 828; Bib. p. 434
Foreigners (labor): Bib. p. 357; Index p. 834
Freight Classification: Bib. p. 339
Freight Trains, Unit: Index p. 829; Bib. p. 340; Ency. 1070-1071
Grade Crossings: (see also Signaling) Index p. 836; Bib. p. 370 & 385, safety Ency. 495-497, 647-648
Granger Movement: Bib. p. 347; Index p. 829; Ency. p. 500-501
Guidebooks: Bib. p. 348349
Hawaii: see Foreign RRs.
History—General: Index p. 349-351; See also Railroads—General Subjects, Miscellaneous. Specific railroad histories are indexed by the railroad's name; Ency. p. 1-17, RR 1945-1990 Ency. p. 65-86, 437-441; Bib. p. 370; Index miscel. p. 833. See individual owning railroads using CDROM.
Hoboes Ency. p. 523-526; Index p. 833 niscel.
Horse railways—see Electric Rys
Ice Houses: See structures
Incline Planes: Index p. 835; Ency. p. 534-541
Interstate Commerce Commission: Bib. p. 341-342, Index p. 829. See also Government Controls.
Interurban Rys—See Electric Rys
Labor Relations: Bib. p. 345-356, Index p. 834
Land Grants: Bib. p. 347, 370 Index p. 829; Ency. p. 581-582;
Laws: Suits. Bib. p. 344-345; Index p. 829; Enclr Granger p. 500-501. See also Govt. Controls
Leasing Companies of equipment—Index p. 828
Libraries: Index p. 833; Bib. p. 371
Light rail—see Electric Rys.
Railroads, Tourist: See Preservation.

Railroads, Tramways: Index type of RR s p. 835

Rates and Traffic Agreements: Bib p. 342-344; Index p. 829; Ency. p. 913-917

Rapid Transit: See Electric Rys, Mass Transit, Light Rail

Reference Works: Bib p. 381-383

Regulations: Bib p. 345-347; Index p. 829 See also Government controls.

Research and Technical: Bib p. 383-384, Index p. 836;

Research: See Technology.

Role Book: Ency. p. 780-785; Index p. 128, 268

Safety: See also accidents, signals, track and technology, grade crossings, safety devices, automatic train stop, etc. Index p. 835; Bib. p. 384-485; Ency. p. 428-432, 492-499, rails p. 891-894; history p. 944-950

Securities: Bib. p. 336

Seniority: see Labor


Shop: See Terminals

Signs and signaling devices: See also Technology. Signaling types, switch signals, grade crossing, ATC, CTC, signal history, signal companies Index p. 835-836; Bib. p. 386-387; Ency. Gen. Ry. Signal Co. p. 113-114, 963-972, 1036-1059, 1060-1070; hand signals p. 972-972

Silage: See also Miscel.

Standardization: (gage, time, couplers, etc.) Bib. p. 387-388; En. gauge and time p. 999-1001; Index p. 833 Miscel.

Stations: (Individual stations indexed to their owning railroads. Station types, baggage handling. Bib. p. 383; Ency. p. 126-143;)


Statues: see see Monuments

Streetcars: see also Labor, Bib. p. 356, Index p. 834; Ency. p. 576-580

Structures: See also stations, bridges, tunnels, terminals, snow sheds, freight houses, section houses, ice houses, etc. Bib. p. 388-389; Index p. 836; Ency. p. 126-143

Suppliers: List of companies included in the alphabetic name list of the Index p. 836; Bib. p. 441-445

Subway railways — See Electric Rys

Street railways — See Electric Rys


Technology: See also Signals, track, communication. TV, track circuits, radio, locomotive testing, micro-wave etc. Bib. p. 383-384; Ency. History p. 37-64; 150, 608-612; radio and television p. 890-891; Equipment identification and fault detection p. 429-432; Testing p. 150


Testing Facilities: see Technology

Timetables and Tickets: see also Passenger Service. Timetables of all North American railroads are in the Official Guide. This also has an alphabetical list of all communities and the railroads served at each.

Train: See also Technology, Maintenance of Way, gauge, ties, track design, rails history, spikes, switches, tyes & plates, track construction Index p. 836-837, Bib. p. 391-394; Ency. p. 639-661; see also standardization

Traffic Agreements — see Rates


Train Robberies: see Crime

Train Service: see Passenger Service

Trains: (Streamliners, High Speed, Special Purpose, etc.) Bib. p. 373-375; Index p. 837; Ency. p. 827-842, 985-995; Ency. Church & special parties p. 985-995; sports p. 996-998; immigrant Index p. 268; Orphan Bib. p. 370;

Tramways: see Railroads, Tramways.

Transit rail systems: Transportation: Bib. p. 395

Travel — Train Trips Bib. p. 395-396

Trestles: see Bridges.

Tunnels: names tunnels, construction Index p. 837; Bib. p. 396; Ency. p. 269-273

Unions: Bib. p. 356; Index p. 834. See also Labor

United States Government Railroading see Govt. controls, Equipment, builders, leasing companies, and Wartime

United States Post Office: see Mail Service.

Valuation: Bib p. 348; Ency. p. 1075-1076. see also Interstate Commerce Commission

Viaducts: see Bridges


Women: Bib. p. 357, Index p. 834; Ency. p. 1110-1114;

Wrecks: see Accidents

Y. M. C. A.: See Personnel, Index; Encl. 1126-1128

Yards: Hump yards, car weighing, snow, lighting, switch heaters, etc. Index p. 837; Bib. p. 390-391; Ency. p. 278-291

Examples of Actual Researching Methods for Companies

When the time comes that being merely a member of the herd of rail "fans" is insufficient and with a desire to explore new adventures the following may help you break from the herd. The common first stop is the Internet. Hundreds or thousands of references can be found and probably none of them have any first person discoveries; the listings giving no original research, and just reproducing what others have done. (In my day, it is equivalent to me looking at all the "Railroad Stories — Railroad Magazines" for items on the Morristown and Erie. I found some — great revelations to a 14 year old. Should there be original research it is probably buried and virtually impossible to find.

I have chosen four railroads which I did. The Lackawanna Railroad for a major carrier, the Morristown and Erie RR for an existing company, the Rockaway Valley RR for an abandoned line prior to my era which began in 1944, and a very early railroad, the pre Civil War Williamsport and Elmira RR.

Lackawanna Railroad

A complete history of a major railroad should be a combination of the typical corporate history and the much more difficult to compile operating history. Both are common in short line history. For corporate history sources any good corporate history will reveal the type to be used. Often the operating history is presented in disorganized chapter-articles in a railfan magazine.

An excellent comparison of the two is the "corporate" Lehigh Valley RR history and the D. L. & W combined history by my father and me. Both railroads ran New York to Buffalo and had similar sources of business The difference between the books are in how historical information is presented. The D.L.& W. history combined corporate and operating histories. Often an operating history is done piece-meal in short articles on individual subjects, but not as part of a plan to cover the operating subject.

For the D. L. & W. book the operating history might be considered the chapters on public relations, employees, individual chapters on main line and suburban passenger, freight separate chapters local freight operations, on coal business how the trains were operated and the non coal main line operations. The milk business and anote on every station on the railroad telling when it was staffed and the freight business at the station. Also a chapters on passenger and freight marine operations, advertising, repair shops and the different types of locomotives and equipment, both revenue and non revenue.

How was it done? Many of the illustrations were found in the glass plates the railroad had taken early in the 20th century and saved. He like I had grown up on the railroad and so we had a feel for its public relations and employees and how they felt.
When the books were written the Index had not been prepared. It subsequently showed about ten pages worthy to be added.

I would try to find dispatcher sheets by checking the DL&WRRHS and the ELHS for paper salvaged after being tossed out. The Strasburg Railroad Museum has much Lackawanna material. The same holds true of other railroads at other locations indicated in the Guide. Dispatcher sheets are excellent for operating history because they show locomotives on various trains, doubleheaders, pushers, time of day, usually number of cars and if a passenger train was on time. Also the engineer and conductor names which gives their frequency of work and the type of service.

Changes in employee attitudes cannot be successfully done except by first person contact, but the attitude of outstanding railroaders of the 1930s is lost and soon the 1940s will also. The Morristown and Erie mentions research topics that also apply to a large railroad and they should be obvious. Check it.

Morristown and Erie Railroad / Railway

The 11 mile Morristown and Erie RR, was built in 1895 and is still operating, but is very different from what its name still indicates.

My interest was practical. It was only five miles from home – a one mile walk and four mile Lackawanna M.U. train ride. I was a teenager and researched it from "top to bottom." Previously I had helped my father on newspaper research of the 1830s on the Morris and Essex RR.

My first researching was to look at the Morristown newspapers from 1894 on up. I found a great deal, which convinced me the importance of looking at newspapers. In New Jersey every county court house had to have a county designated paper. In 1946 I made numerous trips to Morristown to look at the paper. If there was no school, I was there reading.

The next search was to visit the county court house to see if I could find mortgages on equipment, information on the bonds and the reorganization in 1903 when it was extended seven miles and renamed.

I also went to Trenton to see the original incorporation papers of the railroad to learn who were the backers, where it was intended to go, and financing.

I did not have benefit of the Guide, Index and Bibliography because they did not exist. Today the Bibliography would reveal three books – my definitive history up to the 1950s and two diesel picture books of the 1980s. Very few railroad companies listed in 1895 Poors are in existence a hundred years later, very few, but people now interested in doing such histories are even fewer. Color pictures of redundant diesel trains predominate.

Unfortunately no one up-dated my effort at the time of its centennial in 1995. I hoped a centennial history would be produced. After my history ended, the president's shenanigans had caused the railroad to go into bankruptcy and him to possibly a jail term with the road being reorganized as the M. & E. Ry. In 1995 the office manager of the railroad was still alive who could have filled in details not in the newspaper of the hanky-panky that corrupted the railroad.

I would have used the Guide to determine if there was likely material I would not uncover such as an x in a column on which I had nothing or a number in Archive column indicating an unknown special collection. The Guide indicates 27 locations and the two predecessor railroads have five. Most are pictures and negatives or have only two or three x's. A location with seven or more x's indicates a good collection. For an obscure railroad, such as the Montana Southern RR, four of the nine columns with an x indicates a collection particularly if the Data column has an x.

The Railroad Periodicals Index indexed 84 publications. For the Morristown and Erie RR and its predecessor railroad, the Whipple River RR, the M. & E. appears in nine publications with 27 articles, and the Whipple River in one with five articles.

(As this more recent history has not been done except superficially, the Internet has little. Where the Internet does, as with the Rockaway Valley RR it has been mostly taken by various people from a history listed in the Book and Thesis Bibliography - a quick history, sometimes rather good, sometimes with errors but usually lacking in historical research of the subject. (This is why this Handbook is needed. To bring things back into proper weight rather than just pretty picture books with comparable light weight writing.)

If I was not satisfied on my equipment information I would have sought out in the Bibliography the Official Equipment Register; if timetables I lacked I would have done the same for the Official Guide. Ditto for company officers.

I would have checked the subject indexes of the Bibliography and the Index for possible subjects that might be helpful. (This Handbook also serves that purpose, but not as completely.). I would also have checked the Handbook for ideas on finding pictures which I had not yet explored such as the Guide showing pictures at unusual locations not likely to be from a railfan collection.
A copy of each incorporation can be gotten from the Secretary of State, State Capitol. For a charge you can order a copy or visit the office and see the microfilm. These are potentially interesting because of the people who formed the company, where it was expected to be built, cost and special considerations. For earlier railroads formed by an Act of the Legislature, these are given in full in the annual reports of the Legislature. The books can be found at the county court house libraries.

I hunted old pictures. The company's office had prints of the photos taken for the L.C.C. I learned of Hugh Boutell, who photographed it in 1912 and Walter Lucas circa 1920 plus others in the late 1930s who mostly had been on the chartered train in 1939.

I learned that a Morristown commercial photographer circa 1900-1930 had his glass plates preserved at George Washington's Morristown headquarters. Why there I have no idea. Later they went to the county historical society. As I looked through several thousand glass plates I found 40 or 50 pertaining to the M. & E. and the neighboring Lackawanna RR.

I also photographed every still standing structure and piece of equipment.

Eventually I wrote the railroad's history. Unlike today's railroad produced mostly picture books, which are of interest only to rail fans, a "properly" done and priced short line history will have a large interest in non railfans who are interested in local history. From experience the potential market is three times or more than just railfans and modelers. (One of my books has reached 23,000 copies and still is in print. Others have exceeded 10,000.)

What the Internet does, as with the Rockaway Valley RR brings you either second or third hand historical information and current topics having little or no historical value, often in great redundancy The M.&E. has about 500 items to wade through. The Whippany River RR revealed about 30 listings, most historic written basically by the director of the Whippany Railroad Museum, which is located on the M. & E. The director used my history as the source historical information. Original research is minimal.

All of my notes, maps, pictures, went to the Railroad Museum at Strasburg in 1975.

Rockaway Valley Railroad

The Rock-A-Bye-Baby, as it was nicknamed, was the most interesting railroad I ever research. Part of this was because it was my first railroad history of a railroad long gone (32 years), but also because its 25 miles took five corporations to build, it went bankrupt four times, after closing it struggled for four years to reopen, and the only person who made any money during its 25 years was the last owner who tore it up for increased WW1 scrap rail prices. Discovering three former employees 32 years after the railroad closed was a first-time experience. Years my research would find hundreds.

My interest was a natural out growth of the M. & E. research. Both served Morristown and in reading old newspapers on the M. & E., I saw frequent mention of the R.V. In 1947 I read the old papers at Flemington, Morristown, and Peapack for the three counties the railroad traveled through. I took the Lehigh Valley from Newark to Flemington Junction and the connecting doodlebug into Flemington to read newspapers. I could do a year in 45 minutes. I took the CNJ to White House to hunt former employees and find traces of the railroad. I covered the actual route of the railroad by bike, hauling it on trains to get to the railroad and then back home.

As I would years later do in searching old logging railroad pictures I went to the general store/post office of each of the communities served by the railroad to find old timers who lived there when the railroad was operating. One of three employers had several pictures and passes that he gave me. I also found the former Mendham freight agent and several others who have lived along the railroad. Several had pictures. Over the years the railroad after abandonment had had several articles written and included photographs which I had copied.

The Trenton court house, when I was 18, had me asking to see the R.V. various bankruptcy files. As with all the lawyers and clerks in the room I had a white shirt, tie and jacket, but probably was the youngest person to ever ask for historical material. (I thought everyone would do what I was doing. How naive I was!)

Some P.U.C. annual reports found at Trenton augmented the incorporation records found there. To my surprise when I compared the operating figures in Poors with the P.U.C. reports and the Railroad and Canal Reports of N.J. I found that they often disagreed. The railroad had sent fake records to make it look better for the investors who checked on the railroad's status.

In 1972 I decided to publish the history. I retraced the railroad, now 25 years after my research, and found a person in Oldwick who had gotten the pictures of the daughter of the railroad's former superintendent. She had refused to show them to me in 1947. Several were excellent. In the 2000s a person made a DVD of the railroad's history. He had dug up several old pictures that I had not found; but other than that his DVD history is taken from my history.

The newspapers had reported on a possible connection of the R.V. with the Morristown and Erie and the surveyor who had surveyed the route. In 1947 I discovered that he was still practicing in Morristown. I think he was 92. I went to see him at his home and then to his office. He pulled out his survey maps as if they had just been made or used that year. I had them Photoscanned. My collection is now at Strasburg.

Williamsport and Elmira Railroad

I researched this railroad as a challenge to see what I could find on a very early railroad. Unfortunately the Williamsport newspapers from about 1845 to 1865 do not exist. My study was to be from 1832 to 1865 when the railroad went bankrupt and became part of the Northern Central RR (later Pennsylvania RR).

The early local newspaper reported on rallies and conventions on the need for a railroad. In 1834 the canal had reached Williamsport and near Elmira, there were canals throughout much of the state. The railroad would connect the two canal systems. It eventually did, but never served as the connecting link. There was no need.

The newspaper got me started – the construction of the railroad and its early operating days. I then went to the county court house to see the annual volume on Acts of the Legislature. This early railroad charter revealed interesting stipulations for the railroad. I also had accidentally run across an 1870s memoir of the first fireman on the railroad in a local historical society's journal. It was only a paragraph but revealed its early operations. I also checked deeds and bankruptcy foreclosure information at the county court house (It went bankrupt twice).

The Guide told me where annual reports could be found and the Bureau of Railways 1912 catalogue gave me locations of specific years. Because railroads were new and important, a surprising amount of early railroad records are in historical societies as the Guide indicates. The Index told me of periodical articles. At the county historical society I discovered two county wall maps, each having pictures around it including two W. & E. scenes and showing the location of the railroad in the city with its track down to the canal.

The annual reports filled in on the years the newspaper is missing. I learned the strap iron track got so bad that horses replaced the locomotive until iron rail was placed.
found I never found, those taken in the 1870s and 80s. However there is now an exception – rail fan photos of the 1930s are known in existence as indicated in the Negs.

Most picture subjects taken by railfans after WWII have been taken by numerous others. For a few obscure subjects only one or two photographed it, most often being non-locomotive subjects. Pictures of stations and cars were not extensively being done until the 1960s by which time often the stations are derelict or being used for other purposes. C. W. Witbeck took many locomotives in Louisiana area, which no one else photographed, and I took a very few.

Old photographs copied by Joseph Lavelle, Charles Fisher, Robert Schmied. Curran and Jacobs. My father and others are now in collections at historical organizations such as Barriger, Strasburg, DeGoyler, R&LHS and C.S.R.M. Organizations having such pictures are listed in the Guide except for those held by C.S.R.M. with an X under Pictures for the railroad. The R&LHS and Strasburg have tens of thousands of pre 1910 pictures and noted in the Guide.

So besides the common post WWII subjects that can be easily found among railfans, other sources, mostly pre WWII include retired employees may have a few pictures. Normally such people do not respond to letters; you need to visit. I found Morristown and Erie and Rockaway Valley pictures that way in the late 1940s. Of course an occasional picture you find by dumb luck. Needing directions while biking the former route of the Rockaway Valley I knocked at the door of a house. She lived at a road junction, but it did not show on my map. The person answering was in her 80s, this being in 1947 when I had just turned 18. I explained my need for directions and what I was doing. She said she had two pictures taken in the early 1890s. She dug them out and gave them to me.

I did picture hunting from 1959 to 1963 and to a lesser degree 1969-1977 for logging railroad pictures in Pennsylvania, their era being from about 1885 to 1940. I found on average 3 pictures in ten hours knocking on doors except when I stumbled into an old timer who had many photos. A book that I did with 75 pictures represented about 25 full days of picture hunting with virtually nothing more than 70 years old. Today some of these pictures are in historical societies, but most have disappeared except for my copies. These several thousand pictures I have given to the appropriate county historical society because that is where future researcher will automatically look (or should.)

The local or county historical society is a must to be checked for pre 1930 pictures and is probably the only place you will still find pre 1910 pictures other than collectors having picture post card collections which include stations. Many people having pictures inherited from their deceased parents give them to the local historical society.

Another must-check source are illustrations in periodicals. Articles can be found in the Index, but many will have no illustrations – but those that do are likely to be pictures you will find nowhere else. Unfortunately periodicals on microfilm illustrations are destroyed in the filming process, which is set for text and not pictures. Scanning is fine. The Bibliography gives books on your subject of interest, and they almost always have pictures.

Guide, Index, Bibliography and Antebellum have located tens of thousands of pictures formerly unknown to have existed. What a resource for the unknown!

Lastly, My thanks to Kurt Bell for his numerous suggestions, which I incorporated.