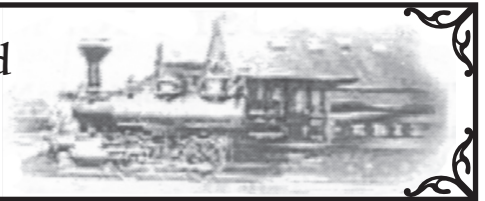


French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

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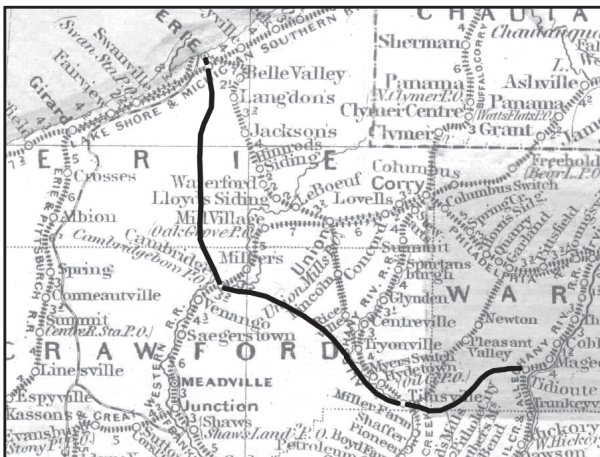
The Pennsylvania Petroleum Railroad

By Dennis Mead and Pete Gifford

Developing the Pennsylvania Petroleum Railroad

In the beginning the Atlantic & Great Western (A&GW) Railroad claimed supremacy in the oil region of Pennsylvania. With the Oil Creek Railroad from Titusville connecting the A&GW at Corry and the Franklin Branch from Meadville to Oil City, it had a rail loop that encompassed the entire oil-producing area in the early 1860s. But, by 1864 the railroad lost their control of this profitable traffic when the Pennsylvania Central Company took possession of the Oil Creek line, dividing the oil business with its new competitor. Now the management needed to restore that supremacy again, and to accomplish this, they proposed the creation of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Railroad (PPRR) in 1871.

Chartered in 1872 the proposed route would be constructed from Cambridge Springs east to Titusville then continue on to Tidioute. The company also intended to first, lease, then purchase the Pithole Valley Railway, a line that ran from Oleopolis on the Allegheny River to Pithole, and construct a 2-mile extension north to connect it with the mainline at a point near Pleasantville called Colorado Junction. (Colorado Junction apparently got its name from the nearby Colorado Hills oil fields.) The second part of the project was building the line from Cambridge north through Edinboro to Port of Erie. The third and last part of the proposal was to lease and later purchase the Shenango & Allegheny Railroad. This rail line connected to the A&GW at Greenville and travelled south to the coal mines at Pardoe, north of Grove City. This line traversed one of the richest mineral districts in the US at that time.



A&GW management felt after all this they could then purchase the PPRR, as well as the Cleveland & Mahoning Railroad which they had leased since October 1, 1863, giving them once again command of the oil and mineral traffic in the region.

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A Note of Appreciation

The French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society would like to once again thank everyone who made the holiday layout displays at the old Kmart building. Everything came together to make this season the best the organization has ever had. The funds we raised will go towards bringing our Delaware Lackawanna & Western Russell snowplow home to Meadville.

Special thanks to Brian MacMurray and Meadville Medical Center for letting us use the Kmart building to display our three layouts and sell our merchandise. We appreciate that these people were open to the suggestion and had enough trust in us to treat their property with respect.

Thank you to Holbrook Tool and Mold who lent us their box truck so that we could haul the merchandise to the Kmart building. Thank you to Coldwell Banker who lent us their box truck, at a moment's notice, when the other truck broke down. Thank you to Lloyd's Rental for providing the mobile sign, free of charge, so that we could attract and direct the public to the Kmart building. Thank you to our advertising associates, Meadville Tribune, WICU-TV, WJET-TV, Cool 101.7, WMVL-FM radio. Thanks to Stan and Debbie Niwa for advertising the display on FYI Crawford County. This was a huge boost in advertising. Thank you to all who attended whether purchases were made or not. You helped get the word out about where our display was this season.

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