

# YARDLEY PRESS

YARDLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

## Media Release

For Immediate Release  
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Other books by Peter Osborne

*No Spot In The Far Land Is More  
Immortalized: A History of  
Pennsylvania's Washington Crossing  
Historic Park*

*Where Washington Once Led:  
A History of New Jersey's Washington  
Crossing State Park*

*So Many Brave Men: The Battle  
at Minisink Ford  
- With Mark Hendrickson  
and Jon Inners -*

*Lewis and Clark and Me*

*For Always, Memories of Janis*

*Our Town: Historic Port Jervis  
1907-2007  
-With Dan Dwyer -*

*Vigilance & Perseverance:  
The History of the Old Decker  
Stone House*

*Hail Matamoros: Matamoros,  
Pennsylvania 1905-2005  
- Compiled and Designed -*

*Images of America:  
Promised Land State Park*

*Images of America:  
Hacklebarney & Voorhees State Parks,  
New Jersey*

*Images of America:  
High Point State Park and the  
Civilian Conservation Corps*

*We Can Take It!  
The Roosevelt Tree Army at  
New Jersey's High Point State Park  
1933-1941*

## NEW HISTORY OF THE RAILROAD MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA PUBLISHED

For Immediate Release

YARDLEY, PENNSYLVANIA – June 20, 2016

Fifty years ago the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission chose Strasburg, Pennsylvania as the site for its new railroad museum. The small town, situated in Lancaster County was, and remains, a major tourist destination with its farms, the Amish, and the Strasburg Rail Road. Since its opening in 1975, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania has been a popular attraction.

Thousands of visitors come every year to see its remarkable world class collection of more than one hundred pieces of rolling stock including locomotives, passenger and freight cars and unique pieces of equipment. There are representatives of the earliest steam locomotives and passenger cars in the nation right up to more modern equipment that has been recently retired from service.

The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is also home to an important archive of railroad materials including photographs, books, railroad history and artifacts. The collection includes resources on the railroads that were active in Pennsylvania. There are interactive exhibits, videos, model train layouts, regular programs and events for a variety of interests and expertise. Visitors can climb up into steam and diesel locomotives and passenger coaches.

For the first time in the museum's fifty years of existence, a new and comprehensive institutional history, entitled *The Trains of Our Memory: A History of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania 1965-2015*, has been published. The book reveals how it took years to bring a dream of a museum to fruition as leaders and organizers proposed ideas, raised awareness, sought funding and then developed the museum. It demonstrates how these efforts continued moving forward given the logistical, legal and political challenges they faced.

The book features essays from all but one of the museum's directors over the decades and other stakeholders including museum staff and the institution's critical non-profit partner, the Friends of the Railroad Museum. The preface has been written by William W. Farkas, and the introduction was authored by Kurt R. Bell, a nationally known railroad historian who provided a treasure trove of expertise and information to the author.

*The Trains of Our Memory: A History of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania 1965-2015* has been published by Yardley Press of Yardley, Pennsylvania, a publisher of local history. The book is 610 pages long, comes in soft and hard cover versions, has an index and extensive bibliography, along with more than 170 illustrations and photographs. The soft cover version of the book retails for \$29.99 and the hard cover sells for \$39.99. Copies of the book can be purchased at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, regional bookstores, on-line or by contacting the Pienpack Company, which represents Yardley Press, the publisher. Further information can be obtained by calling the Pienpack Company ([www.pienpack.com](http://www.pienpack.com)) at 845-551-0417, or by e-mailing [pienpackcompany@gmail.com](mailto:pienpackcompany@gmail.com). The publisher, Yardley Press can be contacted at 215-493-5101 or [wmf510@aol.com](mailto:wmf510@aol.com).



WHAT OTHERS HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT PETER OSBORNE'S BOOKS OVER THE YEARS

**SO MANY BRAVE MEN: A HISTORY OF THE BATTLE AT MINISINK FORD**

The research of Jon Inners, Mark Hendrickson and Peter Osborne is not only impeccable but enjoyable to read. If you only add one more book this year to your history collection, this is the one.

*Theodore Sly, Orange County, New York Historian*

A brief quote of Colonel John Hathorn taken from his report on the Battle of Minisink July, 1779 titles this wonderful book which goes into depth about the personal lives of many of the survivors of that bloody engagement. Certainly a wealth of information for the American Revolution enthusiast of long lost details of these forgotten patriots and the battle itself.

*Tony Domingo, President, Navasing Longrifles  
Eighteen Century Living History Organization*

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**WHERE WASHINGTON ONCE LED:  
A HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY'S WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK**

The Committee was certainly impressed with the scholarship and exhaustive effort that went into *Where Washington Once Led*. One of our Committee members commented that this was indeed the 'Bible of Washington Crossing Park' and we all agreed. The topographical nature of the history was outstanding and the detail was immense, which will be a huge boon for future researchers. The maps and illustrations are wonderful (can you imagine if the one design with the Greek pillars on each side of the river was implemented?) and many Committee members commented that other state parks cry out for such professional and similar coverage.

On behalf of the entire Committee, I would like to thank you . . . for publishing and spreading the news about our Garden State.

*New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance - Author Awards Committee*

Sometimes people get the impression of history being stagnant and dull. Washington Crossing State Park, however, is a dynamic place, with a dynamic history reflecting changes in how we relate to our past that can be just as instructive and entertaining as the events it memorializes. It was especially interesting to read the personal accounts of some of the Superintendents as well as Osborne's own observations in a chapter called *A Year in the Life of the Park*. Osborne has done a wonderful job bringing that long story to life with this comprehensive history.

*GSL Reviews, GardenStateLegacy.com Issue 21, September 2013 (New Jersey)*

Peter Osborne diligently researched the subject and compiled a plethora of information.

*BucksLocalNews.com*

*The Advance of Bucks County (Pennsylvania)*

I think most people would readily agree that setting aside areas of natural beauty such as the National Parks so that we as well as future generations may enjoy them is a national priority. Far fewer, unfortunately, would agree that historical areas and buildings should be preserved and honored. These places are our *landmarks* where we tell our American story to our own generation and preserve it for generations to come. This book is about the Washington Crossing Park in New Jersey which honors one of the pivotal points in the American Revolution - Washington's surprise attack on the Hessians at Trenton on December 26, 1776.

This book is not about the attack itself. You can read about that in one of my all-time favorite history books - *Washington's Crossing* by David Hackett Fischer.

This book is about how the park came to be. The story is full of quirks, characters and odd turns-of-events. It has been superbly researched and written by Peter Osborne who has a number of other historical publications to his credit. It is a lesson for all of us about how to guard the places and buildings which earlier generations have made historic by their actions. For this reason alone, the book is worth the time to read.

Perhaps, more importantly, it is also the story about how the park evolved and was shaped by succeeding generations. A historical park is nothing if it does not tell its story afresh and invite people to share its story while enjoying the site which has been set aside. Peter captures the ongoing history of this park which continues to tell its story and involve people from far and near. *Where Washington Once Led*, we must now lead. This book will help us do it.

One of those leaders is Bill Farkas who funded this project, to whom we are all indebted.

*Dogearred Bookmarker*

*Review on Amazon.com*

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**NO SPOT IN THIS FAR LAND IS MORE IMMORTALIZED  
A HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S WASHINGTON CROSSING HISTORIC PARK**

On Christmas night in 1776, George Washington and 2,400 men crossed the icy Delaware River into Trenton and then later Princeton, where they went on to win decisive victories that changed the course of the Revolutionary War. But it wasn't until 1895 that efforts to memorialize the event and place began. Twenty-two years later, in 1917, a park commission was created, and in 1921 the group formally dedicated Washington Crossing Park to pay tribute to the famed crossing.

Yet in the nearly one hundred years that Washington Crossing Park, both in New Jersey and in Pennsylvania, existed, perhaps no in-depth research has been done on the scale of what writer and historian Peter Osborne has accomplished. Osborne, who has a degree in American history, this past July published *No Spot In This Far Land Is More Immortalized: A History of Washington Crossing Historic Park*, which focuses on Pennsylvania's park, after publishing *Where Washington Once Led: A History of New Jersey's Washington Crossing State Park*, which focuses on New Jersey, in December 2012. Both books were sponsored by Yardley Press.

Combined, the books total more than twelve hundred pages and reveal how park administrators overcame many challenges to organize ideas, raise funds and develop the public areas.

*Times of Trenton (New Jersey)*

I bought this book for my son-in-law's birthday . . . he and my daughter just love the Washington Crossing area . . . so much so they were married there and every year they go to dinner at the Washington Crossing Inn . . . and delight in every minute of it . . . So, I held my breath . . . but Chuck's smile says it all!

TS

*Review on Amazon.com*

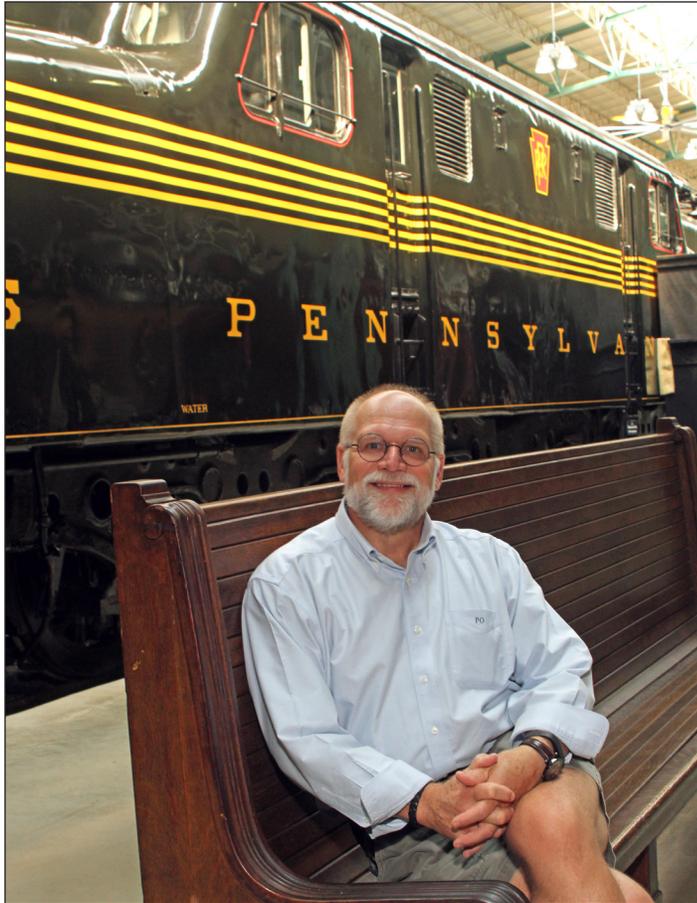
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Local local books, railroad history, railroad museums, local history

The publisher and donor of the book to the park is William Farkas. He is the President of Yardley Press, Yardley, Pennsylvania and can be reached at 215-493-5101



An interview with the author of the book follows.



INTERVIEW  
WITH  
PETER OSBORNE

*Author of*

THE TRAINS  
OF  
OUR MEMORY

A HISTORY OF THE  
RAILROAD MUSEUM OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
1965-2015

Q - Where are you originally from?

A - I was born in Paterson, New Jersey, grew up in Clifton, graduated from high school there and then went to Rutgers-Newark (the State University) where I graduated with a degree in American History. In many ways I am the quintessential Jersey Boy. I love the Jersey Shore, Cape May, High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest. Now I am a Pennsylvanian and live in Easton, a town I love as it is now witnessing a major renaissance in its downtown.

Q – What has been your career path?

A – Like many, it took me a little while to find my path but during my college years, I found that my passion was American history and have pursued a career in public history. I was inspired by my favorite history professor, Dr. Elliot Rosen, who was an expert on President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and the interregnum between the presidencies of Herbert Hoover and Roosevelt. From him came my interest in the Depression era and in particular the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the most popular of the New Deal agencies.

Q – What kind of jobs have you had since then?

A - My first job was at the Neversink Valley Area Museum in Cuddebackville, New York where I was the registrar. I worked there for two years and then went to become the executive director of the Minisink Valley Historical Society in Port Jervis, New York. I served in that position for twenty-nine years. One of the major projects I was involved with was the restoration of the Port Jervis Erie Depot and Railway Express Agency building complex along with the Port Jervis Erie Turntable.

While there I also served as the City Historian for the City of Port Jervis and was active in the community including participating in the creation of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. From there I went to the Red Mill Museum Village in Clinton, New Jersey and was the Curator of Education and Special Events. In late 2011, I left the Red Mill and began to work on our first Crossing book, *Where Washington Once Led: A History of New Jersey's Washington Crossing State Park*. It was commissioned by William Farkas, a great lover of the park and benefactor. We followed up with a book on the Pennsylvania park called *No Spot In The Far Land is So Immortalized: A History of Pennsylvania's Washington Crossing Historic Park*. Now I am an independent historian and writer.

Q – How many books have you written and what have they been about?

A – With this new book I have now written fourteen books. Six of them have been about state parks, one about my following in the footsteps of the Lewis and Clark expedition, several about the Minisink Valley's history (where the states of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey meet) and a memoir about my late wife Janis who was the editor of the *The Gazette*, the weekly newspaper in Port Jervis, New York. She was a wonderful author and I compiled the best of her regular columns that appeared over the years in a book called *Put The Dog On The Phone: The Collected Newspaper Columns of Janis Osborne*.

Q- What state parks have you written about?

A- I wrote two books about New Jersey's High Point State Park and the role that the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) played in developing the park in the 1930s. Then I wrote about Voorhees and Hacklebarney State Parks in central New Jersey, which focused mainly on the work that the CCC had done there. Finally, I have written a history of Promised Land State Park in Green Township in Pennsylvania. It was a park largely built by the CCC and which still honors that tradition regularly with the staging of CCC reunions every year. And, as I mentioned, the Crossing parks along the Delaware.

Q– How did you come to write about Washington Crossing?

A- All of my park books have come about by accident or fate perhaps. My High Point books were the result of having gotten married on the Appalachian Trail in the park and wanting to honor the park. Of course the legacy of the CCC is still very much evident there too. I loved the park and walked there a few days a week when I lived in Port Jervis. The Voorhees and Hacklebarney book came about because of a chance meeting with the park's superintendent at a CCC conference. My Promised Land book also came about because of another such encounter.

I was a speaker at the first New Jersey History Fair a number of years ago at the Crossing, as it is known to everyone within the park system. My subject matter was the CCC and I donated one of my books to the park's archives. Coincidentally, Bill Farkas wanted to see a book written about the New Jersey Crossing park's history and saw my book there and contacted me. The rest as they say is history.

Q- What was your favorite part of working at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania?

A- My favorite part of working at the museum was meeting, interviewing and getting to know the staff there. The staff was wonderful to work with, always taking time out to help me or to discover things at the museum that they only knew about. They are an incredible collection of dedicated professionals and some of them have been working there saving our railroad heritage and its legacy of rolling stock for decades. They were forever patient and gracious, probably wanting to hide when they saw me coming. I am sure that the whole staff felt like I was a new version of Columbo, the 1970s television detective played by Peter Falk, who would wear his suspects down with an unending number of questions. As I met with all of them, I found myself often saying, near closing time “Just one more question. . .”

Collectively, from Jeff Bliemiester, the director, down to the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission staff, the Friends of the Railroad Museum staff and the volunteers, all stopped what they were doing and helped me during my time there.

Q- Do you have a favorite place in the museum?

A- I would have to say it would be the George Hart Motive Power and Rolling Stock Hall where the most important elements of the museum's collection are kept. The Pennsylvania Railroad's Historical Collection is there, one of the most remarkable gathering of equipment anywhere in the country. I was in the hall many times over the last year and a half and every time I was there I saw something new or learned about something that I did not know about. It is this vast space which has the feel of a yard and typical metropolitan train station. Early on in the project I often sat on a waiting room bench reading interpretive panels, reviewing sources

that I was using or watching videos in the hall.

My second favorite place was the Restoration Shop. The staff there was kind enough to let me have access to everything and to answer all my questions and give me insights into the various aspects of restoring equipment and how difficult these kinds of projects were including the most recent, the Lindbergh Engine. They represent a time in our country's history when we built things, big things, and had an industrial power that has slowly disappeared over the last four decades.

This is a hard question to answer because another favorite place was to see the amazing archives and collections that are contained within the museum walls. To be given access to all of that was a great honor. The institution has been collecting railroad artifacts since 1965. It included button dies, pins, lanterns, books, uniforms, mail bags and pouches, builder's plates, signaling devices, locomotive bells, surveying equipment, timetables, stock certificates, stencils, handbooks, glass insulators, a set of prosthetic legs, a model of the Lancaster train station, china, glassware, flatware and desk sets.

The archive includes more than three thousand five hundred cubic feet of manuscripts including reports, drawings maps, prints, corporate records, correspondence and ephemera. That translates into what could be a half million documents. There are many shelves of archival boxes stored in a climate-controlled facility. In addition, part of the museum's collection, about ten percent, remains stored at the State Archives in Harrisburg. At one point, until the collection was culled, there were one hundred and thirty-nine identical Reading Company timetables in the museum's archives. It is a daunting job for the staff to keep track of it all.

The archive serves a large community of railfans, modelers, scholars, historians and visitors all across the nation and internationally. The most researched railroads are the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Reading Company, and the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad. For example, a Russian researcher recently contacted the museum questions about the Baldwin Locomotive Works, the most important steam locomotive manufacturer of its era. The library is a remarkable place as more than one hundred scholars use the collection of books and manuscripts annually.

Then it was always great fun to talk with the volunteers who love the place and love being able to help move the mission of the museum forward. They are a remarkable and dedicated group of people.

I also loved sitting with visitors and talking about their experiences at the museum which often led to broader conversations. Most of the visitors that I spoke to were fascinated and a little overwhelmed by the collection just as I was. On one of my visits I struck up a conversation with a young family and one of the boys said that when he became president he was going to reinstitute much broader passenger service. A good thing indeed.

Q – What was your favorite piece of rolling stock?

A – When I first arrived at Strasburg I presumed that it would have been one of the steam locomotives because of the fine collection that they have. But Bill Farkas got me interested in the GG1 electric locomotive which was a piece of equipment that he was especially taken with. Once I began to delve into its history and its design it became my favorite. There was also the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) Cabin Car No. 478396, a remarkable restoration effort undertaken by the shop staff. It is a work of art in and of itself. And of course I would be remiss in not mentioning the PRR's Air Brake Instruction Car No. 492445 which was also another magnificent effort undertaken by the shop. There were other pieces but those are the top three.

Q – What was the most interesting finding during your research?

A- I think there were two things that I found during my research that were striking to me. The first was the decision to locate the museum at Strasburg after a long and controversial search for a place to build the official state railroad museum. That decision has proven to be correct over the last fifty years and continues to vindicate the judgement of those PHMC leaders, James Stevenson and Sylvester Stevens in 1965. While the Altoona, Mount Union and Rock Hill communities were particularly disappointed with the decision when it was announced, they all have continued on with different destinies ever since. The placement of the museum across from an active railroad, the Strasburg Rail Road, was such a brilliant and visionary action to take.

The second finding was that the PHMC has almost always picked the right person to serve as the director at the right time. There has been an interesting collection of professionals who have led the museum and each has affected the museum's destiny in a variety of ways. So often institutions endure great success or failure because of effective or ineffective leaders but that is not the case there. My book revealed the interesting backgrounds and the successes of each of those leaders along with their challenges.

Q – Where there any disappointments while writing the books?

A - I suppose my greatest disappointment does not have to do so much with the museum but with the larger condition of the history in Pennsylvania, and really across the country. The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has tried mightily to preserve our Commonwealth's history in spite of declining support from the legislature. While its budget has increased somewhat recently the agency was decimated by budget cuts in 2009, and had been in decline for years before that.

The PHMC has spent millions of dollars at the RMP since its founding in 1965 and then its opening in 1975. It is a remarkable legacy and one that has been of great benefit to the people

not only of the Commonwealth but visitors from all over the country and the world. Yet in spite of all of that support there are still pieces of significant rolling stock that have been sitting out in the elements since their donation in the late 1960s. These have deteriorated a great deal and are one of a kind pieces. There needs to be another major Commonwealth investment made in in trying to preserve those pieces and enlarge the building again, just as was last done in 1995. Fortunately, the PHMC and the RMP are in the middle of two major capital projects, the redesign of the museum's exhibitry and the building of a new roundhouse which will house those significant pieces.

But like all of our nation's historic sites the museum still needs more staff, supplies and money to carry out its programs. Because of the sheer size of the museum's operations the funding it needs is substantial. While hundred dollar donations are welcomed and needed, the museum needs to have funding sources that bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars and for some of the projects, millions. It is, and permit me a moment on the soapbox here, a national tragedy when one thinks about what is happening at our historic sites across the country. Don't even get me started.

Q – Did you attend any of the events that the museum sponsored during the year?

A – I tried to attend many of the museum's annual programs and special days. I loved the Reading Days, dedicated to the history of the Reading Company, a major anthracite railroad in Pennsylvania. To talk with the organizing group's volunteers was a real delight. My favorite program was the Troops and Trains and Swing Dance program where hundreds of visitors came to see World War II reenactors, along with period exhibitors. That evening there were swing dancers from area clubs, museum members and visitors. It was great fun to watch. The programs that museum sponsors can satisfy a number of interests and not just those of railfans. The Swing Dance and the Rails, and Ales program undertaken earlier this year, are typical of the various outreaches that are very successful in promoting the museum to different audiences.

Q- What did you think of Strasburg, the community where the museum is located?

A- Strasburg is a wonderful place, so historic and quaint. The first time I walked along its streets I thought that I could move there the next day. It is unique because it is a lineal Pennsylvania village located along Route 741. The remarkable inventory of architecture from so many different periods was always a delight to enjoy. I loved eating at the various establishments both in the borough and the surrounding region.

Q – Did you have interaction with the Amish since you were in the heart of Amish Country?

I was admittedly surprised to find the younger generation of Amish using cell phones. There are now solar panels on the roofs of Amish farm buildings and they are increasingly tied into

the English way of life through their professions that often take them off the farm. I remember eating at an Amish-owned restaurant and paying for my dinner with a credit card. The lovely Amish server told me that my company card had a computer chip in it, something that I did not even know. This all seemed so incongruous because, before my arrival to work on this project, it had been twenty years since I had been in the Amish country. My recollections did not consider how these modern intrusions of ours were affecting their way of life and culture. I became immersed in the culture during my year-long stay at the museum.

A significant number of Amish and Mennonite visitors come to the museum with their families on Holy Days, like Easter Monday, Ascension Day and Pentecost when they take the day off. My misconception, obviously outdated, had always been that the Amish led an austere lifestyle with little contact with the outside world. That was one of the biggest surprises in talking about this with the museum staff. Not surprisingly, Amish craftsmen have worked on pieces in the museum's collection because of the excellent quality of their restoration work, particularly with carriages, sleighs and historic automobiles. I had the pleasure of meeting Elam Fisher, former owner of Double E Carriages from nearby Bird-in-Hand, who has overseen restoration work at the museum. He gave me many insights into Amish culture, as did other younger employees of the company. In all it was a remarkable experience.

Q- Did you ride on the Strasburg Rail Road?

A- I did ride on the railroad on three different occasions and during different seasons. I loved it. It was a delight as I listened to the history of the railroad and nearby sites as the train passed along its beautiful route. While riding in the restored passenger cars my mind kept going back to the remarkable history and rejuvenation of this historic excursion line that remains one of the nation's leaders. There was also an opportunity to meet Linn Moedinger who is now the president of the railroad and whose long association with the company and its success should be documented in a book form. The stories he could tell! His essay in the book is just a sampling of vignettes he has accumulated during his career there.

Q- Why did you write your book?

A- First, William Farkas, the publisher at Yardley Press, asked me to. But little could have I known where it would take me over the last year and a half. Once we got started my main focus came to include honoring the museum, its history, and its staff. The book also places the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in a larger context of what was happening in the railroad world generally, the railroad preservation movement, and the evolution of the Strasburg Rail Road. Not only did we tell the institutional history of the museum in a comprehensive way but we created a digital archive for the museum, and a new Powerpoint program for the staff to use in promoting it.

The project will benefit the museum in many ways for years to come. Now there is a volume of history, more than six hundred pages long for researchers to use and for those with an interest in the museum's development. In addition, I had the great pleasure to meet with Bill weekly to discuss our findings and talk history over lunch. Bill wrote the foreword for the book. Kurt Bell, a nationally known railroad historian wrote the introduction, an essay on George Hart, the museum's founder, and contributed from his own vast body of knowledge to make the book definitive.

Q- Tell me a little about the book.

A - The book comes in either soft or hard cover and is 610 pages long with illustrations. It tells the story of the efforts to create the museum beginning in 1965 and continues to 2015, the fiftieth anniversary of its creation. There is also a commemorative section of the book where staff members, both PHMC and FRM, and all but one of the directors, and various stakeholders reflect on the museum, its history and its future. The book can be purchased at the museum, on-line, in area bookstores, and from Yardley Press directly. Only books purchased from the museum will come autographed and with a special bookmark.

Q- Thank you for sitting down and talking with us.

A- Thanks for the opportunity to promote this important jewel in the crown of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

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*Photograph Courtesy Craig A. Benner, Photographer*

The author can be contacted at 845-551-0417, the publisher, William Farkas, President of Yardley Press, Yardley, Pennsylvania can be reached at: 215-493-5101

