

# The Black Diamond

**Official Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society November 2022**

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## **Message from the Editor**

The November 2022 edition of "The Black Diamond" provides full details about all Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society events during the year. Featured in this issue is an article about the LVRR northeastern style caboos fleet written by Dave Halderman with photographs by Guy Wicksall and Paul Templeton. Please send any Society news and/or historical articles about the Lehigh Valley Railroad to me by U. S. Mail at P. O. Box 200, Manchester, NY 14504-0200 or by e-mail at [kemay59@hotmail.com](mailto:kemay59@hotmail.com). Thank you for your contributions.

Ken May, Editor/Trustee

## **2022 Station Museum Open Houses**

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society Station Museum was open to the public one Sunday afternoon a month from May to October this year. Open house dates were May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18, and October 16. Attendance at the open houses was good. Thanks to the LVRRHS members who volunteered at the open houses.

## **Lehigh Valley Railroad History Program**

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society hosted the Lehigh Valley Railroad History Program at our station museum on Sunday, August 21. The free event was a celebration of the history of the Lehigh Valley Railroad with a program of DVDs, slides, movies, photographs, and discussions. Around 50 people attended the event. Devan Lawton showed two Super 8 movies that he filmed at various locations along the LV main line from Buffalo to Sayre. Dick Palmer gave a slide presentation about the Black Diamond Express. Bernie Beikirch shared his LVRR memorabilia. Ken Willick displayed his insulator collection. Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's special event.

## **Book Signing at LVRRHS Station Museum November 9**

Author Harry Grover Tuttle will sell and autograph copies of his new book, "Lehigh Valley Railroad Manchester Yard Employees" at the LVRRHS Station Museum on Wednesday, November 9, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## **LVRRHS Station Museum Open House November 20**

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society Station Museum at 8 East High Street in Shortsville, New York, will be open to the public on Sunday, November 20. Hours will

be 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. A large collection of historical artifacts from the Lehigh Valley Railroad is on display at the museum. Author Harry Grover Tuttle will sell and autograph copies of his new book, "Lehigh Valley Railroad Manchester Yard Employees." The gift shop will be open. Admission is free; donations are welcome. For more information, visit [www.lvrrhs.org](http://www.lvrrhs.org) or call 585-289-9149.

### **2023 LVRRHS Annual Meeting Notice**

The annual meeting of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., at the Society's Station Museum at 8 East High Street in Shortsville, New York. Election results for officers and trustees will be announced, 2022 activities will be reviewed, and 2023 activities will be discussed at the meeting. The monthly meeting will be held after the annual meeting. All Society members are invited to attend as well as the public.

### **LVRRHS Facebook Page**

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society Facebook page has had much content added over the past year. Ken May has posted more historic photographs and postcards of LVRR locomotives, trains, structures, and facilities in Upstate New York in the photos section. Note that you do not have to sign up for Facebook to view the page. Contact Ken to contribute material for our Facebook page.

### **Membership Renewals**

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2022, we hope that you will renew now. Memberships received after September 30 will be considered good through 2023. We thank all of our members for their continued support of the Society.

### **Donations Needed**

Please consider making a donation to the Society when renewing your membership. Our income is down because we have not been able to sponsor passenger train excursions on the Finger Lakes Railway since 2019 due to COVID restrictions and increased costs. Thank you for your generosity.

### **Membership Drive**

We are actively seeking new members for the Society. Please ask anyone that you know with an interest in railroads to join our group. They can print and fill out the membership application from the Join section of our website. Thank you for your support.

### **LVRRHS Website**

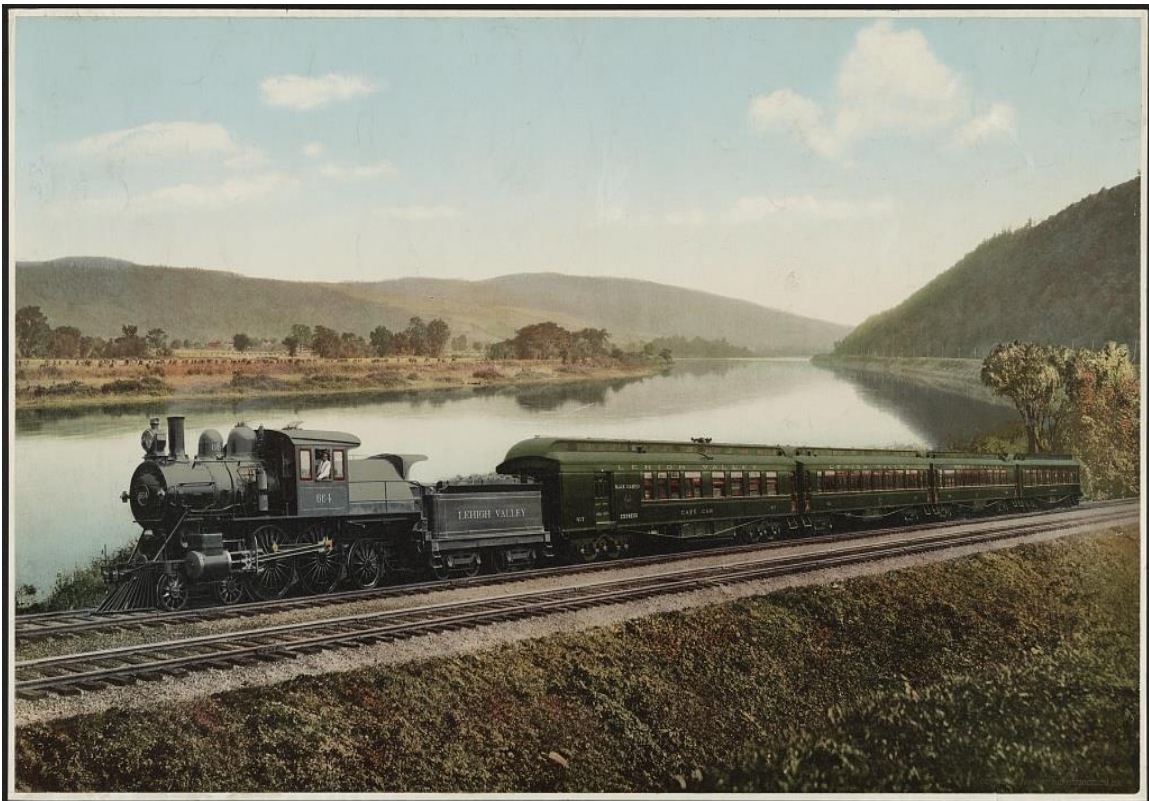
Visit the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society website at [www.lvrrhs.org](http://www.lvrrhs.org) for the latest information about Society activities.

## **LVRRHS Information**

“The Black Diamond” is published by the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society, P. O. Box 200, Manchester, NY 14504-0200. Displays and archives are located at 8 East High Street in Shortsville, New York. Contact the museum at 585-289-9149 and leave a message for a return call.

## **Officers and Trustees of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society**

<b>President:</b>	<b>David Halderman</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Deborah Halderman</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Trustees:</b>	<b>Gary Congdon</b>
	<b>Joseph Dickson</b>
	<b>Rita Gurewitch</b>
	<b>Beverly Halderman</b>
	<b>Kenneth May</b>
	<b>Jack Tuttle</b>



Lehigh Valley Railroad Black Diamond Express on Mainline Along Susquehanna River Near Towanda, Pennsylvania, in 1898

## **Lehigh Valley Railroad's Northeastern Style Caboose Fleet** **By David Halderman**

In 1937, the Lehigh Valley Railroad began a program to rebuild their aging caboose fleet with the construction of twenty new all-steel cabooses. These cars were based on a design originated by neighboring Reading Railroad, the prototype being Reading's class NMj. They were not built exactly as the Reading design however, as the Lehigh Valley chose to eliminate the toolbox, add end windows, and strengthen the posts on the end platforms.

The twenty original cars, numbered 95050-95069, were constructed at the Lehigh Valley's Sayre, Pennsylvania, shops. They used pre-fabricated Bethlehem Steel sub-assemblies, and were equipped with Duryea cushion underframes. They were very well publicized, and one, #95065, was displayed at the 1939-40 World's Fair in New York City. The well-known railroading publication, *Railway Age*, said in its September 1937 issue, "This caboose, built to meet the requirements of the State of New York, has been pronounced one of the safest of its kind by various safety inspectors." This fact would be tested many times throughout their careers, due to the Lehigh Valley's extensive use of pushers in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

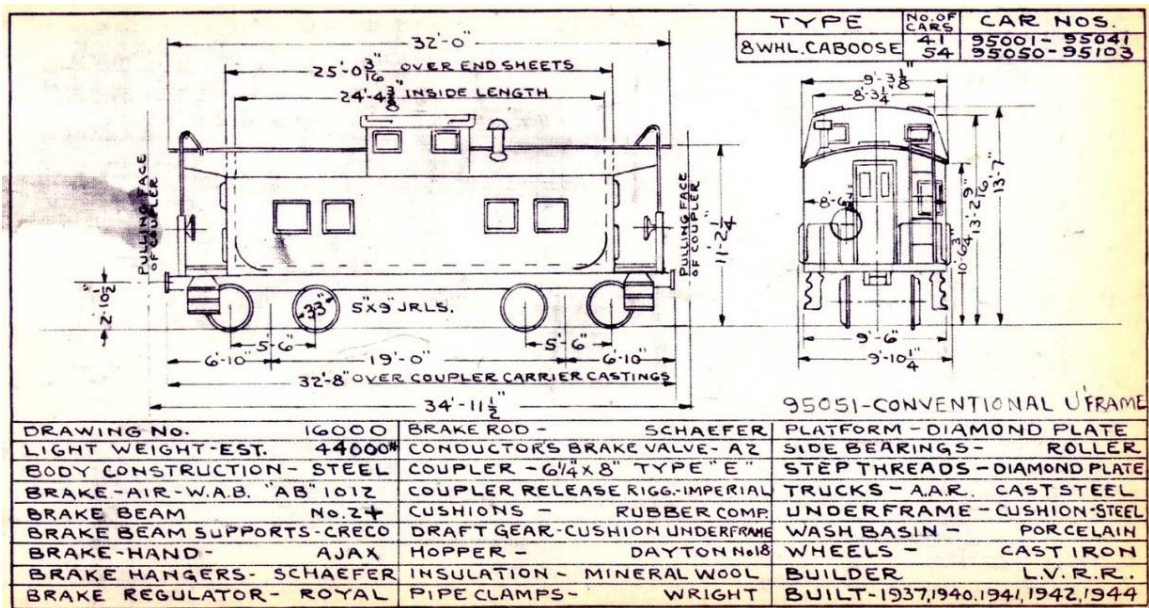
Construction continued through the war years. By 1946, a total of 140 cabooses had been completed. They were numbered 95001-95140, and all were built at the railroad's Sayre shops. These new cabooses were built in two chronological variations, called Phase I and Phase II all being classed "NE." A total of 95 Phase I cars were built, and 45 Phase II cars followed. The biggest noticeable difference between the two phases were the end windows. The Phase I cars had a single rectangular window on each end, while the Phase II cars had two round "porthole" style windows per end. Also, the Phase II cars were built with solid underframes instead of the cushion underframe.

All 140 cabooses started life in "boxcar red" paint, with "The Route of the Black Diamond" slogan painted along the sides in white letters. Handrails were white. The fleet carried this paint scheme into the 1950's, when a simplified version emerged, without the "Black Diamond" slogan, and instead, a large yellow square, with "Make Safety a Habit" stenciled in black, was added. Starting in the 1960's, handrails and end ladders were painted orange. In the mid-1960's, the drab colors were changed, and in their final years, they saw a variety of paint schemes, including Cornell Red, Tuscan Red, Caboose Red, Penn Central Green, and one, #95085, in a Red, White, and Blue "Bicentennial" scheme (renumbered 1776 in December 1975). Cars 95032 and 95054 were painted in a white "Snowbird" scheme, with large red flag heralds, to match the Lehigh Valley's new Alco C-628 diesel locomotives.

Lehigh Valley cabooses were strictly assigned to various divisions across the system. Those with the 'A' prefix in their number were used in pool or run-through service. The Lehigh Valley caboose fleet saw very few upgrades over the years. The most common and noticeable change was the addition of oil heaters to most cars. These can be readily identified by the filler plug near the right-hand end of the "stove side" of the caboose, with the tell-tale stain underneath. Many cars also had sliding screens installed

on the side and cupola windows. To the casual observer, one of the most distinguishing features of the railroad's cabooses were the drip strips above the side and cupola windows, and the three-tread "tender style" steps.

During the 1960's, the Lehigh Valley found itself with a surplus of cabooses, and many were sold off to equipment dealers, eventually finding their way into second-hand service on other railroads. Some of the railroads that purchased former Lehigh Valley cabooses included Penn Central, Chicago & North Western, Rock Island, Genesee & Wyoming, Delaware & Hudson, and Pittsburgh & Shawmut. When the Lehigh Valley Railroad was absorbed into Conrail on April 1, 1976, there were 92 of these "Northeastern" style cabooses still on the roster. Most went on to see service on Conrail before the eventual elimination of the traditional caboose on the rear end of most mainline freight trains.



### LVRB Caboose Data

Builder Data: Railroad Model Craftsman, August 1982.

Individual Data: Lehigh Valley Cabooses.

Phase I	Numbers	Built
Lot 1	95050-95069	7/28/37-12/24/37
Lot 2	95070-95079	6/10/39-7/8/39
Lot 3	95080-95103	4/30/40-3/31/41
Lot 4	95001-95014	5/10/41-8/23/41
Lot 5	95015-95026	5/28/42-8/18/42
Lot 6	95027-95041	4/24/44-

95 Cars: Cushion underframe, right end window, flush roof/end walks, cast steps.

Exceptions:

Fabricated steps: 95014, 95017, 95019, 95022-95026, 95059

Added left end window: 95004, 95007, 95036, 95037, 95038, 95050, 95055,

95056, 95059, 95064, 95065, 95073, 95075, 95077, 95084, 95090, 95092  
Solid underframe: 95051

<u>Phase II</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Built</u>
Lot 6	95042-95049	-6/30/45
Lot 7	95104-95125	7/24/45-11/31/45
Lot 8	95126-95140	3/29/46-5/31/46

45 Cars: Solid underframe, dual porthole windows, raised roof/end walks, cast steps.



LV 95050 at Unknown Location in 1937 (LVRR Photograph, Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania Collection)





LV95123 GENEVA, NY 4/75

GUY WICKSALL PHOTO



LV 95067 5/76

GUY WICKSALL PHOTO



LV 95061 GENEVA, NY 7/75 GUY WICKSALL PHOTO



LV 95016 GENEVA, NY 12/68 GUY WICKSALL PHOTO





LV 95032 Oak Island NJ 1964 Unknown Photographer



Paul J Templeton photo

LV 1776 (95085) Manchester NY 1976 Paul Templeton Photo