

TODAY ON THE M&NJ



NS Local HO8 brings a transformer load for O&R into DG Yard on February 29, 2016. The high and wide load was dropped at Port Jervis by an NYS&W eastbound and picked up by HO8 for delivery to the M&NJ interchange in Middletown. The M&NJ promptly moved the car to O&R's facility near MP 1. Ed Horan took this fine photo and credit also goes to Mike Joyce who gave us a "heads up" on the move.

There was BIG NEWS on the M&NJ on February 29th as NS local HO8 delivered a high and wide shipment, a transformer for O&R, to DG Yard. Randy saw pictures of the transformer and NYSW 3012/3014 (both rebuilt SD40's) which brought it to Port Jervis on the 26th, at RailPictures.Net. They returned to Binghamton as a light move. Mike Joyce supplied a height of 19'3" and a weight of 300,000 lbs. There was concern that the transformer was too wide to clear various passenger station platforms on the Graham Line. Supposedly, this transformer is destined for Warwick but the passenger platform at Campbell Hall fouls the track for that load apparently. M&NJ took a call from O&R on the 29th inquiring about rates for the load to be delivered to the NYS&W at Little Ferry so they could bring the load to Warwick from that direction. M&NJ used U-boat No. 7811 and an empty oil tank car for additional braking capacity to move the transformer into O&R's fenced-in yard near MP 1. The transformer will be stored in O&R's yard for eventual transport to a substation in Greycourt. We are fortunate that Mike Joyce and Ed Horan were trackside to record this notable shipment.



Another view of NS HO-8 with 5617 and 5615 crossing East Main Street to enter DG Yard. Notice the overhead utility wires. Any high and wide move must take obstructions such as this into consideration and make provision, as necessary, to have the restricting clearance addressed. Ed Horan photo

. The string of stored empty oil tank cars extended from the end of track in Slate Hill to the I-84 bridges as of March 27th, roughly 1 ½ miles. Another cut of cars was added the 2nd week of April and again on April 25th when they shoved 23 south. Cars extend from MP3 almost to Uhlig Rd. No cars on North side of Creeden Hill (down to Kirbytown Rd).

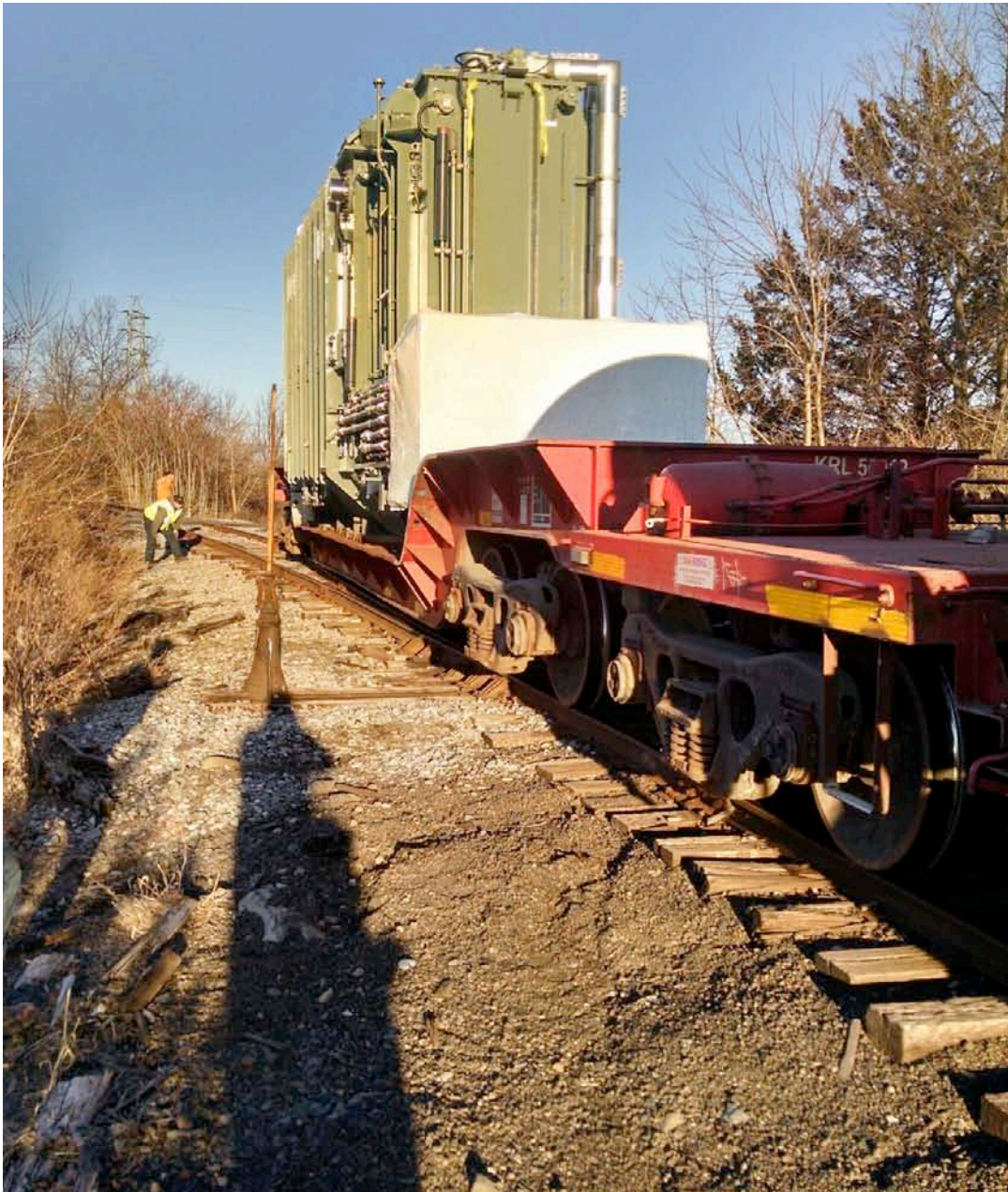
Russ Hallock reported on the discussion site on April 11th: “Today I saw a lot of new ties scattered along the right of way in Greycourt, both the main line and the little branch going into the yard. An East Penn boom truck was in the yard moving bundles of ties around. They should be doing work in this area soon.”

March 13th brought the news that the plan to renovate the O&W’s Middletown headquarters building was endangered as anticipated renovation costs had increased and Middletown’s Community Health Center, which was to occupy the rehabbed building, had failed to secure a state grant for \$7.9 million. The cleanup phase of the \$11 million project was supposed to have commenced by the end of 2015. On the 18th, MCHC announced they had given up on the O&W building and were moving into the former Horton Hospital. Demolition is likely although the mayor spoke of retaining an historic façade.

On March 29th, Metro North announced that Harriman, Salisbury Mills and Campbell Hall were candidates for the mid-point yard and passing sidings that will support increased service on the Port Jervis line. The 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment includes replacing the west-of-Hudson fleet, Moodna and Woodbury viaducts.

On December 31st, a Kingston City judge ordered the CMRR to cease use of the Cornell Street yard in Kingston by February 10th because CMRR could not provide an approved site plan permitting operation at the site or get Ulster County’s approval to use the county land. CMRR moved some equipment to Phoenicia and on February 9th, The Daily Freeman reported some residents of Phoenicia were nervous that CMRR would be moving all their equipment from Kingston to their town. CMRR president, Ernie Hunt, said that only a motor car, a steam engine and related steam engine parts would be brought to Phoenicia. The Shandaken Zoning Board of Appeals was to consider the matter on February 17th. The Delaware & Ulster RR, which operates the

Arkville to Roxbury segment of the former U&D, has approached the County about extending operations to include the Horseshoe Curve in Pine Hill, track that has been dormant for four decades. This out of service trackage is closer to the D&U than to the CMRR which would have to rehab 10 miles from Phoenicia to Pine Hill. The D&U claimed CMRR officials supported their plan. The Ulster County Legislature's Railroad Advisory Committee voted unanimously on September 8th to distribute a Request for Expression of Interest from potential railroad operators with a November 2nd deadline for responses. Meanwhile CMRR was planning to run its Easter Bunny Express on March 26th while the expiration of the lease with the County looms at the end of May. By March 14, the County was soliciting bids on a "Midtown Linear Park", a rail trail from Cornell St. to Westbrook Lane in Kingston. The Cornell St. rail yard will become a trailhead/pocket park. The trail must accommodate a possible future tourist railroad operation loading passengers on the east side of Westbrook Lane.



The 7811 has pulled the tank car and the transformer flat car downgrade on the main below the switch to O&R/Genpak; the switch has been thrown (note the switch stand by the second truck of the flat car) and now 7811 slowly shoves its short train upgrade toward O&R. Note the M&NJ employee on the left watching that the flatcar wheels stay on the track and the belly of the car doesn't bottom out. To spread the heavy weight of the loads it was designed to carry, the flat car has a pair of two-axle trucks at each end. When the Erie bridge (just out of sight to left center) was designed, loads such as this were not envisioned but railroads were notorious for "over-engineering" structures such as bridges and the Erie bridge continues to prove itself in 2016. Mike Joyce photo

On April 19th, the Daily Freeman reported the Catskill Mountain RR and Ulster County had ended their multi-year legal battle. The County agreed to let CMRR store equipment on county-owned land for 60 days after the expiration of CMRR's lease on May 31st. In return CMRR agreed to the following: cease train operations on May 31, 2016; vacate the Cornell St. rail yard in Kingston on or before May 1, 2016; pay rent owed to the County for June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016; forfeit a \$75,000 bond to the County to offset county litigation expenses; post an additional \$25,000 bond and a security interest in railroad equipment to ensure compliance with the settlement; remain responsible for any environmental effects of train operations; remove discarded ties along the tracks, leaving the entire right-of-way free of debris and trash and hire an FRA inspector to ensure track safety before the railroad operates any more tourist train rides.



We only have one image of a high and wide move in our archives prior to 1990 and, unfortunately the subject is a bit dark. However, we present it above as it is a notable shot for many reasons. Note the No. 2 is handling the heavy load with no empty car added for additional braking power. We are standing between the main and the TWO SIDINGS with the Erie bridge to our back. Yes, there were once two sidings into O&R. The closer one remains today and is used to switch Genpak. The transformer load is moving slowly on a siding into O&R's yard that was used to deliver transformers and propane (before a pipeline was laid and a storage facility built adjacent to Agway Fertilizer on the north side and on the west side of the M&NJ main.) Once O&R's inbound shipments dwindled to the rare transformer move, the siding was ripped out. This photo was taken by either Ray Brown or Carl Detwyler



By April 18th, the M&NJ resumed construction of a runaround between Houston Ave. and Washington St., on the south side of DG yard. Randy Stone's photo looks toward Washington St. Rail sections lie within the main line's gauge.



Dan Myers caught ESPN 7811 at Suffern on May 5. A derailment at Montgomery occasioned the rare sight. (Thanks to Russell Hallock, Ed Horan, Mike Joyce, Dan Myers and Randy Stone.)