

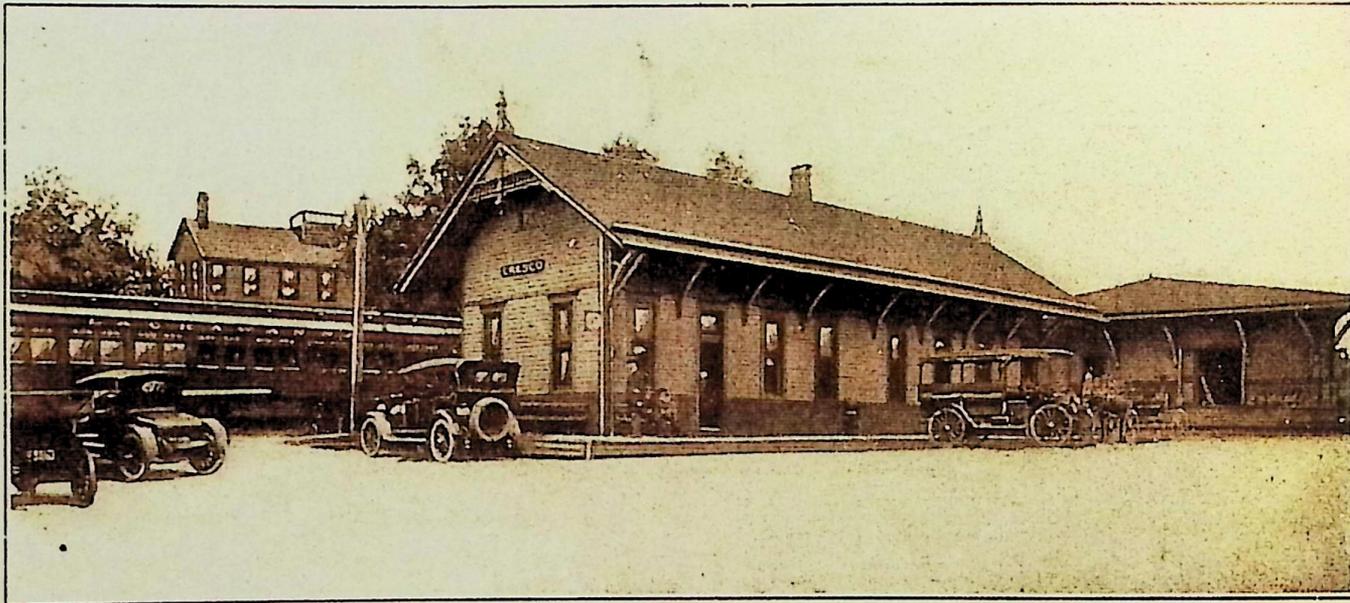
Cresco Train Station

Through the years



Barrett Township Historical Society

May 29, 2022



CRESCO STATION

Cresco Train Station... *Through the years*

Built in the 1880s the Cresco Train Station was once the economic and cultural center of Barrett Township. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad originally chose the location for economic reasons in the 1850s. As business boomed and rail travel became more accessible, Barrett Township grew. The Cresco Station brought hundreds of passengers a day to the thriving hotels and guest houses throughout the region. In the 1920s, the federal government constructed a new Post Office building just across the street. Traffic had become so congested that in the 1950s a bridge was constructed over the tracks to avoid the station intersection. This was a harbinger of what was to befall the railroads. As the age of rail travel faded, the station was closed in 1968 and fell into disrepair. The nearby Weiler Abrasives Corporation purchased the property in the 1970s. Company CEO, Karl Weiler, envisioned that one day the station might house a museum. Thanks to the generosity of the Weiler Family Foundation that dream became a reality when the Barrett Township Historical Society, opened the Cresco Station Museum in 1999. In 2018, the Library and Research Center opened across the street from the station, in the old 1928 Cresco Post Office. The Cresco Station Museum was closed during most of 2019 for a complete replacement of the floor and supporting structure.

The Barrett Township Historical Society was founded on July 30, 1993 to promote the history of Barrett Township and the surrounding area.

Images in this booklet have been collected over the years by the historians of Barrett. We would like to give special thanks to Kendrick and Donna Bisset for organizing those collected image files for use here. Thank you also for images supplied by Ray Roper and Karl Weiler.

Cover image of the train station taken by Kendrick Bisset, Nikon camera.

Barrett Township
Historical Society
Box 358
Mountainhome, PA 18342

May 29, 2022
Cresco, Pennsylvania, USA

T rain notes – 1851-1900

- 1851 – Delaware, Lackawanna & Western formed from the Lackawanna and Western (formerly Ligget's Gap) railroad and the Delaware and Cobb's Gap railroad. Construction began from Scranton north to Great Bend. The railroad was built to 6- foot gauge (the distance between the rails). [1]
- 1856 – DL&W builds the "Southern Division" from Scranton toward New Jersey; all double track. This portion includes what eventually became Cresco. [1]
- 1857 – Oakland station (later Cresco) is reported to be a pile of ties with a tarp roof.
- 1876 – Entire railroad re-gauged to standard gauge (4' – 8.1/2") in one day – March 15. [1]
- 1880's (date not confirmed) – the present station is built.



John Hardy standing at the train station shanty

Early history

The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad (henceforth the "Lackawanna") had opened from the Scranton area north to Great Bend in 1851. The railroad built the "Southern Division" in 1856 from Scranton south to New Jersey. There was originally no station at Cresco, but soon a stop called Oakland was established. The Southern Division was built with at least two tracks through its entire length, presumably because of experience with operating the northern portion as largely a single track railroad.

Around the time the railroad was built, a separate (probably private) branch railroad was built to serve White's Tannery in present day Mountainhome. This railroad is shown on several early maps, such as the Beers Atlas of 1875, and is also mentioned in several property deeds. The name was usually given as the Oak Valley (or Oak Valley Branch) Railroad. The Lackawanna bought the railroad in 1895 and it is now known as the Mountainhome Branch.

The Lackawanna was built to six foot gauge (the distance between the rails) and presumably the Oak Valley was the same gauge. On March 15, 1876, the Lackawanna was re-gauged to the present standard of 4' - 8-1/2" gauge.

Constructing the railroad was a challenge. To build over the mountains, many curves were required. An example is the rather sharp curve at the Cresco station, which had a maximum speed limit of 35 mph for westbound trains (40 mph for eastbound). Steep

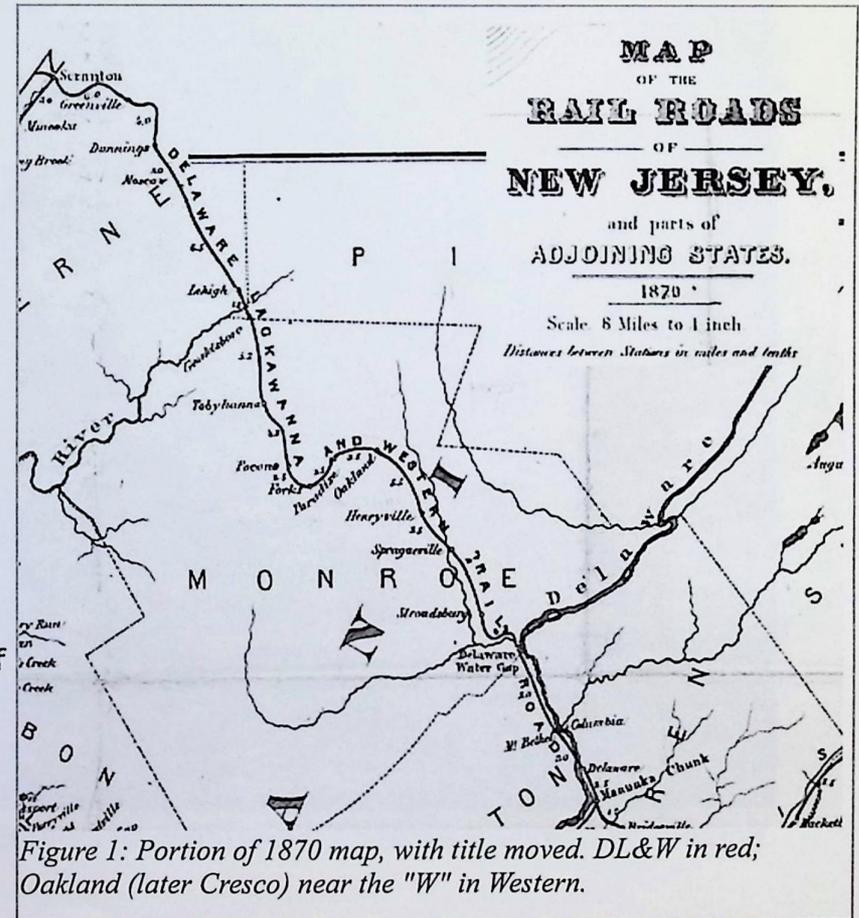


Figure 1: Portion of 1870 map, with title moved. DL&W in red; Oakland (later Cresco) near the "W" in Western.

grades were also needed; from Analomink to Pocono Summit, a distance of about 16.8 miles, the grade is a fairly consistent 1.5%. (That is, the track rises 18 inches in 100 feet.) That is a significant grade, and helper locomotives were required.

An early account suggests that the Oakland station was simply a pile of ties with a canvas roof. Sometime around 1880, the present station was built, though the date has not been confirmed.

Over the years, the railroad built or acquired several structures near the station, and also made modifications to the station. These other structures include: **Freight houses** (two known), **Shanty** for the crossing gate operator, **Passenger platforms**, including a high-level milk or baggage platform, and **Dwellings** for company employees. (Kendrick Bisset)

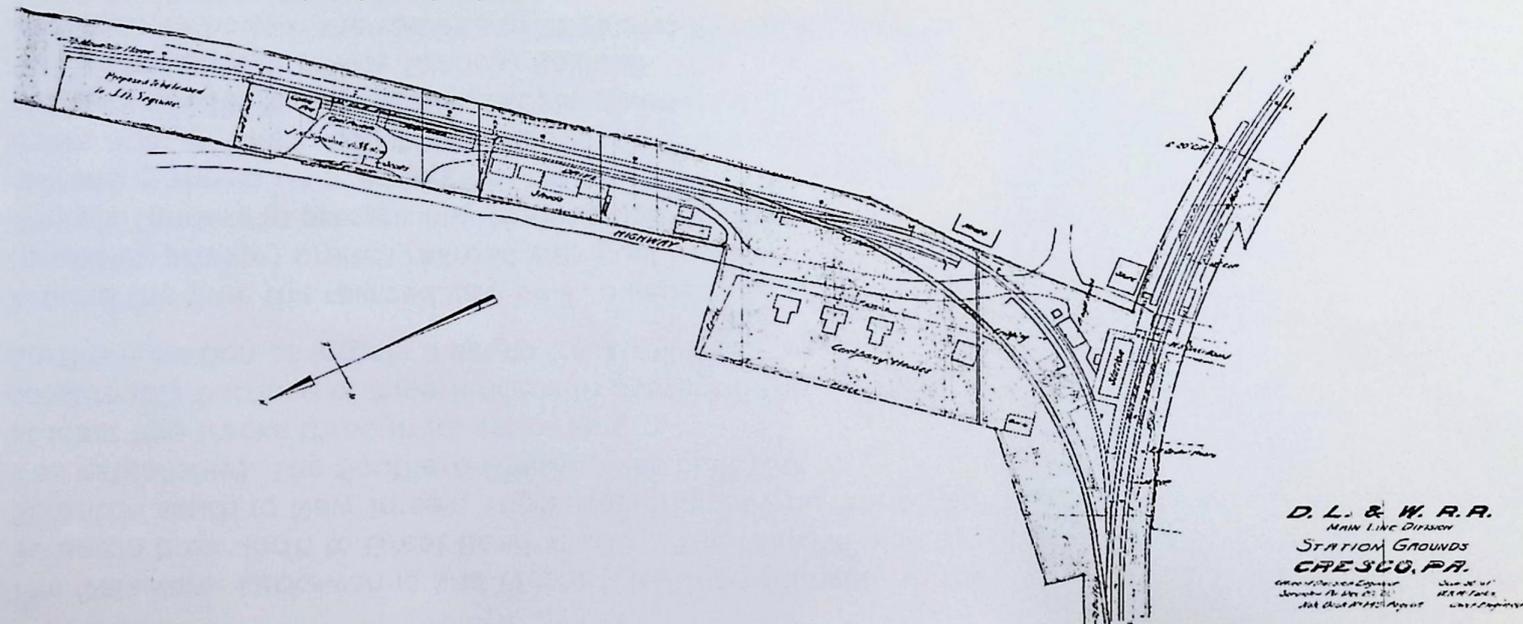
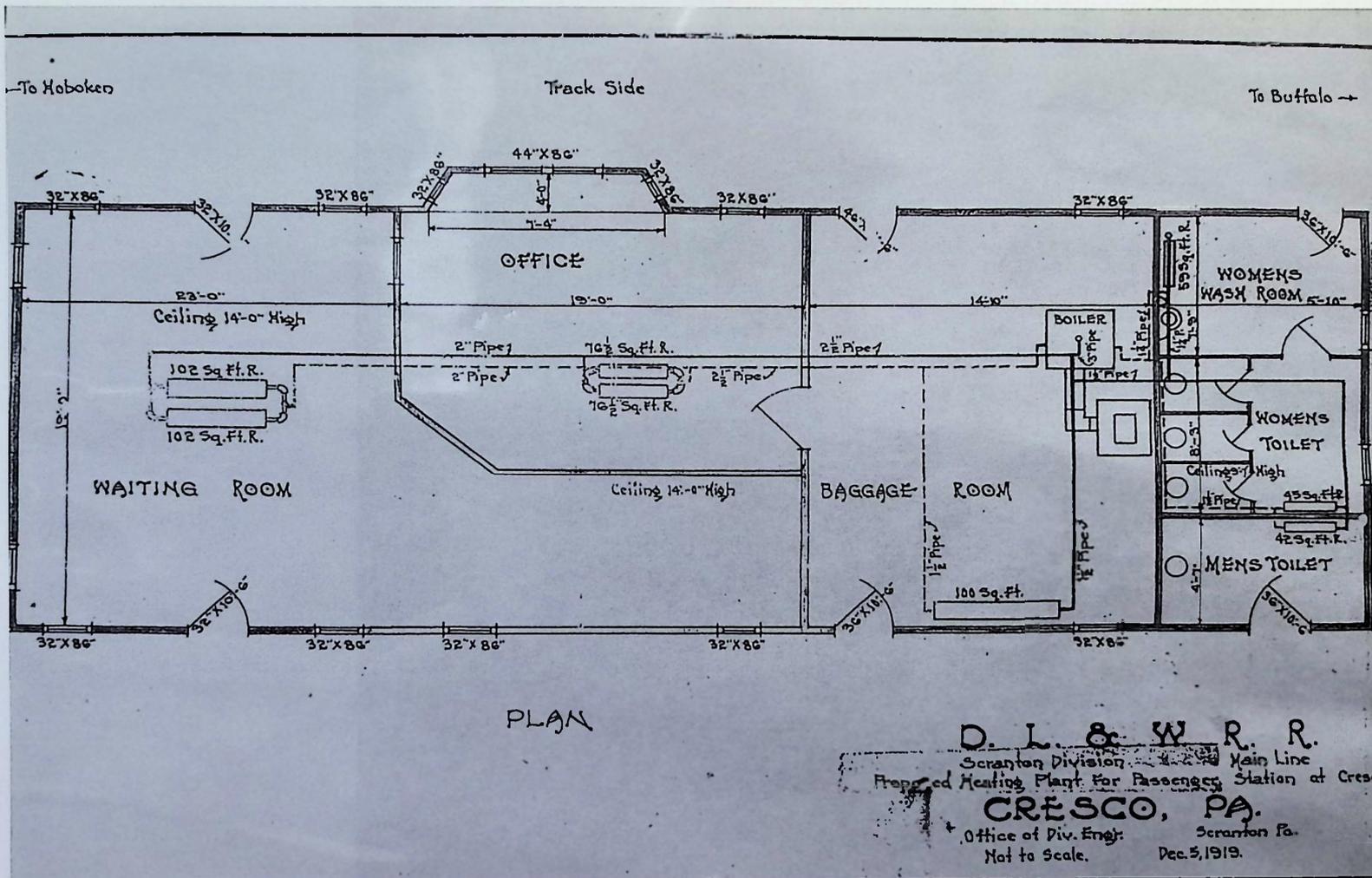


Image of the proposed station grounds in Oakland/Cresco.
(Original drawing from 1901, legend was added later.)



Architectural drawing from 1919 indicating the addition of indoor plumbing.

D. L. & W. R. R.
 Scranton Division Main Line
 Proposed Heating Plant for Passenger Station at Cresco
CRESCO, PA.
 Office of Div. Eng. Scranton Pa.
 Not to Scale. Dec. 5, 1919.



Lackawanna Station, Cresco, Pa

View looking east with a box car on the spur line and Seguine's Department Store on the right.

T rain notes – 1901-1950

- 1925 –DL&W railroad company chief engineer sends a letter regarding complaints about lack of parking at Cresco station. April 23 [2]
- 1925 – DL&W buys the hotel across the track from the station and associated land (88 acres?) July [2]
- 1928 – Post Office moves out of Seguiné’s Souvenir Store and (temporarily) into hotel; the old post office is razed, and the area behind becomes the present parking area. A 100 foot canopy is also built at this time; within a few years, the canopy is extended another 100 feet. June 24[2]



Cresco station and the freight house.

The building has a very unusual shape. It fits between the mainline and the diverging branch line, and has a hip roof with a large overhang. The shape of the roof is very peculiar. The ridge beam is not horizontal; it is higher at the east end than at the west end. The roof had a large overhang, perhaps 8 feet, supported by heavy timber brackets. One bracket was installed at each of the four corners; these were longer, and installed at an angle to support the corner of the roof. Additional brackets were installed straight out from the walls, evenly spaced except with slightly wider spacing at the freight doors. The short west side had two brackets; the south side had eight; the east side had six; and the angled north side had ten. The freight doors on the north and south sides were centered on the wall, while the freight door on the east wall was offset to the north,

This image provides one of the better overall views of the freight house. The exact date is not known, but two events give a rather narrow range. In 1954, the present highway overpass over the tracks was built, and the grade crossing next to the station was closed. In March of 1958, the canopy along the platform blew down in a heavy snowstorm. This picture shows the closed crossing and also the canopy.

Careful examination of archival pictures reveals that some changes were made during the life of the freight house. Pictures from 1916 show that the high-level freight platform along the branch track extended west of the building, around the shortest side of the building, probably by around 20 feet. This was removed by the time of the 1950s picture. Likewise, the bottom edge of the door on the mainline side of the building (the south side) was lowered; the early pictures seem to show that the door threshold was about 4 feet above track level (the height of the high-level platform and the thresholds of the other doors). (-Kendrick Bisset)



*Barrett Township
Historical Society*

Box 358

Mountainhome, PA 18347

View of the uniquely shaped freight house designed to fit between the main line and spur line.



MAIL TRAIN STOPPING AT CRESCO, PA.

8339

July 3, 1908. Photo from the archives.



Cresco station ca. 1916. Photo from the archives.



Lackawanna Station, Cresco, Pa.

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Letter dated 8/3/24

This is Seguin's Souvenir Store ca. 1917. Photo from the archives.



T rain notes – 1951-2000

- 1950 – Automatic crossing gates placed in service at grade crossing next to station. April 11.
- 1954 – Construction of new bridge for Routes 191/390 (as of 2018) by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is sufficiently advanced so that Western Union circuits may be restored on a permanent basis. September 1.[7]
- 1954 – Contractor is installing barricades across the road at the Cresco crossing (presumably bridge is finished) October 12[7]
- 1955 – Hurricane Diane follows Hurricane Connie, and causes extensive flooding in the Poconos. DL&W Train No. 5, the westbound Twilight, is marooned at the Cresco station. Pictures show the canopy and freight house still in place. August 18-19.
- 1958 – The canopy collapsed due to heavy snow and high winds. Canopy not replaced. March 20.
- 1960 – The Lackawanna (DL&W) and Erie railroads merge to form the Erie-Lackawanna. October 17.
- 1961 – Last freight car delivered to T. B. Price (pers comm. employee George Traugh)
- 1967 – Station open per Employees Timetable No. 7 – listed with "D" (Open part time) in timetable; listing of "Train Order Offices - not open twenty-four hours daily" shows Cresco open Monday-Friday 8:15am – 12:45 pm and 1:45 pm- 5:15 pm. Timetable lists two passenger trains a day; No. 5 (WB) at 9:51 pm, and No. 6 (EB) at 6.29 am. Thus, station not open when passenger trains stop. October 29.
- 1969 – Employees Timetable No. 2 not clear if Cresco open or not. Timetable includes "D" note on Cresco, suggesting not open 24 hours, but the listing of "Train Order Offices - not open twenty-four hours daily" does not include Cresco. April 27. [3]
- 1968 – Cresco station to close July 3. [4]
- 1970 – Last passenger train January 6-7.
- 1970 – Weiler Corporation leases Cresco Station from Erie-Lackawanna for storage of cardboard boxes [5]
- 1971 – Freight car still being delivered on the branch, per photo in Lackawanna Facilities, Volume 2 by Bob Hart. August.
- 1976 – Conrail takes over operation of Erie-Lackawanna railroad. April 1.
- 1985 or before – Conrail removes second track [8]

- 1989 – Extensive damage to station by vandals August 8. [5, newspaper articles]
- 1994 – Conrail sells "...approx. 16.4 miles of the subject [Scranton] branch, from Mile Post 101.0, in Mt. Pocono, to Mile Post 84.6 at Analomink, Monroe Co., Pa. to the Monroe County Railroad Authority." January 24. [5, 6]
- 1998 – Weiler Family Foundation presents keys to the Station to Jackie Magann of the Barrett Township Historical Society, for use as a museum August 25 (Tuesday) [5]
- 1998 – Agreement between Weiler Corporation (Karl Weiler) and the Barrett Township Historical Society to use the station as a museum December 18. [5]
- 1999 – BTHS opens the Museum in Cresco Station – Grand Opening Celebration May 30. [5]



Karl Weiler and Jackie Magann





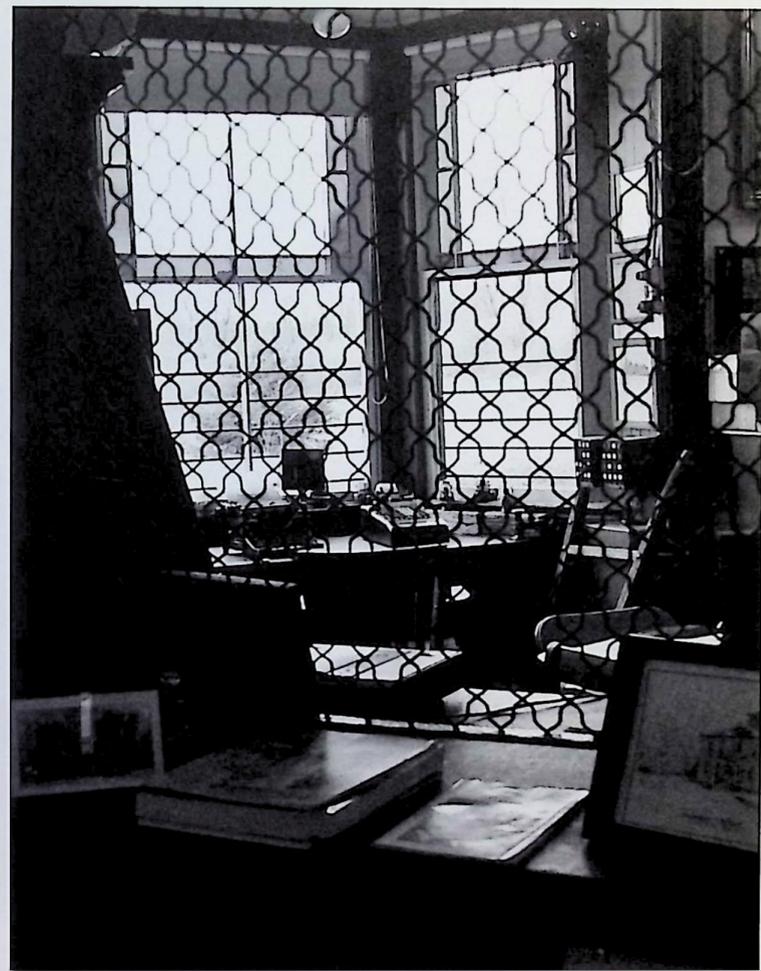
The early 1980s and the train station in need of some work.

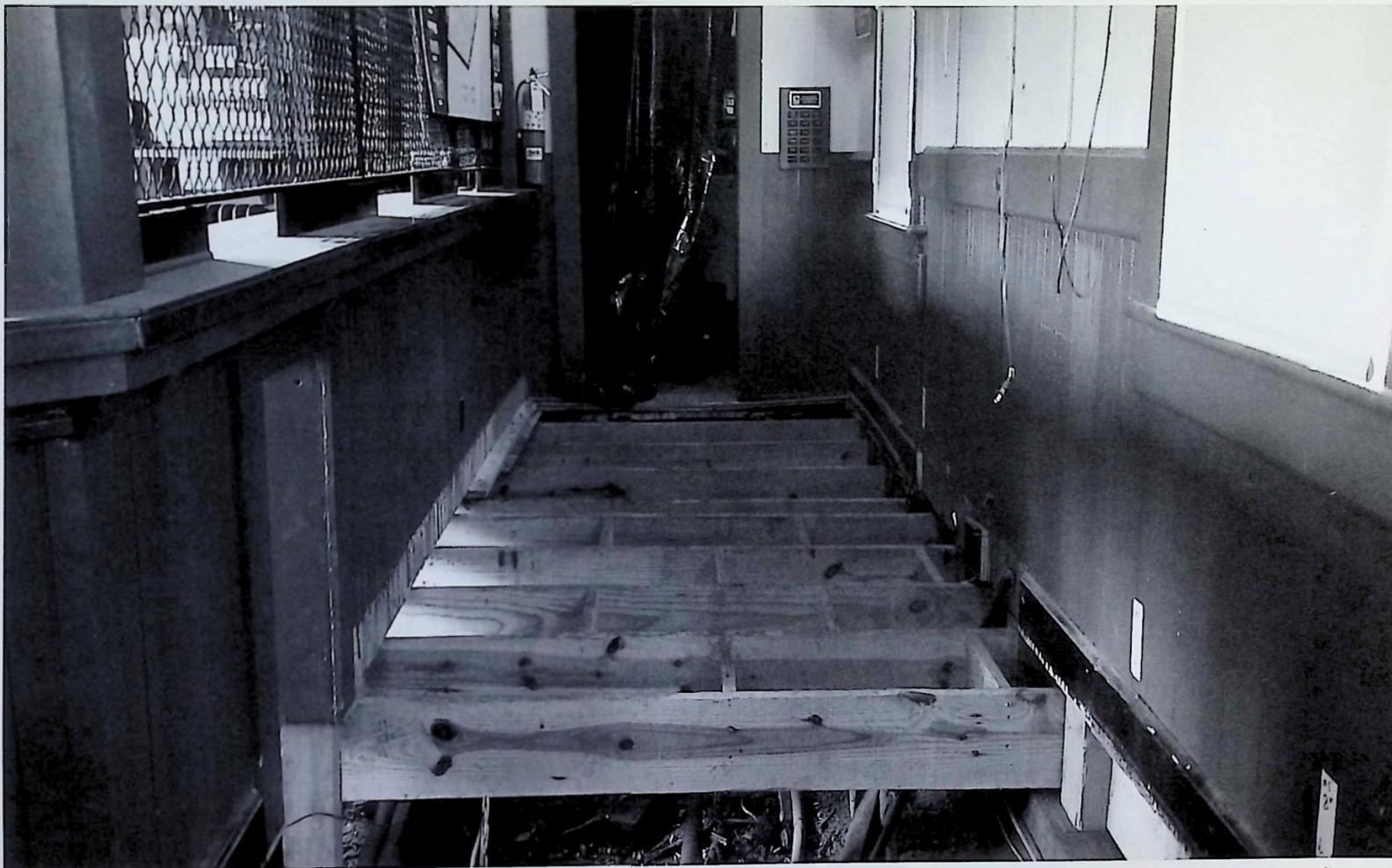


The route 390 bypass now provides a wonderful view of the Cresco Station and Post Office to historians and photographers alike.

T rain notes – 2001 – present day

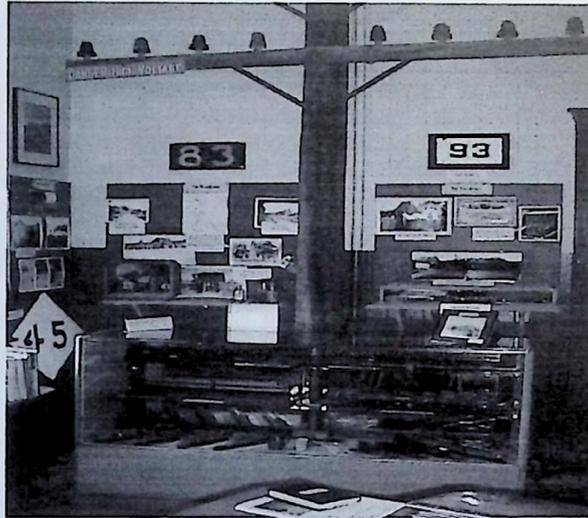
- 2005 – Cresco Post Office building and grounds purchased by Weiler Family Foundation October 24. [5]
- 2006 – Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority created from the Monroe County and Lackawanna County railroad authorities May. [10]
- 2007 – Cresco Station Museum re-opened after extensive rebuilding and repair performed by the Weiler Family Foundation May 19. [5]
- 2010 – Barrett Township Historical Society continues to install new exhibits illustrating the township's history.
- 2019 – Station floors redone and building updated with electrical and water.
- 2022 – Grand Celebration and rededication of the Cresco Station Museum by the Barrett Township Historical Society. The day's events included recognition of Karl Weiler and the Weiler Family Foundation for all they have done to return the Cresco Station to a position of prominence in the community again. May 29





2019 refurbishing the train station floors.

Cresco Train Station – Interior Photos - October 2004



In the early days of the Barrett Township Historical Society, the train station provided enough room to house exhibits, hold meetings, and conduct special programs.

Today (2022), the station houses an extensive collection of artifacts donated to the society through the years. Meetings and other events are now held across the street in the old Cresco Post Office



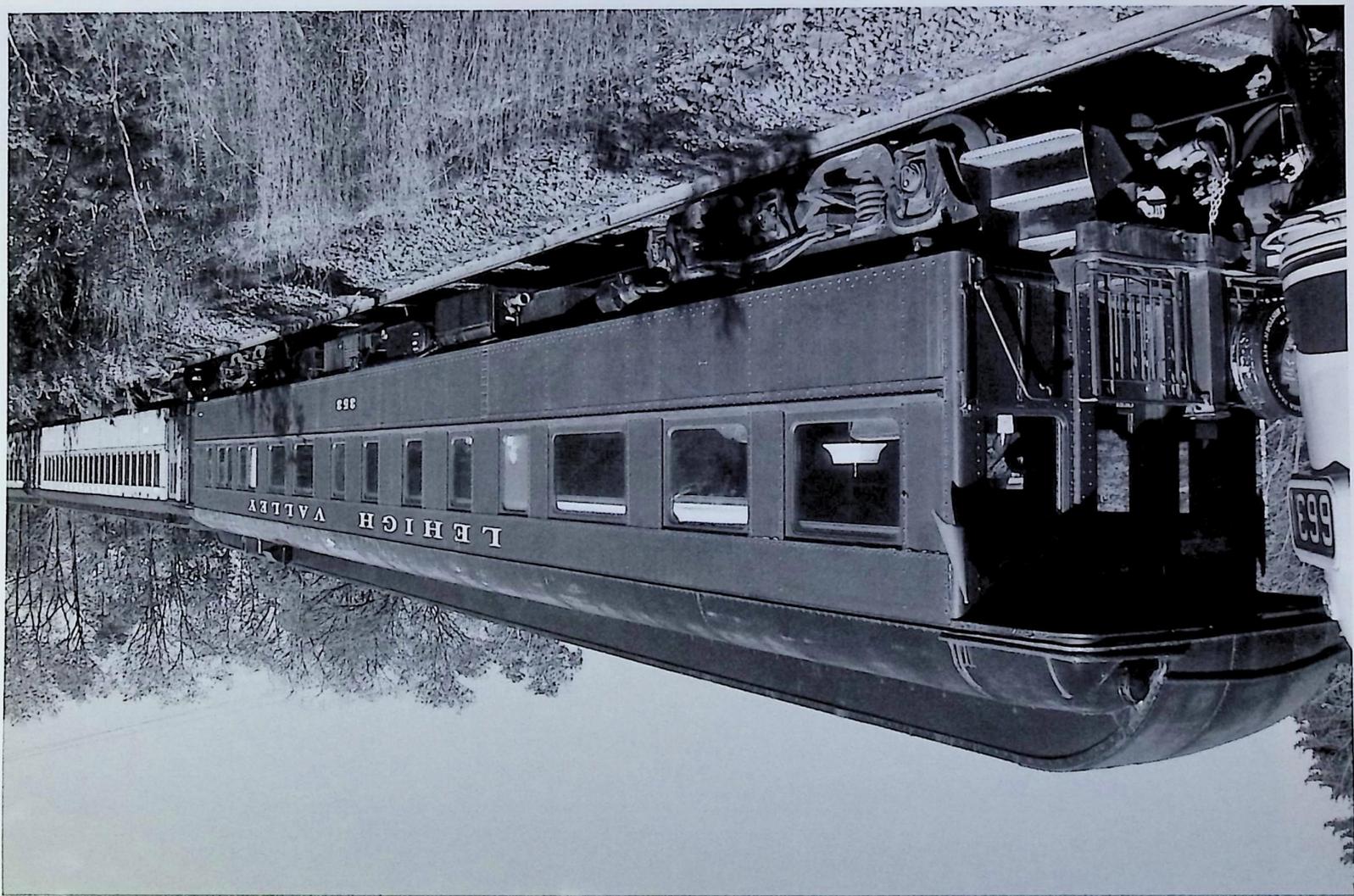
Display of items for sale at Seguin's.

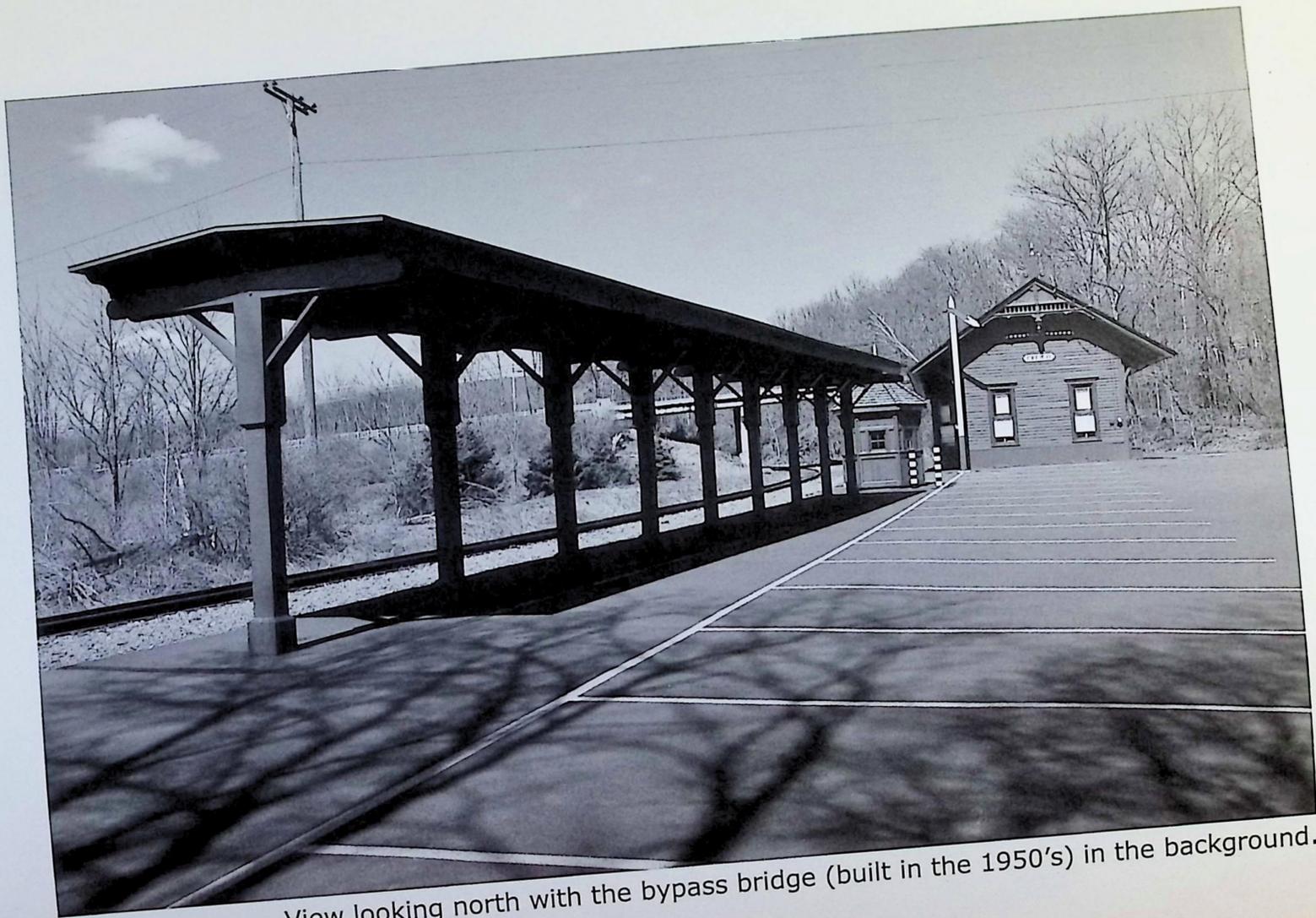


Looking west you can see where the railroad crossing connected to Route 390 (in the background) before the bypass was built.



Present day rail enthusiasts can step back in time by taking excursions to the Cresco station provided by Steamtown National Historic Site out of Scranton





View looking north with the bypass bridge (built in the 1950's) in the background.



Refurbished to its former self, the train station celebrates summer with antique cars.



The Cresco Post Office is now home to the Barrett Township Historical Society Library and Research Center. It is the only example of art deco architecture in the region.

Sources:

- [1] - Taber, TT. 1977. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western in the Nineteenth Century; Taber, TT. 1977. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western in the Twentieth Century (2 volumes). Lycoming Printing Company. 412 pp.
- [2] - Papers apparently from the DL&W Division Engineer's office, ca. 1925 - 1930; from Warren "Mickey" Miller, found in Theo. B. Price store, 2016
- [3] - Erie-Lackawanna employee's timetables, collection of Kendrick Bisset
- [4] - Pocono Record articles June 27, 28 and 29, 1968; loaned from Monroe County Historical Society
- [5] - Weiler Corporation and Karl Weiler files, loaned to Kendrick Bisset
- [6] - Conrail letter to Weiler Brush Co., February 22, 1994
- [7] - Copies of (apparently) DL&W engineer's correspondence in BTHS collection Cresco Station summary timeline 24 April, 2019
- [8] - Conrail Maintenance Program and Track Chart, Eastern Region, New Jersey Division, 1985
- [9] - Barrett Township Historical Society Newsletters. 1998.
- [10] - Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority. About Us. Retrieved on 16 October 2017 from <http://pnrra.org>.

Kendrick Bisset





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