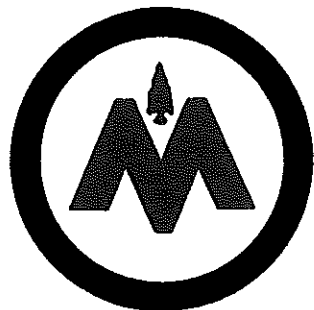


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# **MONON**

**SECOND, REVISED EDITION**

## **THE HOOSIER LINE**

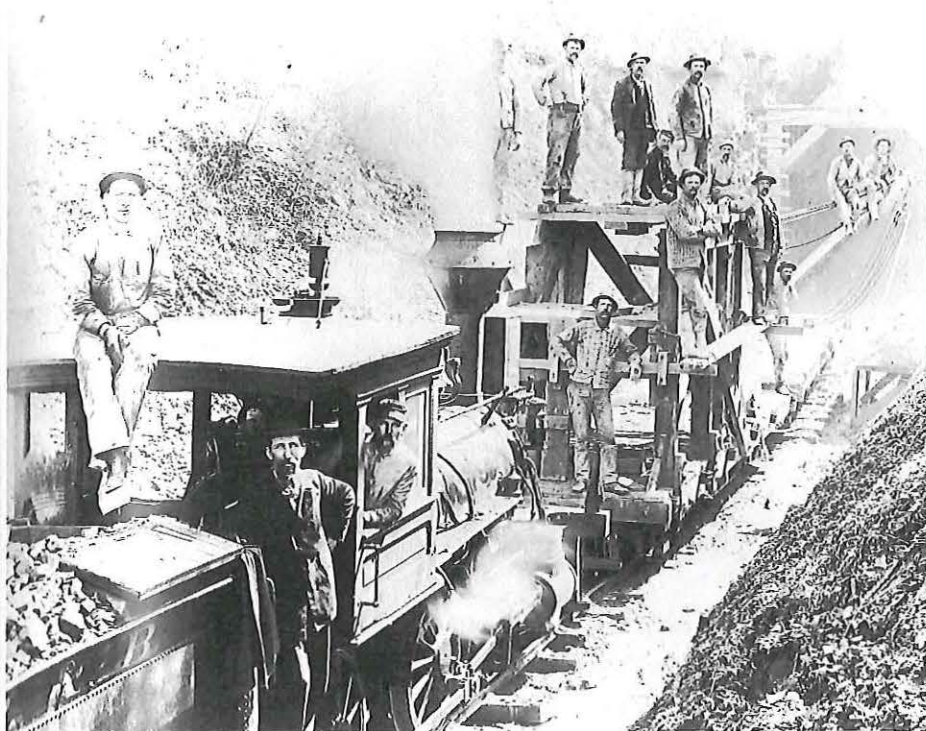


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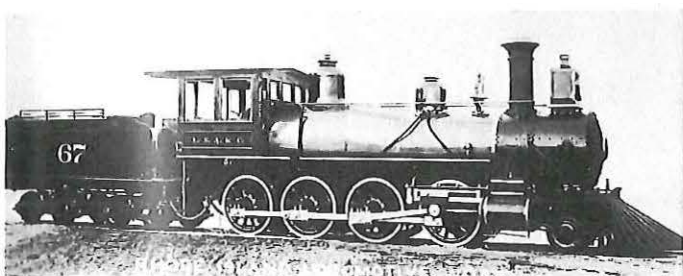
BY GARY W. DOLZALL  
AND  
STEPHEN F. DOLZALL

*WITH AN AFTERWORD BY FRANK VAN BREE, PRESIDENT  
MONON RAILROAD HISTORICAL-TECHNICAL SOCIETY, INC.*

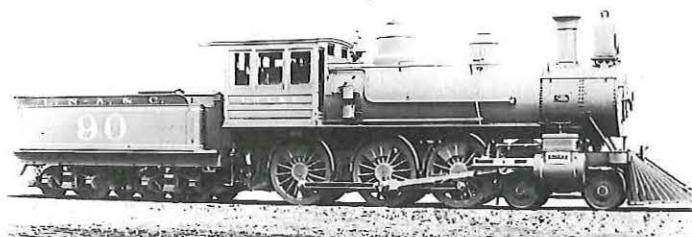
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Most infamous feature of the Bedford & Bloomfield—the Owensboro Tunnel—is visible in the background as tunnel workers pose in this remarkable 19th century photograph. Locomotive in foreground is a B&B narrow-gauge 2-4-0. (LLOYD J. KIMBLE COLLECTION)



Rhode Island Locomotive Works built LNA&C's first 2-8-0's—low-boilered Nos. 64-67—in 1887. Eventually, the Hoosier Line would purchase 40 2-8-0's. (LLOYD J. KIMBLE COLLECTION)



Pin-striping adorns 63-inch drivers of Rogers-built LNA&C 4-6-0 No. 90 when new in 1890. (ALCO HISTORIC PHOTOS)

lost its bridges over Monon Creek at Bradford (later to become Monon, Ind.), and smaller bridges near Greencastle. Other bridges, including the Wabash River crossing, were seriously damaged. Then that August, LNA&C lost more bridges—near Ellettsville and Gosport—to flood waters. LNA&C's superintendent, B.F. Master, estimated repair costs at \$45,000. And there was more trouble: South of Bedford, between Juliett and Hitchcock, LNA&C's track, laid on log stringers, became so unstable that it was necessary to install new ties and sand ballast on nine miles of line.

Despite its troubled economics and battle to merely keep its main line open, the LNA&C did, nonetheless, make attempts at improvement after the Civil War. In 1866, the road purchased 50 box and stock cars from the Ohio Falls Car Co., and at its New Albany shops built 44 coal cars and 26 flatcars. A new station was built at Quincy, and a new blacksmith shop at New Albany. Considered, but not built, was a branch leaving the main line at either Bainbridge or Putnamville bound for the coal fields of Clay County. At the north end of the railroad, LNA&C looked to the completion of Michigan City's harbor, and expected increased

tonnage of lumber, salt, plaster and farm produce from that port.

But the LNA&C's attempts at stability failed. By October 1868, the railroad was again facing foreclosure and James F. Joy of Detroit, Mich., was named receiver. The railroad was sold, and on June 24, 1869, was reorganized as the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago Railway. In control was a New York group with John Jacob Astor at its head.

Over the next three years, the LNA&C endured total financial and legal turmoil. Following a suit by junior bondholder John S. Shaw, who held the 1869 sale of the LNA&C to be illegal, the railroad was again placed in receivership (under George H. Chapman) in 1871. The road again underwent foreclosure sale in December 1872, and control was again gained by the Astor interests. For the next eight years, the LNA&C would lead a quiet existence with few improvements and no expansion.

### A Crossing at Bradford

While the LNA&C of the 1870s slumbered, there was railroad activity elsewhere in Indiana that would





This two-story frame depot at Monon was an 1893 expansion of the single-story depot depicted on page 33. The K-2-class 4-6-2 eased up to the platform was built by Brooks in 1906. In 1916, this station would be replaced by a limestone structure. (DAVE FERGUSON'S PHOTO ART)

change the face of the Hoosier Line. On September 3, 1872, a railroad—the Indianapolis, Delphi & Chicago—was organized to build between its namesake cities. Reorganized was, in truth, a better term, because the ID&C had been first incorporated by Delphi businessmen in 1865, but construction had never been started. But in 1872, there was strong reason to renew the ID&C. A projected railroad giant, the Chicago & South Atlantic—envisioned to reach from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean (Chicago to Charleston, S.C.)—searched for a path across northern Indiana toward Chicago. And the ID&C's charter provided just such a route.

By 1874, with the financial backing of the Chicago & South Atlantic, grading began on the ID&C. Within a year, the majority of the line north of Delphi—projected to run northwest to Monticello, Bradford (where it would cross the LNA&C), Rensselaer and Dyer (where connections into Chicago could be made on existing railroads)—was graded. Then suddenly, the ID&C lost its parent. In late 1875, the Chicago & South Atlantic fell into economic disarray—and finally total collapse. For a second time, the Indianapolis, Delphi & Chicago had been stillborn.

Enter John Lee. In 1877, Lee (of Crawfordsville) and Delphi businessmen again renewed plans for the ID&C. This time the railroad was cast not as part of a dreamed-of Titan such as the ill-fated C&SA, but as a three-foot, narrow-gauge line intended to provide low-cost competition to standard-gauge roads. Because the

Louisville, New Albany & Chicago provided a means to transport rail and equipment, construction of the ID&C began at Bradford. Under the guidance of builder S.N. Yeomen, the ID&C laid its narrow-gauge railroad from Bradford northwest to Rensselaer, 15 miles, by February 1878. By the end of 1878, the ID&C had extended southeast from Bradford to Monticello, and in September 1879 the road reached one of its namesake towns—Delphi. Conquered were crossings of the Tippecanoe River (at Monticello) and the Wabash River (north of Delphi).

But in 1880, the luckless ID&C again—for a final time—faltered. Control of the Indianapolis, Delphi & Chicago passed to its builder, S.N. Yeomen, largely because the ID&C was unable to pay for his construction work. Yeomen reorganized and renamed the road the Indianapolis & Chicago Air Line, planned entry into Chicago via rights on the budding Chicago & Western Indiana, and made the decision to recast the railroad—in standard gauge. In September 1880, tracklaying began south from Dyer, and by the end of the month had reached Lowell, 15 miles. By May 1881, the line was nearly complete from Dyer to Delphi. And the Indianapolis & Chicago Air Line had a larger suitor—the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago.

### Years of Expansion

Following its nearly decade-long sleep, the LNA&C of the 1880s made a rapid expansion. At the start of