

THE HISTORY AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE OLD CALVERT STREET STATION
OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD AT BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

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INDEX

<u>SUMMARY</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>THE HISTORY OF THE CALVERT STREET RAILWAY STATION</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>CONSTRUCTION OF THE CALVERT STREET RAILWAY STATION</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>PHOTOGRAPHS OF STATION</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>MAP OF BALTIMORE</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	<u>16</u>

SUMMARY

In the year of eighteen hundred and forty-eight, the Baltimore and Suxquehanna Railroad Company purchased from the Baltimore Water Company a site of land located at the northeast corner of Calvert and Franklin streets to build a station in order that it could concentrate under one roof its offices and all the business of the road, both freight and passenger. The depot which was first built was commented upon very favorably by all the authorities. The depot was completed and put in use early in the year of eighteen hundred and fifty. In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-four the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company consolidated into the Northern Central Railway Company. Later, in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-four, this latter company was taken over by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, which still owns the station. Until the year eighteen hundred and sixty-five, both passengers and freight were handled in the depot, but after that year the large brick freight warehouse, which is situated on the west side of North street, was used. Two tracks were laid through the center of the building, which took care of about eighteen cars. It has since been used for in-bound and out-bound freight. Eith the addition of a cou;le of small warehouses owned by other companies, these facilities were all that were used for freight at Calvert Station until the year eighteen hundred and seventy-three. Since then sheds "B", "C", "D", "E", and "F" have been erected, as well as a large hay warehouse and the "Jail Yard", which was used for the delivery of bulk freights. Improvements that were made by a change in the main tracks between Union and Calvert stations and by an addition of tracks in the Eager street yard enabled the company to load about two hundred cars daily. The local grain elevator,

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number two, which contains a capacity of three hundred thousand bushels that is used for the handling and storage of grains for city delivery, was completed in eighteen hundred and ninety-one, and greatly facilitated operations which were formerly slow and expensive. The Calvert Street Station is, at the present writing, but little used.

The architects of the Calvert Street Station were Niernsee and Neilson. The station has six large piers forming the foundation of the portal on North street. Forty piers form the foundation of the stone pillars of the car house. The depot consists of a car house, occupying the diagonal of the square of ground owned by the company, and terminating at the end on Calvert street by a large building in the Italian style, and containing the principal offices. On North street, the car house is terminated and supported by a massive portal, also in Italian style, and is the entrance for the passenger and tonnage trains. The roof of the car house is of sheet iron, and the pillars are of cut granite. The easiest and best access, both for the passengers and trains, is gained by the diagonal position of the depot buildings.

THE HISTORY OF THE CALVERT STREET RAILWAY STATION

In the month of June of the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, a site of land at the northeast corner of Franklin and Calvert Streets was purchased by the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company from the Baltimore Water Company. Previous to that time, the site of land was used for a Roman Amphitheatre. This building was completed in the month of October of the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, and the performances that were given there were very well attended by the people of Baltimore. However, the establishment was burned down during the year after it was built. The Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company originally constructed the Calvert Street station in order that it could concentrate under one roof its offices and all the business of the road, both freight and passenger. The depot, which was first built, was regarded by the authorities as a most suitable structure for its purposes. In the American Railroad Journal's reports of eighteen hundred and fifty, the following statement, which was published before the completion of the depot, is quoted:

"The depot erected for the company on the square of ground between North and Calvert, and Franklin and Centre streets, has now approached so near to its completion as to enable the company to use it for the reception and dispatch of passenger trains.

"The depot, for spaciousness, convenience, and adaptation to the purposes for which it is designed, will compare most favorably in every respect with any in the United States. In its construction a substantial strength and solidity have been combined with beauty of architectural style which does great credit to the taste and skill of the archi-

fects from whose bureau the designs came, Messrs. Niernsee and Nelson. The front on Calvert Street, we think, may justly be considered a most imposing and appropriate piece of architecture. The beautiful brown freestone, extensive quarries of which exist on the line of the railroad, has been introduced into with great effect. We are glad to see that this initiative has been followed and that in improvements in different parts of the city, this attractive and excellent building material is being largely used. The depot has been constructed to meet not only the present wants of the road, but those which will be consequent upon the largely increasing business which may confidently be expected to seek our city thru this Avenue; and the president and directors of the road, in thus providing, with an enlightened and liberal policy, for the future, are deserving of the commendation of the community."

The newspaper, the Baltimore Clipper, on the fourth day of June of the year eighteen hundred and fifty, also comments favorably on the depot. The article is as follows:

"The New Depot. The new depot of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company, situated on Calvert Street, is so far completed, that the passenger trains arrive at and depart from it. The cars from York entered it yesterday morning amidst a crowd of spectators, and everyone seemed delighted with the arrangements and accommodations. The main building is large and commodious, divided into airy and comfortable apartments, for the accommodation of the President and the Directors and the various officers of the company, but they are not yet completed, and until finished, a car neatly fitted up will be used as the ticket office. The car

department is supplied with firm and convenient platforms, and will accommodate a large number of cars. The whole structure is substantially made, tastily arranged, and is an ornament to the city. It does great credit to those who designed and executed the work.

"The company, we hope, will proceed to widen North street, and to lay on additional track, as the increase in the business of the road will certainly require greater accomodation than is afforded by one track, especially after the completion of the road from York to Harrisburg.

"We think that the City Council committed an oversight in not sanctioning the law passed at the last session of the Legislature, authorizing the company to borrow a sum of money to repair the Green Spring Road, etc., as it would certainly have contributed to the interests of the city by introducing a large amount of produce and travel; and without the cost of a dollar to the city, as the additional redeipts would have been amply sufficient to discharge the interest accruing on the loan."

In the year of eighteen hundred and forty-nine, the General Assembly of Maryland drew up some laws and ordinances relating to the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company and which concerned the building of the Calvert Station. The laws were as follows:

"A further supplement to an act to incorporate the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company.

Section I--- Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland, that the southern terminus of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company shall be at the depot, now being erected on Calvert street, in Baltimore, including the said depot, and so much of the lot on which it stands as may be necessary for the convenient use of said depot, and that the

president and directors of the Baltimore and Susquehanna shall be and are hereby invested with all the rights and powers necessary for the construction, repair, and use of a line of railroad, in and from said Calvert street depot, along their present line of railroad, in and from said Calvert street depot, along their present line of railroad tracks on the bed of North street, and through Bolton depot to the city limits, as fully in every respect as said company now possesses the right and power to construct, repair, and use its railroad beyond the limits of the city of Baltimore.

"Section II--- And be it enacted, that the president and directors of said company, shall be and they are hereby authorized to construct, repair, and use a second tract of railroad, parallel to the present track, from said Calvert street depot to the city limits, and if necessary in their judgment to alter the location of their present tracks; provided, that before they shall be authorized to construct a second track, it shall widen the streets through which the road passes, in manner provided, for which purposes the said company shall be authorized to widen the streets through which said tracks are or may be located to the further width of twenty feet, and may acquire the receiving ground and materials by gift or purchase, or by condemnation, in the manner prescribed and authorized the original act to which this is a further supplement, and for the purpose of such condemnation the sheriff and justices of peace of Baltimore and Baltimore county court, are hereby invested respectively with all the powers, authority, and duties within the limits of the city of Baltimore, as the sheriff and justices of the peace of Baltimore county and Baltimore county court are respectively charged and invested with by the said original

act, beyond the limits fo the city of Baltimore; provided, that nothing in this act contained, shall deprive the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore of the right and power to fix and prescribe the rate of speed at which the said railroad company may run their cars and locomotives within the city limits, and provided that the legislature reserves to itself the right to repeal this act, whenever in its discretion, it may deem it expedient."

The depot was completed and was put in use early in the year of eighteen hundred and fifty. In the beginning, the passenger trains ran daily except the afternoon train from Baltimore on Sundays. The first trains went from Baltimore to York, Brightsville, and Columbia. In the year of eighteen hundred and fifty-four, under the provisions of an Act of Maryland, concurrent with one of Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company, of the State of Maryland, joined with the York and Maryland Line Railroad Company and the Susquehanna Railroad Company of the State of Pennsylvania, and formed the Northern Central Railway Company. In the year of eighteen hundred and seventy-four, in the interest of greater economy of management and of serving the public, the President of the Northern Central Railway Company resigned and was succeeded by the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, which company is now in possession of the Calvert Station.

Until early in the year of eighteen hundred and sixty-five, with a few changes in the train shed, both passengers and freight were handled in it. The west side was used for the passengers, while the freight was taken care of on the east side and in the yard between the shed and North Street. The offices that were on the second story of the main or office

building, later occupied by the ticket receiver and passenger trainmen as offices, reading-room, and dormitories, were then used by the President, Board, and Executive Officers of the Company. The new general office building on the corner of Calvert and Centre streets, was completed and occupied the month of March of the year eighteen hundred and seventy-six.

On the month of April of the year eighteen hundred and sixty-five, the large brick freight warehouse, which is situated on the west side of North street and extends from Centre to Monument street and to Davis street on the west, was completed and put into use. Two tracks were laid through the center of the building, which took care of about eighteen cars, and it has ever since been used for in-bound and out-bound freight. These facilities, with the addition of a small warehouse on the east side of North street, which was owned by the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Company, and also a similar one adjoining, owned and occupied by the Empire Line, were all that the company possessed for its freight business at Calvert station in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-three, with the exception of two squares of ground on the west side of North street; and which extended from Madison street northwardly to Eager street, and west to Hunter alley, that portion between Madison and Read streets being used for coal yards.

Since then the following large and commodious sheds have been effected: "B" and "C" on the property bounded by Monument, Centre, North, and Holliday streets; "D", which is located on grounds bounded by North, Davis, Monument, and Madison streets; and "E" and "F", which are on the site that is bounded by North street, Jones' Falls, Monument and Madison streets.

In addition to these, the "Jail Yard", which was used for the delivery of bulk freights, was established on the location on the east side of Jones' Falls, bounded by Eager, Beuren, and Madison streets, and a large hay warehouse that was located south of Monument street, between Holliday street and Hones' Falls. The site upon which grain elevator number two is erected, with its necessary complement of tracks, is bounded by Jones' Falls, Beuren, Madison, and Monument streets.

The two squares bounded by North street, Jones' Falls, Madison, and Eager streets are used partly for bulk freight delivery, this being known as the Madison street yard, and partly to be occupied by the main tracks between Union and Calvert stations. The main tracks as originally laid, were on the east side of Jones' Falls, from Chase street to a point near Madison street, crossing Jones' Falls at that place in a southwesterly direction, and over the southeast portion of Madison street yard, crossing Madison street, and from thence curving southwardly into North street, which is the present line to Calvert station. In order to make better use of this ground, there was a change made in which the main line was diverted from the east side of Jones' Falls, south of Eager street, and a new line was constructed, which crossed Jones' Falls north of Eager street on a substantial iron bridge, carrying three tracks, thence under Eager street, and down the west side of Madison street yard to the northeast corner of Madison and North streets, where it intersected the line via North street to Calvert station, in which position it is at present. Tracks are also laid on the ground west of North street, and between Read and Eager

streets for bulk freight delivery, and it is known as the Eager street yard. The improvements, which are enumerated above, enabled the company to load about two hundred cars daily.

The local grain elevator, number two, which is located at the northwest corner of Monument and Beuren streets, and is part of the facilities at Calvert Freight Station and which contains a capacity of three hundred thousand bushels that is used for handling and storage of oats, corn, and other grains for city delivery, was completed and put in operation on the month August of the year eighteen hundred and ninety-one. Mr. Ira Day, who was formerly the Freight Agent for the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad at Calvert Station, was appointed the superintendent that was to in charge of its operations. Before this local grain elevator had been constructed, the delivery of local grain at the Calvert Station had been made directly from the cars, under what was called the "weigh bag" system. This latter method was slow and expensive, and was the cause of general complaint by consignees.

The Calvert Street Station has not been used much in recent years. The Union Station on Charles street is now used for most of the passenger trains. In the year of nineteen hundred and thirty-two, Calvert Station abandoned the handling of freight, which was shifted to the President Street Station. At the present time only two passenger trains run daily, except on Sunday when only one is used. The station is, at this writing, in poor condition, and it is the author's belief that will be abandoned altogether in the near future.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CALVERT STREET RAILWAY STATION

The architects of the Calvert Station were Niernsee and Neilson. In the month of January of the year eighteen hundred and forty-nine, they sent the following report to Mr. R. M. Magran, who was then the president of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company:

"Sir:

We submit the following statement of the progress of the construction of the new depot on North and Calvert streets. The six large piers forming the foundation of the portal on North street have been built either on the rock or on a compact bed of gravel found at a depth varying from fifteen to eighteen feet below the surface of the ground, and from one to three feet below the water in the falls near Monument street bridge. Twenty-five of the forty piers which form the foundation of the stone pillars of the car house are completed. The excavation for the remaining fifteen and for the office buildings has been carried as far as was considered advisable, until the work of building should reach each of them. When completed, the depot will consist of a car house three hundred and fifteen feet long, one hundred and twelve feet wide, occupying the diagonal of the square of ground owned by the company, and terminated at the end on Calvert street by a large building with a front of one hundred and twelve feet, in the Italian style, two stories in height, containing the principal passenger entrance, ticket office, transportation and other offices, with the necessary rooms for president and directors, and fire-proof vaults for securing the books and papers of the company. On North street, the car house will be terminated and supported by a massive portal in the

same Italian style, affording the entrance, by an easy curve, for the passenger and tonnage trains. The roof of the car house, spanning one hundred feet clear, will be of sheet iron, sustained by a series of trusses of a simple form, easily adjusted and repaired, and depending for all the essential ties on wrought-iron comparatively indestructible. The pillars are of cut granite; the space covered contains two passenger tracks and platforms, with three tonnage tracks, and broad receiving and distributing platforms for goods, which can be taken off and on under shelter of the six foot projecting eaves of the roof.

The diagonal position of the depot buildings permits the easiest and best access, both for passengers and trains, and offers for future buildings the most frontage on the four streets encompassing the square.

Signed, with respect,
Niernsee and Neilson,

Architects."

Also, the general office building which is on the corner of Calvert and Centre streets is fifty feet by eighty feet while the large brick freight warehouse which is situated on the west side of North street is three hundred and eighty-three feet long by one hundred and fifty feet wide.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STATION





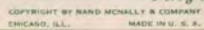
CARLOADING OFFICE



VIEW OF TRACKS



WAREHOUSE



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