

Memories of Jewell

The bridge at Jewell, over Clifton Road, was actually 2 separate spans, side-by-side. The northern span carried the main line and the southern one Jewell Siding. Clifton Road ran under the bridge and made a sharp left turn to run parallel to the railroad, as seen in the right-hand picture. The Siding span can be seen to the right of the trains on the main line.



If you look real close, there are 4 planks for a walkway. Go another foot right of that last plank and you can see the tops of the rivets for the siding span. The walkway planks are laid on cross members, which were resting on the girders from both spans. Both spans were in place up until abandonment.

Gene P. Schaeffer

Jewell Siding, from just east of the bridge to and including the west switch, was removed in the late 1950's. The siding remained east of the bridge. The west bumper can be seen in the right-hand picture just beyond the engine.

The siding span was a little off center on account of it being hit by a high truck once. The Main line span was also hit by a truck in the mid 70's. We used track jacks and hydraulic jacks from the P&LE to relocate the beams back to their mounting blocks. The impact was enough to disturb the track structure, causing kinks in the alignment on both ends of the bridge. We had to re-align and surface (tamp) about 100 feet on both approaches after the beams were back in place.

Tim Sposato

The bridge at Jewell was hit by a truck in the Spring of 1975.

It was late afternoon and Train Dispatcher H.G. Schofield was on the radio calling crews (perhaps R.J.) asking who knew where the railroad passed over Clifton-Library Road as the Bethel Park Police had reported a truck hit the bridge.

A friend & I drove out to see if it was Jewell.

A telephone call to HGS confirmed it as the main track had a gigantic kink in it.

When Tim & I were doing our "*Un-Official*" hi-rail trips, I loved cruising over the top here at Jewell. The loose angle bars would clank under the hi-railer's wheels, then echo off the side of Washington Elementary School. It was sweet music to listen to...

Many of our younger days push cart rides terminated here at Jewell.

We would load up at Salida where we kept our push cart hidden between Baptist Road and the N&W overpass, then head West to Jewell. We would stop just past the switch...then 2 of us would start pushing and into a run we went to gather a bit of speed downgrade back towards Brookside.

Many of those trips we had enough uummph to get through Brookside and into that long curve at Coverdale. We had to walk it back over South Park Road which was a busy highway crossing.

Then, as we made it past the Bethel Park Police Station... Another running start at Brightwood and down past Alleco Spur, under Broughton Road and on towards Horning Road, which was not as busy as South Park Rd.

Many times we rolled smartly across Horning Road which was quite risky. (Especially the night the Bethel Park PD was on our tail)

We even did a few push cart trips on nights Eastbounds were leaving Champion with orders to **East End Salida...**

Gene P. Schaeffer

Before Jewel siding was shortened, I remember being called for 6:00 PM to Mifflin, picking up 50-60 loads at Champion, all Bessemer cars, filling out at Jewel to 120 cars, and on to Mifflin and riding the hump for eight hours. I outlawed many times in Mifflin when allowed time on duty was 16 hours. Looooonnnnggg Days.

CA Ross

Jewell, as I remember as a kid, when Al's Cafe was much smaller, the Pharmacy and convenience store were not there and there was a small service station where Clifton Road met McMurray Road, between the Montour right of way and Al's Café. It was a two story building with an out cropping and two gas pumps.

Clifton Road actually turned into the underpass part of the Montour Bridge, where as now it was straightened to make a better approach to McMurray Road. Back then you had to be careful going under the underpass if a larger truck was coming in the opposite direction needing turning clearance.

Oh, not to sound bad, as a kid I actually sat inside the concrete abutments next to the girders with my friends, watching traffic go by.

Glen Blum

Yeah, you did have to be careful at that underpass. I remember Rob Dudt hitting the corner in his dad's 1970 Buick Electra!

Really enjoying seeing all the photos. Brings back many memories of walking the tracks.

Dave Layman



I found out where Jewell got its name. The attached map shows an "N. Jewell" owning the property on both side of the right of way in the curve. Also, there is a road nearby but it's spelled "Jewel."

Bob Ciminel

Noah Jewell acquired his property, April 22, 1870.

Noah had 6 children: Lizzie, Harriet, Adelaide, Mary E., William C., and Flora.

At the time of the Montour land purchase, Noah and Lizzie had passed on, and the remaining heirs sold to the Montour some land at \$250.00 per acre, as based on the Articles of Agreement dated February 13, 1913.

The original road (Jewell Rd) ran along the top of the ridge line that the RR curve passes through. The old road RoW can be seen just east of the present manufacturing company, curving away from the present road towards the MRR cut.

The new road was relocated to its current location from that business to the intersection of Clifton Rd, supposedly during RR construction. This road, as we know it, is now McMurray Rd.

I'm pretty sure the MRR dealt with the McConnell, Espy and Jewell heirs to construct McMurray Rd's present location across all three of their lands.

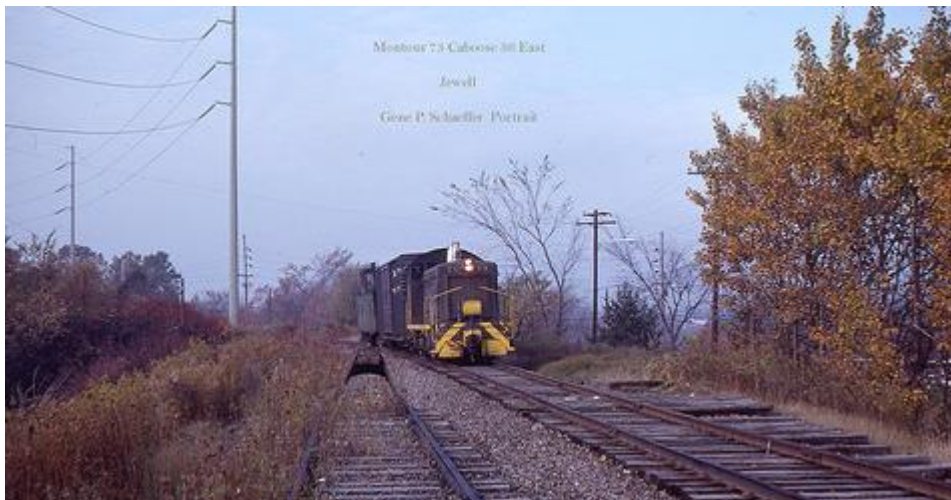
Note:

(I was told by a MRR employee, that he thought a wooden bridge once crossed the cut?)

Interesting arrangement to eliminate any crossing at grade just as we have seen before on the Mifflin extension construction and only requiring the small 30' deck plate bridge near the intersection instead of a larger overhead bridge at the cut.

I would also think the intersection used to be on the opposite side of the bridge than where it's at today. Note Penn Pilot's early images and a tree/fence line shows the approximate location of the old Jewell Road toward Clifton Rd.

Tim Sposato



Montour Extra 73 East rounds the curve coming past Jewell bumper en route to Brookside. At this late date of October 22, 1980 the Brookside crews will cease in 2 months.

I have an early 1970's photo of myself standing at the bumper with the coupler/knuckle of a B&LE hopper up against it. On that visit, which was made on bicycles, Jewell had 21 B&LE loaded hoppers.



I'm guessing it's 1972. Summer of course. This is a 126 Instamatic image.

George Kress & I pedal our bicycles to Jewell.

B&LE Hoppers are set off for Mifflin.

The west car is up against the bumper with George leaning on the coupler.

Gene P. Schaeffer

Timetable #2 shows Jewell as holding 20 cars of 50 foot each, so about 1000 feet long. I seem to remember Tim saying 22 cars could be stored in the siding if they were pushed right up against the bumper.

The Valuation Plan shows a double track going across the bridge, and I know the siding originally went further west along the main. The 1939 Penn Pilot aerial shows a string of hoppers sitting on the siding. It looks like the West Switch was about behind the current Advanced Vision Care building. Some may remember that building during Montour days as Meyer's Meat Market. (Yum.... we used to stop there for meats in the mid 70's) Limestone Drive in that area did not exist in Montour days.

Bryan Seip

The switch was behind Meyers Meats, about near the center of the fill. If you walk there today, you can see how the top of the fill narrows about where the switch stand was located.

Tim Sposato

The original double-ended siding looks like it was about 3000 feet, and in the old 55-ton hopper days would have held 80-plus cars. (I counted 84 on the Penn Pilot aerial.)

There was a short spur on the north side of the main just east of the bridge – beside Al's Café. It is listed on the valuation plan as "Commercial Siding 276' Long"

What kind of business did that spur serve? And how long did it last?

Bryan Seip

It was for general public use, anyone could have a shipment delivered there, similar to a 'house' or 'team' track, as other railroads called them. Not sure when it was removed, but most of the switch ties were still in place when the railroad was dismantled in the early eighties.

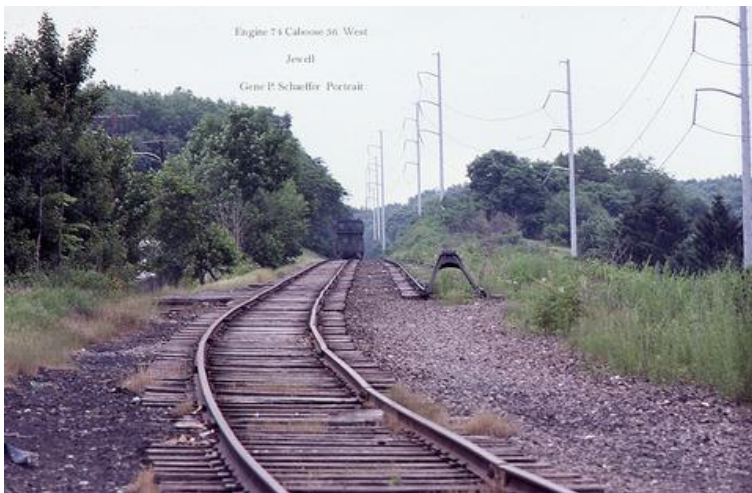
Attached is a shot of Jewell bridge, taken 1982. I was mainly focusing on Al's Cafe. Note all the changes to that place!

The old farm buildings are still present in 1982, and behind them, to the right, was the old garage with the 1950's Pontiac that Kurt and I used to sit in while waiting for eastbounds.

Tim Sposato



In June of 1979, Montour 74 shoves West with Caboose 36 approaching the top of the vertical curve as well as the bumper at Jewell.
Jewell, like Salida, Henderson and perhaps Scott were all shortened in the 1960's. I have a memo here indicating that date.



On the left you can see the long switch ties Tim referred to for the team track.
The last 2 years of Brookside crews, I made it a point to be out and photograph as many as possible including as many of the bridges as I could. In the last years, the Brookside crews were usually the 1st coal run, going on duty at 12:01 A.M...usually every Monday....usually.

Gene P. Schaeffer