



# THE Lantern

November 2021

Volume 26 Number 11

## HEADLINES

- Tuesday, November 16 BBMRA Zoom Meeting – Kato USA Sales & Marketing Director Michael Conway. (Rescheduled from October.)
- Monthly Articles: Billboard Reefers out of the Past
- More Articles and Minutes
- BBMRA Running Trains at Tall Senior Center Dec. 14 – Grandparents Holiday Event
- History of Apalachicola Northern Railroad

### BBMRA Running Trains at Tall Senior Center Dec. 14 – Grandparents Holiday Event



The Big Bend Model Railroad Association was asked by the Tallahassee Senior Center to operate trains in a special holiday event Tuesday evening, December 14, for seniors, grandparents, and their grandchildren. During the October Zoom meeting, we agreed to do it, the first Christmas holidays setup for the club in several years.

The operating session will be from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, December 14. Set-up begins at 4:30 p.m. We have the entire auditorium on the second floor and will be bringing several small layouts - two O Gauge layouts, Walt Disney and Thomas the Tank Engine, and possibly Steve Pollock's new animated module: plus, an HO T-Trak layout and an N Scale T-Trak setup.

"We are excited to host your club and the trains on December 14," says Maureen Haberfeld, Tallahassee Senior Center & Fountain Lifelong Learning Coordinator. "I'm just starting to think about 2022, so I will try and come up with another way that your group can help us. And we hope that more of your

members will become active with the TSC."

BBMRA HO "Phil Weston says, "The guys are excited to be able to run trains again!!" Phil and the other HO folks will operate two trains, including a Christmas/Holiday train. Sam Miller and the Large-Scale folks will run a Holiday train and a Mickey Mouse train on the Disney layout. Both will be pulled by a Lionel LionChief engine with remote control so kids – anyone, really – can run the trains. Randy Lombardo will have hands on tasks for the Thomas layout as well.



The Senior Center is located at 1400 North Monroe Street, across from Lake Ella. It is housed in the old National Guard Armory. It hosts an extensive daily activity schedule for seniors, including a model building class on Friday afternoon attended by several club members, including Paul Schneider, Bob Feuerstein, Barbara Donner and Neal Meadows.

We can't get into the auditorium until 4:30 p.m., so the formal times of the operating sessions are only 90 minutes – from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Some folks likely will arrive as early as 6 so we hopefully to be mainly set up by then. We will break down at 8 and need to be through by 9 p.m. when the building closes. So, we will need small, easy to assemble layouts. The Senior Center will be providing the tables.

Andy Zimmerman is asking any club members who can to help. Everyone in the Senior Center will be wearing masks.

Sam and other club members conducted a live and virtual workshop on model e railroading in September as part of the TSC's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional L3X Lifelong Learning Extravaganza.

Here is a report being circulated by the Senior Center on the upcoming model train setup. It will be in the Tallahassee Democrat in November:

**Play with the Trains Tue. Dec. 14, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.** Toy trains are a big part of many of our holiday memories. Come to the TSC and celebrate the holiday season with the Big Bend Model Train Association. Four model train layouts, including a Disney set, will be on display in the Tallahassee Senior Center auditorium and members of the club will be available to answer questions. Come play with the trains and relive happy holiday memories. Kids are welcome so bring your grandchildren. Holiday refreshments will be served. Pre-registration **not** necessary. **Masks required.**



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## November BBMRA Meeting Program – Kato USA

November 16, 2021 7:30 p.m.: Guest presenter will be Michael Conway, Kato USA Director of Sales & Marketing. Mr. Conway will be discussing some new products in N, HO, and Narrow Gauge, and field questions from members. [www.katousa.com](http://www.katousa.com)

**Club Meetings are Back to Zoom Only for Now**

**BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.**

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password:162465

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## Jacksonville TCA Running Lionel Trains at Christmas

The TCA Southern Division is running Lionel and other O Gauge trains for seven days around Christmas and New Years at the Museum of Science and History in Jacksonville. TCA is Train Collectors Association, focusing on O Gauge and vintage O especially.

“We run seven trains and one bump and go trolley line – all in O gauge. Lots of fun. Lots of noise,” says Chuck Bryner, a member of the group.

The museum is located at **1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, 32207.**

Here is the schedule:

- Sunday, December 19, 12 to 5
- Monday, December 20, 10 to 5
- The museum is closed Tuesday, December 21, and Wednesday, December 22.
- Thursday, Wednesday, December 23, 10 to 5
- The museum is closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- Sunday, December 26, 12 to 5
- Monday, December 27, 10 to 5.
- The museum is closed December 28-29.
- Thursday, December 30, 10 to 5
- Friday, December 31, 10 to 5.
- New Year’s Day, the museum is closed, and the TCA operations will be over.



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## BBMRA Important Events in 2021!!

**Sam Miller reported during the October Zoom call that the Christmas party will not be held again this year. Hopefully, in 2022.**

**BBMRA meetings are the third Tuesday of each month. We have resumed meeting through Zoom only because of the COVID resurgence.**

**BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.**

**Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password:162465**

Lionel Interest Group Operating Sessions: each Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at Sam Miller’s house in Woodgate. But not November 7 and 14. They will resume on November 21.

**December 4-5, 2021: 2021 Pensacola Railfest Model Train Show & Sale, Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds, Building 1, 6655 Mobile Highway, Pensacola, 32526.**

**December 11-12, 2021: Wiregrass Annual Model Railroad Show & Sale, National Peanut Festival and Fairgrounds, Dothan, AL. (Originally scheduled for September 11-12 but postponed because of the COVID resurgence.)**

**December 14, 2021: BBMRA Running trains at Tallahassee Senior Center, 6:30 to 8 p.m.,** 1400 North Monroe Street, Tallahassee. This is a quick in and out special event, with seniors and grandparents and their grandchildren invited to celebrate the Christmas and Jewish holidays by running model trains. Set-up is at 4:30 in the second-floor auditorium.

**December O Gauge Trains at the Museum of Science & History, 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, 32207.** This is by the Train Collectors Association Southern Division. Here is the schedule: Sunday, December 19, 12 to 5; Monday, December 20, 10 to 5; museum is closed Tuesday, December 21, and Wednesday, December 22; Thursday, December 23, 10 to 5; museum is closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; Sunday, December 26, 12 to 5; Monday, December 27, 10 to 5; museum is closed December 28-29; Thursday, December 30, 10 to 5; and Friday, December 31, 10 to 5. New Year's Day, the museum is closed, and the TCA operations will be over.

**December: Veterans Memorial Railroad Christmas Special Light Display Trains, VMRR, Bristol.** Trains run at 6 p.m. on December 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19 and 20. Reservations can be made beginning November 1, at (850) 643-2229. The VMRR address is 10561 NW Theo Jacobs Way, Bristol, FL, 32321.

**January 6-8, 2022: Prototype Rails 2022, Cocoa Beach Hilton.** This is an NMRA Sunshine Region sanctioned event with a wide variety of model railroading workshops and presentations. Featuring O, HO and N. The registration fee is \$45 before December 31 and \$50 after that. Checks payable to Prototype Rails and must be sent to Marty Megregian, 480 Gails Way, Merritt Island, FL 32953. Mention Group Code NMR 22 when reserving your room.

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ccbchhf-hilton-cocoa-beach-oceanfront/>

**January 8-9, 2022: Golden Spike Model Train Show, Deland.** Volusia County Fairgrounds.

**February 5, 2020: January 8-9, 2022: Golden Spike Model Train Show, Jacksonville.** Prime Osborne Conventional Center.

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## Trains & Christmas



Much of the December Lantern will be devoted to real and model trains and the Christmas/Jewish holidays. This cover from Christopher Jennison's wonderful 2004 book, "All Aboard for Christmas", sets the tone. The illustration is from the December 7, 1946, Saturday Evening Post.

Please send Sam Miller or Neal Meadows photos of winter holiday scenes from your model railroad or of Christmas decorations involving Santa and trains. Also, and this is the most important request, email Sam and Neal with your special memories of toy and real trains and the Christmas/Jewish holidays.

## PART 8 THE HISTORY AND OPERATION OF THE APALACHICOLA NORTHERN RAILROAD

By: Neal Meadows, Ed.D.

*In October's article we looked at the history of the ANRR and the "Cabooses" that were used during freight hauling operations. This month we will focus on the other types of rolling stock used by the ANRR. This information continues the July 1993 article from the Railroad & Railfan Magazine about the ANRR. The original article was written by James Gunning. Permission to use this article content granted by White River Publications, current owner of Railroad & Railfan Magazine.*

### Rolling Stock

The ANRR had a variety of rolling stock used for various freight hauling. An earlier article mentioned the unit coal trains that were prevalent at the time the 1993 article was originally published. I wanted to share some photos of the different types of rolling stock.



Photo by: Rick D. taken 3/13/2007 Tuscaloosa, AL



Photo by: Cameron Manning 2/2/2008 Folkston, GA

<b>Owner:</b>	<b><u>Apalachicola Northern</u></b>
<b>Type:</b>	Open Hopper
<b>AAR Class:</b>	<b>HTS:</b> Specialty Open top self-clearing car, having fixed sides and ends and bottom consisting of three or more divided hoppers with doors hinged crosswise of car and dumping between rails.
<b>AAR Type:</b>	K247
<b>Detail Info:</b>	Hopper, Load Limit: 155,000 to 184,999, Greater than 5000 cu ft capacity *Light Density Service
<b>Plate:</b>	F
<b>Builder:</b>	Greenville Steel Car Co.
<b>Max Gross Weight:</b>	263000
<b>Load Limit:</b>	182800
<b>Dry Capacity:</b>	7000
<b>Ext L/W/H:</b>	73' 3" / 9' 11" / 16' 2"
<b>Road #s:</b>	AN 4041-4052
<b>User Notes:</b>	Apalachicola Northern



Photo by: Eddie Coleman 5/1/1998 Birmingham, AL  
AN 2003

<b>Owner:</b>	<b><u>Apalachicola Northern</u></b>
<b>Type:</b>	Box Car
<b>AAR Class:</b>	<b>XP:</b> Boxcar similar in design to "XM", but which is specially equipped, designed, and/or structurally suitable for a specific commodity loading; except, boxcars (XF, XM, XMI) dedicated to the transportation of commodities in paragraph A, Rule 97, AAR Interchange Rules, must be designated "XP".
<b>AAR Type:</b>	A402
<b>Detail Info:</b>	Equipped Box Car, Inside Length: 49' to 59', cushion draft gear/underframe, Sliding door, opening between 9 and 11 feet
<b>Plate:</b>	B
<b>User Notes:</b>	ex-WVRC 7702



Photo by: Joe Rogers 2/25/2005 Elkhart, IN  
AN 2094

**Owner:** **Apalachicola Northern**  
**Type:** Box Car  
**AAR Class:** **XP:** Boxcar similar in design to "XM", but which is specially equipped, designed, and/or structurally suitable for a specific commodity loading; except, boxcars (XF, XM, XMI) dedicated to the transportation of commodities in paragraph A, Rule 97, AAR Interchange Rules, must be designated "XP".  
**AAR Type:** A402  
**Detail Info:** Equipped Box Car, Inside Length: 49' to 59', cushion draft gear/underframe, Sliding door, opening between 9 and 11 feet  
**Plate:** B  
**User Notes:** ex-WVRC 8043



Photo by: Chris Carangi 9/15/2011 Bridgeport, NJ  
AN 7012

**Owner:** **Apalachicola Northern**  
**Type:** Box Car  
**AAR Class:** **XM:** Box car for general service equipped with side or side and end doors.  
**AAR Type:** B314  
**Detail Info:** Unequipped Box Car, Inside Length: 49' to 59', Sliding doors, inside width 9ft 6in and over, Door opening 10ft to 11ft  
**Plate:** B  
**User Notes:** ex-BM 78005 Built 10-73 Rebuilt 2-94

**The Blue paint was added during the repaint in late 1993.**



Photo by: G. Gerard 1/24/2010 Valdosta, GA

**Owner:** **Apalachicola Northern**  
**Type:** Box Car  
**AAR Class:** **XM:** Box car for general service equipped with side or side and end doors.  
**AAR Type:** B314  
**Detail Info:** Unequipped Box Car, Inside Length: 49' to 59', Sliding doors, inside width 9ft 6in and over, Door opening 10ft to 11ft  
**Plate:** B  
**User Notes:** ex-NS 321 Built 10-73 Rebuilt 2-94; Currently ATW 557040

Car # Range	# of Cars		
0-99	1	<a href="#">5300-5399</a>	6
<a href="#">2000-2099</a>	8	<a href="#">5400-5499</a>	7
<a href="#">2100-2199</a>	2	<a href="#">5500-5599</a>	8
<a href="#">2200-2299</a>	3	<a href="#">5600-5699</a>	11
<a href="#">5000-5099</a>	2	<a href="#">5700-5799</a>	7
<a href="#">5100-5199</a>	4	<a href="#">5800-5899</a>	5
<a href="#">5200-5299</a>	7	<a href="#">6000-6099</a>	8
		<a href="#">7000-7099</a>	23

This is a listing of the boxcars owned by ANRR that have their pictures archived at the RR Picture Archives.net. I am not able to find a listing of all the boxcars owned by ANRR. The examples display over 100 of the various types.



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Larry De Bert



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Larry De Bert



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Larry De Bert

**Title:** AN X6 a rare find off of the Appalachian Northern parked in Selma, Alabama

**Description:** Visiting the Meridian & Bigbee in 2007.

It must have been quite a problem getting it here. The markings state "Do Not Exceed 30 MPH"

All the parts of this set were numbered the same "X6."

**Photo Date:** 12/22/2007 **Upload Date:** 12/31/2010  
10:29:04 AM

**Location:** Selma, AL

**Author:** Larry De Bert

**Categories:** Rolling Stock



This tank car is designed to carry sulfuric acid. Cars like these were used by the Arizona Chemical Plant that was in Port St. Joe. Arizona Chemical supplied chemicals directly to the paper mill when it was in operation. Raw materials to make the chemicals were transported to the site. ANRR hauled cars like these.



Example of the tank cars used on the ANRR



Example of the types of cars used in the 97 car unit coal trains that carried coal from the barges docked at the canal docks in Port St. Joe up to River Junction at Chattahoochee, then over to Palatka to the power plant located there. The coal hauling was part of a 30-year contract to haul from the barges to Palatka.





The first three pictures are representative of the types of pulpwood cars that were used by ANRR. The last picture is of the unloading of pulpwood at the Port St. Joe Paper Mill. The cars were hauled there by the ANRR. It took a lot of wood to make all the paper that was produced at the mill. The main paper product was kraft paper rolls. A box manufacturing plant adjacent to the mill made pasteboard sheets that were later made into boxes. We now would call them cardboard boxes. My father always referred to them as pasteboard boxes.

*Next month we will look at Railfanning on the ANRR*

## BILLBOARD REEFERS OUT OF THE PAST

By Neal Meadows, Ed.D.

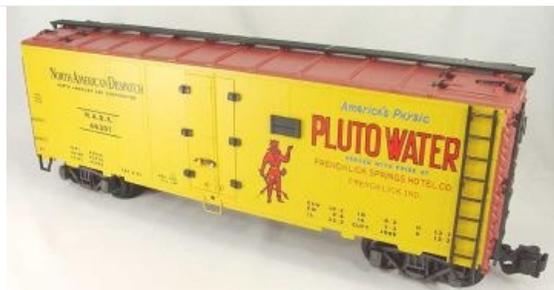
### French Lick and its Pluto Water



Pluto Water is an interesting product for a billboard reefer. It was produced in a bottling plant adjacent to the French Lick Hotel in its early years. It was later moved across the street and the business was separated from the French Lick Hotel Company. The car has been replicated by several manufacturers in different scales. It is still popular today.



This O Scale car model was made by Atlas and sold by Walthers as Part# 151-8018. The price for the car was \$59.95. This 36' reefer model is a highly detailed reproduction of cars that were a mainstay in the meat packing industry during the steam era. Based upon cars built by the General American Car Company for the Cudahy Packing Co. in 1925, the 36' Wood Reefer is representative of the thousands of cars that transported meat, dairy, beer and food products well into the 1960's. Cars feature separately applied grab irons, roofwalks, and more. Operates on O-31 curves.



Aristo Craft part # ART 46207. 40' wood ice reefer for Pluto Water.  
G Scale



Athearn 5210 HO Scale scribed reefer with Kadee couplers. Original price was \$3.00. Now selling on EBAY for \$12.50 plus \$6.70 shipping.



Lego custom built Pluto Water reefer. The builder is selling this car as well as others on EBAY for \$120.00 each. Built to order and takes about 3 weeks to get.



Micro-Trains Line part # 49490 Pluto Water NADX 2689. Released in 1999 and sold for \$16.20. this car is currently on sale on EBAY for \$24.95. This car was leased from North American Despatch and painted in 1927. Because people were taking the mineral springs water away with them after visiting the French Lick Hotel, Taggart. The owner, began bottling it and named it "Pluto Water."

French Lick was named for deposits from mineral springs animals licked along the Buffalo Trace. In 1832, after determining the springs were not a practical source of salt, Indiana sold 1,500 acres to William Bowles, a minister expelled from his local church. Claiming to be a physician, Bowles built a hotel and began selling spring water he said cured everything from alcoholism and asthma to insomnia and influenza. In 1869, after Bowles beat charges of practicing medicine without a license, he named his largest spring "Pluto's Spring" for the Greek god of the underworld. After Bowles' death, a series of owners expanded the hotel, its supposedly magical "Pluto Water" drawing guests by train from across the United States.

In 1905, Thomas Taggart, formerly Indianapolis mayor, acquired the French Lick Springs Hotel and greatly expanded it and its appeal. The Monon Railroad ran a train from Chicago directly to the hotel, where up to 200 passengers a day, including Hollywood celebrities, entered beneath a gilded marquee. In 1911, Taggart erected an octagonal pavilion over Pluto's Spring proclaiming Pluto Water to be "Nature's Greatest Laxative." Although gambling was illegal, French Lick casinos, including one across the street from Taggart's hotel, attracted yet more visitors. By the time of Taggart's death in 1929, his hotel was earning \$2 million a year. Franklin Roosevelt attended the Democratic Governors' Conference in the hotel in 1931, where he sought support for a presidential bid and was photographed wearing leg braces.



The Great Depression and Indiana's crackdown on gambling led to the hotel's decline, but a magnificently restored hotel and adjoining (lawful) casino are again attracting visitors from around the world. The French Lick Springs Hotel, a part of the French Lick Resort Casino complex, is a major resort hotel in Orange County, Indiana.

The historic hotel in the national historic district at French Lick was initially known as a mineral spring health spa and for its trademarked Pluto Water. During the period 1901 to 1946, when Thomas Taggart, a former mayor of Indianapolis, and his son, Thomas D. Taggart, were its owners and operators, the popular hotel attracted many fashionable, wealthy, and notable guests. The resort was a major employer of African American labor, which mostly came from Kentucky.

In the early 1900s, the hotel had a Negro league baseball team, the French Lick Plutos, and until the 1940s French Lick was a venue for spring training for professional baseball teams. In the 1920s and into the 1930s, the resort became known for its recreational sports, most notably golf, but the French Lick area also had a reputation for illegal gambling. After a series of subsequent owners and renovations, the hotel was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The restored hotel, with its exteriors of distinctive, buff-colored brick, reopened in 2006. (Excerpted from an article by Don Knebel August 30, 2021)

## Origins

The hotel site was located near a salt lick that wild animals once visited as they traveled along the Buffalo Trace in southern Indiana. Native Americans also used the area as hunting grounds. It became known as French Lick in reference to the French traders and settlers who lived in the vicinity of the salt lick. Some sources have cited a legend that suggests George Rogers Clark, who camped in the area during an expedition in 1786–87, may have named it after a site along the Cumberland River in Tennessee.

## Early development

In 1826, encouraged by the presence of salt deposits near French Lick, Indiana's state government authorized the land to be mined for quantities of salt, but the saline content was insufficient to support large-scale salt mining and the property was offered for sale. In 1832 Thomas Bowles and his brother, William A., a Paoli, Indiana, physician and early land speculator, purchased 1,500 acres (610 hectares) of land that included the site near the mineral springs. Doctor Bowles eventually built an inn on the property; it became known as the French Lick Springs Hotel.

Although the specific date of the hotel's opening is not known, it is believed that Bowles built the first hotel on his French Lick property sometime around 1845. (Some sources believe the narrow, three-story hotel, measuring an estimated 80 feet (24 m) to 100 feet (30 m) in length, may have been built prior to 1840, but most report that it opened in 1845.) The early hotel, which operated during the summer months, was a modest success. In 1846, prior to his departure for military service as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army during the Mexican American War, Bowles leased the property to John A. Lane, a physician/patent medicine salesman, for at least five years. Under the terms of the lease Lane agreed to enlarge and improve the facility.

In the early 1850s Bowles resumed management of the French Lick hotel at the end of the lease and continued to improve the property. Lane purchased 770 acres (310 hectares) of land from Bowles that included mineral springs at Mile Lick, 1 mile (1.6 km) north of French Lick. Lane assembled a sawmill, erected a bridge to traverse Lick Creek, and built the West Baden Springs Hotel. Competition from Lane's new hotel, which opened in the mid-1850s, began a decades-long rivalry between the two Orange County sites. In the 1860s Bowles leased the French Lick hotel to Doctor Samuel Ryan, who operated it for Bowles and the heirs of Bowles's estate following the owner's death in 1873. Joseph G. Rogers, a physician from Madison, Indiana, named the French Lick hotel's largest mineral



spring Pluto's Well in 1869. (Pluto is the classical mythological god of the underworld.)

The original French Lick hotel, which was rebuilt or enlarged as a 2+1/2-story frame building with a wrap-around veranda in the Gothic Revival style, underwent few additional changes until the early 1880s, when it was sold to Hiram E. Wells and James M. Andrews. (The hotel and mineral springs were sold at a sheriff's sale organized to settle a legal dispute over Bowles's estate.) Wells and Andrews enlarged and improved the property in the 1880s and 1890s, developing it into a popular mineral-springs health resort.

Wells acquired Andrews's interest in the property in 1887 for \$61,000, and immediately sold the hotel to a group of Louisville, Kentucky, investors for \$122,000 in cash and \$100,000 in the French Lick Springs Company's stock. Wells retained a one-quarter interest in the property until 1891, when he sold his interest to the investment group. The new owners made major improvements to the hotel, including the addition of two wings (Clifton and Pavilion [sic]) to the main hotel (Windsor). They also expanded the hotel's operation from a seasonal business to a year-round resort. In 1887 the Monon Railroad built an extension of its line to transport guests to the hotels and mineral springs at French Lick and West Baden. In 1888 the hotel's owners granted the railroad a right of way on the hotel property.

The main hotel building (Windsor) was destroyed by a fire in 1897. Rebuilt on an even grander scale, a major resort that catered to guests seeking the advertised health benefits of the town's sulfur springs. Three major springs were located on the French Lick resort's property: Bowles (renamed Lithia), Proserpine, and the better-known Pluto. The area's mineral water and baths were alleged to cure more than fifty ailments, including gout, alcoholism, and rheumatism, among others.

## Taggart Era

### Turn of the century

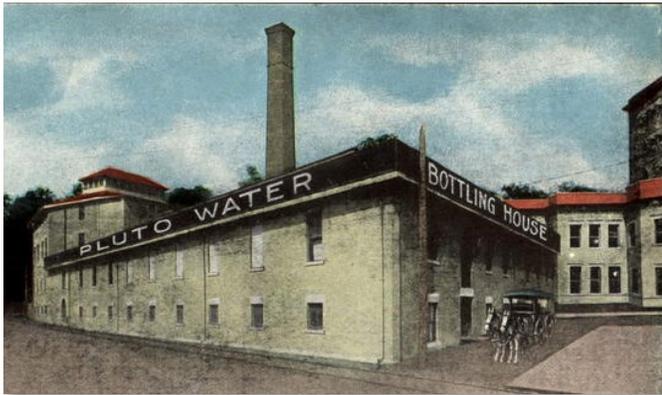
In 1901 the property was sold to an investment group that included Thomas Taggart, a politician and former mayor of Indianapolis. Taggart served three terms as mayor of Indianapolis (1895 to 1901), as a chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and briefly in the U.S. Senate (1916). Other members of the investment group included William McDoel, president of the Monon Railroad; Crawford Fairbanks, a Terre Haute brewery owner; and Livingston T. Dickson, a limestone quarry owner.



The new owners spent more than \$200,000 on improvements, including a redesign and enlargement of the main wing (1901–02), sometimes called the front or east wing, designed by architect William Homer Floyd. The main wing's new design overlaid the hotel's Late Victorian architecture with Mediterranean Revival architecture, most notably the Italian Renaissance style that was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The exteriors of the main wing and later additions were unified with similar proportions, a consistent roofline, and the hotel's distinctive buff-colored brick.

Around 1905 Taggart bought out his partners to become the hotel's sole owner. Under his direction, the hotel was transformed into a first-class resort that included the main wing (1901–1902), a recreation center (formerly the bath house, 1910–11), and four connected wings: annex (1905, remodeled 1911), west (1910–11), deluxe (1914–15), and north (1924–25). These facilities housed lobbies and guest room, dining rooms and bars, offices, shops, and a spa. The annex wing provided offices and guest rooms. The west wing, the hotel's first fireproof wing, included an

elaborate Italian Renaissance Revival-style pavilion, originally named the Pluto Bar. The seven-story deluxe wing housed guest rooms and suites, including accommodations for the Taggart family when they resided at the hotel. The hotel's six-story north wing provided the hotel with conference and exhibition spaces.



Taggart made additional improvements at the mineral springs that included the construction of pavilions, including the Pluto spring house (circa 1911), to shelter the springs. A new mineral spring bath was built at the site of the present-day spa facility. In addition, Taggart is credited with modernizing the hotel, which included bringing in electricity, adding a freshwater system, and establishing trolley service to French Lick. The hotel's service buildings included a kitchen complex (1897, 1910–11, c. 1925), power station (1902, expanded 1905), its first bottling plant (circa 1900) for Pluto Water, and a

hotel laundry (circa 1911–13). He also convinced the Monon Railroad to lay a spur track to the hotel's grounds and run daily passenger service to Chicago. The hotel also had three distinct gardens on its grounds: a Japanese garden (circa 1920; later redesigned and replanted), a Fresh Water Spring Garden (circa 1900–15), and an Italian-style formal garden (circa 1915; later redesigned and altered). Recreational facilities included horseback riding, tennis, swimming, bowling, billiards, and a gym, as well as fine dining and dancing to music from the hotel's orchestra.

At the height of the resort's popularity, which occurred during Taggart's ownership of the hotel, approximately 150 to 200 guests checked into the hotel each day. The resort provided Taggart with more than \$2 million in annual profits. Following Taggart's death in 1929, Thomas Douglas Taggart, the politician's son, became owner of the hotel property, which included approximately 4,000 acres (1,600 hectares) and buildings valued at nearly \$2 million.

## Decline

In the years following the Wall Street stock market crash of 1929, the resort went into a steady decline, but it did not close. To survive the financial challenges of the Great Depression and an increase in competition from other resorts in the United States, the French Lick hotel was promoted as a recreational resort with an emphasis on golf and convention business instead of a health spa.

After a brief revival during World War II, it fell into another decline.

Thomas D. Taggart sold the hotel to a group of New York City investors in 1946. Pluto Water operations were separated from the resort's operations in 1948. The resort was sold to Sheraton Hotels in 1954 and renamed the French Lick-Sheraton Hotel. Although the Sheraton chain spent "millions of dollars" to improve the facilities, French Lick's physical condition continued to decline. Sheraton sold the hotel to Cox Hotel Corporation of New York in 1979. Cox returned the resort to its original name and sold the property to Kenwood Financial in 1986. The Luther James family of Louisville, Kentucky, acquired the hotel in 1991, and Boykin Lodging of Cleveland, Ohio, bought it in 1997. The Cook Group, headquartered in Bloomington, Indiana, purchased the hotel on April 13, 2005.



## Casino Resort

### Pluto Spring

Revitalization of the hotel in the early twenty-first century began after considerable campaigning by Orange County residents, the Cook Group, Boykin Lodging (the hotel's owner), and Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, who lobbied the Indiana General Assembly to allow casino gambling in the area. Legislation was finally approved in 2003 and the required local referendum easily passed. The Indiana Gaming Commission granted the long-promised operating license for a riverboat casino to The Trump Organization, headed by businessman Donald Trump, but a variety of reasons caused the selection process to begin again. A partnership of business interests from within Indiana, including billionaire Bill Cook, submitted an application for a gambling license before purchasing the French Lick Springs Hotel from Boykin Lodging. The partnership was awarded the license during the summer of 2005. (Cook later bought out the partners after a legal dispute.)



← *Antique bottle of Pluto Water* →

The French Lick Resort Casino complex includes the French Lick Springs Hotel, adjacent casino, and the nearby West Baden Springs Hotel. The French Lick hotel was restored as part of a \$382 million project that included construction of the new casino. Refurbishments to the multi-structure French Lick hotel included updating its 443 guest rooms and restoration of the lobby, among other improvements. The renovated hotel and new casino complex opened together on November 3, 2006.



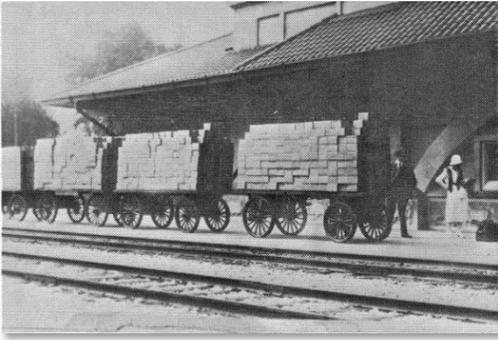
The French Lick resort, which is located on approximately 2,600 acres (1,100 hectares), includes the hotel, a casino, restaurants, boutique shops, a spa, and a conference center. Its recreational facilities offer guests swimming pools, three golf courses, a bowling alley, fitness center, stables for horses, and more than thirty miles of hiking trails.

### Pluto Water

French Lick's spring water, trademarked as Pluto Water, was served to guests at the hotel's Pluto Bar, just off the main entrance. The water was bottled at a plant across the street from the hotel for consumption on the property and for commercial distribution nationally and internationally. Pluto Water's slogan, "If Nature Won't, Pluto Will," promoted its effectiveness as a laxative.

Pluto Water was a trademark for a strong laxative educing natural water product which was very popular in the United States in the early 20th century. The water's laxative properties were from its high native content of mineral salts, with the active ingredient listed as sodium and magnesium sulfate, which are known as natural laxatives. The water's high native content of mineral salts generally made it effective within one hour of ingestion, a fact the company emphasized in their promotional literature. Company advertisements stated the laxative was effective from a half-hour to two hours after ingestion. The company's slogan was "When nature won't, Pluto will."





The water was an extremely popular product. In 1919, it took 450 railroad cars to transport the bottler's output. Today, there is a Pluto car on display in town near the depot.

### Notable guests

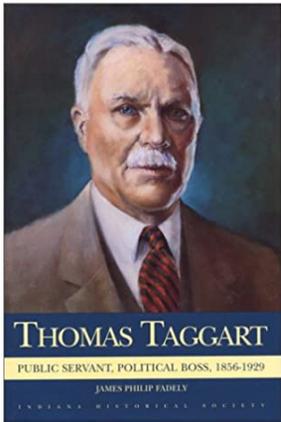
Chris Bundy, author of *West Baden Springs: Legacy of Dreams*, explained that in their heyday from the 1880s to the 1920s the resort hotels at French Lick and West Baden "were the Disney World of their

time. In those days, it was assumed that if you could afford to come to America [for vacation], you would go to French Lick. It was that well-known overseas." Over the years many of the country's rich and famous came as guests or gave performances at the resort. French Lick's visitors included moguls, movie stars, and entertainers such as John Barrymore, Howard Hughes, Lana Turner, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Hoagy Carmichael, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, and Louis Armstrong; noted politicians such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan; wealthy socialites, such as members of the Vanderbilt family; and numerous others.



*In December 1930 Franklin D. Roosevelt takes the oath of office for the second time as New York's governor. Looking on, second from left, is Herbert H. Lehman, who served as the state's lieutenant governor and subsequently served four terms as governor from 1933 to 1942.*

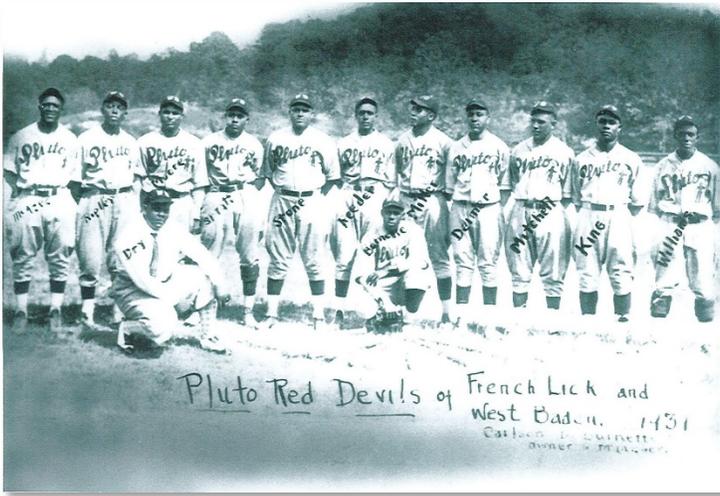
### Gambling



Although casino gambling at French Lick and West Baden Springs was illegal under Indiana law until the early 2000s, it flourished in the area from the early 1900s until the mid-1940s, during the Taggart family's management of the resort. Thomas Taggart disassociated himself with any connection to gambling establishments, but there were several casinos in operation within Orange County, including Ed Ballard's casino at West Baden Springs, Al Brown's casino at French Lick, and one named The Gorge, among several others. A two-story, wood-framed structure in the middle of the French Lick hotel's Japanese gardens may have been used as a casino in the early twentieth century, although the building was identified in promotional materials as a place for bowling and dice games. Taggart denied any connections to illegal gambling operations.

In 1904 Indiana's Republican governor, Frank Hanly, instigated a raid at the hotel and seized its gambling equipment. The state brought suit against Taggart, French Lick's owner, and Lee Sinclair, owner of the West Baden Springs Hotel, but the court case bogged down when Hanley's Democratic successor, Thomas R. Marshall, became Indiana's governor in 1908 and the suit was dropped. After the raid, gambling operations moved offsite to Brown's hotel, across the street from the French Lick Hotel. Illegal gambling continued away from the resort until 1949, when Indiana's governor, Henry Schricker, succeeded in getting the authorities to raid illegal gambling operations at French Lick, and Brown's casino was finally closed.

Legalized casino gambling came to French Lick in 2006, when the new French Lick Resort Casino opened as a part of the resort complex.



**Negro league baseball club: French Lick Plutos**

The French Lick Plutos were an independent Negro league baseball club from 1912 to 1914. Likely consisting for a large part of waiters at the resort, they had started off as a mixed team in 1908 but were all-Black the next year; their main rival was the team from the nearby West Baden Springs Hotel, the West Baden Sprudels. Games were played at the resort to amuse the spectators, but were fiercely competitive, nonetheless. Negro league clubs including the Indianapolis ABCs would frequently come and play at French Lick. Historian Paul Debono notes the connection between African-

American baseball players, employment, and local demographics: when the resorts in the area were booming, the owners needed laborers and frequently those were African-Americans from nearby Kentucky; the local African-American population increased greatly between 1880 and 1900, from one to 124, and in 1920 there were 325, of which over 100 "listed their occupation as waiter", followed by bell-boy and porter; 2/3 of the town's African-American population hailed from Kentucky. According to Debono, "the tradition of black baseball teams continued until the Great Depression, when most of the blacks at the resort lost their jobs". In the 1940s still, French Lick was a venue for spring training for professional baseball teams.

*This picture is of the Pluto Red Devils baseball team taken at French Lick & West Baden, Indiana in 1931.*



**World Famous Pluto Spring Gazebo Structures Over the Springs Through the Years**

*Next month I will continue with the Pluto Water story and focus on the trains that serviced the area. As an added bit of information, I will share about my trip to this area with a very good friend and the sites we visited.*

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## Minutes of the BBMRA Meeting October 19, 2021

**President** Andy Zimmerman called the meeting, held on Oct 19 via Zoom at about 7:31 PM. There were 18 participants involved at maximum.

**Minutes** – A motion to accept the minutes with corrections from the June meeting was forwarded by Bob Ruggles and seconded by Stacy. The motion was accepted and passed without objection.

**Treasurer's Report** – Drew was absent hence President Andy showed the Treasurer's report using the Meeting share functionality. We are now at 68 members, the highest total since 2018. He mentioned that we are in the black and still looking good. The report was moved by Stacy and seconded by Phil. The motion was passed without objection.

### Division Reports

**Small Scale** – Garth mentioned that he is still recovering and hanging in there, so he had nothing much to add. He was not able to commit to participation in the Pensacola show T-Trak activities.

**Large Scale** – Sam Miller mentioned that he was not yet comfortable with a Christmas party owing to reluctance given our recent losses. He suggested sometime next Spring or next Christmas depending on the epidemiological situation at the time. He mentioned the recent request from the Senior Center regarding a model train display sometime near Christmas. There was discussion regarding logistics and participation from each division, particularly with all the other activities near that time frame such as the Pensacola show and the postponed Dothan show. President Andy then mentioned that a good idea may be for Sam to draft an email asking for broad club participation from all the scales and divisions and seed what kind of response is returned from the general club membership.

**HO** – Phil did not have much to add stating things are pretty quiet.

**Switching Layout** – Joe had nothing to share.

**Good of the Group** – There was discussion about folks who are into scale model trains but doing their own thing but were not aware of the club or not interested in participation. Bill Bell mentioned that we probably should attempt to distribute brochures even more aggressively as he knows of people who could have distributed as many as we can provide. Bob Feuerstein mentioned the NMRA convention stating that it was a success. He gave some other updates regarding officer changes etc. Randy then mentioned some new Lionel catalog items to become available. The business portion of the meeting was then concluded quickly at 8:12 PM.

Submitted by: Sheldon Harrison – Secretary

*Neal and Sam bring you all the news and views that we can put together for your viewing pleasure around model trains.*

*Hopefully, you will see something you like and can share the info with others. Share info and pics of your Christmas layout!*

*Now for a little humor.....*

