

A Job on the A & S

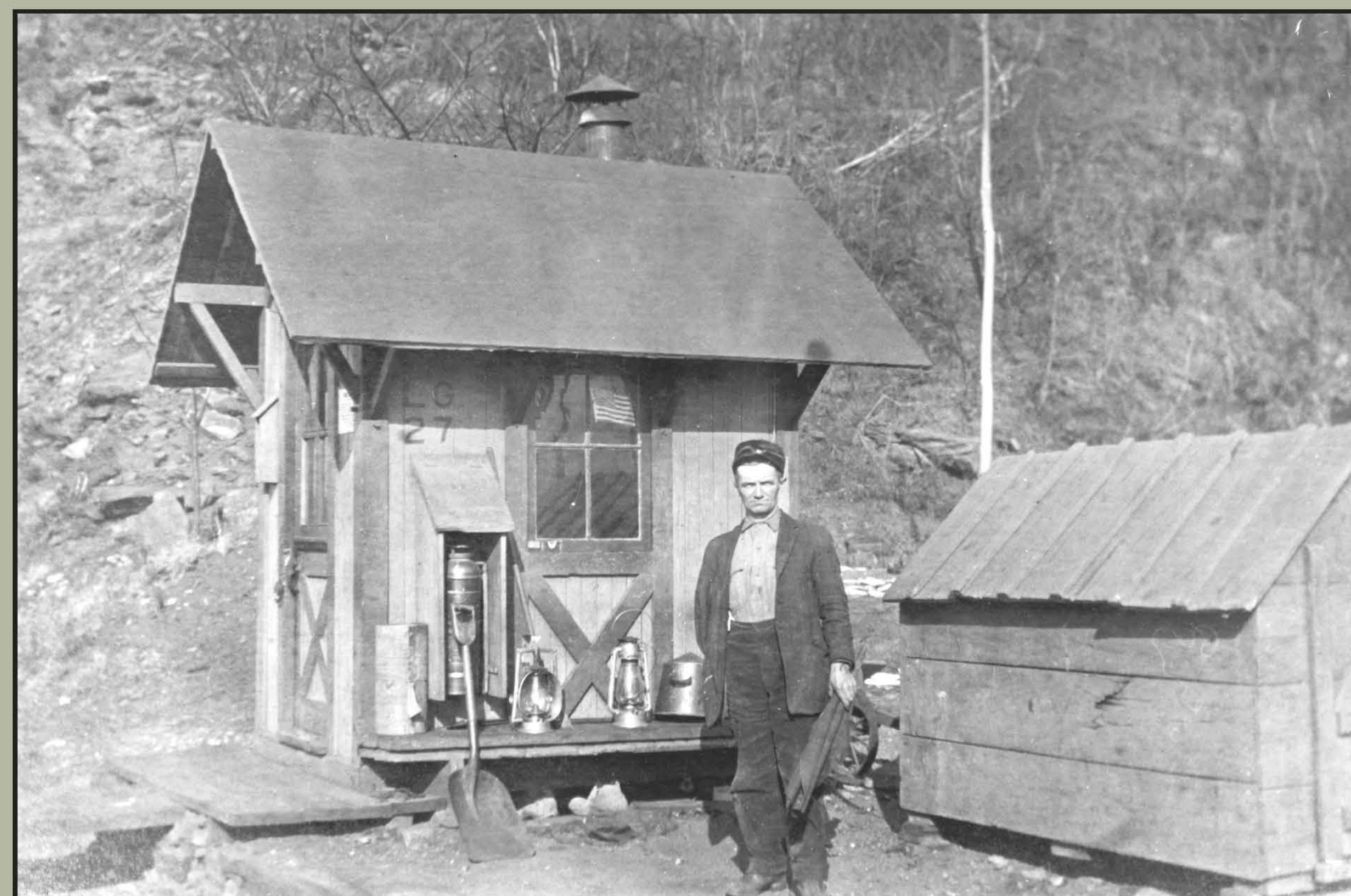
The Atglen & Susquehanna in Eden Township



Personal collection of William L. Seigford, Mount Joy, PA.

“Q” Tower (above) was located approximately 600 feet west of Bushong Road on the south side of the tracks. Even with an easy grade, eastbound freights on the A&S often required “helper” engines to assist with the long ascent to Mars Hill Summit. There were six tracks at “Q,” including sidings that moved the helpers out of traffic, and crossovers to reverse their track direction so they could return to help another freight. Two pairs of water columns were positioned to serve all six tracks, providing essential on-route water to helpers.

Watchmen (right) were located along problematic areas such as cuts that were prone to landslides and fills that were subject to washouts. The stove-heated, single-room watch box was staffed in two 12-hour shifts, seven days a week. A watchman often boarded with a local farmer. His tools included two lanterns, a white (day) lantern with round reflector and a red (night) lantern. In his left hand are red flags used to flag down (stop) trains if the tracks were blocked. The large wooden bin held coal for his stove. This watchbox at LG-27 was located on the west side the Safe Harbor Viaduct, along the cliffs of the Susquehanna River.



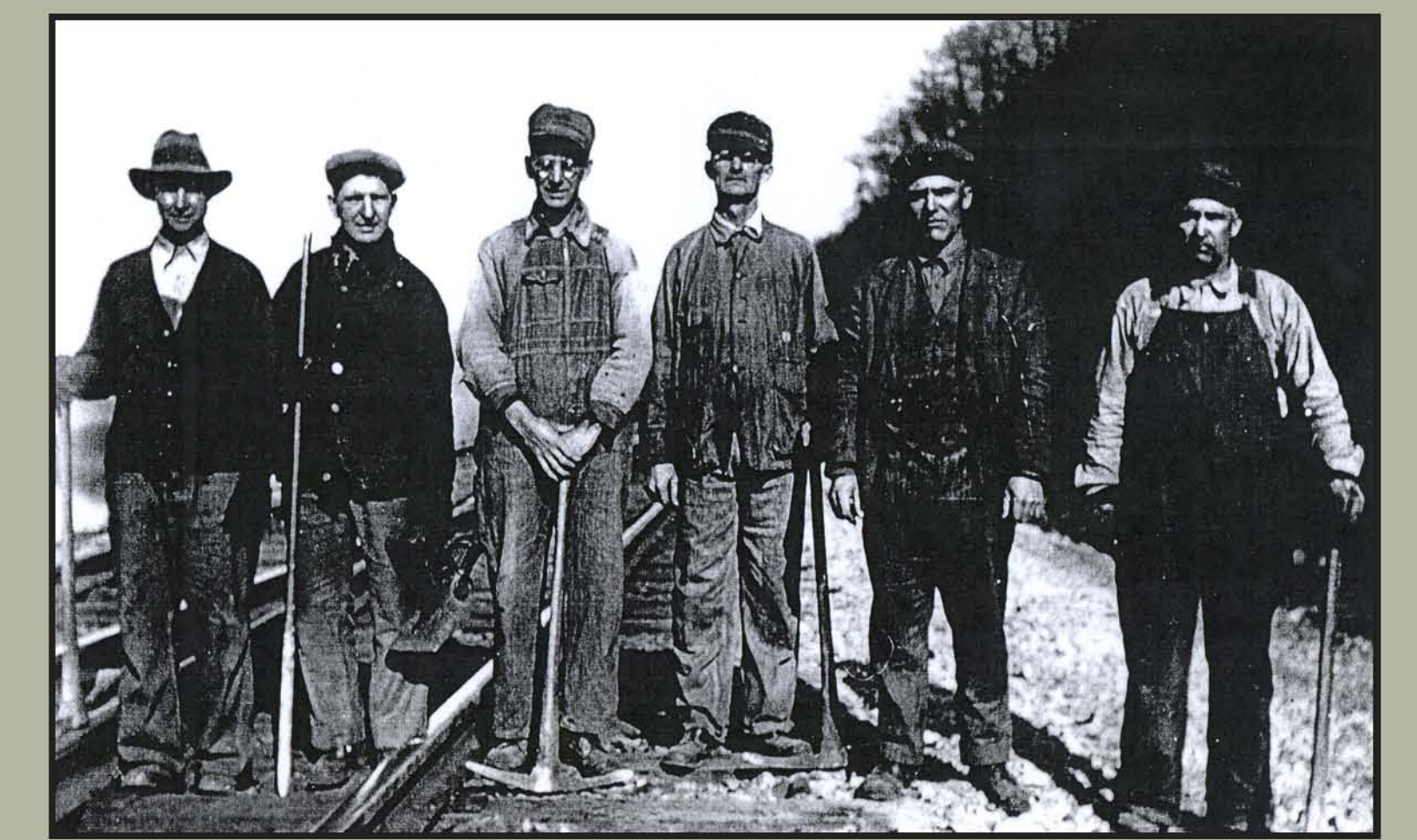
Southern Lancaster County Historical Society, Quarryville, PA.

Unlike routes that served passengers and local freight customers, the A&S required relatively few staffed facilities. Westward from Atglen, the A&S was desolate, compared to the main line’s string of frequent village stops. Constructed after the PRR’s decision to transition from telegraph to telephone, communication on the A&S was thoroughly modern. Pole-mounted telephone boxes were located approximately 1¼ miles apart along the entire route and accessible to almost all levels of railroad employees. The unassuming wooden box (image lower right) protected a revolutionary communications network. Everyone learned how to use the telephone. The PRR would not run without it.

“Q” Tower (image upper left) at M.P. 10.8 was the first A&S switching tower west of Parkesburg (M.P. 0.0) and a node of activity during the steam era. An operator in the tower received and relayed *telephone* orders governing train movement from a dispatcher in Columbia. The tower’s trackside projecting bay provided visual confirmation of train movement and time markers. The solitary watchman (upper right image) monitoring road conditions and track gangs (right center) formed a steady reliance on a new technology via the delicate copper strands of telephone wire.



Conestoga Area Historical Society, Conestoga, PA.



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Photo by Erin Stotter, Sunbury, PA.

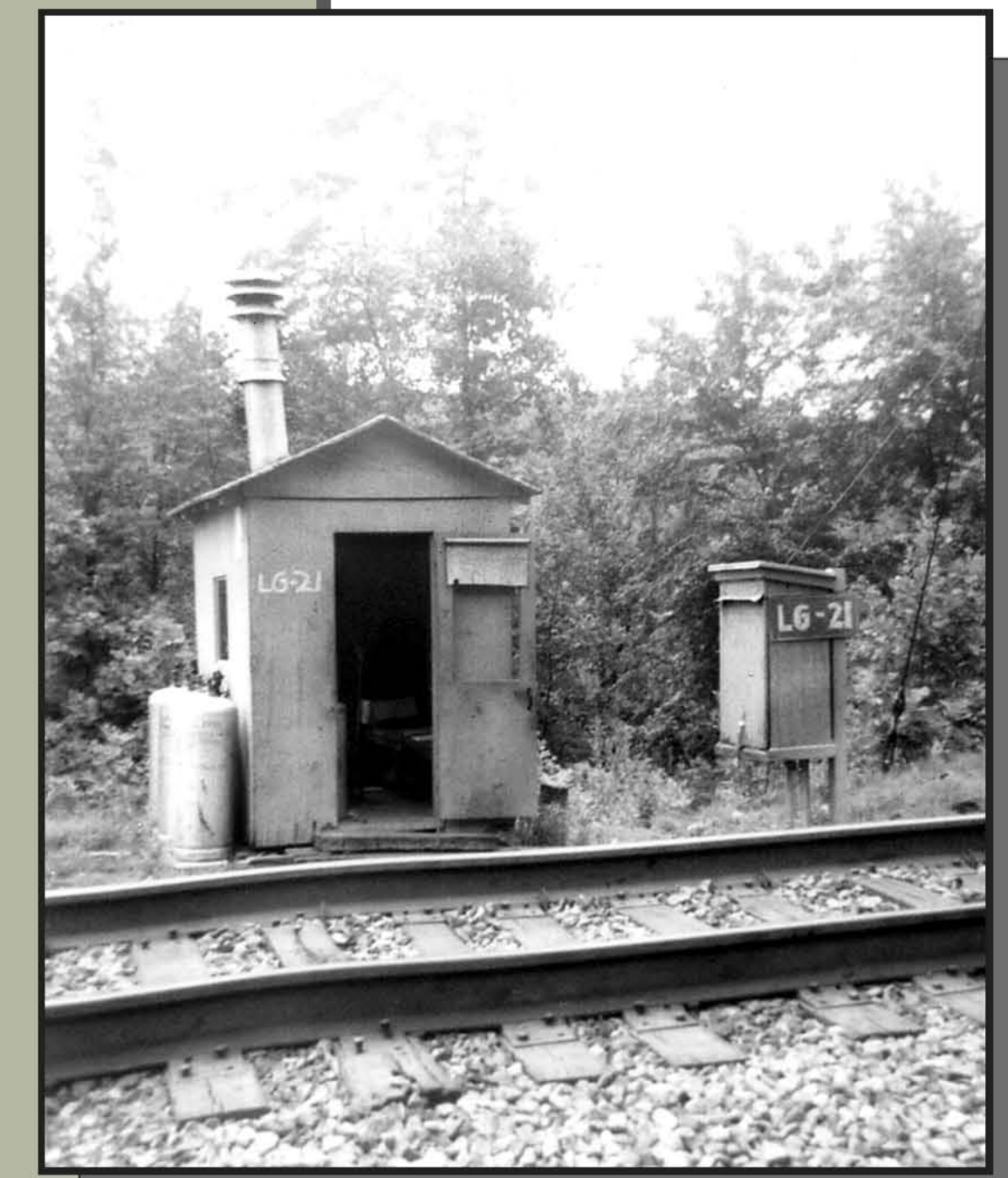
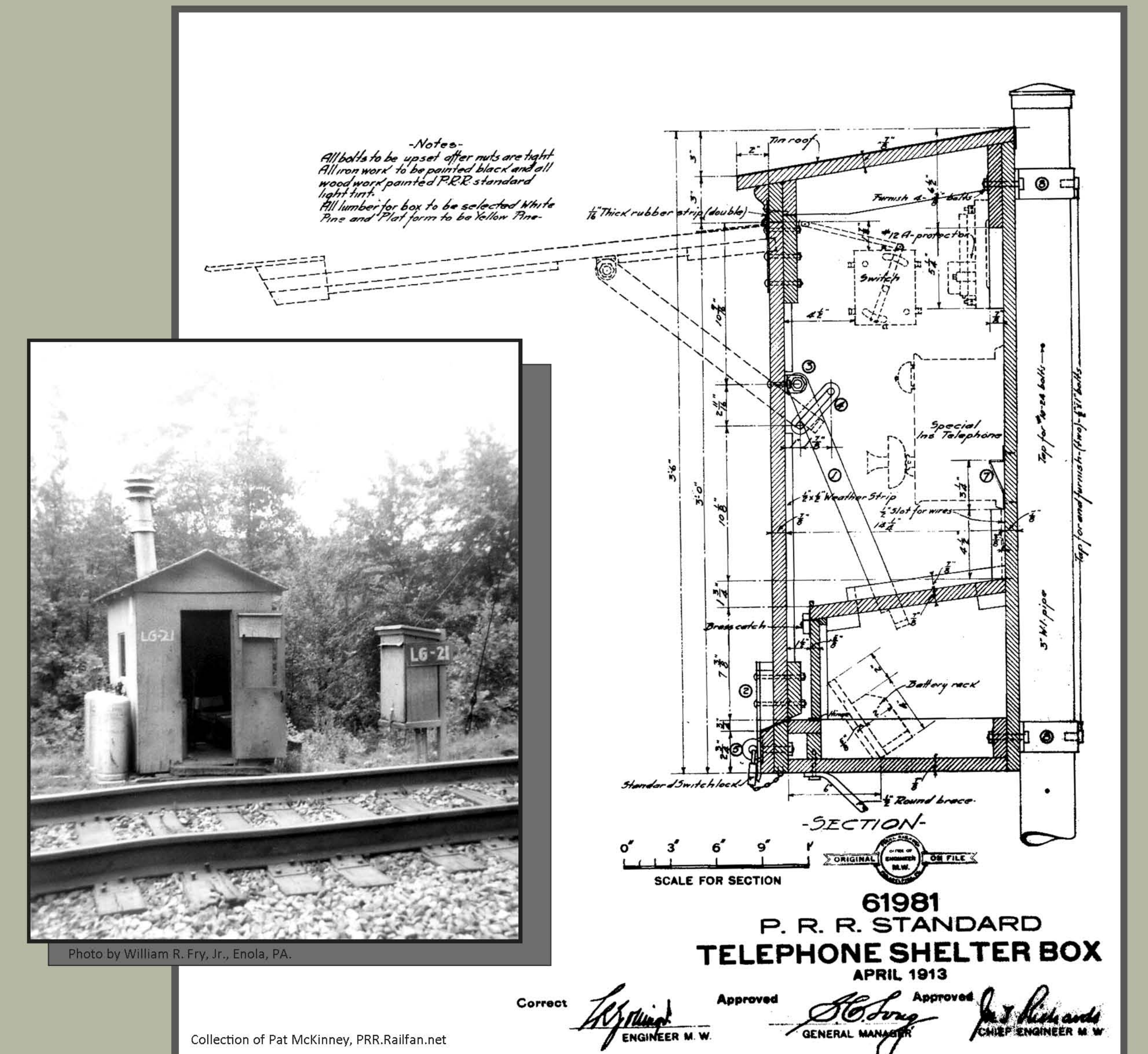


Photo by William R. Fry, Jr., Enola, PA.

Collection of Pat McKinney, PRR.Railfan.net

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ENGINEER M. W. GENERAL MANAGER CHIEF ENGINEER M. W.