

“All Aboard at B&O!”

Location: 317 S. Whittle

This piece will showcase images related to the influence of the railroad, and images of the City Tree and City Flower.

You may recall in some of the other mural topic write ups that the influence of the railroad was mentioned. Railroads opened up a whole new world of opportunity for commercial and passenger business and were a catalyst for growth. Agricultural and manufactured products saw new markets, leading attractions performed at Hyatt’s Opera House, political figures visited; new jobs were created, etc.

The first train between Cincinnati and St. Louis, on the O&M line, passed through Olney on July 4, 1855, with much celebration. A few years later, a competing railroad was placed. Over time, the new railroad saw much legal turmoil, disrepair, and name changes. This railroad was planned from run from Danville to the Ohio river, but it never saw either. At its farthest, the railroad made it about 15 miles away from Danville at Sidell. It eventually became known as the Sidell and Olney railroad, and was abandoned during World War I.

The O&M line, however, continued to see much success. In the 1890s, the O&M line became the B&O. The original O&M depot was destroyed by fire. After that, in 1901, B&O built a Bedford stone and brick depot. Staffing at this bustling location typically consisted of one agent and four railway clerks.

The last passenger train arrived at this station on April 30, 1971. Over time, the railroad still employed its order operator, agent, and other railroad operations until it completely closed on February 4, 1974. In the 1980s, the building was demolished. Today, the railroad is owned by CSX, and special moves are made to transport grain to Consolidated Grain & Barge.

The images in this mural will also include that of the City Tree and City Flower. In 2016, the City of Olney Tree Board made the recommendation to designate an official City Tree and City Flower as part of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of

Olney & Richland County. The City Council then formally accepted the recommendations by ordinance.

The official City Tree is the Hickory (*Carya*). It was chosen because Hickories produce fine nuts that serve as a food source for our prized squirrels.

Additionally, the squirrels help to maintain the tree by knocking off loose tissue and eating some of the galls that can form. The official City Flower is the Garden Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*). It was chosen because it is a wildflower native to Illinois, is easy to maintain, and has beautiful blooms that stay during its long flowering season.