A BRIEF HISTORY OF BF TOWER
This information courtesy of Bill Haines

BF Tower was opened by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1925 to replace an older wooden tower, known as BJ Tower, that stood just west of BF. The main purpose of this interlocking tower was to control the switches and signals that made up Bradford junction. The junction itself is where the PRR's main line from Columbus, Ohio and points east split into two lines, one going to Chicago and the other to St. Louis. The tower also controlled switches and signals at other nearby locations such as East Bradford (Greenville Falls-Clayton Road), which was the east end of Bradford Yard, and at West Bradford where two main tracks combined to one between Bradford and Gettysburg. (The names East Bradford and West Bradford were for railroad purposes only and to indentify these locations.)

The name BF goes back to the days of the telegraph. BF was Bradford Tower's telegraphic designation. It was faster to tap out "BF" instead of "Bradford" on a telegraph key. This saved tower operators and train dispatchers much time when issuing instructions and reporting arrivals and departures via telegraph.

The tower remained in use through major operational changes such as the decline of the yards and the downgrading of the Greenville line. The tower also saw significant changes in technology such as the telephone replacing the telegraph and the use of radios to communicate directly with train crews. The tower was finally closed by Conrail in 1983 since all of the through trains it once routed had been moved to the former NYC line to the north.

The tower sat unused for several years until it was rescued by a group of local railfans. Thanks to the efforts of this group, and to the efforts of the BORM members who restored it, you can now visit one of the very few remaining relics of Bradford's railroad heyday. It's also one of the very few remaining interlocking towers in the US! The tower also has the distinction of being on the National Register Of Historic Places.