

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
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Railroading – Past, Present and Future

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Spring 2011 Excursion Announced

On Saturday, March 26, the Chapter will be hosting a scenic railway excursion over the GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD (pictured at right) through the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina. Spring is in the air, and there's no better way to celebrate the season's arrival than by taking a train



ride through the mountains of the Southern Appalachian region. If you're suffering from "cabin fever" after this long, snowy winter, we have the cure for you – getting out of the house and taking a great train ride! For more information about the trip, visit our web site www.wataugavalleynrhs.org; phone (423) 753-5797; e-mail us at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com; or write us at Watauga Valley NRHS, P O Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. **ALL ABOARD!**

FEBRUARY 28 CHAPTER MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of Watauga Valley NRHS will be held Monday, February 28, 2011 at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN. Join us to learn more information about our 2011 Excursion Program. Gary Price will present the video "Pocahontas Glory Vol. 7", featuring N&W steam action from the 1950's highlighting trains between Cincinnati, Portsmouth, Ohio, and Roanoke. It has some excellent footage of the steam turbine "Jawn Henry" in action. If you like steam trains you will love this video. Bring a friend and enjoy this program.

Member Notes

by Nancy Jewell

Sympathy is extended to the family of Farrell Snyder in his death on February 4, 2011, from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). Farrell joined Watauga Valley Chapter in 1993 and enjoyed many Chapter functions as long as his health permitted. He was very active as a volunteer in church and community projects. Farrell's gentle presence will be missed.

Congratulations to Evan Walker and Jennifer Palmer on their wedding on January 22, 2011, at First Presbyterian Church, Johnson City. Evan, son of Jeanie and Billy Walker, was a great concession car helper during the Chapter excursions of the 1990's. Best wishes to the bride and groom for many happy years together.

Sympathy is extended to Richard Baker and his family, in the death of his uncle, Richard N. Seaver, on January 29, 2011, in Johnson City.

Please call the Chapter phone, (423) 753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918 to let us know of a Chapter member or family friend to whom a card might be sent or a call made to add a bit of cheer on these wintery days. Thanks.

WATAUGA VALLEY RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

The membership approved a new organization established to promote our proposed museum in Jonesborough. The new organization will be called the Watauga Valley Railway Historical Society and Museum (RHSM). Membership in the museum organization is \$20 for individual members and \$5.00 for each additional family member. Anyone that is interested in the museum is welcome to join. More information about the organization will be announced in the next *Whistle Stop*.

CHAPTER BY-LAWS

The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society revised by-laws were approved by the membership at the January meeting. Thanks to the by-laws committee for their hard work during the last couple of months on the revisions.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

The chapter wishes to thank Steven Clarke for his donation to the Chapter Library of the excellent hard-back book, *Cincinnati Union Terminal!* Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the chapter office at (423) 753-5797. Our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library is growing everyday. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good work. We have plenty of room to add more books!

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple

The month of December was a total disaster as well as the first two weeks of January. Work has continued on efforts to organize our work shop and inventory materials on hand.

Moultrie Diner. Work has begun on more improvements in the kitchen. In addition to the new lighting, all exposed and deteriorated wiring is being removed; lights and switches repaired or replaced in the refrigerators; and a new blower fan installed over the grill and stove. This will also include closing two unused and leaking vents through the roof; replacing damaged and missing sheet metal over the cabinets; installing new stainless panels to close the open area where the fans are located; and installing grease filters and traps under the cabinets. The door locks and dead bolts on each end of the car have been serviced, repaired, missing parts made, and broken parts replaced. Some of the problems have been caused by humping at the classification yard.

Clinchfield Coach. The car is at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

Powhatan Arrow Coach. More work is being done on the controls in the electric closets with some replacement of deteriorated wiring. Starting the diesel generator had become an intermittent problem on the last excursion. We are going rewire all controls and gauges and add a second starting battery in the accordance with a standard plan we developed for the diner.

Crescent Harbor. The generator is now in its place under the car. Systems installation will start as weather permits. The new fuel tank has been fabricated, primed and delivered. Final paint will depend on the weather. Work on the interior includes more preparation for painting in the bedrooms and installing the painted parts in the corridor and lounge. We have a solution for replacing the damaged window sills in the lounge. The sills will be stained natural curly maple.

CHAPTER SPRING FIELD TRIP

Thirty chapter members have already signed up for the members-only field trip on April 16, 2011 to the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, TN. We still have room left if you want to go. The cost is \$36.00 per person, which includes the following:

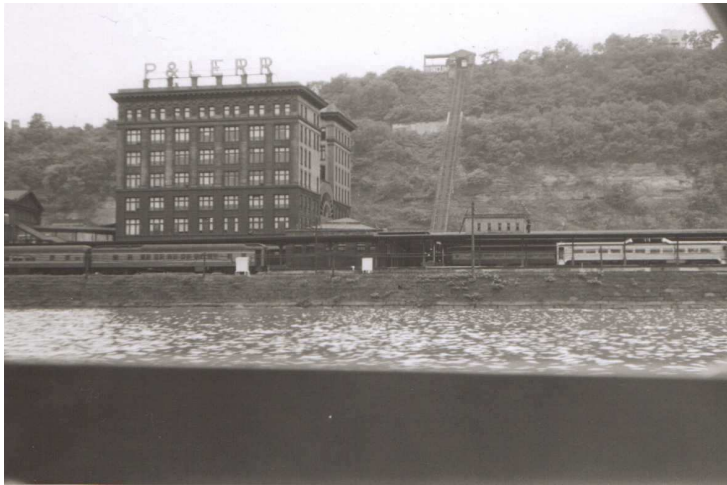
1. Transportation to and from Chattanooga.
2. Train ride at TVRM.
3. Tour of the TVRM Steam shop (see steam locomotive 4501 being rebuilt).
4. Visit to the Chattanooga Choo Choo.

For reservations, call Nick White at (276) 759-4498. ***You do not want to miss this trip!***

P&LE Terminal

by Gary Price

This article actually brings my previous two articles together with another of those incidents that I just happen to stumble upon during my travels with NORFOLK SOUTHERN.



Gary Price Collection

LAKE ERIE RAILROAD, but did not know where the building stood until my travels brought me right to the back door of this historic structure. I realized then that the large group of the black and white photos were taken in Pittsburgh. In the photo of the terminal above you will notice the MONONGAHELA INCLINE RAILROAD station and tracks traversing up the mountain. ^[1]

In last month's article I stated that I couldn't use my machine on the tracks, and I had to do manual labor. One of the jobs assigned to me for the two weeks there was to feed spikes into the shoots on an automatic spiking machine, which is kind of like loading bullets into a gun. This job allowed me ample opportunity to sit back and enjoy the sights along the tracks of Pittsburgh. During one of these breaks I happened to gaze to my right and something caught my eye, It was the letters that I had just seen in the black and white photo mentioned above, I



was right behind the building and probably wouldn't have noticed it if I was working my regular assignment. I stepped off of the machine and snapped a photo of the rear of the structure with my cell phone. Later, I drove by and took a good look at the facilities located there. It has really built up since the black and white photo was taken.

A little history:

The PITTSBURGH AND LAKE ERIE RAILROAD was opened in 1879 with only 58 miles of mainline track and was dubbed "The Little Giant" because of the enormous amount of tonnage this small railroad hauled on a daily basis. The P&LE terminal was built on 40 acres of riverfront land and boasted a station, general offices, passenger train shed, freight yard and an ample sized freight house. [Continued on next page.]

The railroad eventually became a part of CONRAIL and the facility was abandoned in the mid 70's. The City of Pittsburgh purchased the property in 1977 with the intent to revitalize the old downtown area by using all the existing railroad structures. It took the city 19 years to complete the transformation. The terminal is now located on the National Register of Historic Places. Today it is known as the Station Square, and it is Pittsburgh's premiere shopping, dining and entertainment destination. The General Office building now houses a fine dining restaurant where you can enjoy a meal on the river and watch CSX trains pass by. There is a historic MONONGAHELA RAILWAY elongated wooden caboose on display under the passenger shed, and the freight house has several stores and a Hard Rock Cafe located inside. There are also concerts on the river located in the old rail yard. It is a favorite spot for all the local sport fans and their team colors are represented everywhere.

The P&LERR trackage became part of the CSX system after the 1998 break-up of CONRAIL and is an important coal and intermodal route for CSX. The company is presently upgrading this line as part of their Gateway Corridor project.

[1] Ed. Note: The coaches in the foreground appear to be NYC cars. The car under the train shed and the RDC are possibly B&O owned. Both lines served Pittsburgh over the P&LE.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

Second Chapter Dues Notices have been sent out recently. If you have not sent in your dues, your membership has expired January 1. Please send your dues in ASAP so you will not miss out on great articles like Gary's in future issues of the *Whistle Stop*.

NRHS News

The *2009 Yearbook* is being offered electronically to members. It can be viewed at <http://www.nrhs.com/2009yearbook>. Anyone wishing a paper copy mailed to them must send \$39.99 to the printer. Consult the February 2011 *NRHS News* for details.

The same edition of *NRHS News* features a photo of our October 31 excursion to Asheville by photographer Ben Earp (the same photo gracing the cover of the November 2010 *Whistle Stop*).

TACOMA CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO
CASCADE RAILS 2011
NRHS CONVENTION
JUNE 20 - 26, 2011
TACOMA, WASHINGTON



For convention details, go to <http://www.cascaderails2011.com/>



Photo Section



Chapter member Doug Callan took this beautiful photo of CASS SCENIC RAILROAD (ex-WESTERN MARYLAND) Shay #6, Lima c/n #1907, crossing the bridge at Cheat Junction in West Virginia. It was taken on July 2008 during a special event – Elkins, WV's "Depot Centennial & Railroad Days".

CSX (ex-CLINCHFIELD) was shut down for several days in January due to a major derailment near Fremont, VA when a coal train hit a mud slide. Two engines and five loaded coal cars were involved in the derailment. The photo at right shows the head engine, GE CW44AC number 105, which spun around 360 degrees and landed in the



position shown with its fuel tank lying on its side.

Fortunately, the engineer was not hurt. The conductor was thrown around in the cab and suffered minor injuries.

The nearest access to this location is down the track 1 mile, which complicated clean-up. [From Mike Tilley]

Last month's *Whistle Stop* reported that CHESAPEAKE & OHIO Class J-3a 4-8-4 No. 614, along with NORFOLK & WESTERN 4-8-4 No. 611, will highlight an exhibit called "Thoroughbreds: N&W 611 and C&O 614, the pinnacle of steam locomotive technology." The exhibit, sponsored by NORFOLK SOUTHERN, will be located at the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke. Nick White sends along this photo of 614 arriving at the NS Yard in Roanoke, pulled by NS locomotive GE C40-9 No. 8792. A NS office car can be barely seen under the shed roof to the right.



Geared Locomotive Power on the CLINCHFIELD ???

Your Editor was sent this highly unusual photo of a Shay geared locomotive at the CLINCHFIELD yards in Erwin. What was it doing there? While the only documentation is the writing on the photo "Shay + Mike Erwin June 1928", I have a theory. The photo is one of a series taken that June of the former LAUREL FORK RAILWAY Shay #2, Lima c/n #2391. This engine had left the Pittsburgh Lumber Co. operation in Braemar, Carter County, in 1922



Michael Hardin Collection

for another lumber operation owned by the parent company in Virginia. With the Carter County lumber operation ending by late 1927 (its last spur dropped down from Dennis Cove into the Doe River Gorge), the final chore was to remove rail from the mountain lines for resale. An engine was required for that effort. HERE'S THE THEORY. Another photo in this series shows #2 in Elizabethton besides a stack of rails. I posit that #2 was brought back from Virginia for this work. But that still doesn't solve the riddle of why it ended up in Erwin. It is known that the Shay was put up for sale as early as 1924. My theory is that either a Southeastern buyer was found or that the engine was sent south to a dealer such as SI&E in Atlanta. A movement over the ET&WNC and the CLINCHFIELD in either case would seem reasonable. The photo depicts the engine in Erwin in preparation for its final move South. But that's just a theory. Any information you might have to either support or dispute this theory would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Fred Waskiewicz at the Chapter email address: wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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