

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Photo used with permission of NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Last month we reported on NORFOLK SOUTHERN plans to release a series of locomotives painted in the color schemes of its legacy lines. This is being done in celebration of its 30th anniversary. A total of 19 engines from either the GE ES44AC series (9) or SD70ACe (10) series will be painted. This month we are proud to begin publishing photos of those engines as they are rolled out of the paint shops. Showcasing this month's set of photos is SOUTHERN 8099_K. (The "K" denotes the engine pool to which the locomotive was assigned.) Certainly a color scheme to jog the memories of many of our members. For pictures of this engine in action and more locomotives in this series, go to pages 3 and 7.

***** Date Change *** April 30th Membership Meeting**

Due to ongoing construction at JCPL, the date for the next Watauga Valley RHS&M Membership Meeting will be held **Monday, April 30, 2012** at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will be presented by Richard Baker on the BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD'S freight and passenger operations. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewell

Our sympathy is extended to Bob Schubel in the death of his mother, Lois Schubel, in Greeneville, Tennessee, in early April.

Please keep Jane DeVoe, Jack Maloney, Walter Byrd and other members and friends that you know who are dealing with health or other concerns in mind. Call the office phone, (423) 753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918, to tell us of anyone to whom a card could be sent or a call made to let them know of our interest and support. Thanks for helping us keep in touch!

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

We want to thank all the Watauga Valley volunteers who helped out on our very successful GSMR trip on Saturday, March 31, 2012. We had happy passengers, nice weather and a great train ride. You could not ask for anything better!!!!!!

Facebook postings:

Randy Moore: "After the early downpours, it turned out to be a wonderful day for a trip. Everyone seemed to have a good time."

Gary Price: "What a wonderful trip we had yesterday, and even the early morning rain didn't dampen the spirits of the 7 busloads of passengers that joined the WVRHSM on the Great Smoky Mountain Railway Adventure. The sun came out and the weather was perfect for a laid-back train ride through the mountains. The staff at GSM was very helpful and saw to all our needs. Say you missed it, or want to ride a train, then keep watching our page for future announcements on rail-excursions."

CHERRY BLOSSUM SPECIALS SOLD OUT

Both Washington DC trips on the WATV passenger cars (April 14-15 and May 5-6) sold out. We appreciate everyone's support on these trips.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

The Watauga Valley Mechanical Team has been very busy getting the cars ready for the Washington, DC trips on April 14-15 and May 5-6. There have been some 14-hour days to get the cars all checked out. We want to thank all WATV members who came down and made the move out of the yard on April 6 to Washington, DC possible.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT COACH YARD

With our equipment getting ready to depart for the season, we need volunteers to help at the coach yard in various ways including cleaning. Please call our office at (423) 753-5797, leave a message, and we will call you back.

Regional News

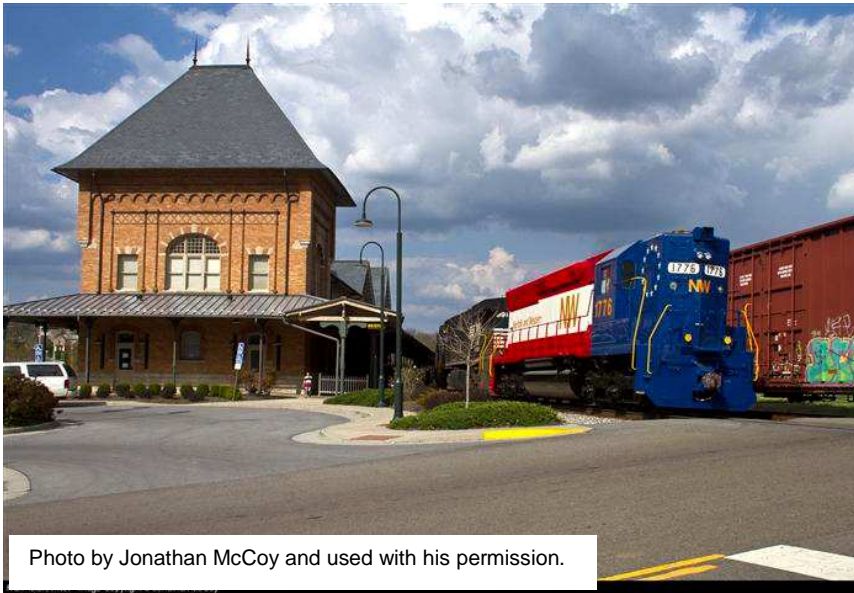


Photo by Jonathan McCoy and used with his permission.

>>> Blue Ridge NRHS reports that ex-N&W SD45 #1776, which had received a special patriotic paint scheme for the nation's bicentennial celebration, was returned to Roanoke on March 23. The locomotive had been in NORFOLK SOUTHERN's paint shop in Chattanooga, TN, for restoration. The gleaming locomotive is currently in storage; it will be brought out for public display on July 4th.

The photo at left shows the #1776 on its homeward bound trip. Passing Bristol's beautifully restored train station, the #1776 is at the rear of an eastbound light power movement.

>>> According to "HIGH GREEN" (Chesapeake Railway Assoc.), there will not be any activities celebrating the May 12 National Train Day at Washington, DC's Union Station. The reason is that the station is undergoing an extensive restoration effort to repair ceiling damage caused by last Fall's earthquake.

>>> The CSX Clinchfield Route in the 21st Century (Railroads Past and Present) is now available in paperback (\$18.11 on Amazon.) The authors, Jerry Taylor and Ray Poteat, take readers on a mile-by-mile trip through the tunnels and over the bridges of CSX's historic ex-CLINCHFIELD route.



>>> "The Automatic Block" (Western Maryland NRHS) reports that CSX added 50 GE ES44AC locomotives to its roster. Numbered 950-999, some of these units will see pusher service on the ex-CLINCHFIELD line between Elkhorn City, KY and Spartanburg, SC. The locomotives sport an updated paint livery based on the original "YN3" or "Dark Future" paint scheme. Prominent on each side is the newly established CSX "boxcar

logo" that first made its appearance on several covered hoppers and intermodal containers in 2010.

>>> Tony King submitted these two terrific shots of SOU #8099 in service. Taken just west of Telford, TN, the #8099 is seen leading eastbound Train 38Q en route to Roanoke. The MoW crew should take great pride in the immaculate roadbed.

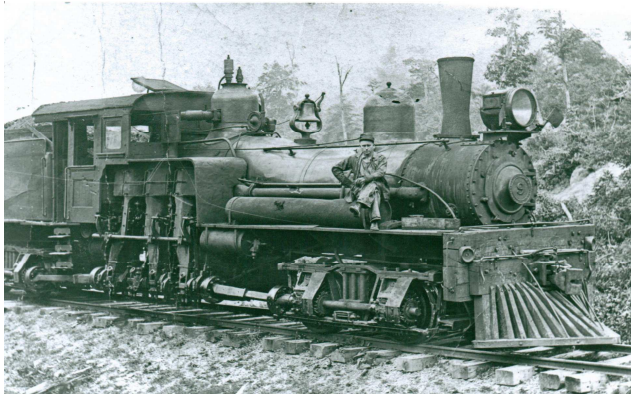


“The Switchback Scenic Route ~ A History of The Marion and Rye Valley Railway” By: Gary P. Price

[NOTE: This is the first installment of the serialization of Gary’s Book on the M&RV. ©Gary. P. Price, 1998. All Rights Reserved.]

“Introduction”

Imagine this: It’s springtime, 1910. The quiet tranquility of Southwest Virginia’s Appalachian Mountains is suddenly interrupted by the shrill echo of a steam whistle. You pause for a moment to take in the lonesome sound. But you notice something sounds different! Instead of the traditional chug – chug sound made by nearby Norfolk & Western steam locomotives, you hear a growling sound off in the distance.



Engineer Guy Garrettson strikes a somber pose on Shay Locomotive No. 9 built by Lima Locomotive Works [55-2, c/n 977] on March 31, 1905.

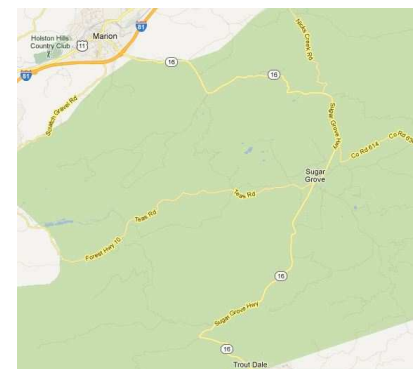
Suddenly a headlight appears from around a sharp curve and your eyes are set upon a strange, lopsided steam locomotive. As it steams closer you notice this strange contraption has no driving wheels, but has vertical pistons connected to a crank shaft leading to four small geared wheels.

You are mesmerized by the sight, when a tall, lean engineer looks out of the locomotive’s cab and gives you a friendly wave and a smile. The locomotive and a load of fresh cut logs roll by and disappear into the mountains. You, my friend, have just been introduced to Guy Garrettson, the Shay locomotive, and the Marion and Rye Valley Railway.

“Chapter I” - “History”

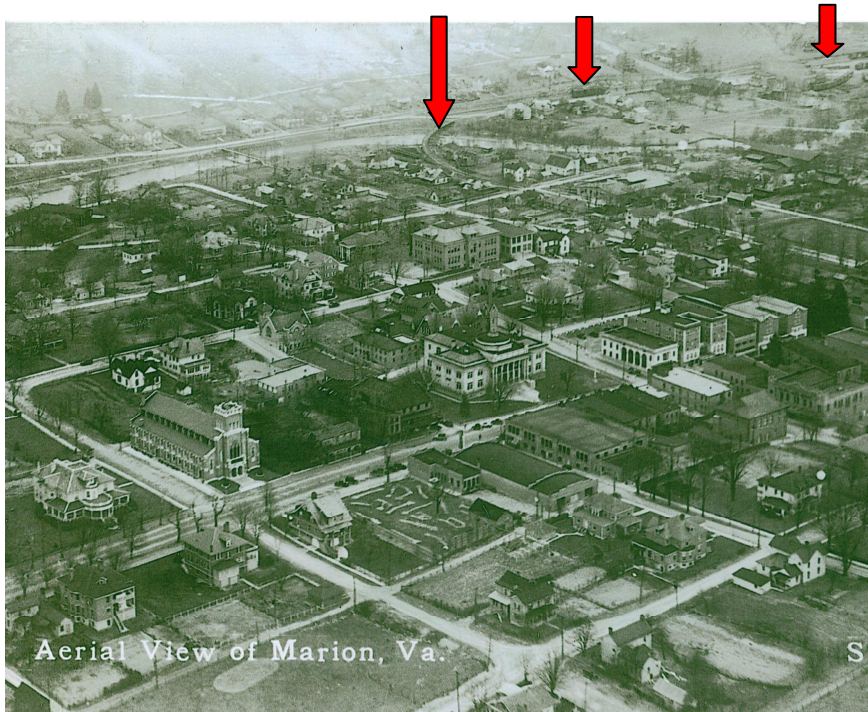
The Marion and Rye Valley Railway Company was a standard gauge (56 ½”) logging railroad that operated 17.7 miles from Marion, Virginia, to Sugar Grove, Virginia. Below is a history of this railroad compiled from Smyth and Grayson County history books.

The Marion and Rye Valley Railway was chartered by the Virginia State Commerce Commission in 1891. The actual building of the railroad began in 1893 with six miles constructed between the railroad’s connection with the Norfolk and Western Railroad at Marion, Virginia, south to the Currin Valley section of Smyth County. The railroad’s chief promoters were Dr. J. S. Apperson and G. W. Miles. It was thought that there were huge deposits of manganese ore located in the Currin Valley area, but this turned out to be non-profitable for the railroad. So in 1896, G. W. Miles had the railroad extended 11.7 miles to Sugar Grove, Virginia, to form a connection with the newly built Virginia Southern Railroad, which operated from Sugar Grove, Virginia, to Fairwood, Virginia. The Virginia Southern was built by J. W. Moltz to lumber the mountains of Grayson County, Virginia. Both railroads were placed under the same management with P. S. Swain of New York named as the President of the entire 27.5 mile system. H. T. Lawford was named Superintendent. [Continued on next page.]



P. S. Swain was replaced by B. F. Buchanan, followed by G. W. Miles, who held the position until 1905, when the United States Lumber Company purchased both railroads. U.S. Lumber named J. C. Campbell as President of the Railroads. Eighteen years later, the U. S. Lumber Company had stripped all available lumber from their Grayson and Smyth County, Virginia timber supply. The company sold off the railroads to F. L. Knight of Lynchburg, Virginia.

In September, 1923, the Virginia Southern took over complete management and financial operations of The Marion and Rye Valley, a move that financially doomed the Virginia Southern. In the fiscal year 1927, the Virginia Southern was operating at a loss. The Marion and Rye Valley was still turning a small profit. Time finally caught up with the Marion and Rye Valley. In the fiscal year 1930, records show the Marion and Rye Valley operating at a loss.



In 1931, the railroad filed an abandonment plea with the Virginia State Commerce Commission. The Virginia Southern was granted abandonment of its 7.85 mile route from Fairwood, Virginia back to Sugar Grove, Virginia. The Marion and Rye Valley was denied until 1932, when the railroad completed its United States Mail contract. The Marion and Rye Valley was sold to the Marion Brick Company with tracks being taken up from Sugar Grove, Virginia, back to Currin Valley. The rails were sold for scrap.

The Marion Brick Company operated trains to haul components used for manufacturing bricks from 1932 to 1936. Eventually the Brick Company closed down, taking the remains of The Marion and Rye Valley with it.

During The Marion and Rye Valley's more profitable days, the railroad moved logs from the forest

Bonus photo, not included in book. In this early 1900's, aerial photograph/postcard, you can see the basic landscape and structures of Marion, Virginia during the time of the Marion and Rye Valley. The arrow in the center of the photo points to the massive wooden railroad bridge that connected the M&RV with the small Norfolk and Western Yard (arrow on the right). The middle arrow points to boxcars set off by the N&W to be received by the M&RV crews. The Norfolk and Western mainline runs along the river, and is still in service today. (Postcard property of Gary Price.)

to the sawmill to the market. Coal was hauled in large quantities to the Southwest Virginia State Mental Hospital. Extract and tanning dyes were hauled in tank cars from the Extract Plant in Teas, VA.

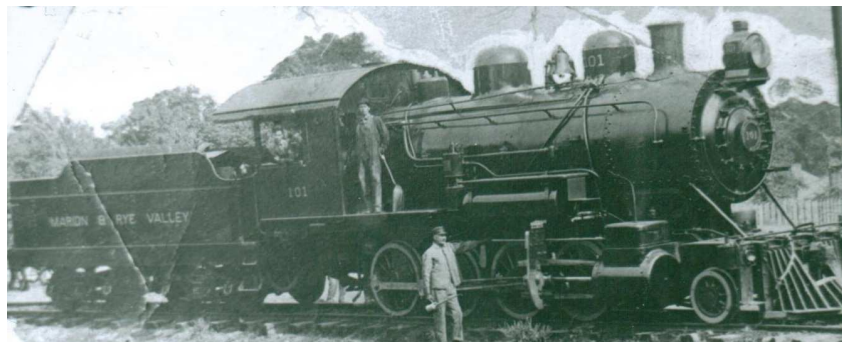
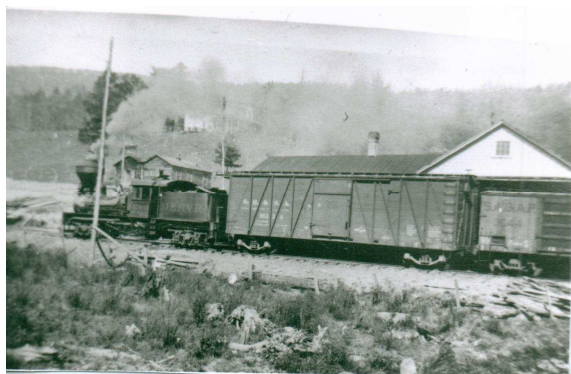
The railroad hauled mail and passengers throughout the entire system. Passengers included famous American author, Sherwood Anderson, as he traveled from "Ripshin" to work in Marion daily. The circus came to town by rail to Sugar Grove and Fairwood, Virginia. Farm supplies and food came to town by the boxcar load. Cattle were shipped out in livestock cars. [Continued on next page.]

In 1928 an attempt was made by railroad officials to bring tourism dollars to the railroad and the region. The Marion and Rye Valley was labeled and advertised as “The Switchback Scenic Route”. Tourists could pay twenty-five cents to ride to the top of Pine Mountain to what is known today as “The Scales” for a scenic view across Southwest Virginia’s Appalachian Mountains.

“Ties with the N & W”

The Marion and Rye Valley connected with the Norfolk and Western Railway at the old stockyards in Marion (the town pool is located there now). All freight and lumber moved by the Marion and Rye Valley had to be handled by the Norfolk and Western at Marion where a local switcher would move the merchandise into Marion or out of Bristol, VA for processing and being added to a mainline Norfolk and Western freight train.

How did the Marion and Rye Valley buy their rail? They didn’t, they leased it! Documents on file in the Smyth County Courthouse show that all rails, tie plates, joint bars and bolts were leased to the Marion and Rye Valley by their neighbor, the Norfolk and Western Railway. When the Marion and Rye Valley was offered to be sold, the Norfolk and Western turned down their offer due to the fact that they (N & W) already had rail lines running from Abingdon, Virginia to nearby West Jefferson, North Carolina and also a line from Pulaski, Virginia to Galax, Virginia.



Marion and Rye Valley No. 8 [55-2 Shay, c/n 960] rolls into Troutdale, Virginia with a train of boxcars. (Following information not in book.) Reporting marks for the first boxcar is Galveston, Houston and San Antonio, and the second one is San Antonio and Arkansas Pass. Hay and grain were shipped to the Midwestern states during the Great Depression.

1911: Brand new #101 (ALCO-built Consol, c/n 49933) has arrived in Marion, Virginia, and the crew is more than happy to pose for her christening.

More information on M&RV motive power will follow as Gary continues this wonderful story of an area short line’s struggle to survive.

LIBRARY DONATIONS

Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call (423) 753-5797. Our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library is growing every day. 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.



Photo Section



More locomotives of the "Heritage Series". Missing in the numbering sequence are #8102, tentatively scheduled to be painted in PENNSYLVANIA colors, and #8104, tentatively scheduled to honor the LEHIGH VALLEY. This program has to be one of the most exciting and interesting for railfans since NS announced its (limited) return to steam excursions. That a color scheme can evoke such powerful memories gives testament to role and impact railroads have played and continue to play in our lives.



[All photos used with permission of NORFOLK SOUTHERN. Special effects are courtesy of Mother Nature.]

According to Robin Chapman, Director of Public Relations at NORFOLK SOUTHERN, paint shop assignment was based mostly on shop capacity. EMD agreed to paint the ten SD70ACe units on order. However, GE did not have the paint shop capacity or the time in their production schedule, so NS took the nine ES44AC units in primer. NS Altoona (Juniata) will paint mostly CONRAIL predecessor roads. SOUTHERN RAILWAY predecessors will go to NS Chattanooga, thus SOU #8099 and CoG #8101 were painted at that location. CR #8098 and NKP #8100 were painted in Altoona as was N&W #8103. (We who reside in Railfan Fantasyland would have had #8103 painted in Roanoke if a paint shop existed there.)

Good news for modelers is that M.T.H. Electric Trains will be offering all units in O scale.

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P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432
wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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