

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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NICKEL PLATE ROAD #765 gracefully negotiates Horseshoe Curve near Altoona, PA in an August 13th eastbound positioning move of the train from Conway Yard to Enola Yard for the NS 30th Anniversary employee trips. Heritage ES44AC #8100 in NICKEL PLATE livery can be seen behind the tenders providing additional power. [Photo, via "The Susquehannock" (CENTRAL PA NRHS), taken by NORFOLK SOUTHERN company photographer Casey Thomason.]

September 24th Membership Meeting

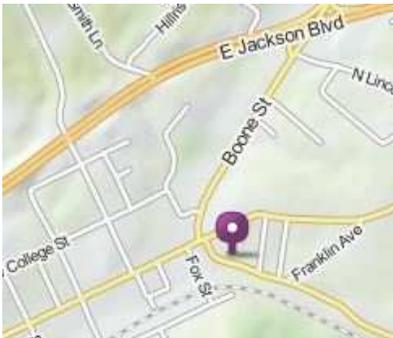
The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will have our regular meeting on Monday, September 24, 2012 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will feature the Blue Ridge Scenic Railway, a fun and informative video on the Georgia attraction, presented by Tom and Katie Phelps. Hear about the details about the upcoming fall excursions to Appomattox VA and Toccoa, GA. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewell

Please keep Jane DeVoe, Mary Roach, and Bonnie Smitter in your thoughts as they deal with health concerns. As always, let us know of members, friends or family folk who might be remembered with a card or phone call. The office phone number is 423-753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Let us hear from you as we do want to keep in touch.

CLEANING DAY AT THE SPRING STREET COACH YARD: SAT., SEPT 29th



WATV members are asked to show up at the Spring St. Coach Yard in Jonesborough on Saturday, September 29, 9 am – 12 noon, for a cleaning session for our equipment. All our cars will be departing soon for the Autumn Train excursions throughout the East. We need as many people as possible to show up and help get the cars ready.

Appomattox, VA and Toccoa, GA Trips: November 3-4, 2012

All workers on the November 3 & 4 trips from Spencer, NC to Appomattox, VA and Toccoa, GA will be receiving their information and assignment forms either by e-mail or by mail very soon. Please look over in case you have any questions. If you have not made your reservation at the Super 8 motel in Salisbury for the special rate, please call ASAP and ask for the Watauga Valley Railroad Special Rate for excursion.

Hiwassee Gorge Trip Sold Out

We are happy to announce that the Hiwassee Gorge Trip to Etowah, TN on October 6 is sold out. We have large amount of people booked for this beautiful trip.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yapple

CLINCHFIELD and **POWHATAN ARROW**. Both coaches are out with the NS Steam program.

MOULTRIE. The drapes and blinds have been re-installed along with the new carpeting. The stainless carpet molding at the floor is being replaced and the seats and seat backs have been cleaned and repaired. The car will look much like its old self – only much brighter. Rewiring of the electrical and lighting circuits in the galley is in progress.

CRESCENT HARBOR. Interior detail work is ongoing. The car has been raised one inch with equalizer pad shims. It has been decided to raise an additional 2/4 inch in attempt to meet the Amtrak "A" Clearance Diagram

Both the diner and sleeper/lounge received their Amtrak PC-1 Brake and Mechanical Inspections. There are no major problems and only a short punch list.

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

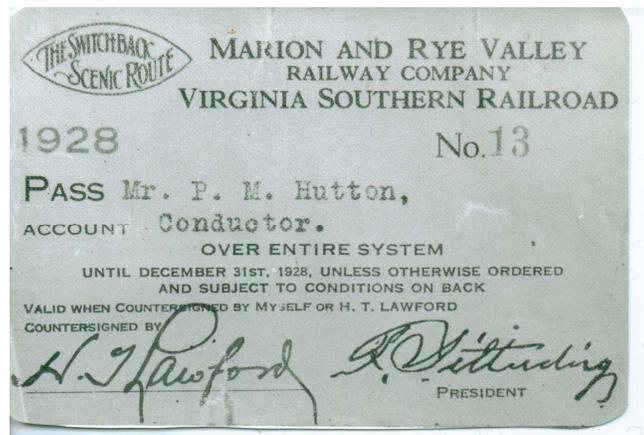
[This is the final installment of the serialization of Gary's Book on the M&RV. ©Gary. P. Price, 1998. All Rights Reserved.]

Authors note: One of the most important things that we can do as a historical society is to document the memories of those who worked on, or have “fond memories” of the railroads of this region. During my research for this book, I met a lot of interesting and colorful people. This chapter was set aside just for their memories. Most of the people that I spoke with have passed on, but their words will live forever in Chapter 5 of “The Switchback Scenic Route”.

Chapter V - PEOPLE REMEMBER

BILL SEYMOUR. I remember, as a child, one day I was leading one of my father's cows out to pasture. When out of the blue, the ole Rye Valley train appeared and laid down on his whistle. This startled the ole cow and she began to run. I held onto the rope, but being the small fellow I was, the jerk on the rope caused me to fall and the cow drug me through the dirt and tar for a couple of feet. I didn't let go and the cow finally stopped. This happened near the VDOT shops in Marion.

WADE ANDERSON. I remember as a ten year old boy, my father and I boarded the train at Sugar Grove. I quickly grabbed a window seat while my father set down with a friend he knew from Teas. As the train picked up a little bit of steam, I poked my head out the window and let the wind blow through my hair. When I least expected it, a passenger two seats in front of me spit his “chaw” of “backer” out and it hit me right square between the eyes. (He laughed a big hearty laugh as he was remembering this). I also remember later on when I was sixteen, I was going to ride the train to Marion. This would be my last time riding the Marion and Rye Valley. I missed the train at Sugar Grove, but I knew I could catch it if I hurried across the way. Sure



enough, I arrived at the tracks just as the train began climbing the steep grade. I tried to flag the train down, but Harrison Bowman signaled to me that his train was too heavy to stop on the steep grade. So I waited as the log cars rolled by. Then I saw the passenger car rounding the bend. I ran up beside the train, grabbed ahold of the handrail, and swung up to the stairs. “Poke” Hutton met me at the door and seated me beside the stove, ‘cuz I was soaking wet from the cool autumn rain.

DOLLY REPASS. One day while I was in my early teens, I boarded the train at Sugar Grove for a trip to Marion to visit my older sister. “Poke” Hutton took my twenty-five cent fare and the train left the station at noon. We were supposed to arrive in Marion a couple of hours later. The train was just a short one. It had one engine, No. 101, a loaded cattle hauling car and our passenger car. This was late in the life of the railroad and the tracks were in pitiful shape. The train derailed, “Poke” Hutton made myself and two other male passengers get off the train. Guy Garrettson, the engineer, blew his whistle so the section men could come and re-rail the train. We finally arrived at the Marion Depot at eleven o'clock that night. Needless to say, my sister gave up on me and had gone home at four o'clock. I had to find me a way to my sister's home.

[Continued on next page.]

MARY JANE WOLFE. The home I lived in when I was young was located above the “barn” where the railroad stored the “motor car” (Edwards Motor Car #202) when they wasn’t using it. The funny thing is, they left it running all the time. I could hear it idle all night long. Our home was located where Shop Street meets VA. Route 16 in Marion.

Originally included in Gary’s book were these other fine photos.



Here we see a crew posing for the photographer, showing off their handiwork – a “small” cut extending the line. Imagine doing that all of that work by hand! Behind the crew lies a huge pile of logs awaiting transport to the mill.



A Surry-Parker log loader, probably owned by the lumber company, at work in the mountains. These machines were popular in areas where lighter weight trees did not require a heavy-weight steel loader (notice its wood framework). You can see the devastation that clear-cutting can wreak in the background.



The NORFOLK AND WESTERN freight yards in Marion, Virginia is where all MARION AND RYE VALLEY freight cars were picked up or dropped off for shipment. The boxcars in the background are to be picked up by the MARION AND RYE VALLEY. The stock car in the foreground is being loaded with heads of cabbage.

[Editor’s note: An Afterword and a map of the M&RV will appear in next month’s Whistle Stop.]

In the News

Newton Depot Authority plans groundbreaking for museum pavilion

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NEWTON, NC (August 29, 2012) – The Newton Depot Authority has issued an invitation to the public to a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, September 5, at 5:30 p.m. to symbolize the start of construction of a new pavilion for the Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum. Light refreshments and entertainment will be provided.

The groundbreaking marks the addition of an outdoor museum component, the Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum, to the historic Newton Depot Museum. The depot, constructed in 1924, was relocated to its present site, restored, and opened to the public in September 2006. The depot authority kicked off its “Golden Spike” capital campaign in mid-2011 to help raise funds and solicit donations for the new outdoor museum. According to Depot Authority member Matt Bumgarner, support has been favorable thus far, but additional donations are needed to help complete the museum.

“The pavilion will be the cornerstone achievement of the ongoing \$750,000 capital campaign, which is being used to create the museum,” Bumgarner stated. “As of August 23, over \$475,000 in pledges and in-kind donations have been received for this project.”

Bumgarner said the pavilion will be an L-shaped structure covering approximately 300 feet of dual-gauge railroad track, and will house the museum’s rolling stock.

“The structure shape is based on the floor plan of the old Carolina & North-Western Railway shops that were located in Hickory from 1912 to 1974,” Bumgarner related.



The pavilion is an integral part of the outdoor museum which will help achieve the depot authority’s goal of heritage education about the importance of the narrow-gauge railroad in the industrial development of this area. The focus of the outdoor museum is to collect, restore, and preserve railroad equipment representative of the long history of railroads in western North Carolina, and to provide an enjoyable educational experience for individuals, families, school groups, and tourists.

The pavilion, which will be located just behind the depot off North College Avenue, will display a 1922 American

Locomotive Company steam engine, restored narrow-gauge railroad cars that were used locally by the Chester & Lenoir Railroad, a boxcar from Tweetsie Railroad, a Southern Railway caboose, a 1950 Alco diesel engine, and other railroad stock typically found on area narrow-gauge and shortline railroads.

For more information, visit www.newtondepot.com or call Thomas W. Warlick at (828) 464-3930.

Ex-N&W Rural Retreat Depot Restoration



Present

Check out the new site created by the Rural Retreat Depot Restoration Foundation at <http://www.ruralretreatdepot.org/index.html>.

Learn how you can help with the restoration, the goal of which is to bring the depot back to its 1955 appearance.



1955 era

Veteran's Day Weekend Amtrak Excursions

November 10-11, 2012

After your hard work on our own excursions, you might want to lay back and enjoy a rail trip as a passenger. Once again, with cooperation of NORFOLK SOUTHERN and AMTRAK, Roanoke NRHS is pleased to offer two fine excursion trains in Southwest Virginia. On Saturday, November 10, 2012 the excursion train will depart Roanoke's former N&W passenger station bound for historic Abingdon, Virginia. On Sunday, November 11, 2012, the train will travel to lovely Shenandoah, VA north of Roanoke in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley.

For more information, either download the flyer from [here](#) or send a stamped, self-addressed business sized envelope to: Amtrak Excursions, Roanoke Chapter NRHS, P.O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032. Tickets can be ordered by calling (540) 774-0611. There may be a few first class tickets available, call for details! Since this weekend is Veteran's Day, they are pleased to offer a 10 percent discount on a veteran's ticket.

NRHS INCREASES DUES AT SUMMER BOARD MEETING BY \$3.00

The National Railway Historical Society Board of Directors at the Summer 2012 Convention raised the NRHS dues by \$3.00. There will be no increase in dues for either the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum or the Railroad Heritage Alliance.

***** RUMOR ALERT *** NCTM FUTURE IN JEOPARDY *** RUMOR ALERT *****

There are stories circulating concerning the [NC] General Assembly's possible consideration of "mothballing" the North Carolina Transportation Museum and other museums to save money, despite the fact that it costs little to operate the NCTM and it brings in considerable revenue for the surrounding communities. If the NCTM is mothballed, it may not ever emerge. On a non-rumor note, the NCTM showed a \$34,000 profit during NORFOLK SOUTHERN Heritage Days. Half of the proceeds go to the museum and half to its foundation. ["The Roundhouse", Greensboro NRHS]



Photo Section



CENTRAL PA NRHS newsletter editor Mark Eyer perfectly timed this August 18th Rockville (Harrisburg) Bridge meet of NKP #765 and NS train #4270 – an Office Car Special. Either this was a staged event or Mark needs to start playing the lottery.

GHOST TRAIN COMES TO ERWIN, TN

On Saturday, September 15, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum's Ghost Train (Whistle Machine) participated in the Erwin Train Show sponsored by the Southeastern Regional Train Center. The Ghost Train was a big success at the show, allowing all ages to come and blow different train whistles from SOUTHERN; NORFOLK & WESTERN; WESTERN MARYLAND; a Casey Jones Replica; and many more railroads. The best part of the event was that several people brought out original CLINCHFIELD whistles that have not been blown in over 60 years. What a beautiful sound these whistles made as they echoed through the valley and against the mountains. Sounds that have not been heard in Erwin in over 60+ years when steam was King in Erwin Yard.



Nick White instructs a future engineer on the proper technique for getting a good whistle blast. [Don Finley photo.]

WATV members at the event and were part of the Whistle Blowing Event were Nick White; Mike & Lois Tilley; Don Findley; George Ritchie; David Denny; Doug Zimmerman; Steven Clark; Terry & Anita Worley; and Dan, Sonia and Ian Ring. Special thanks goes out to Phil Laws and Mike Hopson for bringing the CLINCHFIELD whistles.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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