

Whistle Stop



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

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Going, going, ... ???

Rumor has it that the former CRR General Office Building in Erwin, TN is slated for demolition. Story on page 5.

March 22nd General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, March 22nd, 2021 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St. Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will feature Charlie Morris, who is the oldest living Clinchfield engineer. Come out and hear Charlie's stories on the Great CRR. You do not want to miss this program. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your fellow railfans.

Member Notes

By Edna Kay Carter

Continue to keep the Tilley family in your prayers in their recent loss of loved ones.

Please keep George and Nancy Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Gary Price, Jack Maloney, Bob and Norma Hand and Billie Walker in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is 423-753-5797 or call Edna Carter at 423-571-4612.

We would like to welcome new members John M. II and Nikki Lewin Dabbs.

Hope everyone will stay safe and healthy.

NEW EXCURSION MAILING LIST

WVRHS&M has put together a new mass e-mail list for people to receive advance notification of future excursions. Anyone interesting in getting on the advance list, please e-mail your information to wataugavalley@gmail.com.

WATAUGA VALLEY UNIFORMS NOW AVAILABLE

WVRHS&M uniforms are now available. Get your order in now for these beautiful uniforms; an order form is attached to this issue of the *Whistle Stop*. Submit your order form and check to: WVRHS&M, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432.

PHOTOS FOR WHISTLE STOP

Several members have expressed interest in contributing photos for the *Whistle Stop*. You are encouraged to do so. Photos should be reasonably composed, in focus and of a reproducible exposure (not too dark nor too light). An accompanying description is very helpful to the readers. Please submit to our editor, Fred Waskiewicz, at whistlestop.editor@gmail.org.

May 16 Rail Excursion

On Sunday, May 16th, 2021, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will sponsor its Spring Rail Excursion – a ride on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad through the majestic mountains and beautiful countryside of western North Carolina, originating in Bryson City, NC to the Nantahala Gorge, NC. This is a chance to enjoy a beautiful spring train excursion after a long, cold winter. Ticket prices are as follows:

CROWN COACH	ticket price is \$108/adult and \$85/child (2-12)
TOURIST COACH	ticket price is \$94/adult and \$75/child (2-12)
OPEN AIR COACH	ticket price is \$94/adult and \$75/child (2-12)

The train cars are set up for social distancing; everyone will be asked to wear a mask or face shield while on board the train. The trip is handicap accessible. Box lunches are available. Please note that, unlike past excursions, transportation to the train is the responsibility of passengers. For a complete description of the trip and instructions for ordering tickets and box lunches, go to our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill and Art DeVoe

All the Watauga Valley passenger cars are back to the yard now and a lot of work is needed on the cars since several of them have been on the road over 6 months. The bad weather has again taken its toll on the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team in working at the yard over the last several weeks. Hopefully the weather will turn around and we can get some of the work done that was planned for the spring. If you would like to volunteer at the Spring St. Coach Yard, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 and leave a message; the Mechanical Team will call you back. We are in need of several more volunteers to help with the cars.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): Repair broken window and do some electrical work and general cleaning.

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): Upgrades to the kitchen.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): A/C fan repair and installing new windows.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Work on the electrical system.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): Continued renovation as previously reported.

WVRHS&M PASSENGER CARS IN ACCIDENT SEVERAL YEARS AGO



A couple of years ago, Mike Tilley got a call that was not good. The NS Supt at Charlotte Yard called and said “Mike, something has happened this afternoon with your four passenger cars.” He went on to say the yard crew had the cars coupled to some freight cars and cut them apart from the coaches. With no brakes the passenger cars went down the hill at a high speed

through a switch and a derail. Mike took a big breath and asked if the *Crescent Harbor* was on its side. He was told no but please get to Charlotte Yard as soon as possible. Mike called his good friend Bob Willets who was nearby and asked him to meet down there. Here is what they found: *Crescent Harbor*, which had traveled the mainline 1000s of times on the “*Southern Crescent*” passenger train through Charlotte, was on the ground and about to tip over. The *Moultrie* was in better shape, staying upright, but damaged as well. Our two coaches were not damaged. Bob knew a wreck crew who came out and helped get the cars back on track. The coaches went on Amtrak the next day to Washington, DC while NS took the two wrecked cars to Spencer for repairs. What a nightmare, but our beautiful Southern car could have been destroyed in a split second on account of a rookie brakemen. Railroadng sometimes has broken rails in front of you which takes the fun out of it. --- Mike Tilley

Chuckey Depot and Museum

The Chuckey Railroad Depot and Museum is coming alive in the Spring. During the last several weeks attendance has been very good, especially on the weekends, with over 100+ visitors. If you have not been at the depot, come on down. Hours are Thursday through Sunday, 1pm to 4pm. We have a special announcement on what is coming to the Chuckey Depot next month - get ready for the surprise.

CHUCKEY DEPOT VOLUNTEERS

We are nearing the 90 mark in getting Watauga Valley Members trained to volunteer at the Chuckey Railroad Depot/Museum. We still need more; the next training sessions will be soon. If you would like to host at the depot, please email us at wataugavalley@gmail.com. Get signed up to come out and enjoy your depot.



And if you think that all you'll view on the Depot's web cam is a string of box cars then think again! There's a good chance you'll see something really interesting in the consist as evidenced by the load of military tanks that can be seen in the snapshot at left.



Feeling nostalgic? Here's a Kevin Gilliam photo of Southern 2-8-0 #630 at Bulls Gap loading passengers during one of our former excursions. Wouldn't that be a grand sight of the Consolidation roaring past the Depot?

In the News

Clinchfield General Office Building May be Demolished

Rumors are flying around Erwin that officials on a recent CSX inspection train visited the former Clinchfield General Office Building and requested that everyone vacate the building and that the power and water be turned off ASAP. Speculation is that CSX is leaning toward getting rid of the building for liability reasons. The other rumor is that the Town of Erwin does not want it just as they do not want any CRR equipment on display in the town. We would suggest that if you want a picture of this building, get out there and get it NOW! Time might be short for the CRR General Office Building. What a shame to lose such a piece of history. Several people have asked about the round tubes beside the building, located in the back and on the side. They are fire escapes; you get in and slide down to the parking lot. Someone looked in there several years ago and saw several snakes lying about.

The officials on the inspection train also suggested removing several tracks at Bostic Yard; removing tracks 4-16 at the Erwin Yard; removing the Boody Passing Track; and some changes at Dante, VA.

Amtrak Revives Northeast Corridor Sleeping Cars

[From Bob Johnston, *trains.com*, 3/16/2021] Passengers opting to take the train between Boston and Washington, D.C., will have a long-overdue alternative to the 7-hour daytime journey aboard *Acela*, Amtrak's fastest train.

Overnight northbound train No. 66 and southbound No. 67 (No. 65 on Friday and Saturday nights) are scheduled at 9 to 10 hours depending on the direction and day of the week, but beginning April 5, they will each feature a *Viewliner* sleeper. Boarding customers will get a complimentary continental breakfast box in the evening and may either go to the train's cafe car for coffee and juice in the morning or have the car's attendant deliver it. As is the case for Amtrak sleeping car patrons elsewhere, they are also entitled to one free alcoholic beverage.

Northeast Corridor night trains did have sleeping cars for most of their Amtrak existence. This continued service once provided by New Haven's *Owl* out of New York's Grand Central Terminal to Boston and the Washington-Boston *Federal*, a joint New Haven-Pennsylvania Railroad operation, which carried a "cut-off" Philadelphia-Boston sleeper into the late 1960s.

Amtrak's version was called the *Night Owl*, which for a time also featured a New York-Washington "Executive Sleeper" that was dropped off or picked up at New York's Penn Station. Though the ride was short, it allowed passengers to avoid the cost of a Manhattan hotel room. The cut-off car was dropped with the phase-out of heritage sleepers, whose direct-dump toilet systems were never modified with holding tanks.

In 1997, the overnigher was extended south to Newport News, Va., and re-equipped with the last-arriving *Viewliner* sleeping cars and simultaneously rebranded as the *Twilight Shoreliner*. Tray meal service was also introduced at the time. But the *Viewliners* were taken off in 2003 after the *Cardinal's* Superliners were redirected to Auto Train following an equipment-damaging accident the previous year. The *Viewliner* shortage has finally been rectified, though the sleeping cars won't operate south of Washington.

CSX Purchase of Pan Am Railways Advancing

[From Marybeth Luczak, RAILWAY AGE, 2/26/2021. For the complete article, go to <https://tinyurl.com/ykhc8n27>.] CSX is submitting an application to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to acquire the Pan Am System, including Pan Am Railways (PAR) and its 50% stake in Pan Am Southern (PAS), the Class I railroad reported Feb. 26.

CSX announced Nov. 30 it had signed a definitive agreement to acquire PAR, a New England Class II with 1,700 route-miles that was previously known as the Guilford Rail System. The move would expand CSX's reach in Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts, while adding Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to its existing 23-state network. It would also offer access to northern Maine and Saint John, NB, Canada, via PAR haulage agreements with J.D. Irving Ltd. subsidiary NBM Railways.

But a point of contention had been who would operate PAS, a "pro-competitive" joint venture of Norfolk Southern (NS) and PAR that consists of 437 miles of rail lines and trackage-rights agreements. It gives NS access to New England via trackage rights on the former Boston & Maine Mechanicville, NY-Ayer, MA, main line, the "*Patriot Corridor*."

NS, in a Nov. 6 filing with the STB, opposed the CSX-PAR transaction, noting that "one of the main benefits of ... joint control and ownership of PAS was to strengthen competition with CSX Transportation. Any CSXT effort to acquire Pan Am would threaten to materially undermine this existing competition, thus impacting not only NS, but also rail shippers and other railroads."

CSX and NS have now reached an agreement: Both Class I railroads will retain ownership of PAS. Genesee & Wyoming (G&W) subsidiary Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad, LLC, which will do business as Berkshire & Eastern Railroad (BERK), will operate and maintain PAS, formerly run by PAR subsidiary Springfield Terminal Railway.

Train Spotters

Local NS Action

- NS Trains 126 and 127 have been running around 200+ cars recently through Jonesborough.
- NS Trains 201 and 202 been loaded down with Fed Ex trucks recently. Vaccine?
- NS Train 15T still hauling garbage through Jonesborough, reportedly coming from New Jersey to Mississippi. Hold your nose.

Erwin Inspection Train?



A video posting on YouTube captures a CSX Office Car Special traveling along their James River Division. As this was a system-wide tour conducted in March, it is probable that it was the inspection train mentioned in the CRR article on the previous page. To view, go to <https://youtu.be/6ZmxPLCISWE>. One viewer noticed that the cars were painted in a traditional B&O scheme – a beautiful sight – although, hey, that line was C&O.

Clinchfield Passenger Cars – Part II

Last month's *Whistle Stop* listed the passenger car roster for the former Clinchfield Railroad with accompanying photographs of the cars while on service on the CRR. It was noted then that several of the cars still exist (or thought to be). Following are more recent photos and status update on some of those cars.

CRR 100



General Managers Office Car. Purchased by Watauga Valley Railroad Museum in 2012 and undergoing restoration for operation.

CRR 101



56 seat coach. Purchased by Great Smoky Mountains Railroad; in operation today. Original photo unavailable.

CRR 102, 104, 110

Photos not available

These cars were purchased by Ross Rowland for rail excursions which subsequently failed. Possibly sold at auction in 2014. Locations and conditions unknown.

CRR 107



56 seat coach. Purchased by Great Smoky Mountains Railroad; in operation today.

CRR 108, CRR 109

Photos not available

Both are 48 seat coaches. Purchased by the Kentucky Railway Museum. A photo on KRM's home page shows what appears to be the two coaches, restored to L&N blue paint and livery, and renumbered to their original 2554 and 2572 respectively.

CRR 112



Tavern Lounge. Currently in Duluth, GA at the Southeastern Railway Museum, serving as their meeting and party car.

CRR 114



When the car came on CRR property, it was called the *White Oak* after GM Tom Moore's farm in South Carolina. When Mr. Moore left the company, it was renamed the *Blue Ridge*. Sold to the New Orleans Belt Line Railroad, which uses the car for entertainment of guests on their trains.

Whistle Stop

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