

Whistle Stop



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



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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CRR #101

CRR coach #101 was the first car out of the Clinchfield car shop intended for excursion service. The car was a 52-seat coach with windows that open and close. After the #101 came coaches #102 - #111; then #112, a bar car; and #114, an ex-N&W observation car. "113" was skipped due to superstition.

CRR #101 survives on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad as their car #320, the "Sylva", along with cars #106 and #107. Sadly, the car shop was demolished along with several other buildings after the Erwin Yard was closed.

March 25th General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, March 25th, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). This month's program will offer stories on Southern Railway's famous Saluda Grade. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great evening of railroading.

Member Notes

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers: Art DeVoe, Gary Price, Tony King, Lois Tilley, Fred Phofl, Dona Lewis, and Terry Worley.

If you know of a member that needs a card, thoughts for various concerns, or to request that one of our members or family be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email a request to wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com.

Welcome Aboard! Please welcome our newest member: Ronald Green – Afton, TN.

Member Survey: If you have not responded to the poll that was emailed to you a few weeks ago concerning your membership start year, we would encourage you to do so. This is some good information to have in our records. We understand that this could be difficult to remember. Thanks to all that have participated.

If anyone's address, phone number or email address has changed in the last years' time, please contact Les Billings at wataugavalley.membership@gmail.com for correction. This will ensure that no one misses mailings, phone calls or emails. Also, if this info changes at any time please send us the correction. Thank You.

2024 WVRHS&M MEMBERSHIP DUES

Final 2024 dues notices have been sent out to those who have not paid. If you have not paid your 2024 dues, please do so immediately as unpaid memberships will be dropped from our roles on **March 31st**. Dues are as follows: Individual Membership \$20.00, Family Membership \$5.00 per family member. Checks should be made out to WVRHS&M and mailed to P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432.

Spring 2024 Rail Excursion Tickets



Ticket sales are progressing well for our upcoming Saturday, May 4th, 2024 train excursion on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad.

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the beauty of the spring season while riding the rails in vintage passenger railroad cars.

The one-day excursion will cover most of the operating trackage of the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. The track follows the route of the former Southern Railway's Murphy Branch Line, established in 1891, with its five percent grade and many bridges.

Our scenic rail excursion takes us from the historic depot in Bryson City, NC, through the beautiful countryside of Western North Carolina, into the breath-taking Nantahala Gorge surrounded by the majestic Smoky Mountains, and back to Bryson City. Much of the route hugs the banks of the Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers. It crosses Fontana Lake on a trestle spanning 780 feet 100 feet above the lake.

To learn more about the trip and order tickets, go to:
<https://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org/excursions.php>

Mechanical Department Report

by Art Devoe

All work sessions at the Spring Street Coach Yard, 210 Spring St., Jonesborough, are planned for each Tuesday every month; please show up at 9:00 a.m. if you can help.

ROLLING STOCK

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400) and **“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500)**: in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): in the Spring St. Coach Yard receiving several upgrades.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): in the Spring St. Coach Yard for generator/engine repairs.



“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): at the Spring St. Coach Yard receiving upgrades. At left we see new roller bearings recently installed recently at NCTM in Spencer, NC.

Chuckey Depot / Museum

Attendance at the Chuckey Depot is starting to climb each week as the weather improves. If you would like to be trained as a host, please email your intent to wataugavalley@gmail.com. Our hosts enjoy volunteering at the depot.

Thanks to Rick Chinouth for putting together the L&N and Tennessee Central Railroad exhibits. At the Grand Showing on Saturday, March 2nd, we had 68 people come by to visit these exhibits.

Thanks also to David Billings for getting the mainline signal up and running again and for all the electrical work performed on our Southern X450 caboose.

Whistle Truck available

The Watauga Valley's Whistle Truck is now available for rental. Call (423) 335-1100 for leases.

Train Trivia: Illinois Central's *“The City of New Orleans,”* introduced in April 1947, was: A.) the longest daylight run of its time; B.) replaced the existing *“Panama Limited”*; C.) introduced modern streamlined steam locomotives to the IC. Answer on next page.

In the News ...

Historic Spencer Shops Train Show

Saturday, May 18

Museum Open with Train Show 9 a.m.
– 5 p.m.
Train rides at 10 & 11 a.m. and 1, 2
p.m.

Sunday, May 19

Museum Open 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Train Show open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Train rides at 1, 2 & 3 p.m.

Fun for the Whole Family!

The Historic Spencer Shops Train Show features vendors with railroad memorabilia of all types: model train dealers, model train layouts, collectors, and more. The show takes place at the former Southern Railway Spencer Shops steam repair facility, a historic railroad location perfect for a railroading event! Take a train ride around our 60-acre historic site, ride on restored railroad maintenance motor cars, and enjoy more fun for all age

General Admission Tickets

\$8 for Adults
\$7 for Seniors (62+)/Military
\$6 for Children 3-12 years of age

General Admission + Train Ride Tickets

\$16 for Adults
\$14 for Seniors (62+)/Military
\$12 for Children 3-12 years of age

Historic Spencer Shops Train Show Features:

- Model train and railroad collectible vendors
- Model train layouts
- Railroad motor car rides provided by Red Springs & Northern
- Museum passenger train rides
- Museum exhibits and programs
- Special photo opportunities

Train Trivia answer: A.) The 921-mile route, which the *City of New Orleans* covered in 15 hours 55 minutes, was the longest daytime schedule in the United States at the time. The train, an all-coach companion to the overnight “*Panama Limited*,” was powered by EMD E7 diesel locomotives and featured new lightweight Pullman Company coaches. [source: *Wikipedia*]

BLET Opposes Hostile Takeover of NS Control

[trains.com] The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen said it will “vigorously oppose” an activist investor’s attempt to gain control of the Norfolk Southern board and oust CEO Alan Shaw and Chief Operating Officer Paul Duncan.

Cleveland-based Ancora Holdings is waging a proxy battle and has proposed a slate of eight directors and is touting former UPS President and Chief Operating Officer Jim Barber as its CEO candidate and former CSX operations chief Jamie Boychuk for the NS chief operating officer position.

“From our vantage point and from what we’ve learned from our union brothers and sisters at CSX, Boychuk was reckless and ran CSX operations into the ground before he was run out by CSX’s management team,” said BLET General Chairman Scott R. Bunten, one of the union’s officers representing members at Norfolk Southern. “Ancora wants to turn back the clock and return to the failed Precision Scheduled Railroading business model with Boychuk’s help that the other Class I railroads are now abandoning.”

For the full article, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2s3hc48u>.

Wrecks on the Clinchfield

The following is a partial list compiled by Scott Jessee, Sandhi Kozsuch, Ron Flanery, and Mike Tilley. Being a mountain railroad, the Clinchfield had its share of wrecks. Sources are noted where applicable.

12/3/1910	Clinchport Extra North struck a slide, earliest record of derailment/fatality known.
7/17/1919	Erwin Coal Train lost its brakes. Photo in Goforth book.
2/9/1932	Berry Gap Pusher/Passenger train head on. Photo Goforth book.
8/11/1936	Dante Head-on collision; rule violation and poor past practices.
2/6/1946	Frisco Kingsport Yard Crew/Local overlooked #97, head on collision. Goforth book.
6/20/1946	Erwin Coal Train lined into track occupied by another train. Goforth Book.
6/1/1947	Boone Coal Train struck rear of train ahead at Boone tank. Goforth Book.
4/21/1948	Gorge Boiler Explosion. Goforth Book.
1957	Engine 200 coal Train derails off Bolder Bluff.
7/7/1959	Marion Merchandise wreck and subsequent fire.
10/25/1965	Wininger Coal Train sees rock fall off the hill, over 40 cars of coal derailed.
10/25/1970	Green Mountain head-on collision.
1971	Train 92 derails at MP 125.
1973	Derailment in Kendricks Tunnel at Kingsport, TN.
1/25/1974	36 cars went off the track on train 97 just north of the South switch at Boone Siding.
8/24/1977	Wininger Coal train versus slide.
1978	Coal Train derails 5 loaded coal cars off Copper Creek Bridge MP 78.8.
1986	Train 92 derails near hold out in Kingsport.
1989	FRA side swaps train at south end of Boone.
1991	Coal Train Derails in Indian Ridge Tunnel.
1994	Extra North derails at MP 115 – old solder at Johnson City.



For more historical information on the Clinchfield, visit <http://www.clinchfield.org>, edited by Sandhi Kozsuch.

Display in the Block

By Les Billings

Foreign Power is always a Railfan treat. So, this month I will feature Foreign Power from CSX (Clinchfield) line. This is not an easy thing to do. There is very little of this on CSX, unlike NS where you see this type of power very frequently. Most likely, you will only see this only on ethanol trains. I believe this is because they come from outside the regular run area. So, in the 3 years of photographing trains, the below is all I have been able to get on the CSX.



[Left] Here, we have a Kansas City Southern locomotive, #4676, on point on this loaded ethanol train. This photo was taken just south of the north Erwin signal and soon will be heading into the gorge. This is a very good place to photograph trains in Erwin. It is beside the old Clinchfield office building.

[Right] This photo is of the pusher unit from the train pictured above, Canadian Pacific #8135. It will push the train through the gorge and up the mountain. CP is always a treat because you don't see many of these around these parts. I do believe its destination will be Charlotte, NC.





[Above] These 2 photos above were shot off Signal Drive in Johnson City. Both are empty ethanol trains heading north. First, we see two Union Pacific locos, #'s 5455 & 5682. The other has a BNSF #6402 and a NS # 3669. On a historical note, this was the location for the Highline ceremony that took place when they opened this Johnson City bypass in 1971.



[Above] While doing a little shopping on Black Friday last year, I heard from a contact that an Empty Ethanol train was sitting in Erwin. I jumped on I-26 and headed in that direction. To my surprise it was not setting exactly where I thought. At first, I thought I was given bad information. After searching behind the old Clinchfield office, I saw it further south. So finally, was able to find a good place and but had to shoot over a fence. With three NS locomotives pulling this train, you would think that it was not on the CSX line but on the NS line.

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whistlestop.editor@gmail.com

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TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL