

Turntable Times

Volume XXXI

Number 4

April 1999



April 1, 1949 was a significant date in Roanoke and Norfolk and Western history. After just over a year of construction and almost a decade of planning, the new Roanoke Passenger Station opened for business. This photo one of a series of pictures made on the opening day shows the new clean modern lines of the rebuilt station. Who would have suspected that the station would still stand, on her 50th birthday?

Negative 506517-A, April 1, 1949.

Norfolk and Western Photo, Roanoke Chapter NRHS Archives Collection.

Turntable Times

Volume XXXI April 1999 Number 4

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Turntable Times is printed by Salem Printing Co., Salem, VA

Cards and Flowers

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, lost a loved one or has a new birth in the family, please contact Elizabeth Leedy. Elizabeth is responsible for Chapter cards and flowers and can be reached at 389-5274.

Meeting Notice

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, April 15, 1999 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke.

Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Monday, April 19, 1999. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128.

Small Rails - April by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers had a very good time at the Salem Civic Center's toy, train, and doll show during the weekend of March 13 and 14. The refurbished modules really looked good. Any member who wanted to got to run a favorite train or trains. There were a few derailments, but things kept running pretty well. We got to see some old friends and make a few new friends, who may join the club. Our

club is already looking forward to the fall show and hoping to have an even better display.

As I write, it is mid-March, so the Big Lick Big Train Operators will not hold their first meeting for 1999 for another week and a half. I'll be reporting on it in the next edition of Small Rails.

Mixed Freight - April

by Mr. Robin Shavers

For much of the nineties, depots located along the former Southern Railway here in Virginia have been restored and extensively maintain the original look and charm that railroad depots are known for. The latest to join the completed goal is located in Charlottesville, VA. The \$700,000 renovation project was completed in late 98, but the formal dedication and open house to the public occurred on Tuesday, February 9th. The ceremony commenced at 11:00 a.m., and was attended by roughly 150 people.

A few months ago, I reported on a new bridge being built over the Conrail tracks just west of Enola Yard. I have some updated information on the bridge. The structure is not yet open, but should be sometime this summer. While attending a railroadians/model railroad sale and show in March, I spoke directly with an individual involved with the project as a consultant. Mr. Dan Cupper, author of numerous books about railroads, served as a consultant in behalf of the railfan community. Mr. Cupper explained to highway and state officials the importance of designing the bridge to train hobbyist "standards". He explained that though railroad enthusiast may be invisible to the general public, they contribute much to the Harrisburg area economy by buying gasoline, food, lodging and other supplies used to pursue the hobby. People from all over the U.S.A and abroad come to Harrisburg and surroundings to enjoy the vibrant railroad activity and the Mountain Avenue bridge was a favored location for hobbyist til it was closed nearly 5 years ago. The main problem to address was the installation of those infamous chainlink fence structures that are found on many bridges in metropolitan areas to prevent vandals from dropping things

from bridges. The solution will be "windows" within the chain link fence. Mr. Cupper explained that a small rectangle would be okay for still camera photographers but not suitable for video fans. According to Mr. Cupper, officials were more than accommodating to his suggestion. Nothing was etched in stone, but Mr. Cupper feels that when the bridge is complete, it will be a real asset for enjoying the trains entering and exiting the westend of Enola Yard.

One of the better model railroad shows that occurs yearly in Virginia will be occurring within a few weeks on Sunday May 2nd at The Rockingham County Fairgrounds from 10:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. The fairgrounds are located just south of Harrisonburg, VA on U.S. 11. The event is sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Model Railroad Club and the Shenandoah Valley Chapter N.R.H.S. For more information, contact Jack Kellog at 540-234-0403.

Operation for Garden Railways

by Dave Meashey

An interesting trend is developing in Garden Railways magazine and at the Large Scale On Line web site. Hobbyists are expressing an interest for more articles on how to operate a garden railway like a real railroad. Many garden railway enthusiasts had entered the hobby from non-model railroad pursuits, such as flower or vegetable gardening. As such, they were originally content to watch trains just run in loops, ovals, and circles. Now these hobbyist are looking for ways to do more with their garden railways.

The most recent edition of Garden Railways has an article on turnouts and switching operations. Large Scale On Line has opened an operations workshop on its workshops page. People are suggesting John Armstrong's book *The Railroad: What It Is and What It Does* as a good learning tool. As more model railroaders venture into garden railroading from the smaller scales, they too want operating sessions like they had with their indoor layouts. Operations will most likely enhance the enjoyment of

hobby for all.

A garden railway has one advantage over its smaller scale brethren, it can actually haul commodities. This could be as simple as hauling beverages and snacks from the house to a patio or pool. For those with a vegetable garden, it could involve scheduling fresh produce extras to get those crops to market. (Of course, the "market" may be the back door of the owner's house!)

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt and Transportation Secretary Norris Tolson announced on January 11, 1999 that North Carolina is entering a new age of transportation, an era in which trains are an easy, affordable alternative to cars.

During the next 20 years, the N.C. Department of Transportation recommends \$10.5 billion in construction, expansion, planning and operating costs. The projects include: High-speed rail connecting North Carolina with the rest of the Southeast; Commuter rail and improved bus service for Charlotte, the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area, the Piedmont Triad (Greensboro area), and the Elizabeth City-Norfolk, VA area; Additional passenger rail service to connect Asheville, Greenville, Morehead City and Wilmington to the rest of the state. (The Piedmont Flyer, Piedmont Carolinas Chapter).

Questions about passenger train services in North Carolina can now be answered through a phone call to 1-800-BY-TRAIN. Operators are based in North Carolina and will be able to answer questions about schedules, services, stations and amenities on trains operating through the state. Your Turntable Times Editor saw several billboards along Interstate 40 which feature the above listed number along with a picture of a passenger train while he was on a recent visit to the Raleigh area.

The North Carolina Transportation Museum Shay steam engine #1925 will head out west for the 1999 Railfair to be held at the California Railroad Museum. The event planners will cover



From the ARCHIVES

(This will be an occasional feature in our newsletter, featuring materials out of the Chapter Archive Facility by Ken Miller

All: Norfolk and Western Photos

A photo collage feature this month offering memories of the Roanoke Passenger Station open, fifty years ago this month.

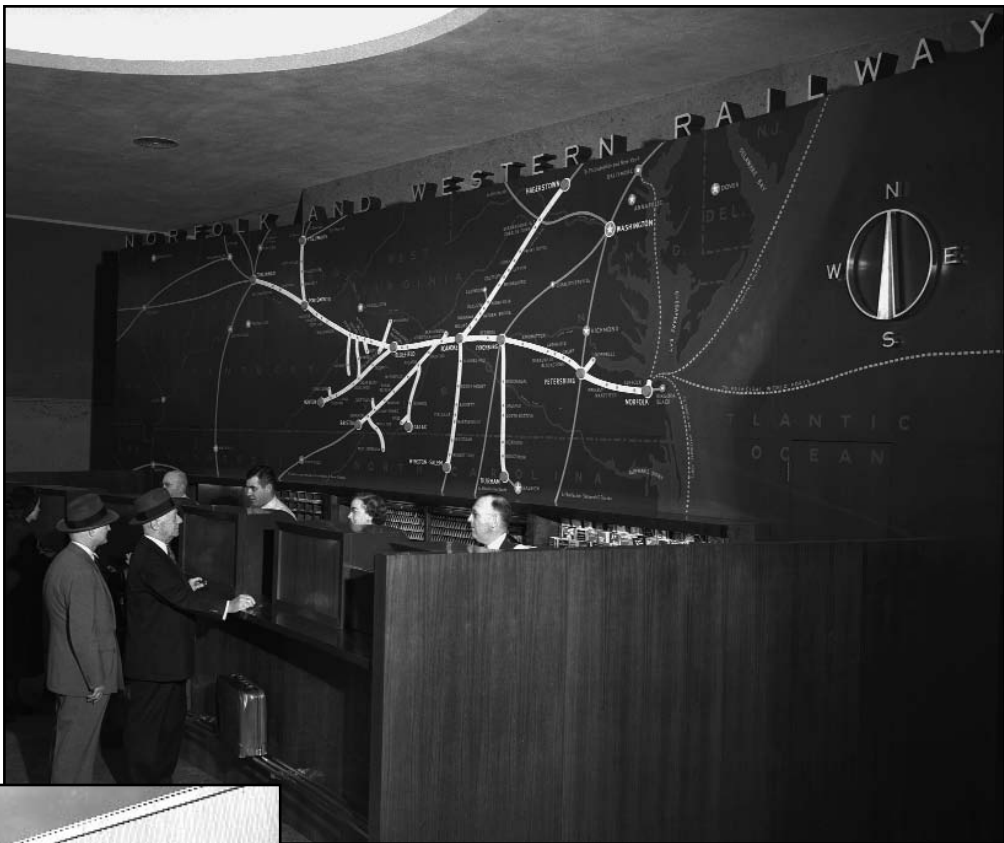
Today the concourse is gone, but the N&W herald is still intact, short of a doorway constructed on top of it. The ticket counter with the 28 foot long system map of course is long since gone, notice the dome in the ceiling.

First ticket sold at the new station was going to Spokane, Washington. Agent C.E. Newell writes the ticket for Mrs. George Hill.

The escalator structure, train shed from track level, these were the first escalators in Roanoke.

The all-new station restaurant, complete with a class J along New River menu cover (in front of the plate of grapefruit.





the costs of moving the shay locomotive to Sacramento and the crews to operate it during the 10 days of Railfair.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has purchased the Atlantic Coast Line E-3 #501 from the estate of Glenn Monhart in Wisconsin. The locomotive will be taken to Waycross, GA for repairs and then taken to Raleigh to be turned over to DOT Rail. The locomotive will be on display at the N.C. Transportation Museum in Spencer when not in use by DOT. (Above two items via The Company Mail, Samuel Spencer Chapter, NRHS).

"The Great Train Robbery"

Back in time he goes, to a day 36 years ago when 15 resourceful thieves stole \$7.1 million from a train carrying the Royal Mail to London.

One minute, he's John Donahoo, man of the 1990's, resident of Virginia Beach, employee of Virginia Natural Gas. Then everything changes with one word from the director. "Action!"

At that instant, Donahoo becomes Bruce R. Reynolds, the brains behind The Great Train Robbery of August 6, 1963, during which he and his mates carted off 120 bags of old, unmarked bills.

In "Daring Capers: True Criminals and Their Remarkable Crimes," filming this month (March) in Hampton Roads, New Dominion Pictures brings before the camera local firefighters, utility mechanics, food-delivery guys and

other day players in 10 half-hour episodes that will be seen later this year on The Learning Channel.

Filming of "The Great Train Robbery" employed 13 actors, a crew of nearly 30 and cars on loan from the Tidewater Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Eastern Shore Railroad supplied the engine.

Reynolds and his accomplices - played by Kurt Etheridge, Gregory Walker, Michael Osmann and Rodney Schaffer - ambushed the train's crew, separated the mail cars from eight other cars, and then carried off the cash in Land Rovers.

With "Daring Capers" and "Navy Seals", being produced for The Learning Channel, New Dominion continues to supply quality programming for cable.

Already on New Dominion's resume are "The FBI Files," "The New Detectives: Case Studies in Forensic Science," "The Quest," "Dinosaurs Inside & Out," "Archaeology," "Paleoworld" and the syndicated "Ghost Stories."

"Our aim is to find good stories and tell them well," said Tom Naughton, New Dominion founder and executive producer of "Daring Capers." (Above story from the Virginian Pilot Newspaper, March 16, 1999, submitted to the Turntable Times Editor by Roanoke Chapter member David Doss).

Staunton River Battlefield Park

Tim Vest becomes animated as he talks about the Civil War. As park manager of Staunton River Battlefield State Park, his enthusiasm is to be expected.

The Staunton River Battlefield Park includes more than 300 acres on both the Halifax County side of the river near Clover and on the Charlotte County side near Randolph. The Staunton River is known farther upstream and downstream as the Roanoke River.

The park's diversification took another important step with the recent purchase of an old train depot that will be relocated to the Charlotte County side of the park and converted into a second visitor center.

Roanoke Station, which was built around the turn of the century, was sold to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation for \$5,000 by Kathryn St.John, president of the Historic Staunton River Foundation.

Union forces used the original depot as a hospital, but burned it as they withdrew. St.John's building had been used as the Randolph depot until the mid-1980's, but was moved and used for storage.

The acquisition of the depot is another step in the state's ambitious plan for the park. Officials hope to have the new visitor center open in a year. The building, ravaged by weather and years, will be completely refurbished and an

outside deck will be added.

Joe Elton, director of the division of parks and recreation, said the purchase of the depot was allowed by \$1.2 million in federal funds that will also be used to renovate the old railroad bridge over the river, create a waling trail, stabilize battlefield earthworks, restore surrounding rifle pits, replace two railroad trestles, create a picnic shelter and construct a maintenance building.

The Battle of Staunton River Bridge occurred on the hot summer afternoon of June 25, 1864, when 492 old men and young boys from Southside Virginia - known in lore as the "Old Men and Young Boys Brigade" - responded to a call to assist a Confederate volunteer force of 296 men in the defense of the important railroad bridge over the Staunton River against 5,000 Union cavalry soldiers. The Confederates successfully beat back the Union forces.

Development of the battlefield park, which opened in 1995, was fueled largely by private donations and grants. The original 6 acre battlefield site on the Halifax County side of the river was given to the state in 1954, and that's all there was until 1995.

Then the nearby Clover Power Station donated 85 acres and built a visitor information center. The Clover Nature and Science Center houses exhibits about the battle and has information about the power plant. In addition, Norfolk Southern donated a stretch of abandoned railroad bed for a hiking trail.

In 1997, the General Assembly approved money for acquisition of additional land, pushing the park to its current size of more than 300 acres.

The Civil War earthworks of the park are in excellent condition. They include manmade earthen forts from which Confederate soldiers tried to rain cannon fire on advancing Union troops. Ramps on which cannons were moved can still easily be seen, as can a depression that served as the cannon magazine where ammunition was stored.

From the earthworks, one can look out through trees and across the Staunton River on a battlefield that looks very much as it did on the

day of the clash.

The big difference is the trees that have grown up over the years and claimed what was farm land at the time of the battle. Some of the trees, especially around the earthworks, have been cleared, and plans call for additional clearing to be done.

But there is much more to the park than the battle. Longwood College students have spent the last few years digging at an Indian village that has yielded thousands of artifacts, including shell and bone beads, and fish hooks. In March 1997, the largest waterfowl habitat west of Tidewater was dedicated along the river, and the park has become popular with bird watchers. There is also a wildlife observation tower. In addition, a canoe slide will eventually be constructed along Roanoke Creek, which will open the park up for another recreational use. (Associated Press Release via The Martinsville Bulletin, March 28, 1999).

Book Review

by John Austen

American Locomotives: An Engineering History, 1830-1880 by John White; 1996, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 N. Charles Street, Baltimore MD 21218-4319; 10-1/4" x 9-1/4", 593pp. + xxvi; hardcover; \$49.95.

This is the newly revised and expanded edition of John White's seminal work on the engineering development of early American locomotives. It is one of the works which established his reputation as one of the pre-eminent historians of American railroads.

The book is presented in several parts, each consisting of several chapters and sub-headings. Part I, "Era of Fundamental Locomotive Design", includes seven chapters on such topics as builders, materials, performance and fuel. Part II, "Components", covers boilers, running gears, and miscellaneous considerations. Part III, "Representative American Locomotives", presents a chronological series of case histories of significant locomotives important in the progress of the engineering developments. Part IV, "More Representative Locomotives", is a new section added in this edition, providing a

dozen more examples to go with the two dozen in the previous section. Part V adds another thirty pages of comments and new information in this expanded edition. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page throughout the text and sometimes expand on the narrative to which they pertain.

The appendix provides a chronology of the American locomotive, biographical sketches of designers and builders, and sample contracts and specifications. The bibliography cites the manuscripts, books, reports and periodicals used, and explains the information available in each. The index of 11 pages (a ratio to the main text of about 1:50) is appropriate and useful, if not exhaustive. The list of illustrations mentions 280 drawings and photographs placed throughout the book, and comments on them as well as citing the source. All the illustrations are black and white (except the full color dust jacket); reproduction is very good throughout.

This is a very useful and interesting book on several levels. The scale drawings are sufficient to attract the attention of modelers. The discussions and illustrations explain the inner workings

of the machinery.

The narrative provides a thorough analysis of the development of the engineering techniques which were the principal means of moving the industrial revolution forward. We have here both a thorough component by component analysis of the engineering developments, and a series of case histories of particular locomotives representative of the state of the art at different periods. Laced throughout is the history of the development of business organization and the advance of industrial techniques. This helps place the locomotive industry in perspective as a driving force in the development of modern industry and business.

This book remains of great interest to business and industrial historians, as well as railroad historians. It has been popular for thirty years, even appearing in a Dover paperback edition. This revised and expanded edition is a worthy successor.

Turntable Times is published monthly as the newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. Opinions and points of view expressed herein are those of the staff members of the **Turntable Times** and not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or directors of the Chapter. Items of interest should be sent to Editor Kenny Kirkman, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128.

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