



Turntable TIMES

Volume 32, Number 2

February 2000

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc.





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MIXED FREIGHT

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SMALL RAILS

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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.

Meeting Notice

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next general meeting on Thursday, February 17, 2000 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke. Please remember that the chapter meeting will be cancelled if inclement weather causes the closing of Roanoke schools on a scheduled chapter meeting date.

From The Head End

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.

Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Friday, February 18, 2000. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Time, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

Cover Photo

Obviously it was a cold winter in 1917-18 when an N&W photographer set out to record depots all along the system as part of the Federal valuation program. When he set out north-bound on the Shenandoah Division it had been a snowy season as almost all of the photos can attest. The photographer apparently road the regular trains to shoot most of the photos. This scene at Buena Vista may have been the exception, or the stopping point for the day as there is no passenger train apparent in the scene. The schedule allowed for a ride north on No 14, a quick stop in Buena Vista and return to Roanoke on No. 13.

Also obvious is the manpower required to account for the shoveling of the platform when these events came about. Even with less litigation in those days, it was a common passenger courtesy to have the way cleared.

Norfolk and Western Photo

Small Rails - February

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers have been told that they may stay at Crossroads Mall for an indefinite amount of time. This is very good news, since the club has not had a regular place to meet and work on the display layout for over a year. While members were able to work on individual modules in the homes of various other members, we have had no opportunity to work on the layout as a whole. Over the next few months, the club hopes to unify and enhance the appearance of the layout. Some new modules may even be constructed.

While the Big Lick Big Train Operators are not meeting at present, I was able to hold a Y2K operating session on New Year's Day. The mild weather was too nice to ignore, so several trains were run. No Y2K bugs cropped up. Not even on the nine-year-old model 386 computer I have typed these columns upon. This Small Rails marks the last hurrah for the old 386, though. A new Dell Pentium III powered computer is on the way.

Mixed Freight - February

by Mr. Robin Shavers

For openers, I'd like to thank Editor Kenney Kirkman for reversing his decision to depart the editor position for The Turntable Times. The Roanoke Chapter N.R.H.S. has it's couplers busy enough maintaining volunteers for it's numerous activities. Landing a new editor will be one less chore to accomplish.

If you keep up with today's railroading scene, you often read or hear about grade crossing safety and trespassing on railroad property. Despite efforts by the railroading industry and other safety minded entities, human casualties remain at a disturbing level. In 1998 according to Federal Railroad Administration records, the top 3 states for deaths to people at grade crossings and or trespassing were Illinois at 64, North Carolina at 40 and Louisiana at 33. The 3 states with the lowest for 1998 were Delaware and the District of Columbia at 1 each, Maryland and West Virginia at 4 each. Oh yes, include Connecticut at 4 too. Massachusetts ranked third with 5 fatalities.

A lot of you have probably read or heard about the planned resurrection of Union Pacific Railroad Big Boy #4018. The project has grown into a full fledge enterprise that anyone may become a part of if he or she wishes. The whole project is being spear-headed by History in Motion, Inc located in Sherman, Texas. The restoration has been estimated to cost \$2.5 million. To raise funds for this mammoth undertaking, H.I.M. is offering 5 levels of membership. There is a level of one time dues for almost every budget from \$20.00 for Level One to \$2,900 for Level Five. There are also numerous souvenir items for everyone, member or not. For further information contact: History In Motion, 2741 Fallon Drive, Sherman, TX 75090. Phone is 903-868-9511, and computer address is www.bigboy4018.com

Several months back, I reported that Norfolk Southern and The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum had plans

An occasion column appearing in the *Turntable Times* featuring material from the Roanoke Chapter Archive Facility.

Historian
Kenneth L. Miller

An material of interest comments or corrections may be submitted to Roanoke Chapter NRHS Archives, attn Ken Miller, P. O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032.

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Norfolk and Western Railway Photo, Negative Number 2463

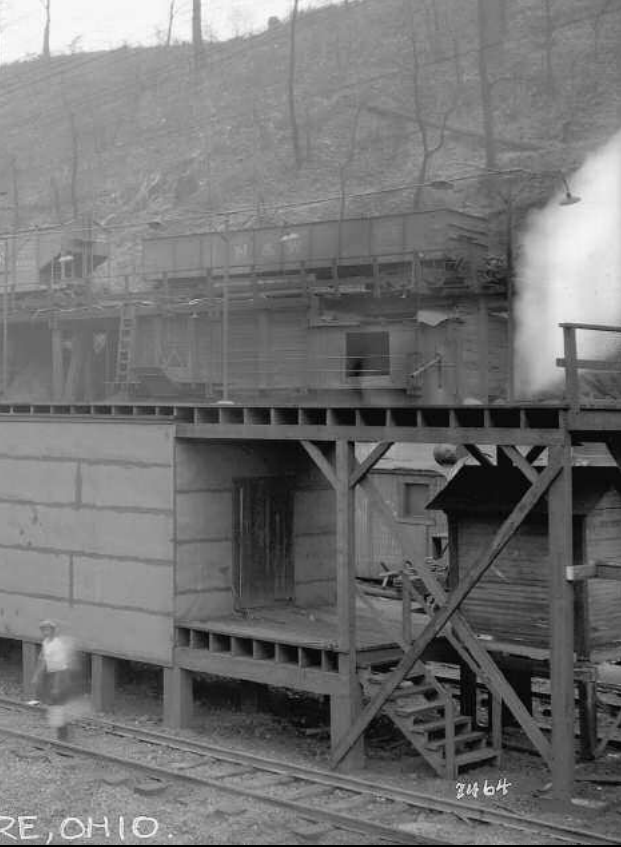
It is easy to forget how much more labor intensive the railroad once was. A considerable amount of people power was required in the days before diesels arrived.

This icing station, a "modern" one was completed and placed in service on March 12, 1925 at Clare Yard, Ohio. It could accommodate eight cars at one time.

The ice (for later use) was unloaded onto the platform at the right and placed in the storage room immediately adjacent to it. The insulated storage area could hold 60 tons of the block ice for a rather lengthy time with little waste (according to the *N&W Magazine!*) on demand the ice was transferred to a conveyor at the opposite end of the storage facility then moved to the top of platform or to the crusher at left.

Crushed ice was mixed with salt and used in reefers carrying meat or other packing house products. It was dumped into carts, mixed with salt manually and then dumped by hand into the bunkers on the cars.

Block ice used with fresh fruit was simply run onto the plat-



form and then guided by the workers into the bunker with an ice pick, a pole with a hook and point on one end. When placed in the bunker, these men generally broke up the blocks to pack more in each car so the need for service was diminished.

Each major terminal had an icing facility similar to this, some larger than others. During the winter, it was even necessary to heat the refrigerator cars to keep the products from freezing. This was accomplished with alcohol fueled heater.

Of course today, the refrigerator cars are electro-mechanically cooled and require no such icing facilities.

Of course, the coal cars in the background were part of the locomotive facility at Clare and had nothing to do with the icing services.

for a massive vegetation removal at Horseshoe Curve. While visiting The Curve back in October, I asked a staff member of the A.R.M.M. when the vegetation removal would be taking place as I was under the impression it was to take place prior to autumn. The reply was that Norfolk Southern was so busy ironing out the problems associated with their 58% of Conrail that the vegetation removal might not occur until spring. I found this answer somewhat perplexing since the task is to be performed by a private contractor.

We railfans, historians and lovers of old buildings have lost a lot to fires over the years. Many of these fires have been deliberately set by vandals or vagrants. It almost happened again this past January 8th in Lynchburg, VA when a vagrant trying to stay warm built a small fire in the lower level of the former Southern Railway Kemper Street depot. The fire attacked a wooden toilet and reached the ceiling. A Lynchburg police officer making his rounds spotted the smoke and quickly summoned the fire department before any serious damage occurred. This was a real close call as the depot is slated for major restoration within a few months.

The 2-8-0 # 722 was one of many steam locomotives that played an important part of the Southern Railway Steam Program. The little engine was placed under a protective shed for 7 years in Asheville, N.C. The engine has been sold by it's former owners, Asheville Chapter N.R.H.S., to The Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. The 722, with caboose, will be placed in static display or placed into active service. On December 10th, the headlight, whistle, bell and other parts were removed and grease cakes packed.

Pending stockholder approval, First

American Railways may purchase The Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. If this happens, improvements are in the forecast. New turntables will be installed at Andrews, Bryson City and Waynesville, North Carolina. Rolling stock will receive Norfolk & Western Tuscan red. Stainless steel cars will remain at they are.

Railroad History from Unexpected Sources

by Dave Meashey

As working steam locomotives became harder and harder to find, we sometimes wonder how new generations will be able to appreciate the steam locomotive or even understand how it worked. Oddly enough, people may be able to familiarize themselves with the operation of a steam locomotive as they enjoy some of the new model locomotives that are becoming available for sale to the public. Bachmann has just introduced a 1:20.3 scale model of a Baldwin 1876 "Centennial" model 4-4-0 locomotive. The locomotive is almost a museum quality model. It has working Stephenson valve gear, equalized suspension, and a completely furnished cab. The throttle and Johnson bar can even be moved.

In HO scale, Lifelike is ready to release a Y3 that features highly accurate detail. This locomotive will also have complete cab controls, although nothing will be movable. Still, both these models are run by electric motors.

For those who want to experience a real, although small, steamer, right now is about as good as things have ever been. Several

companies are producing small live steamers which run on number one gauge track; the same track that is most popular for garden railways. These little steamers are usually fueled by mentholated alcohol or a butane mixture instead of coal, but they are becoming very "user friendly." They are also becoming budget friendly as well. Accucraft has introduced a small 0-4-0 locomotive for under \$400.00. This puts live steam on a par with medium sized electric powered locomotives. While the locomotives are small, their charm and appeal are big. These little locomotives may well become teaching tools for new generations of steam enthusiasts.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

Kansas City Southern and its partner are preparing to rebuild the 47-mile railroad that links the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean along the Panama Canal. Reconstruction of what amounts to North America's shortest transcontinental railroad, and its first one (it was completed on January 27, 1855) was expected to begin during January, and should be completed by mid-2001. Kansas City Southern and Mi-Jack Products Inc., of Illinois, signed an agreement in January, 1998 with the Panamanian government to operate the Panama Canal Railway Company. Once it is completed, KCS will operated three sets of trains on the 5-foot gauge line, each train hauling 40 containers. Mi-Jack will operate the intermodal terminals at both ends of the line to transload the containers between the ships and the railroad. The

Panama Canal Railway will hold a ground-breaking in mid-February for the \$70 million project. (Trains web page via Shenandoah Valley Express).

Amtrak started a new train on December 17th called the Kentucky Cardinal which runs between Chicago and Jeffersonville, Indiana, near Louisville, Kentucky four days a week. The other three days the train will operate as a section of the Cardinal, separating and joining the latter train at Indianapolis. It will be an overnight train, using Superliner equipment. Mail and express traffic will be carried on the train. (Numerous sources)

News from the White Pass & Yukon in Alaska is that the railroad hauled over 250,000 passengers during 1999. The railroad plans on expanding steam passenger operations this year with the addition of leased steam locomotives # 40 (2-8-0) arriving from the Georgetown Loop Railway in Colorado in the Spring of 2000. (Colorado Midland Rails).

Book Review

by John Austen

American Railroads in the Nineteenth Century: A Pictorial History in Victorian Wood Engravings by Jim Harter; 1999, Texas Tech University Press, 2903 4th Street, Box 41037, Lubbock TX 79409-1037; 9"x12", 320pp.; ISBN 0896724026; \$45.00.

As the title states, this is a collection of nineteenth century wood engravings. The engravings are organized topically in eighteen chapters. Each chapter begins with a page or two of narrative commenting on the development of the topic depicted. The balance of the chapter consists of

the engravings. A brief caption at the bottom of each page identifies the engravings on the page and notes their time period, e.g. "Baldwin-built N&W Consolidation locomotive at the 1893 Columbian Exposition". Many of the engravings occupy a full page. Most are shown two to the page, more in a few cases.

There are chapters on locomotives, stations, bridges and tunnels, passenger operations, freight operations, wrecks, and other topics. There is even an 1887 illustration of a dome car proposed by an inventor, with three domes resembling Vista Domes. There is also an 1885 illustration of an N&W work train in Virginia. An engine is pushing a boxcar and wooden track inspection car number 3152. This car has tiers of seats so several persons can view the track at once, including one sitting on a bench on the roof! The roof is a sort of irregular hip roof. A smoke jack projects through the roof near the rear of the car. The only windows are small and high, one group ascending along with the tiers of seats at the observation end, another group being in a horizontal row near the center of the car.

There is also a one-page introduction and a one-page bibliography (considerably less than one page, actually). As might be expected, these engravings have been published before; the bibliography lists a few secondary sources and no primary sources. There is no index; but that is not really any problem, since the purpose of the book is to give the flavor of the times for American railroads collectively.

American Railroads in the Nineteenth Century: A Pictorial History in Victorian

Wood Engravings delivers just what you would expect based on the title. The engravings do the work; the brief narrative is sufficient to introduce the material and place it in context. A full variety of American railroads are covered, including cable cars and electric trolleys. An alternative style of gathering the electric current is even shown, where in the wire is under the track as if it were a cable (but not moving), with the current collector resembling the cable grip but simply sliding along the wire more like a trolley pole. The engraving is a cross-section of the installation, and shows the advantage engravings often have over photographs. A well-thought-out picture can indeed be worth a thousand words (or more...). Such a system was used in Washington D.C. I wish everything in Washington were as clear and useful as this

engraving!

The engravings reproduce well. Some are apparently from photographs; others obviously are not, taking advantage (in both cases) of the opportunities to show or emphasize things in a manner not achievable with photography. The true value of the book is two-fold. The factual information presented by the engravings constitutes an effective history of the development of railroads in nineteenth-century America. The engravings collectively (as such) also serve as a reminder of the state of the art in graphic communication, and illustrate the techniques and inherent opportunities of that medium. This is a good book, whether you want it as a "coffee table" collection of nice illustrations, or as a component of a serious historical study of Victorian technology.

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