

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
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Railroading – Past, Present and Future

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Mike Jackson, Editor

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Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing/Circulation

Next Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting July 26

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) will be held Monday, July 26, 2010, at 6:30 pm, at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. The program will be presented by David Denny on his visit to the Hawaii Railroad. David has an excellent program, so come on out and bring a friend. Details about our fall excursions will be announced at the July meeting.

DAY TRIPS/EXCURSIONS TO ROANOKE, VA, AND ASHEVILLE, NC, OCT. 30 AND 31

SPENCER, NC—The Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) and the North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation (NCTMF) will host day trip excursions to Roanoke, VA, October 30, and to Asheville, NC, October 31. These excursions, now in their fourth year, allow travelers to see beautiful fall foliage, experience destination to two great cities, and enjoy the romance of riding the rails.

The NCTMF and Watauga Valley NRHS revived fall excursions in 2007, offering trips to Charlottesville, VA. Sell-out crowds and satisfied passengers made those excursions incredibly popular. Last year's addition of a trip to Asheville, NC as a destination created an even greater demand for tickets. The trips sold out in record time, with dome car tickets selling out in mere minutes.

This year, the "Virginia Autumn Special" will travel to Roanoke on **Saturday, Oct. 30**, and the "Blue Ridge Special" will travel to Asheville on **Sunday, Oct. 31**. More dome car tickets have been added this year, but the demand is expected to be just as strong as years past.

Departing Spencer at 7 a.m., **Saturday's** "Virginia Autumn Special" will offer additional passenger pick-up at the Greensboro's (NC) Amtrak Station at 8 a.m., allowing those in the Triad a more convenient boarding opportunity. The train will travel through the northern portion of the North Carolina Piedmont, and pass the cities of High Point and Reidsville before crossing into Virginia. The western part of central Virginia offers spectacular views of the fall foliage, crossing the Dan and Roanoke Rivers. Moving onto the old Virginian Railway line, passengers will travel westward, passing through several tunnels and enjoying the rolling Virginia countryside before arriving in Roanoke, the "Star City of the South," at noon. Passengers will have nearly three hours to enjoy the attractions offered in Roanoke. Downtown Roanoke offers an array of dining experiences, shopping, and sightseeing opportunities.

Passengers will depart the train at the old Norfolk and Western Passenger Station, home of the O. Winston Link museum. The museum offers a grand photographic and auditory history of 1950's steam engine locomotives. Advance tickets to the museum are available to excursion passengers at the discounted group rate of \$4 per person.

The nearby Taubman Museum of Art features a permanent collection of 19th and early 20th Century American art, while the Historic Roanoke City Market has fresh food and handmade crafts. Passengers can also take a drink from the historic Dogmouth Fountain, constructed in 1898. Legend says those drinking from the fountain will always return to Roanoke. Departing Roanoke at 3 p.m., the train will arrive back in Greensboro at 6:45 p.m. and Spencer at 8 p.m.

During **Sunday's** trip, the "Blue Ridge Special" will travel through the western Piedmont into the foothills and on to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Departing Spencer at 7 a.m., the train will

roll through the cities of Statesville, Hickory, Morganton, Marion, Black Mountain, and Swannanoa. The train will climb the famed "loops" of the Blue Ridge Mountains and pass through several tunnels before arriving in Asheville at noon. Passengers will have nearly three hours for an outing at Biltmore Village.

Established in the late 1890s as a planned community near the entrance of the Biltmore estate, Biltmore Village stands near the entrance to Biltmore Estate. Shopping will be available in unique, locally-owned boutiques. Passengers can dine in restaurants and take walks along brick sidewalks that parallel tree-lined streets. All of this will be enjoyed alongside spectacular views of the North Carolina Mountains. Departing Asheville at 3 p.m., the "Blue Ridge Special" will return to Spencer at 8 p.m.

Dome tickets offer the best views of passing scenery with two levels. Windows stretch across the walls and ceiling on the second level, providing a panoramic view of the entire ride. Dome tickets are available for \$280 per person. **Premium First Class fares** include continental breakfast and newspapers on the journey to both Roanoke and Asheville, plus dinner on the return trip served in vintage lounge and dining cars. Premium First Class tickets are available for \$245 per person. **Deluxe Coach Class tickets** feature spacious seating with large windows, lunch on the dining car and light snacks during the trip. Deluxe Coach tickets are \$175 per person. Finally, **Coach Seating tickets**, featuring wide windows, adjustable seats and convenient access to the commissary car, are also available for \$145 per person. All cars feature air conditioning, heat and rest rooms.

For those patrons wishing to eat on the train and have more time for sightseeing, an optional box lunch will be offered. The \$14 meal, served in a souvenir lunch tote, includes a half turkey wrap, pasta, chips & salsa, a cookie and drink.

Tickets will be available online at www.nctrans.org or by calling [704-636-2889](tel:704-636-2889) ext. 232.

The N.C. Transportation Museum, located in historic Spencer Shops, the former Southern Railway repair facility, is located just five minutes off I-85 at Exit 79 in Spencer, N.C., and about an hour from Charlotte, Greensboro or Winston-Salem.

WORKERS NEEDED FOR AUTUMN TRAIN EXCURSIONS

All members who want to work the October 30 and 31 trips from Spencer to Roanoke and Asheville please complete the enclosed Excursion Workers Form and return back at the **July** meeting or mail back in by **August 15, 2010**. Please Mail to Watauga Valley NRHS/TRIP COMMITTEE, P O Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. These two scenic rare mileage fall excursions are ones that you do not want to miss. Please volunteer to serve as a car host or as another worker today.

JONESBOROUGH DAYS EVENT SUCCESSFUL!

The Jonesborough Days event, Saturday, July 3, was very popular this year with an estimated two hundred or more folks visiting the Spring Street Coach Yard, going through the Chapter's cars and the museum displays. This was the first time for many people who had never been on a railroad passenger car before to see the cars and the work of the Chapter's mechanical crew. We never know just how many people are interested in the railroad till we offer an event as this one to the public. Several people asked about the Chapter and its activities and about the July 17 excursion to the Hiwassee River Gorge.

President Mike Tilley would like to thank the following members who helped out with this event Jim & Helen Calhoun, Tom & Kati Phelps, Art Devoe, Paul Markey, Harold Smitter, Richard Baker, Anthony Pittman, Frank Rohrer, Gary & Casey Price, Nick White, Penny May, Lois Tilley, Walter Byrd, Bob Schubel, Doug Zimmerman, George Ritchie, Jim Magill, Jane Edds, and Mike & Betty Jackson.

SUMMER 2010 EXCURSION AND ROANOKE VAN TRIP

The Summer 2010 Excursion on July 17 to the Hiwassee River Gorge was a great success with four bus loads going to Etowah and loading on the train at the Gee Creek Ranger Station for a beautiful ride into the Gorge and back. The trip was a complete sell out with many folks on the waiting list to get a ticket if someone canceled. **Also, Nick White and Gary Price** have announced that there are still a few seats available for Roanoke van trip on July 31st to see the Link and Transportation Museums. Additionally, please note that you must sign up with Nick White no later than Saturday, July 17, 2010. All payments must be made in full to Nick White no later than the July Chapter meeting on July 26, 2010. No Exceptions, Please! Thank You!

PROGRAMS FOR 2010 NEEDED!

We still need programs for our General Membership meetings each month in 2010, so if you have any program, which may include railroad slides, a video, a DVD, or if you know a possible speaker, please see Nick White, the Program Director, at the July meeting, or call the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797 or e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

Mike Tilley, Chapter President

Momentum Builds for the Return to Erwin of the Former Clinchfield Railroad's No. 1 Steam Locomotive

Permission was granted to print in the *Whistle Stop* per Erwin Record Newspaper

By Mark A. Stevens

Publisher

mstevens@erwinrecord.net

Some call her "Old Number One," while others refer to the nearly 128-year-old steam locomotive as the "Clinchfield No. 1." Sometimes, it's simply, the "No. 1." Whatever name the locomotive is called, there seems to be one clear consensus for railroad and local history enthusiasts — bring her home to Erwin. "My gut feeling is it belongs in Erwin," said Mike Tilley, who has worked for the railroad (now CSX) for 34 years and is president of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. "It belongs to Erwin and its citizens."

Since June 1979, the locomotive has been housed in the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, Md. For years, residents have called for its return, but Tilley said he now believes it's possible. That is, if enough interest and a suitable location could be found here and the B&O is willing to let go of a valuable piece of railroad history.

"It would be an absolute dream come true to have the No. 1 back here," Tilley said. A lot of people seem to think so. A Facebook "Cause" page started by Erwin resident and longtime railroader Alf Peoples has had 211 join since it was established last month. Posts on the social-networking Internet site have been enthusiastic. Shanna Slemp wrote, "Help!!!!!! Bring this train home," while Phyllis McCourry White wrote, "This old steam locomotive should be placed inside a museum in Erwin so everyone, especially the younger generation, can see and learn the history of the Clinchfield #1." In her post, Betty Tipton said, "Let's return our history to its home base."

Both Tilley and Peoples have fond memories of actually working on the Clinchfield No. 1 after the locomotive was refurbished and used as an excursion train. From 1969 until 1979, the No. 1 traveled the rails as the "Clinchfield Special," shuttling paying customers to Spartanburg, S.C., for a daylong trip. Peoples, who said he's the oldest engineer working at the CSX, worked as a car marshall on the "Special." He said: "Basically, I was a porter. I helped people on and off, I checked tickets and took care of the passengers." For Peoples, the Clinchfield No. 1 remains a special part of his life. "The passengers were just amazed to be on that train," he said. "I don't know how to describe the experience. Hearing that whistle and everything was just something special. I wish I could hear it again. It was a lot of fun." Peoples recalled that he was playing football at Unicoi County High School and sped away after the game to Spartanburg, where he would board the train and work aboard it as it made its way back to Erwin.

Like Peoples, Tilley was also aboard the Clinchfield Special. "I helped sell the concessions aboard the train and sold souvenirs," he said. "It was for the YMCA. It was a nice feeling to get to ride it. So many people remember the No. 1 from the excursions. "It was a nice feeling to get to ride it."

Even if the No. 1 could be returned to Erwin, her days as a working locomotive are long since passed, but the engine could be a showcase — as it is in Baltimore — for Erwin's rich railroad heritage.

The Clinchfield No. 1 had a long history — but not all of it in Erwin or, even, as part of the Clinchfield. Jim Goforth, the late Erwin historian, wrote her story once, describing how the locomotive was built in August 1882 in Logansport, Ind., in the shops of the Columbus, Chicago & Indiana Central Railway. The locomotive was originally designated the CC&IC No. 423. Several railroads, including the Clinchfield, owned the locomotive over the years, including the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad.

For much of its service, from 1913 and until 1955, it was known as the Black Mountain No. 1, according to Goforth's research. In '55, the power of diesel replaced engines like the No. 1,

and the Clinchfield Railroad, headquartered in Erwin, once again acquired the locomotive. The Clinchfield sold the locomotive to the town of Erwin, which had plans to put the engine on permanent display under a protective shed. Earl Hernden, a member of the Erwin Board of Mayor and Aldermen who had spearheaded those plans, died suddenly and with no one else interested in the project, the engine was left rusting away in the rail yard. In 1968, the town sold the Clinchfield No. 1 back to the railroad for only \$1. It was then that the No. 1 was restored to its former glory and began, on Nov. 23, 1968, a decade-long stint as the lead on the popular Clinchfield Special excursion.

In 1976, Sen. Howard Baker used the No. 1 for an old-timey whistle-stop campaign swing across Tennessee. The powerful senator quickly found that at his stops, the Clinchfield No. 1 often eclipsed him in popularity, as throngs of people gathered around the train to admire it, leaving Baker giving speeches



to obliged dignitaries and high school bands. The No. 1's time in the sun, though, was over by June 1979, when she was moved to the B&O Railroad Museum.

Over the past 30 years that the locomotive has made its home in Baltimore, folks like Peoples and Tilley have resurrected the idea of somehow returning the Clinchfield No. 1 to Erwin. "Other towns would sure like to get it," Tilley said, "but we feel Erwin should have it." Peoples said the latest plan has been met with enthusiasm from local leaders to retired railroaders. "Everybody I talk to wants to see it happen," he said.

B&O Railroad Museum Chief Curator Dave Shackelford said that he has received a letter inquiring about the museum's interest in taking the No. 1 out of its collection and a return to Erwin. Shackelford stressed that such a decision would be based on many factors — and would not come quickly. "Right now, it's not gone any further than having received the letter," he said. "We discuss a lot of things. Whether such a request goes to fruition, I couldn't possibly tell you at this point. There will be a lot of decision making to come, and it will something our collection committee would take up." Shackelford said the Clinchfield No. 1 is a "pretty significant piece of our collection," noting that visitors are allowed to board the engine and "see what it was like to ride a steam engine."

"It's hands-on history," he said, "and the Clinchfield No. 1 has a very respectable spot in the Round House here at the museum. It's one of our premier pieces."

Any decision to allow it outside the B&O's protection would, Shackelford said, be based, partly, on how the antique engine would be housed and cared for in a new location. "It's an old engine," he said, "and in reality, you can't just put it outside along the sidewalk."

Shackelford said the museum has received various offers for the No. 1 over the years — some from folks who want to make the locomotive operable again. "It's a pretty important component to our visitors' experience," he said. "Taking it out of the collection would be something discussed at high levels of the museum here."

The curator said he understands the desire for Unicoi County residents and railroaders to see its return to Tennessee. "It's possession and passion," Shackelford said, "and we have that

with many pieces in our collection. Whether they are rail fans or simply based on nostalgia, everybody takes it personally, and that's OK, because people are passionate about history."

Tilley hopes the B&O will be open to the request for the Clinchfield No. 1's return. "It would be something really special if we could find a way to bring the No. 1 back to Erwin," he said.

Members' Notes by Nancy Jewell

Welcome back to seven members of the Watauga Valley NRHS who attended the 2010 National Convention of the National Railway Historical Society. Members **Bob Yaple, Duane and Harriet Swank, Dan and Charlene McLeod and Jim and Charlotte Pahr**is were present at the convention in Scranton, PA. "This was a good representation from the Chapter," National Director Jim Pahr is said.

We have no news concerning the health concerns of our members, or of a family member or friends, but I always want to know when a card or a phone call is needed. Please contact me with any news at 423-282-0918 or the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797.

Editor's Note: As many of our friends know, my wife Betty and I are licensed amateur radio operators, and we enjoy that hobby as much as we do our railroad hobby. Nancy gave me a set of the 1964 commemorative U. S. postage stamps in honor of amateur radio operators who were instrumental in keeping U.S. Navy personnel stationed in Antarctica in contact with loved ones back home during the International Geophysical Year during the late 1950s. We have placed the stamps in a display with our Federal Communications Commission Licenses. To us, HAM radio is not only fun, but also gives us an opportunity to serve others as the operators did for the Navy personnel in Antarctica in the late 1950s.

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has given an excellent statement on the purpose of and the importance of HAM radio, I believe: "When cell phones, regular phones, the internet and other systems are down or overloaded [as evidenced on 9-11-2001], HAM radio still gets the message through." American Radio Relay League, March 9, 2009. That's what amateur radio means to Betty and me, but we see another purpose for us.

In fact, we see a connection between the HAM radio hobby and our railroad interests, especially when it concerns radios and antenna theory and practice. Our involvement in HAM radio has given us an elementary knowledge of antenna theory so that we now have achieved the best radio reception possible adding to our enjoyment of listening to the railroad frequencies in our area! Thanks, Nancy, for the gift, Mike and Betty Jackson.

Membership Chairman's Report by Harriet Swank

I would like to extend a welcome to a new Chapter member, **Mary Roach of Gate City, VA**. Please welcome Mary into our Chapter!

Also, please invite a friend to our meetings, and maybe we can see our membership continue to grow!

Keeping Norfolk Southern safe...one tie at a time

Working in Roanoke

One of my favorite places to work on the entire Norfolk Southern system is Roanoke, Va. The Norfolk and Western had such a dominate presence in the area from the fabled Blue Ridge Grade to the massive Roanoke Shops were the 611 and 1218 were designed and built. My gang moved into Roanoke and the NS placed our camp-cars in the Roadway Material Yard near Shaffer's Crossing, so I knew that I was guaranteed action all day and all night, and I was not disappointed.

Our job this time would be to re-tie the fore-mentioned Blue Ridge Grade on the eastbound main one track from Montvale (MP N239) to Tinker Creek (MP N256). After breaking ground and finishing up our first 11 hour shift on the mountain, I was treated to a run-by of the westbound Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey's (RBBB) "red" circus train. It was a warm evening and every vestibule was occupied by waving RBBB employees and staff. **In the photo**

below, Elephant Cars in the train's consist of the Circus Train are seen. The cars were built using former baggage cars



As I worked up the steep eastern slope, I can see why the N&W had to build massive steam locomotives to conquer this grade, and even today's modern diesels struggle to lift a merchandise train up this mountain grade. You can feel the ground shake even while the train is a mile away. As I passed the former site of the Blue Ridge Depot, I was saddened to see that the former crushed rock tipple had been torn down since. This was the last remaining structure of many that could be seen in numerous, famous photographs taken of the N&W steam on Blue Ridge during the steam era.

Working past MP N247 I finally found the concrete footers of what once was known as the Railfan Photographer's Bridge (**picture below**). The bridge once stood at the steepest part of the grade, and photographers would line up there just to capture N&W's steam hard at work and preserve it for us to enjoy today. We finally replaced the last tie of our job at Tinker Creek, and traffic was so heavy that we had to wait five hours before we could get clearance to take our equipment across town to Starkey to be in position to travel to our next job.

Next month: Workin' on the Punkin' Vine!

Gary Price

Keeping Norfolk Southern safe...one tie at a time.



All that remains of the famous Railfan Photographers Bridge on N&W's Blue Ridge Grade. Photos by Gary Price.

Review of DVD "Pillars of Smoke in the Sky"

Herron Rail Video, 45 minutes

Filmed by E.C. Eddy

During a recent visit to the O. Winston Link Museum in Roanoke, I picked up a copy of a new Norfolk and Western steam DVD, entitled "Pillars of Smoke in the Sky," as filmed by E. C. Eddy. The liner notes state that Mr. Eddy recorded this production in 1957, edited it himself, and it had been stored in a vault for 45 years before being re-discovered and produced for this DVD.

The DVD starts off with footage filmed from the rear car of a J-class powered train as it skirts along the New River, and then climbs up the Blue Ridge Grade. While his wife plays a piano accompaniment, Mr. Eddy tells the story of how this ride inspired him to contact N&W management and be allowed to return to Roanoke and film the operations of steam locomotives on coal trains across the grade. What follows is, in my opinion, some of the most spectacular footage of the Norfolk and Western ever produced on film.

With multiple cameras mounted on different N&W Y6b locomotives, you can really get the feel of what it was like in 1957. One camera is mounted on the tender and allows a look along the top of the boiler to the track ahead of the train. A second camera shows interior views of the engineer as he has the massive locomotive under his watchful eye. Mr. Eddy also rides on the rear pusher Y6b, and shows how the operation of the pusher was an important job in helping trains over the grade.

Also included in between on-board views are trackside shots of trains passing that give the DVD a well rounded feel. One of the most amazing shots comes from a camera, mounted on the front running board that gives the viewer an outstanding view of the Y6b drive wheels and drive rods as they pound the tracks of Virginia. Views of 1957 Roanoke hump yard, and trains leaving the rail yard heading east, along with the Webster Brick Plant located at Webster, offer the viewer a glimpse of a by gone era. A quick glimpse of N&W's experimental locomotive the Jawn Henry, is also seen at the Boaz pusher siding waiting its turn to push a train across the grade. For more info and clips of this DVD, go to www.herronrail.com.

Gary Price, Keeping Norfolk Southern safe...one tie at a time.



Editor's Notes...

Norris Deyerle, National Director of the Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS, Lynchburg, VA, sent the following item on their Rail Day for 2010 to our Chapter Historian Gary Price:

Lynchburg Rail Day 2010: The Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS 32nd annual train show will be held on August 14, 2010 at the Air Conditioned Boonsboro Ruritan

Club in Lynchburg, VA. The event will feature Vendor Tables, White Elephant Table, Operating Model Layouts, Railroadiana, Slide Shows, and Railroad Model and Photography Exposition and Contest. ALSO, fresh prepared food and Door Prizes.

Admission: \$6.00/person, Family \$10.00 {Children 12 and under free with paying adult}. View past LRD's at www.blueridgenrhs.org and also download a Vendor Registration Form and White Elephant Table Guidelines. **Note:** Use the map on our website for the correct directions.

More info: Barry Moorefield {434-821-2174 before 9:00 p.m.} bmopar@verizon.net, John Tanner {434-525-1318} flytrains@verizon.net, Norris Deyerle {434-237-4912} railcow@msn.com. Model and Photography Contest, Contact: Fred Mayer {434-384-2773} barbalin@comcast.net.

Thanks Gary; it sounds like an exciting event!

A supplement to the July 2010 *Whistle Stop* with more news will be prepared and released the week of July 26. It will be distributed at the July 26th Chapter meeting and sent to members who receive their monthly newsletter by email. If you want to receive a copy by email, please email me at ki4ojomike@gmail.com. **Mike Jackson, Editor**

Watauga Valley NRHS Officers, Board of Directors and, Appointments for 2010

Mike Tilley	President
Bob Schubel	Vice- President
Betty Jackson	Secretary
Duane Swank	Treasurer
Jim Pahriss	National Director, Chapter Librarian
Gary Price	Historian

Directors: Bill Beagen, Jim Calhoun, Helen Calhoun, Art Devoe, Mike Jackson (Newsletter Editor), Penny May, Nick White (Publicity Chairman, Program Chairman), and Bob Yaple

Appointments:	Jim Magill, Chief Mechanical Officer
Bob Yaple	Asst. Chief Mechanical Officer
Duane & Harriet Swank	Newsletter Circulation
Fred Waskiewicz Jr.	Webmaster
Mike Tilley	Trip Director
David Denny	Chapter Attorney
Nancy Jewell	Membership Notes Reporter
Harriet Swank	Membership Chairman
Walter Byrd	Communications Chairman
Jack Maloney	Spring St Coach Yard Maintenance



A westbound Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey "red" circus train tops the Blue Ridge Grade in this photo by Chapter Historian Gary Price. See his column inside the *Whistle Stop*. Also, please note that the sign-up date for the Roanoke Van Trip is soon. Please see Mike Tilley's column inside.

**Railway Historical Society
Watauga Valley Chapter
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