

Turntable Times

Volume XXX

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Cover Photo

The crew of Train No. First 84, takes time to have their picture made in September, 1945. See the accompanying story entitled What Does A Freight Train Carry? that is featured elsewhere in this month's Turntable Times. From left to right are: V. J. Scott, head end trainman; J. A. Martin, rear end trainman; C. E. Akers, conductor and father of Roanoke Chapter members Wanda Overstreet and Gordon Akers; J. Q. Scruggs, fireman, and W. J. Fielding, engineer. Photo by Norfolk and Western Railway, collection of Wanda Overstreet.

Turntable Times

Volume XXX July 1998 Number 7

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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, July 16, 1998 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke.

New Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for each issue of Turntable Times is now the 18th of the month instead of the 25th. Please make note if

you haven't done so. The deadline for the next issue is Saturday, July 18th. Please send articles, information and all exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

Chapter Picnic

Our Chapter picnic will be at Shelter Number 5 at Salem's Longwood Park on August 1st beginning at 5:00 pm. It will be pot luck with the Chapter providing soft drinks and

hot dogs and hamburgers. Contact Elizabeth Leedy or Karl Oehring for details and to help coordinate this fun event.

Chapter Activities

by Ken Miller

Work continues at our 9th Street Maintenance Facility year round, even with the recent bout of hot weather, our small but dedicated crew still is putting in the hours working on the equipment. At this writing, the interior painting continues on observation-lounge 3305. Due to the many years and multiple coats of paint in the entrance way, it was deemed that scaling the old paint off before repainting would be successful and attractive. The 3305 also had a badly damaged floor in the observation end that had to be repaired to prevent further damage as well as several window sills. The diesel generator which died two years ago is now slated for complete replacement in the next two months. The old unit had a lot of service behind it, but the new unit will be just like those under the coaches we have now.

Cars 537 and 1827 went to Spencer for their annual Raildays at the beginning of June and served a huge amount of people. They are getting the brake system redone at Spencer and should be heading back to Roanoke by the time you read this.

John Garrett has constructed side doorway gates for the 1407 tool car which will allow it to be used once again as a "hang-out" car safely. Interior renovation on the car is almost complete with just final details to be done. John has also made steps to use on the end of food car No. 1148 that can be removed for movement but allow safe entrance in stationary service.

For the second time this year, our forklift is making a trip to the shops, this time with a main cylinder leaking. It has been repaired and returned to service.

When a local fence company was installing a fence around a parking area next to our siding, they made one small mistake. While cutting off a fence post on our base of timbers they care-

lessly allowed sparks to go down into the creosote, then went to lunch. Of course a fire resulted virtually destroying our timbers. These are not just any timbers of course, they are huge timbers that supported the weight of fully loaded hoppers, and slated for future use. The fire was so great that the fire department had to be called out to stop the blaze.

The east end of the archive facility has virtually been completed at this point. The air-conditioning was turned on for the first time on Saturday, June 27, and was desperately needed. The place looks so different from what was there just a year ago, it is amazing! With the help of the mechanical committee, the file cabinets we purchased last winter were carried upstairs that same day. That afternoon, the first box of archival material was also carried up the steps. We will be scheduling an open house sometime soon for all who would like to see the place.

We still have a huge quantity of things to carry up those steps and need volunteers for this important task. Contact Ken Miller for details.

Several donations of material have come in recently including a variety of timetables, photographs and financial records, if you have material you would like to donate or loan, again, please get in touch with Ken Miller.

Volunteers are needed for all of these projects so come to the next Chapter meeting and get involved!

Small Rails - July

by Dave Meashey

The Roanoke Valley Model Engineers held their June meeting at the Pizza Den. Members voted to reduce the meeting schedule to one meeting per month for the remainder of the summer. Other issues were described as well. The club will hold elections for officers at the July meeting. There is also a proposal to raise the dues before the membership. This would allow the club to raise money for construction of a permanent layout, once a suitable and permanent meeting location is secured. The club members will need to get the modules

ready for shows in September and October.

The Big Lick Big Train Operators met Saturday May 23rd at the Blue Ridge Live Steamers' site in Burnt Chimney. We had a wonderful time socializing and riding the 7' inch gauge live steam and "diesel" trains. Several members got to ride behind fellow member Joe Feazell's diesel switcher. One of our group commented, "This has got to be the ultimate garden railway!"

Mixed Freight - July

by Mr. Robin Shavers

About mid-May, Norfolk Southern freights A351 and 352 were assigned a new southern point of termination and origin as well as a new routing. They formerly traversed the former N&W Pumpkin Vine via Martinsville, VA and Winston-Salem, N.C. and former Southern Railway trackage to reach Pomona Yard in Greensboro, N.C. The trains now travel between Roanoke and Raleigh, N.C. via the former Virginian and on to the former Southern via The Hurt Connection. At Greensboro, the locomotives are required to run around their train to proceed eastward to Raleigh or northward for Roanoke. 352 makes the run from Roanoke to Raleigh and 351 does the opposite. The trains still operated daily.

At the request of CSX, Conrail freight cars that are to become the property of CSX are receiving NYC reporting marks. NS has made a parallel request too. Conrail rolling stock that will become NS's are receiving PRR reporting marks. Frankly, I wish Conrail could remain Conrail but since the Surface Transportation Board has already given the high green of approval, the railroad scene east of Old Man River and north of The Mason Dixon will indeed be interesting during the next five or ten years.

It's almost that time of year again, RAIL DAY sponsored by Trains Unlimited of Lynchburg. The date is August 8th from 9:00 a.m. til 6:00 p.m. at The Builders Meeting Centre located at The Greenstone Industrial Park off of Forest Road about a half mile west of the Graves Mill Road intersection. Be sure to prepare your best pho-

tos and scale models for the contests to be had. For further info call 804-239-8377.

This will be the 20th Anniversary of RAIL DAY. Hard to believe it's been 20 years since the first one. I remember those early years when the event was nothing more than a few tables set up in the parking lot of Trains Unlimited full of merchandise to be sold and a bee hive of activity inside and outside the store. My God a lot has changed.

There will be a Great American Train Show held at The Virginia State Fairground in Richmond, VA on the August weekend of the 22nd and 23rd. The fairground is located on 600 East Laburnum Avenue. For more info, phone 630-834-0652.

The Blue Ridge Live Steamers will hold their summer open house to the public Mosquito Run during the July weekend of the 18th and 19th. The property will be open to the public starting at 10:00 a.m. The property is located at Burnt Chimney, VA at the intersection of 688 and 689 off of state route 116 about 15 miles southeast of Roanoke. Closing time will be 4:00 p.m.

The Tall Pines Division Becomes Reality

by Dave Meashey

Sunday, June 14th the Tall Pines Division of the Geneva & New Bern Railroad chugged into reality. I spent Sunday afternoon and most of Sunday evening constructing the main loop and the yard ladder. Just as darkness fell, I hooked the track wires to a power pack and sent a Lionel 0-6-0 and an LGB low gondola for a test trip over the garden railway. The little train ran smoothly around the loop. This railroad is small as garden railways go; 21 feet on the tangent tracks with 5 foot radius curves. But it works, and its mine.

Early Monday morning the little railroad weathered a severe cloudburst. I never thought I'd be thankful for the hard, red Virginia clay that makes up most of our backyard, but I am now. The track didn't budge. I may have to nickname this railroad the Santa Claus Route, because I really had to hoe, hoe, hoe to create that sturdy subroadbed.

Monday evening I finished the yard tracks. Tuesday evening I began ballasting. I am using a mixture of two parts chicken grit (crushed granite) to one part sand mix concrete for the ballast. I only had a short length of track ballasted before another squall blew through. The ballast set up nice and firm. The golden spike ceremony is scheduled for Sunday June 21st, when the garden railway club will meet at our house. So far the progress is encouraging.

From the Left Seat

by E. Duane Howard

Like many of you I am not only a member of the Roanoke Chapter, NRHS but a member of another fine organization as, well. I am a member of the Roanoke Chapter of the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society.

We stand to gain a great deal of publicity and new members when our aviation exhibit, Wings of Woodrum Field, opens at the History Museum, Center in the Square, on November 15, 1998.

If you have any unique photos or artifacts connected with the airport or airlines, I would like to hear from you. If you would like to loan something for the exhibit it will be insured by the museum. I will assist you in assessing the value if needed. Of particular interest is American, Eastern, Ludington and PCA, (Pennsylvania Central). Piedmont items are plentiful, but if you feel you have something exceptional please let me know.

I am looking for aviation related promotional items that can be given to the children. Deadline for accepting items is August 31, 1998 or earlier pending on space available. Recently, I wrote the following letter to the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission in regard to the old terminal building. It reads as follows:

"The Roanoke Regional Airport has a rich heritage. If immediate plans are not developed to save this vital part of aviation history, we are destined to bury it with the razing of the old terminal building and the passing of our local pioneer aviators! Cities across this great nation take pride

in their contributions they made to the war effort. All we have to do is look at our neighbors in Bedford and their National D-Day Memorial. Lest we forget, Roanoke made its own unique contribution. The federal government contracted with Pennsylvania Central Airlines (PCA) to train military pilots. In turn PCA selected Roanoke as the location for this important mission. This brought good jobs to our community, which helped to boost the local economy. My father was hired as a mechanic, and he was able to support a wife and nine children. PCA did not serve Roanoke with commercial flights. In 1948 it became Capital Airlines, the fifth largest airline in the country before its merger with United in 1961. It was a pioneer and innovator in the early days of commercial aviation and many of its initiatives are still enjoyed by the travel industry today.

For over four decades, travel out of Roanoke was synonymous with Piedmont Airlines. Prior to its merger with U.S. Air in 1989, it was recognized as one of this country's most respected air carriers, offering both transcontinental and international flights. As with Capitol, Piedmont is destined to be remembered as one of this county's great airlines. Piedmont is to Roanoke's aviation history as Norfolk & Western is to this city's great railroad heritage.

Please ponder this! Imagine the uproar in this town if there was a proposal to tear down the train station. Our citizens and leaders appreciate and understand this vital link to its historic past. So I call upon the Commission and city officials to raise public awareness of the importance of preserving its aviation past.

Piedmont was not Roanoke's first air carrier. American Airlines launched service here in 1936, connecting this city to its transcontinental route. Today American is the country's number-one airline and is now a premier international carrier respected worldwide. Again Roanoke should take pride in remembering American's link to its past history.

One of the country's greatest airline pioneers, Eddie Rickenbacher came to the airport in the

1940s to promote Eastern Airlines' service into Roanoke. The city also is fortunate to have its own group of aviation pioneers like "Bootz" Frantz, Clayton Lemon and Wesley Hillman, to name just a few. For these men who are still with us today, every effort should be made to preserve their account of history associated with the Airport and preserve for display any memorabilia that would be donated.

If the old terminal building cannot be saved then some significant portion of the building representing its architecture and its service should be saved and restored in the Virginia Museum of Transportation, where an accompanying exhibit can be developed over time, not only to Roanoke but to the great historic airlines of the past!

It is my desire to work with this fine Commission, the City and Transportation Museum to help preserve this city's historic aviation past and its contribution to victory in World War II."

If you would like to become a member of the Roanoke Chapter, Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society, or if you wish to contribute to the Wings of Woodrum Field exhibit at Center in the Square, please contact me by phone at 540-982-1085, or write to: E. Duane Howard, 508-B Walnut Ave. S.W. Roanoke, Va. 24016.

What Does A Freight Train Carry?

by Tag A. Long

(The following with the above title and author is from the Norfolk and Western Magazine, September, 1945. See the accompanying photo on the cover of this month's Turntable Times).

The boss and I were standing beside his office window the other day, watching speculatively the N&W time freight train rolling by below us.

Turning to him, I said, "I wonder what's inside of those freight cars. Wouldn't it be interesting if the cars had windows so you could peep inside?" (I'm new at this railroad business.)

He smiled and replied, "That's a novel idea all right. But you've got the makings of a story there.

Lots of folks would like to take a peep inside of a freight train. Why don't you go out on the road and ask somebody to show you the contents and then come back and report?"

So that's why I found myself, next morning, aboard the caboose of N&W Time Freight Train first No. 84 as it pulled out of Bluefield en route to Roanoke and points east. With me was Conductor C. E. Akers. Up ahead in the cab of the locomotive were Engineer W.J. Fielding and Fireman J. Q. Scruggs.

"Cap'n," I said, "we want to find out and write a story for the MAGAZINE about what you're hauling in each car of this train.

"Well, son," he replied, "that's a rather large order but maybe we can accommodate you. As you probably know, this train makes only three stops between here and Roanoke but maybe with the aid of those waybills here and a little imagination we can give you what you want.

And so, as the freight train rolled toward Roanoke, Conductor Akers and the MAGAZINE representative figuratively inspected the contents of the 108 cars. On the first car in the train (a Southern Railway flat car) we found a tractor excavator and parts - weight 44,580 pounds - shipped from a point in Indiana to Roanoke. Immediately behind this car were two box cars of the St. Louis Southwestern and Northern Pacific railroads containing synthetic rubber. "It's called 'neoprene'," Conductor Akers explained.

"There's more than 80,000 pounds of it in each car. The shipments originated in Kentucky, and go to Norfolk," he added.

A string of seven box cars were next in line. They carried about 65 tons of leaf tobacco and were en route to South Richmond, Va., out of Kentucky.

"You're hauling a lot of stuff from Kentucky in this train, Cap'n Akers," I remarked.

"Yes, we pick up quite a bit of it at Bluefield. It moves that way over our Clinch Valley Line from our connection with the L & N at Norton."

A Pere Marquette car, originating in Alabama, on its way to Lambert Point, and loaded with plywood, was next in the train.

An unmistakable odor that increased as we

made our way to the next car foretold its contents. Only a count was necessary. One hundred and eleven hogs, also from Kentucky, were en route to Suffolk.

The next car, proclaiming by its initials as belonging to the Reading Company, contained 40,000 pounds of second-hand-steel plates, journeying from Portsmouth, Ohio, to Roanoke. The Pennsylvania car which followed, also bound for Roanoke from Canton, Ohio, carried 400 steel plates, weighing 50 tons.

The next five cars provided a pleasant relief from the hot weather. They turned out to be refrigerator cars, the first of which was a Northwestern Refrigerator Line Company car with 490 boxes of Cheddar cheese, shipped from Chicago for Army use at Camp Lee, Va. Fruit growers in California were sending two carloads of grapefruits to Virginia - one to Richmond, the other to Roanoke.

An Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe car, which had begun its journey in Missouri, contained 600 cases of eggs, consigned to Norfolk, then to feed Navy men. In the Pacific Fruit Express car, next behind, the same quantity of eggs from Illinois, were on their way to Florida.

From the twinkle in his eyes, it was apparent that Conductor Akers had a high regard for the contents of the next car. "Now this Armour and Company car is loaded with 42,770 pounds of prime oleo stearine, or if you understand it better, beef fat - processed, of course. It's potent stuff. It's used in making anything from cooking lard and soap to lubricants and explosives. It's on its way from Iowa to Norfolk."

There was no shortage of fresh, processed and packed meats on Train No. 84 that day. Five carloads were in the train, but every car was destined to become food for our troops. Three of the cars were consigned to the U.S. Naval Base at Norfolk, and two to the Army at Richmond, Va.

Wrought pipe, weighing 45,960 pounds, was in a Pennsylvania car, making its long journey from Pennsylvania to Tampa, Fla.

I was amazed at the number of different railroads, refrigerator lines and tank car companies

represented in this one train. Later on, I made a count and found that the cars carried the initials of 56 different companies.

Approximately 237 tons of prepared feed for livestock and poultry were in seven cars. They were being forwarded to Martinsville and Danville, Va., and points in North Carolina. A Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad carload of feed from Indiana on its way to Roanoke, its journey's end. Northern Pacific and Missouri Pacific cars, originating at Minneapolis, were going to North Carolina towns.

Further back we found a car bound for Durham, N.C., with 600 cases of eggs. These were shipped from Kansas.

"How shortage-weary housewives would go for this car," said Conductor Akers. "Take a look - 79,000 pounds of wax wrapping paper from Chicago, bound for Winston-Salem, N.C."

The next two cars carried chemical containers loaded with a total of 153,000 pounds of a vital chemical, processed at Louisville, Ky., and routed to Waynesboro, Va.

Out of Maryville, Mo., and bound for Harrisonburg, Va., was a Wabash car with 138 half barrels and 20 kegs of condensed milk for - believe it not - livestock.

A New Orleans, Texas and Mexico Railroad car, originating in Texas, carried 63,912 pounds of grease for Roanoke. Immediately behind it was a refrigerator car with the Fruit Growers Express Company's trademark, containing 1,388 cartons of bottled beer, brewed, yes, you guessed it, at Milwaukee, and consigned to Roanoke.

A look at a "tanker" of the General American Tank Line Company indicated that some Roanoke industry soon would have 76,200 pounds of chlorinated paraffin, shipped from Colorado.

The next car contained 1,670 pieces of lumber from once proud Douglas first not far from Bellingham, Wash., the shipping point. An Illinois Central car was packed with 700 36-pound boxes of tomatoes, while bulk corn from an Indiana granary was on its way to Roanoke in a Union Pacific car.

And from the looks of Illinois Central car No. 15727, some Weyers Cave, Va., soon would be grinding bulk corn into corn meal and feed for poultry and livestock.

The contents of the Pennsylvania car which we next examined indicated that the busy factories of Rocky Mount, Va., soon would be fashioning fine furniture out of 30 tons of lumber coming from Oregon.

As we approached the Illinois Central car just ahead, Conductor Akers said, "I'm glad you threw away that cigarette several cars back. This car is loaded with 1,350 cases of matches. Of course they're well sealed and packed to meet perfect shipping standards, but it pays to be safe, you know. A wholesale firm in Salisbury, N.C., is getting these from Oshkosh, Wis.," he responded.

Bakery goods, weighing 25,400 pounds and consigned to Roanoke, were in a Delaware, Lackawanna and Western car which had originated at Norwood, Ohio. Also destined to Roanoke was a Union Tank Line car, out of Louisiana, whose "Danger" and "Explosive" tags clearly admonished careful handling. It contained 53,200 pounds of highly explosive petroleum naphtha.

Pennsylvania car No. 566875 carried 76,075 pounds of gluten meal, rich in protein, from a chemical plant in Chicago to Farmville, Va. There it would be mixed with other ingredients to form valuable livestock and poultry needs.

Norfolk and Western car No. 49284 was loaded with a used 10,100-pound metal working machine which was on its way from Detroit, Mich., to Henderson, N.C.

More than 40 tons of hard wheat for flour were in the next car - of Rock Island Railroad ownership. Now far from its origin somewhere in Kansas, it was bound for the U.S. Army's large food supply depot at Bellbluff, Va.

The next two cars were "tankers," belonging to the Gulf Oil Corporation, and carrying a total of 16,174 gallons of fuel oil from Cleveland, Ohio, to Richmond, Va.

My pondering over the great variety of merchandise carried in this train was interrupted by

Conductor Akers who asked, "Like spuds?" "You bet."

"Well, in these next two cars there are 83 tons of 'em' but they're a little different from most potatoes we haul. These have been dehydrated out in California, and they're going to the Army depot near Richmond.

On a Southern Pacific flat car, six traction engines and parts, made in Illinois, and headed for Norfolk, Va., were easily identified.

Next in line were two cars containing 1,035 bales of alfalfa hay traveling from Arizona to Richmond. The following three cars were loaded with motor trucks. Then came carloads of fuel oil from New Mexico, corn from Kentucky, firebrick from Missouri and more fuel oil from Ohio.

The next car indicated that our troops at Camp Lee soon would have plenty of lettuce since it carried 23,712 pounds of the leafy vegetable. In fact, this train was well supplying the Army's need for food, I discovered, for behind the carload of lettuce were two carloads of dried peas from Iowa moving to the Army's food depot near Richmond. Then came a carload of corn - 100,000 pounds of it - originating in Illinois and going to Portsmouth, Va., as was its traveling companion back of it - a Canadian National Railway's car loaded with another 100,000 pounds of corn. The B&O car behind them contained 1,400 packages of condensed milk for Petersburg.

"I certainly hope they don't get these cars mixed up," I remarked to Conductor Akers, pointing to the two cars of lubricating oil immediately behind the condensed milk.

"Yes, we'll have to be pretty careful about that," he replied, "since we have more condensed milk behind the oil, 143 tons of it as a matter of fact. And, you will note that this milk is marked 'for export.' That means it's going overseas for feeding some of the hungry people of liberated Europe."

The variety was seemingly endless. For example, the next car was loaded with 600 bundles of asbestos shingles and 600 cartons of building paper from Ohio, destined for Norfolk. Then

there was another carload of milk - this time evaporated milk from Kentucky.

Baled hay, 23,900 pounds of it, followed and then came a string of 14 tank cars loaded with more fuel oil. "This is going to the Pacific," remarked Mr. Akers.

"Well," he went on, "we'll have to have a little salt to mix in with all this food, so here we have 62,420 pounds of the seasoning which comes from Port Huron, Mich., I believe."

"Ever see a carload of 'life-savers'?" queried Conductor Akers, as we approached the last car.

"No," I promptly replied, thinking of what fun thousands of children, as well as a mint-restricted public, could have if they were turned loose in a freight carload of those round packages with the familiar "O" wrappers.

"Well, this last car contained just that - life-savers. But they're weren't candy, mind you. They're pneumatic rubber life rafts, manufactured in Ohio and consigned to Miami, Fla. Who knows but what one of those rafts will save the life of some Norfolk and Western employee now in the armed forces.

During the remainder off our journey to Roanoke I got better acquainted with Conductor Akers, Brakeman V. J. Scott and P. A. Richardson. "You know," said Mr. Akers, "you could keep a whole town going with the stuff on this train. You could feed the citizens with grapefruit, ham and eggs, cheese and milk, corn, potatoes, bread, peas, tomatoes and lettuce. You could house them in homes built of lumber complete with plumbing, roofing and chimneys - we even have an excavator to dig the foundation. Yes, and we've got lumber to make the furniture. There's plenty of oil, gasoline and rubber for the autos in the town and feed for the cows which furnish the milk and butter. We've even got some tobacco and matches to light it with.

"Sakes alive, Mr. Akers, if just one freight train carries all of that stuff just imagine what our real-life cities and towns would suffer if the railroads ever stopped running."

"You've got something there, all right," he replied, "and what's more some folks don't take into consideration how efficiently we move the

stuff. In this train, pulled by just one locomotive, there are approximately 3,000 net tons of goods, representing the raw materials or manufactured products of 21 states. When it comes to assembling and moving a lot of things from a lot of different places, and moving them a long distance at economical cost, I reckon the railroad is just about tops.”

“There is no doubt of that, Conductor Akers. I believe we Americans will always use trains on tracks as our major means of mass transportation. Thanks a lot for a most interesting trip. I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.”

20 Minutes to Roanoke...

by Chris Hazlehurst

With the assistance of British Rail, United Airline and Alamo Rental car, it takes about 17 hours to get from home to North Jefferson Street. It’s almost 10 years to the day since I started making the trip and so much has happened in that time.

What got me interested, I think the video of the 1987 Convention helped and the writing of David P. Morgan in Trains magazine had a bearing. Doubtless we all remember “Roanoke-Alamo For Steam” and my favorite “20 Minutes To Roanoke.” My first trip in June 1988 should have started downtown but the airline delayed me and a hasty taxi ride to Christiansburg got me in front of the 1218 heading for Chicago with Independence Limited 1988. Upon arriving in Bluefield and finding no taxi service, I walked to the station from the hotel to spend the evening with the “A”.

I was immediately hooked on “big steam” and returned during the fall to meet up with the 611 and NKP 765 on the New River train. To date, it’s been 25 trips and hopefully many more to come. I joined the Roanoke Chapter in 1989 and have managed to meet the membership qualifications most years. Some trips have been organized around regular meetings, but one memorable occasion was assisting with washing down the cars on Friday before Columbus day weekend trips.

I followed the train around over the years. A favorite run was Chattanooga-Oneida and also through the Rat-Hole Division at Kings Mountain and Burnside. The pattern quickly settled in to joining the October festivities each year, arriving on Thursday, taking in the scene on Friday, chasing on Saturday and riding on Sunday. What happy memories of those trips to Bluefield, standing for hours beside a dutch door listening to steam superpower and watching the Virginia landscape roll by.

What separates Roanoke from other places I visit is the people. They always have time for you and are glad to answer questions and be your friend. Upon hitting town, I normally head for Ken’s Trains where Bob Bowers always asks about the Royal Family. I was a regular at the Motel 6 until it closed, so now it is the Super 8. Whilst the steam trips were a natural draw, I enjoy just being there and often spend an hour after dinner parked near the station waving at the engineers as freights roll through.

I’m one of Winston Link’s many English fans. I’ve met him several times and his signed prints of Hot SHot Eastbound and Mainline on Main Street adorn the dining room wall. Perhaps we could commemorate the 40th anniversary of the passing of N&W steam (the first time) by meeting up at Williamson in two years and perhaps Winston could take a group picture.

The trip in October 1994, gave no inkling of what was to come a few weeks later. A friend saw mention on the internet and a call to Ken Miller confirmed the sad news. But at least the 611 is home where she belongs and we can always hope that she may turn a wheel again some day.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Chapter members for their kindness during my visits, particularly Bill Arnold, Bill Carson, Grace Helmer, Paul Howell and especially Ken Miller and family who always make me feel welcome.

I look forward, as ever, to the next time that I can rent a car at Dulles Airport, drive down I-81 and know from the mileage board that I’m just 20 minutes to Roanoke.

The Worlds Largest Steam locomotive will move after 30 years.

submitted by Harold Castleman via the Internet

On Thursday, August 13, 1998, at the Age of Steam Railroad Museum, located inside the Dallas Fair Park, the worlds largest amd most powerful steam locomotive ever built will be moved for the first time in 30 years.

The "Big Boy" No. 4018 is 132 feet long, 16 feet high, and weighing in at 1.2 million pounds will undergo a rolling evaluation as the initial stage of its refurbishment to begin in August 1998 where it is tentatively scheduled to be moved to Sherman, Texas for fullrestoration.

This locomotive is said to be the only one still in existence that is capable of being refurbished to running condition. It is estimated that its refurbishment will cost about 2 million dollars and take about 4 to 6 months. The restoration will be spearheaded by McKinney based High Ball Films and Diversified Rail Services of Osceola, Wisconsin (<http://discover.discover-net.net/~steam/pages/drs.html>) one of the top steam

refurbishers in the country, and the Age of Steam Railroad Museum.

Upon completion of the restoration, the locomotive will be used in an upcoming epic train film entitled "Big Boy" slated for Christmas release 1999. Inspired by the part railroading has played in American history, two Dallas based filmmakers, Producer Danny Bishop, and Director Phil Pfeiffer, co-wrote a screenplay called "Big Boy" and are currently in development to produce the film in early 1999.

Producer Danny Bishop, who also teaches film making at SMU, describes the story as a contemporary fable with historical flashbacks and richly textured characters. Bishop joins Joe Pope, King Hollis, Mark Bowen, as producers, while Phil Pfeiffer, 2nd unit director/director of photography on films such as: "Dances with Wolves", "JFK", "Cliffhanger", "Natural Born Killers", "The Horse Whisperer", will direct.

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