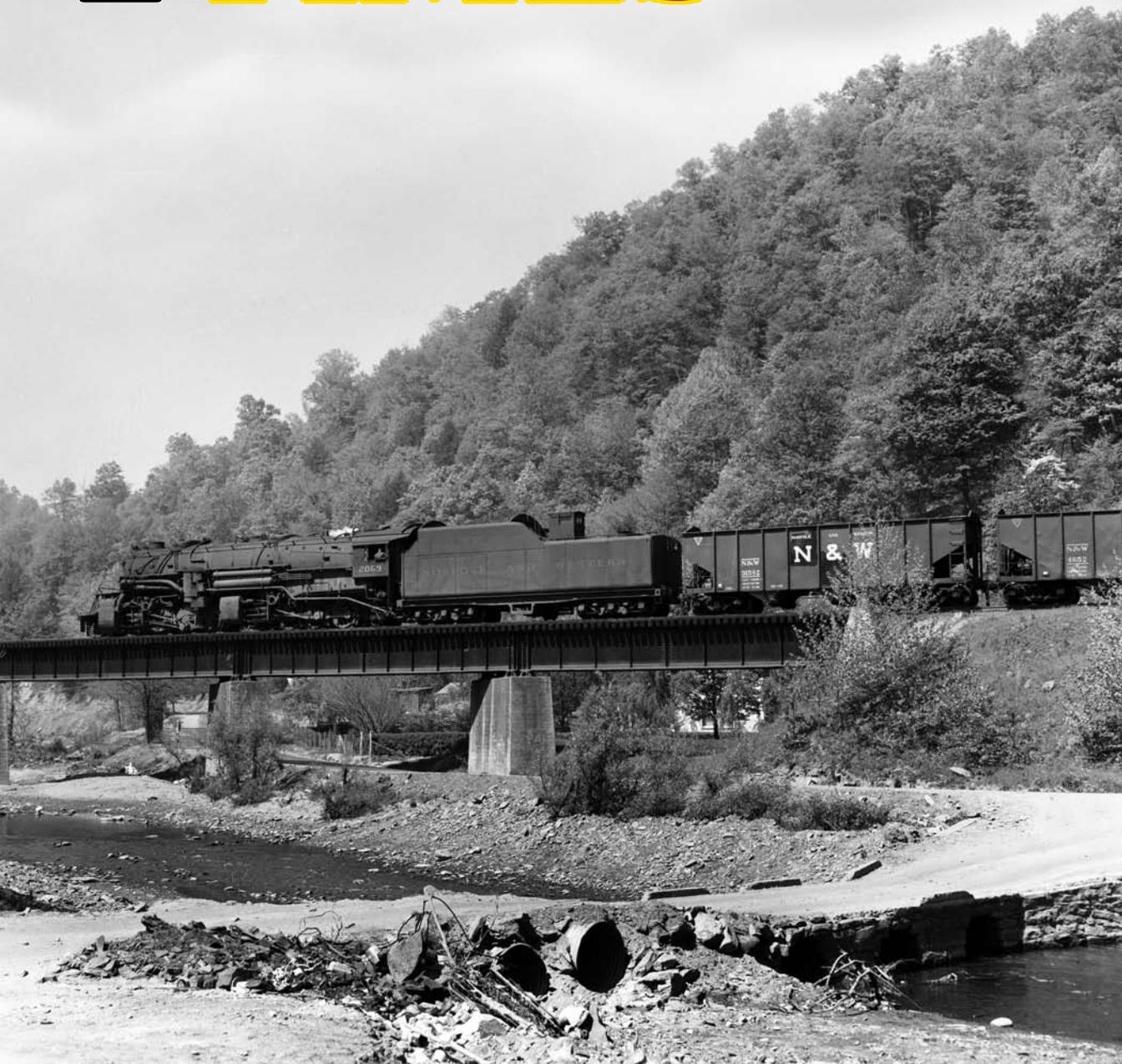




Turntable **TIMES**

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

Volume 42, Number 5
September-October 2010





Turntable TIMES

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Sept.-Oct. 2010**

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Turntable Times is published bimonthly as the newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. Opinions and points of view expressed here-in 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 regular meeting on Thursday, September 16th at 7:30 pm. at the Link Museum located in the former N&W Passenger Station, 101 Shenandoah Avenue.

Our October meeting will be held on Thursday, October 21, 2010 at the O. Winston Link Museum in the auditorium.

Our November Annual meeting will be held Thursday, November, 18, 2010.

Watch the website to see the announcement of other programs.

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 Bonnie Molinary. Bonnie is responsible for Chapter cards and flowers and can be reached at 362-0273.

Deadline for Turntable Times

The deadline for the November/December 2010 issue of Turntable Times is Monday, October 18, 2010. Please send articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, VA 24078-2128. All parties sending newsletters to the Roanoke Chapter via email should send them to: kkirkman50@hotmail.com and Ken Miller at klmiller@rev.net

Meeting Cancellation Policy

Any Chapter meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are due to weather: Roanoke City Schools are closed on the day of or for the day after the meeting, or Virginia Western night classes are cancelled for the night of a meeting.

Cover Photo

Another wonderful John Krause photo shows the 2069 drifting along leading a hopper train in a bucolic country scene. However, I'd bet that scene was not so peaceful in the past few weeks before the photo as witnessed by the damage to the low water bridge and culvert in the foreground in addition to all the rocks scattered on the banks. Of note is the freshly repainted repairs to the first hopper car in the train.

K. L. Miller Collection

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held at the O. Winston Link Museum on Thursday, November 18, 2010. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm. At this time, we will hold our annual election in which four (4) directors will be elected.

Board members whose terms are expiring are as follows:

Landon Gregory
Bill Mason
Ken Miller
Eddie Mooneyham

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, please be sure you have that person's consent before making a nomination.

The Roanoke Chapter is soliciting nominees for Directors to be voted on at the November Annual Meeting. There are four (4) positions to be voted on. Please consider putting your name in nomination. Within the last few years the Chapter's responsibilities have greatly increased, what with the Virginian Station project, our excursions, and the Chapter's equipment. Please consider helping out. You may contact a member of the nominating committee - Bonnie Molinary, Dorr Tucker, and Jim Overholser, chairman.

Instructions for Absentee Ballot: This year we will elect four (4) directors by secret ballot. Any member in good standing may vote by absentee ballot.

Please Note: if you are interested in running, or know of another Chapter member who is, please contact the nominating committee promptly.

If there are no more candidates than posi-

tions, a motion to elect by acclaim will be accepted.

To vote by absentee ballot, one must:

1 - Request an absentee ballot from the Secretary or a member of the nominating committee. You will receive (a) one ballot; (b) one "ballot" envelope; and (c) one mailing envelope.

2 - Mark the ballot (vote for not more than five (5) directors. If more than four (4) votes are cast, the ballot will be discarded).

3 - Place the ballot in the "ballot" envelope and seal. Do not put your name on the ballot or "ballot" envelope.

4 - Place "ballot" envelope in the mailing envelope. Write your name and return address on the envelope and mail to:

Roanoke Chapter, NRHS
P.O. Box 13222
Roanoke, VA 24032-1322

or the envelope may be hand delivered to the Secretary anytime before the election at the annual meeting.

Fall Excursion Trains

by Dorr Tucker and Jim Overholser

We are looking forward to our Fall 2010 Excursions to be held on Saturday, November 6, and Sunday, November 7. This year we will operate with a slightly different consist and head to a new destination.

For the first time ever Danville, Virginia, located on the main line of the old Southern Railway, will be our destination. We will depart from Roanoke at 9AM on the 6th heading east, take the Tinker Creek connection to the former Virginian Railway, pass through two tunnels, get a quick peek of Smith Mountain Lake before passing through Moneta and Huddleston. Some 43 miles from Roanoke below the Leesville Dam on the Roanoke River we will enter the

two mile long Hurt connection linking the former Virginian with the Southern Railway just south of Altavista, Virginia.

Heading South from that point we will pass by Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham. Twelve miles before reaching Danville we will head up White Oak Mountain (more like a hill) on a ___ % grade. We won't pass over Stillhouse Trestle where "Steve" Broady wrecked the fast mail train known as Old '97 back on September 27, 1903. That structure was demolished in 1935 some twenty plus years after the Southern main line was rebuilt before World War I. We will have covered 85 miles by the time we reach the inviting park-like setting around the Danville passenger station.

The station is now part of the campus of the Danville Science Center, a satellite facility of the Science Museum of Virginia. Built in 1899, the depot was relocated 133 feet upon the completion of Southern's 1915 line relocation. The building was jacked up on rollers and crews used mules and stump pullers to move the structure. In 1922 the building burned and was rebuilt within it's original walls in modified form excluding a central tower.

Some of the other attractions near the station include a river walk trail, a small amphitheater, shuttle buses to downtown, and a farmers market. A catered pork shoulder barbeque including grilled chicken and all the fixins including tea will be available for \$10 (advance reservations required).

We plan to head north from Danville at 2:00 PM via the Montview/Kinney wye in Lynchburg and Bedford. The mileage for the return route is 113.

Always a winner, the Bluefield trip on Sunday, November 7, will be much the same as last year with an 8:00 AM Eastern Standard Time departure from our Star City (note the time change!). Upon arrival in

natures air-conditioned city we will have an array of dining options including "The Heritage Cafe" (seating 300), "The Internet Cafe" (seating 45), "The Historic Commerical Bank" (seating 175) and the "Sugar Shack Cafe" (seating 330 on two floors).

Our consist will be much the same as last year with three Genesis units, 9 Amfleet coaches, two cafe cars, a Powhatan Arrow Coach, and five first class cars including an ex-Santa Fe Super Dome that will give us 66 more dome seats than we had in 2009.

Even though ticket sales are now under way we have a long way to go. We appreciate the support of all members and affiliated organizations who are helping to sell tickets.

Many Chapter members have signed up to work on our November 6 and 7 Chapter excursions but if you haven't yet you can still do so. Contact Jeff Sanders, 520-3668, or Jim Overholser, 343-1928, or either by email. Training is scheduled at the 9th Street Chapter Siding for 230 PM Sunday, October 17 and 10 AM Saturday, October 23 - you only need to attend one session. Contact Jim Overholser if you can't attend either session - we will have make up sessions as needed. We want everyone who would like to work to have a chance. If you can only work one of the two days that is OK.

A cleanup day will be on the train on Friday, November 5 for everyone who can help out.

Of course, let's not forget, for those folks who cannot ride our trips for one reason or another. The prior weekend, October 30-31, the Watauga Valley Chapter/NC Museum of Transportation (Spencer Shops) will be running the excursion consist. On October 30, they will run from Spencer to Roanoke and return, and on Sunday from Spencer up to Asheville and return. Remember to support any of the excursion trips, as they are primary fundraising events for all concerned.

Mixed Freight September/ October 2010

by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

I attended The Manassas Railway Festival the first Saturday in June. I must say it left a lot to be desired from the perspective of a heart 'n soul railroad enthusiast. What I experienced would be okay for light-weight daisy pickers. There was only one dealer selling worthwhile railfan apparel and railroadianna items. The rest was not even railroad related. I did enjoy the model railroad layouts under the pavilion and one large tent. I also rode the VRE train to Burke and back. As always, FOOD WAS IN ABUNDANCE and most of the folks patronizing these vendors should have been patronizing Wieght Watchers instead.

I also attended WEST VIRGINIA RAILS 2010. This too left much to be desired too after advertising itself as an event that would have a number of steam locomotives from all over the country operating. The one steamer that a number of fans wanted to see, photograph and ride behind was the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad 734, which was unable to make it because the couplers were non compliant with a CSX rule. The two steamers that were present were Flagg Coal Company # 75 and New Hope Valley Railroad # 17. One steamer was on the south end of the excursion train and one was on the north end. There were quite a few vendors on hand with good merchandise of appeal to railfans and non-railfans too. Attendance on Saturday Day 2 was light. That would be true for the night photo session too. I mainly enjoyed seeing and photographing the C&O 8016 F unit and the newly painted former Potomac Eagle F unit painted now in a B&O heritage scheme from the 50s, a very good job for an extremely detailed and intricate scheme that B&O and

fallen flag fans can really appreciate. It was also good to see the motive power for the South Branch Valley Railroad too.

Lynchburg Rail Day 2010 was a success this August 14th past. High enthusiasm and low weather temperatures combined to create a number of happy faces and greener bottom lines for a number of vendors. The most enjoyable part of this event for a lot of people is the reunion aspect. You see people at this event that you don't see elsewhere including trackside. This is especially true since the termination of the Norfolk Southern Steam Program. Kudos to the LRD 2010 staff.

A few months ago, a railfan associate informed me of a website I could go to to find out what company holds what reporting mark that you see on the sides and ends of freight cars. The printer put out 60 single side pages of AAR reporting marks. Despite all of that, I am still seeing reporting marks that have been out for more than a year but not within those 60 pages.

2010 marks year 5 for the RF&P Historical Society. We are up to 430 members with in the bank cash of just over 25 grand. A few of our members worked as railroad merit badge counselors at the annual Boy Scout Jamboree held in Bowling Green, Virginia just north of Richmond this past July. 1,455 railroad merit badges were earned at that event. How many of these people will remain or become railfans or railroaders is anybody's guess.

I'm a year late but I'll mention the following anyway. 2009 marked the 30 year anniversary of the former Southern Railway Linwood Yard in Linwood, N.C. 2009 also marked 20 years since the Buckingham Branch began operating the former C&O branch from Brems Bluff to Dillwyn, VA.

Believe it or not, it has been 5 years since the last Norfolk Southern train traveled the

now gone Farmville line. The train was east-bound to Crewe.

This March 31st marked 30 years since the Rock Island Railroad ceased operations. 2010 marks 10 years since Amtrak presented the Acela to America.

There will be an Altoona Railfest 2010. It will be held the first weekend in October. Check out the details at railroadcity.com The following weekend, the East Broad Top Railroad will have it's annual Autumn Spectacular Weekend. Keep in mind those folks are celebrating 50 years of existence as a tourist operation so the activities up there will have an extra flair of energy. Do that spider thing at www.EBTRR.com or phone them at 814-447-3011.

Here and There

by Kenney Kirkman

The U.S. Army is considering using train travel to move troops from Fort Lee to Fort AP Hill for training purposes, with the idea of moving 800 to 1100 soldiers per week between the two installations. Plans are for Amtrak to operate the military shuttle service, with plans to acquire up to three locomotives and as many as twelve railcars from the Virginia Railway Express for this service. Fort Lee is near Hopewell and Petersburg and Fort AP Hill is in Caroline County with the closet city of magnitude being Fredericksburg. VRE is selling older equipment, both cars and locomotives. Initial plans are for this service to commence this fall, initially discharging the troops for AP Hill at the Milford Station, about three miles from the base. By using rail for these movements, up to 4000 bus trips and 320 tractor-trailer moves, would be removed annually from Virginia roadways. The Army plans to allow the State to use the equipment for natural disasters or emergencies, and it is believed this project

would also be a recruiting tool. If this plan is implemented, it would be the first time in roughly forty years that rail passenger equipment has been used by the military. (From 'The World of Railroads' by Jerry Grosshans, Old Dominion Chapter newsletter, "Highball").

120-year old ex-Southern Railway Consolidation locomotive No. 154 made its first run in 57 years on July 3 in Knoxville, Tennessee after a two-year rebuild. It is operated by the Three Rivers Rambler excursion group and served western North Carolina and east Tennessee until the Southern Railway gave it to Knoxville in 1953. It had been on display in Knoxville's Chilhowee Park. (Info. from 'White Flags and Steam', North Alabama Railroad Museum newsletter).

In Canadian steam news, The Rocky Mountain Rail Society ran a large number of excursions with the former CN 4-8-2 # 6060 in July. Longtime Roanoke Chapter members who attended the 1980 NRHS Convention in Toronto will remember this locomotive, which powered several trips during the Toronto Convention, including one to Niagara Falls. No. 6060 is the only "Mountain type" locomotive currently running in North America. It operates regularly in the service of Alberta Prairie Steam Tours of Stettler to Big Valley. (Info. from 'The Michigan Railfan' via 'The 470', newsletter of the 470 Railroad Club).

And, Master Mechanic for Southern Railway/NS, William "Bill" James Purdie, Jr., the beloved master mechanic for Southern Railway's extensive steam excursions in the 1960s and 1970s, passed away on July 22, 2010. He was 95. Purdie joined Southern Railway as helper in 1936 and progressed to machinist, and later to roundhouse foreman at Atlanta's Pegram Shops in 1952. Longtime railfans will recall Purdie hold-

ing down the fireman's side of the cab on engines 4501, 722, 630, and 750, or working at night to prepare them for the excursion the next day. As the years went on, Purdie was instrumental in the restoration and operation of other steam locomotives that Southern leased, including Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 No. 610, Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2839, and Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 No. 2716. With the Southern-Norfolk & Western merger, Purdie concluded his career with the restoration of N&W Class J No. 611. He retired in December, 1982, but kept busy with the Southeastern Railway Museum near Atlanta and as a consultant and friend to steam restoration projects nationwide. (Info. from various sources including TRAINS Magazine and www.legacy.com)

My Memories of One-Way Trip (Part Four)

by Joe Fagan

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT. After the war ended and the units began breaking up the secrets of what the different units had been doing started to be told. At that time Pakistan and Bangladesh were not yet established. All of that territory was still British controlled India. Through India was the only access to China. Men and equipment had to be flown across the Hump on Chinese National Air Corporation (CNAC) or it was driven in truck convoys over the Burma Road. Calcutta was the entry point for personnel and supplies. It the supply point for the whole operation of SACO. SACO was such a secret undercover organization that even the British Army and Indian government were kept out. They were led to believe that SACO was just an ordinary operation. HEADQUARTERS was located in Chungking, China. All of SACO was controlled from there.

UNIT ONE, the oldest unit located in

Chong Shuen, China, was established far behind Japanese lines in April, 1943. It was located 2,200 miles from Chungking, China, headquarters of SACO. Unit One was surrounded by Japanese forces for the entire time of its existence to the end of the war. 6,976 Guerilla fighters were trained at Unit One for Tail Li's Loyal Patriotic Army (LPA). They were equipped with small arms and Thompson Machine guns and various high explosives and were to gather military intelligence as well as blowing up anything that would help keep Japs alive. AEROLOGY units were posted through the mountains and made weather maps of the information gained by their local readings. They had to figure all of this out for themselves and then radio their information to Chungking weather central where it was all made into maps for the use of Army Air Force and Navy Carrier planes and Submarines COAST WATCHER positions were located along the coastal shipping lanes to report Japanese vessels by type and size and direction. The coast watcher and a radioman and a Chinese guerilla usually were a team. They had to walk, carrying heavy radio and sporting equipment many miles through China to get to their spotting positions all in Japanese controlled territory. Their headquarters was in Changchow, China. There were classes in Chungking teaching the men assigned as Aerologist and Coast Watcher and any other jobs behind the Jap lines how to walk like Chinese coolies and how to carry the yoyo yokes like the coolies did. They took atabrine tablets and sunbaths each day to make them the color of Chinese farmers and how to dress and act like them. It must have worked because none were ever caught.

UNIT TWO was set up in Nanyo, Hunan Province. Its purpose was much like Unit One, training LPA troops in American weapons and guerilla tactics and SACO men how

to hide in plain sight. Many Chinese guerilla commandos joined the fight to exterminate the Japs after training at Unit Two.

UNIT THREE departed Chungking in August, 1943 by truck convoy on the Burma Road extension. After ten days travel they arrived at Paoki, China and loaded on railroad flatcars of the Lung-Hai Railway. At Wai Ying, Shensi the trucks were unloaded and driven to a friendlier place to re-load to avoid a large contingent of Japs in the area and eventually set up camp at Linju, China. In April 1944 the Japanese began an offensive in the area of Unit Three, which caused SACO to move to another location. They decided not to stand and fight because they may have lost the fight. Twenty-five Americans and four hundred Chinese might have lost against 25,000 Japanese.

UNIT FOUR was formed in Chungking and with a convoy of twelve trucks left on December 18, 1943 traveling to Shan Pa, Suiyan Province arriving there January 18, 1944. There were many break downs on the charcoal powered Chinese trucks. They had to cross the Yellow River at Wu Chung Pao. It was usually frozen enough for trucks to cross in mid December. When they arrived there however it still not frozen and they had to wait until January 8, 1944 before they could cross. They arrived at the camp-site January 18, 1944. They were to train Chinese LPA troops and make weather readings on the Gobi Desert. The Chinese army provided horses for the Americans for their military and personal use. One action had three SACO men and 200 Chinese Guerillas marching to Peking when they were attacked by a Japanese armored column of six tanks, five Bren gun carriers and 400 cavalrymen. The good guys took out two tanks and four gun carriers and 70 men and forced the rest to retreat. Dr. Henry L. Heimlich, famous for the Heimlich maneuver, was a member of

Unit Four.

UNIT FIVE was established in August 1944 by taking a portion of Unit Two personnel and taking up position in southeast China at the city of Nanning, South Kwangsi. They were to train and equip 1,000 Chinese guerillas. A special class of them was trained as assassins to work in occupied cities. That explains the cases of assassin guns and the many cases of both Thompson and Marlin machine guns I saw in one of the SACO warehouses.

UNIT SIX was formed in July 1944 and was located in Changehow and Huaan in Fukien Province. They were there to train Chinese guerillas in the use of American weapons as well as demolition, scouting and patrolling along with other methods to make life miserable for the Japanese. Unit Six did demolition along the coast and placed mines off the coast of China.

UNIT SEVEN personnel arrived in Teng-Feng in late September 1944. The Chinese had one thousand men waiting to train in the same guerilla tactics and small arms use. As with the other units they attacked Japanese installations with much success.

UNIT EIGHT personnel arrived in Calcutta with the Unit Seven contingent and set up a camp at Yu Hu, Chekiang Province where 500 Chinese waited for training. After training four or five Americans would go with groups of them on raids and demolition actions.

YANGTZE RIVER RAIDERS were probably the most active unit of SACO. The unit was formed in April 1944 when Adm. Miles and General Tai Li met at Nanyo, Hunan Province and authorized Lt. J. E. Champe and Gen. Tong Shien to form a force in Mankiang, but after training a group of saboteurs they set up headquarters in Hsiu Shui and began training 500 Guerilla Commandos. By the end of the war there

were 21 Americans and more than 1,000 guerillas in the unit. They were to cover an area of 24,500 square miles including a great stretch of the Han River and the Yangtze River. The saboteurs destroyed many warehouses of Japanese military supplies, Jap radio stations, highway and railroad bridges, locomotives and equipment and steam ships on the Yangtze River disrupting traffic for the Japs enroute to Northern areas.

UNIT NINE. Early on it was decided SACO needed a school of Intelligence and Counter-Espionage. After much discussion and 'wait and see' thinking, the school was approved by Washington. One hundred ninety tons of equipment was needed. Everything from the electronics of the day to trucks, teaching equipment, even war dogs, horses and carrier pigeons (remember it was the 1940s). After many months of assembling all of the equipment and loading it aboard the Liberty Ship Joseph Leconte, sailing half way around the world and driving it over the Burma Road to Chungking, the school was finally established near Headquarters. The first class started on January 8, 1945. In July 1945, five hundred thirty five students graduated the intensive course and then another very secret thing happened. The secret of the Atom Bomb was revealed with two BANGS and the war was over. Unit 9's material was transported to Shanghai to establish a shore patrol and to reactivate Naval facilities there.

UNIT TEN was formed on January 5, 1945 at Hsi Feng., Kweichow Province to train guerillas to help stem the Japanese drives at Kweiyang and operate against Japanese troops and supply trains. There were two battalions of guerillas waiting at Hsi Feng for training. They were in such bad physical condition that it was necessary to get them back in good health before training could start. Progress was made until mid

March when a typhus epidemic broke out. Many of the guerillas died but the strength of the two battalions remained the same. Every time one would drop out another man would take his place and training would continue. In the six months the unit was in operation it trained 1,410 guerillas. 1,100 guerillas had been sent to act as a tenth column against Japs in the Kweilin-Liuchow corridor. They barely had time to get in position before the war was over.

Obviously, no longer than I was in Calcutta in the supply unit I wouldn't have been able to learn much about SACO. I have condensed the information here about SACO from a unit history titled 'SACO, THE RICE PADDY NAVY' by Roy Olin Stratton, who was in command of the Calcutta operations while I was there. (End Part Four of My Memories of One-Way Trip).

Important Websites for Steam Information

With so much happening so fast regarding the return of steam to several Southern Railway engines, here is a list of helpful websites. For starters:

- Southern Railway Historical Association, www.srha.net
- Southern Railway #154 Documentary, www.southern154.com
- Southern Railway #401 Information, www.mymr.com
- Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum www.tvrail.org
- NC Transportation Museum (Spencer Shops), www.nctrans.org
- Southeastern Railway Museum, (Duluth, GA), www.srmduluth.org;
- Norfolk Southern www.nscorp.com

(From information submitted by Mr. Robin R. Shavers)

Condolences

The Chapter extends its sympathy to Beth and Ken Miller, Beth's mother Roberta Kressler passed away after illness on July 30.

Former member Richard Sherman has been ailing in recent weeks, but is expected to make a full recovery.

Long time member Jim Carter passed away in early August as well. Jim had retired and moved to the beach several years ago, but was an active member in the early years of the Chapter.

Coach 1827 Update

On August 16, at 4:22 pm, coach 1827 arrived at its new home, the Monticello Railroad Museum in Montecello, Illinois. This marked the first time the car had returned to Wabash rails since 1994.

Prime Time Dome for Cardinal

The last surviving Amtrak dome car ex Santa Fe Great Dome No. 10031 will operate on the Cardinal; during the period Oct. 30-Nov 12 running west from Washington on Fridays and east from Chicago on Saturdays. Will enterprising rail fans find a way to get to and from Clifton Forge so that they will be able to ride another dome on our Danville trip on Nov. 6? We will be glad to sell a dome seat out of Roanoke but they will have to make their own arrangements for the Clifton Forge Connection.

Cuyahoga Valley News

Viscose No. 6, a saddle tank, coal fired 0-4-0 used at what is now our maintenance facility in Southeast Roanoke until after World War II and stored for many years at the Gem City Junk Co. in Pulaski Will operate on The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad out of Akron Ohio this month. Along with the little "tea kettle" former NKP Berkshire 765 will also run.

Not a locomotive, but with a Roanoke history ex Central of Georgia Budd built combine No. 391, The Fort Mitchell, will also be operating on the Ohio tourist line. This car built in 1947 for Central of Georgia's "Man of War" streamliner was sold to the Chapter by Southern Railway in 1979, operated on many of the 611 and 1218 trips and was later sold to the Cuyahoga Valley in early 1995.

Punkin' Vine Part One; Roanoke to Winston-Salem, NC

by Gary Price, via Watagua Valley NRHS
Newsletter

Just mention the name Punkin' Vine and they will automatically know that you are referring to the 126 miles of railroad tracks that twist and turn their way south from Roanoke, Virginia, through Martinsville, Virginia, across the North Carolina border and on to the yard at Winston-Salem, NC. The line was originally chartered in 1887 as the Roanoke and Southern Railroad, was leased by the Norfolk and Western in 1892, and in 1896 the N&W purchased the R&S. Today the line is known as Norfolk Southern's Eastern Region R-line. The railroad served various industries along the line, but the most dominate commodity was furniture. All along the Punkin Vine, the town names were synonymous with the manufactures of fine furniture, Henry, Bassett, Stanley, and Walkertown—world renown for their quality furniture and mirrors.

My trip along this fabled route began at Starkey, Virginia (MP R-12), just south of Roanoke. The job was to begin at Rocky Mount, VA (MP R-33) so that meant a relaxing 21 mile trip through scenic countryside and small towns, a nice way to start off a Monday. We broke ground and began work-

ing southward. Several days and seven miles later we were in the college town of Ferrum. There is an active signal replacement program taking place along this line, and several N&W style position lights have been recently replaced with the newer Safetran (Southern) style signals.

Train traffic along this route is only around 6 mainline trains and two locals, but the NS274 is a priority auto train bound for Walkertown, NC, and we were instructed that we could not begin work until 274 had passed, so several days we were not able to work until after lunch. Pay me to set and watch trains all morning? Heck Yeah! One particular morning, an elderly black lady stopped by, and she was having a fund raiser for her local church and had baked up some chicken, biscuits, and fried apple pies, so she asked if we was interested. It took her about five minutes to sell-out all her goodies, so we looked for her the next day, but never saw her again, as we moved on down the line a few days after.

Working through the one industrial areas that I mentioned above is a depressing sight. If you ever want to see the effects of NAFTA first hand, go visit Bassett, VA, and talk with the people there. A majority of the factories have relocated overseas and shut down operations along this line, and the ones left no longer use rail service. When I first worked this line in 1996 there were 15 active switch tracks in Stanley and Bassett alone, and I was amazed to discover there is only one switch track left in service, and it is used only for storage. We finished our job at the MP R-58. and traveled south, passing Martinsville Raceway and tied down at Fontaine (MP R-71) for the weekend.

Next month we will continue our journey into the great state of North Carolina.

New Book Coming

Aubrey Wiley's new book, *Virginian Railway Pictorial - Pictures and Stories*, is the first new book on the Virginian Railway in many years, and the largest in over 40 years. It contains over 225 vintage pictures in black & white from his and other private collections of the railroad's trains, equipment, structures and locations as well as many stories from former VGN employees and people who lived along and rode the Virginian. The hardback, 144 page book contains: overview of Virginian Railway history, coverage with pictures and stories from milepost zero in Norfolk, Virginia to milepost 435 in south central West Virginia, as well as almost 200 miles of branch line and trackage rights operation. One chapter details the railroad's nearly 49 years of passenger train service, while other chapters present information, pictures and stories on a very wide range of topics and many lesser known events in the railroad's history. Examples include a retired engineer recalling his running of an N&W class J steam engine on a detoured N&W passenger train. Learn about the routine operation of a Shay locomotive on VGN's mainline, away from home terminals, beaneries, a branch line with a switchback, where milepost zero was actually located, VGN's searchlight signals, motor cars, and many other phases of the railroad's operation. And of course, all types of VGN's locomotives are pictured; steam, electric and diesel, as well as passenger and freight trains and company structures.

Not to forget our "Lost Engines"

While many of us are pursuing the challenging, complex issues of the Virginian Station Restoration and others are working with our Fall Amtrak Excursions, Gary Wood, Harold Hunley, Chris Hunley and John Garnand as well as others are focusing

their efforts on Norfolk and Western M2, 4-8-0 No. 1118.

As we know , this locomotive along with 4 other steam and 2 diesels had been rusting away under weeds and vines at Virginia Scrap Iron for 49 years.

Thanks to the efforts of these members the cosmetic restoration of this locomotive is well under way. Gary a master machinist and retired Radford Division engineer along with retired N&W shop foreman Harold Hunley and son Chris and along with John Garnand and others have a goal in mind. That goal is the ability for the locomotive to roll on its own wheels. Then the engine could be moved from place to place for display. Will Gary and his gang stop when that goal is reached? Don't bet on it!

Later we will give you an update on what is going on with the 2 Baldwin diesel units.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

Regular Meeting Locations are at the O. Winston Link Museum.

July 15 - Regular Meeting
August 3 - Board Meeting
August 19 - Regular Meeting
September 7 - Board Meeting
September 16 - General Meeting
October 5 - Board Meeting
October 21 - General Meeting
Nov. 2 - Board Meeting
Nov. 5-6 - Amtrak trips (tentative)
Nov. 18 - Annual Meeting and Election of Directors

Visit us on the web: www.RoanokeNRHS.org

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