

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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The Virginia Handicap at Walton Downs – Down the Final Stretch

The recent excitement over the return of the #611 to excursion service motivated your editor to dig this photo out of his archives. It's 1982, the 611-led excursion has been turned at the Walton wye and is headed back to Roanoke. All of the commotion was more than these horses could handle, provoking them to break out of their corral, racing down the tracks, headed for a photo finish while leaving the Queen of Steam furlongs behind. Despite what this photograph suggests, the locomotive's engineer was not racing the horses, and they were given more than ample time to clear the tracks and to be caught unharmed.

General Membership Meeting

***** Date/day change: Tuesday, June 23rd *****

The next GWVRHS&M general Membership Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 23rd**, starting at 6:30 p.m., and located at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Please note the **date/day change** due to the library having to make changes for June meetings; Car host training for the Norfolk Southern Steam Excursion out of Bristol on June 26-27-28 will be conducted at this meeting. All volunteers that will work the excursion need to attend. If you have a problem in attending, please call Mike Tilley at 423-335-0903 for a makeup session to be scheduled. Mark your calendar so you will not miss this meeting.

Member Notes

By Nancy Jewel

Our sympathy is extended to George and Nancy Ritchie in the death of their sister-in-law, Lynice Ritchie, on May 9, 2015. Lynice was the widow of George's brother, Ernest "Gebe" Ritchie of Elizabethton.

Please keep the following folks in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns: Carrie Denny, Jim Calhoun, Bob Hand, Sidney Blankenbeckler, George and Margaret Holley, Gary Price, Bob Yapple and Bob May. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is 423-753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Your help is appreciated.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN BRISTOL TRAIN EXCURSIONS

We are happy to announce that coach seats on the Bristol #4501 train excursions have sold out for the weekend of June 27th & 28th. Premium seats are still available. We added the third trip to Radford on the 26th for which we are expecting a sell-out also. If you volunteered to work the excursions, please remember to attend the safety meeting on June 23rd at the Johnson City Public Library. The excursion train will be 18 cars long out of Bristol with nearly 1000 passengers.

NORTH END CLINCHFIELD TOUR

On Saturday, June 6th, 35 members of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum boarded a bus and toured the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD's North End. Our first stop was the famous Cooper Creek Bridge near Speers Ferry, VA. The next stop was the Elkhorn City Railroad Museum and the former CLINCHFIELD yard in Elkhorn City. After a lot of picture taking, we headed to the Breaks Interstate Park where we all had a great meal and got to see the State Line overlook, seeing the ole CLINCHFIELD Line winding through the mountains out of State Line Tunnel. Next we stopped at Haysi to look at railroad equipment, and then headed to the former CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD Fremont Station.

We made a pit stop in Nora, VA to cool off and take a rest room break. Our next stop was St. Paul, VA to watch a NORFOLK SOUTHERN train pass by. Next we headed to Natural Tunnel VA, then on back home.

Thanks to Nick White for arranging the bus and driving us on the tour.



[Left] WVRHS&M members on the state line overlook at Interstate Breaks. [Right] WVRHS&M members at Trammel, VA where the last spike was driven on the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

By Bob Yaple

GENERAL: Yard capacity expansion is still in the discussion stage and the only solution so far is extending the railroad gate about 40'. The WVRHS&M Board is working with the landlord in the study extension of our two tracks. .

ROLLING STOCK

“CLINCHFIELD” (WATX 100): a search committee is looking for a set of trucks to get it AMTRAK certified.

“MOULTRIE” diner (WATX 400): Jim Calhoun has been working on the car’s refrigeration. The mechanical crew has been working on the noisy overhead fan.

“ST. AUGUSTINE” coach (WATX 500): Up North in the Norfolk Southern Steam Program.

“POWHATTAN ARROW” coach (WATX 539): Up North in the NS Steam Program.

“CRESCENT HARBOR” sleeper/lounge (WATX 2351): Up North in the NS Steam Program.



Two NORFOLK SOUTHERN dignitaries, current CEO Mr. Wick Moorman (left) and former CEO David Goode (right), are welcomed aboard the “CRESCENT HARBOR” by WVRHS&M president Mike Tilley during the 611’s Homecoming Trip from Spencer to Roanoke on May 30th.

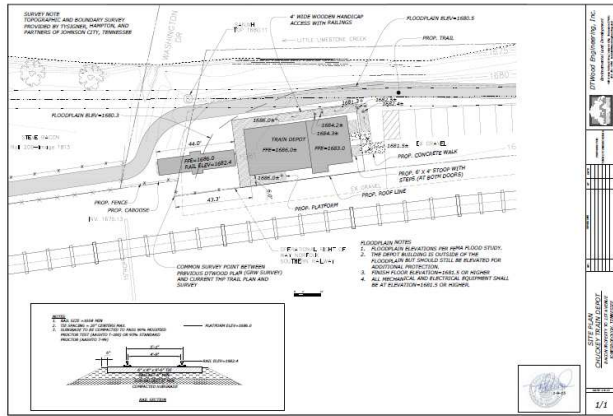
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT COACH YARD

With all the activities at the coach yard, we need you on a Tuesday or Saturday to volunteer to help - we have a project for everyone. Come on down to Jonesborough one of the two days or call the WVRHS&M office at 423-753-5797 and let us know your interest.

In the News

JONESBOROUGH RAILROAD DEPOT / MUSEUM

The Jonesborough Railroad Museum (ex-SOUTHERN station at Chuckey, TN) is going up at a high rate of speed. The floor and foundation has been reinstalled. The walls have been going up the past two weeks and the construction on the roof should start very soon. Mr. Craig Ford, project manager, is expecting to have the museum completed sometime in September. WVRHS&M is already collecting items to be on display in the museum.



And just in case you've never seen it, here's the station at its original location in Chuckey:





N&W "WARHORSE" BACK IN ROANOKE FOR STEAM ENGINE REUNION

N&W Class Y6a #2156 freight locomotive, which was used for coal-hauling in the 1940s and 1950s, returned home to Roanoke, VA, in mid-May. The #2156 was built in 1942 in the Norfolk & Western Railway's East End Shops in Roanoke, VA. "This is a dream come true for us," said Virginia Museum of Transportation (VMT) Executive Director Bev Fitzpatrick. A massive engine built to haul coal through the Appalachian Mountains, the #2156 was nicknamed the "Warhorse." "It is among the most powerful locomotives in America and the world," Fitzpatrick said. The Warhorse was retired after 17 years and donated to the Museum of Transportation in St. Louis. It has returned to its native city to stay for five years as part of a swap arranged between the two museums by Norfolk Southern Corp. It is the last existing engine of its Class. In exchange for the #2156, the VMT has loaned a Southern Railway diesel General Motors EMD FTB unit to the St. Louis museum. Upon its arrival, the #2156 was placed in NS' East End Shops in Roanoke. On May 31st, NS GP40-2 #3068 pulled the #2156 from the East End Shops to the VMT where it was staged next to the Class J #611 and Class A #1218. (The Roanoke Times)



From left to right: N&W's Class Y6a 2-8-8-2 No. #2156, Class J 4-8-4 No. #611, and Class A 2-6-6-4 #1218]. [Photo: Clay Moritz, Potomac NRHS]



VMT files with US Patent & Trademark Office to register N&W Class J 611

The Virginia Museum of Transportation, Inc., announced initial filing with the US Patent & Trademark Office to register the NORFOLK & WESTERN Class J 611 steam passenger locomotive. If the Virginia Museum of Transportation's application is successful and a trademark registration is awarded by the USPTO, a legal presumption is that the Museum will be awarded ownership nationwide of the trademarks for the NORFOLK & WESTERN Class J steam passenger locomotive, and specifically, the Class J 611, and the Museum's exclusive right to use a these trademarks on or in connection with all the registered products, services and media produced by the Museum.. This application has, understandably, caused a furor in the railfan community. If awarded, it remains to be seen what this means to the railfan community (e.g., images of the locomotive). [Material taken from the VMT web site.]



LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN DID NOT RECREATE ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY

Short of funds, the Elgin, IL made re-creation of the Abraham Lincoln funeral train car participated in an early May reenactment of Lincoln's burial in Springfield, IL, but did not retrace the steps that Lincoln's body took on its rail journey from Washington, D.C., to Springfield 150 years ago. The train was to run along railroads duplicating the original funeral train's 1,600-mile route, from Washington through Philadelphia, New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, Chicago and Joliet to Springfield in time for the burial commemoration. The funeral car was to be pulled by a 1870s-era steam locomotive named the Leviathan, accompanied by a 1860s-style railroad passenger car similar to the "officers' car" on the original funeral train that carried soldiers escorting the body.



Photo: "The Gateway Railletter", St. Louis NRHS

Early in the process, however, the planners realized it would not be practical to run the train from town to town along the original railroad tracks. "We would be moving a train whose steam locomotive can go 25 mph at best along railroads that now are mainlines for CSX and AMTRAK. Plan B called for moving the historic cars and the Leviathan from town to town aboard an expensive-to-operate fleet of flatbed semi trailer trucks. But it was

announced in early March that the organizers finally had to admit they didn't have enough money to pay for that kind of a trip. They had raised around \$200,000 in donations, but felt they were still short a little more than \$125,000. However, the funeral car was completed in time to take it and the Leviathan to Springfield for the May 2-3 activities there. Plans remain to send the train to many of the original cities where it stopped, just not on the anniversary dates where the train arrived in each city. Planners hope that cities that want the train to visit can cover the expense of moving the train and its crew of 10 there aboard a convoy of trucks. [From "POTOMAC RAIL NEWS", Potomac NRHS]



Mike Tilley found NS SD60E #911, painted in tribute to first responders, parked next to WATX 539 at NCTM. WATX 2351 can be seen in the background.

Upcoming Events



June 20–21: N&W 4-8-4 #611 on display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. For details, see NCTM.



JUNE 26-28: 21st Century Steam. See <http://www.wataugavalleyrhs.org/excursions.php>.



AUGUST 15: WVRHS&M sponsored trip on GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD.



SEPT 11-13: Western Maryland Scenic Railroad "Steel Wheels Festival". For details: <https://www.movingfullsteamahead.com/content/steelwheels>.



SEPT 12-13: Tennessee Valley Railfest. For details: <http://tvrail.com/pages/railfest>.



OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1. WVRHS&M Fall AMTRAK excursions

The remaining schedule for this year's 21st Century Steam Program (locomotive in parentheses) is as follows:

July 3, 4 & 5 / morning trip - **The Powhatan Arrow** – Roanoke to Lynchburg, VA (#611)
 July 3, 4 & 5 / afternoon trip - **The Pelican** - Roanoke to Radford, VA (#611)
 July 18-19 Fort Wayne – Lafayette, IN (#765)
 July 25-26 Youngstown – Ashtabula, OH (#765)
 Aug. 1-2 Buffalo – Corning, NY (#765)
 Aug. 22-23 Allentown – Pittston, PA (#765)
 Sept. 12-13 Scranton – Nicholson, PA (#765)
 Sept. 12-13 Jersey – Cleveland, TN (#4501)
 Sept. 26-25 Macon – Tennille, GA (#4501)
 Oct. 3-4 Atlanta – Toccoa, GA (#4501)

For ticket information, visit the website of the Virginia Museum of Transportation at <http://www.vmt.org> (#611), the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum website at <http://www.tvrail.com> (#4501), and the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society website at <https://www.fortwaynerailroad.org> (#765).

For Your Viewing Pleasure

#611 Homecoming and Recent Excursions

Because there's so much digital media out there capturing these wonderful events, it would be impossible to list everything here. A search of the internet will readily provide hours of viewing enjoyment of the 611's recent ramblings. Here's a nice example on YouTube of the 611's first fully-restored movement in Spencer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZaN9rlclU>

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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