



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB
NOVEMBER 2015 - MEMBERS EDITION
Volume 22 - Number 11

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership

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LOCATION

ETSU Campus
George L. Carter
Railroad Museum

HOURS

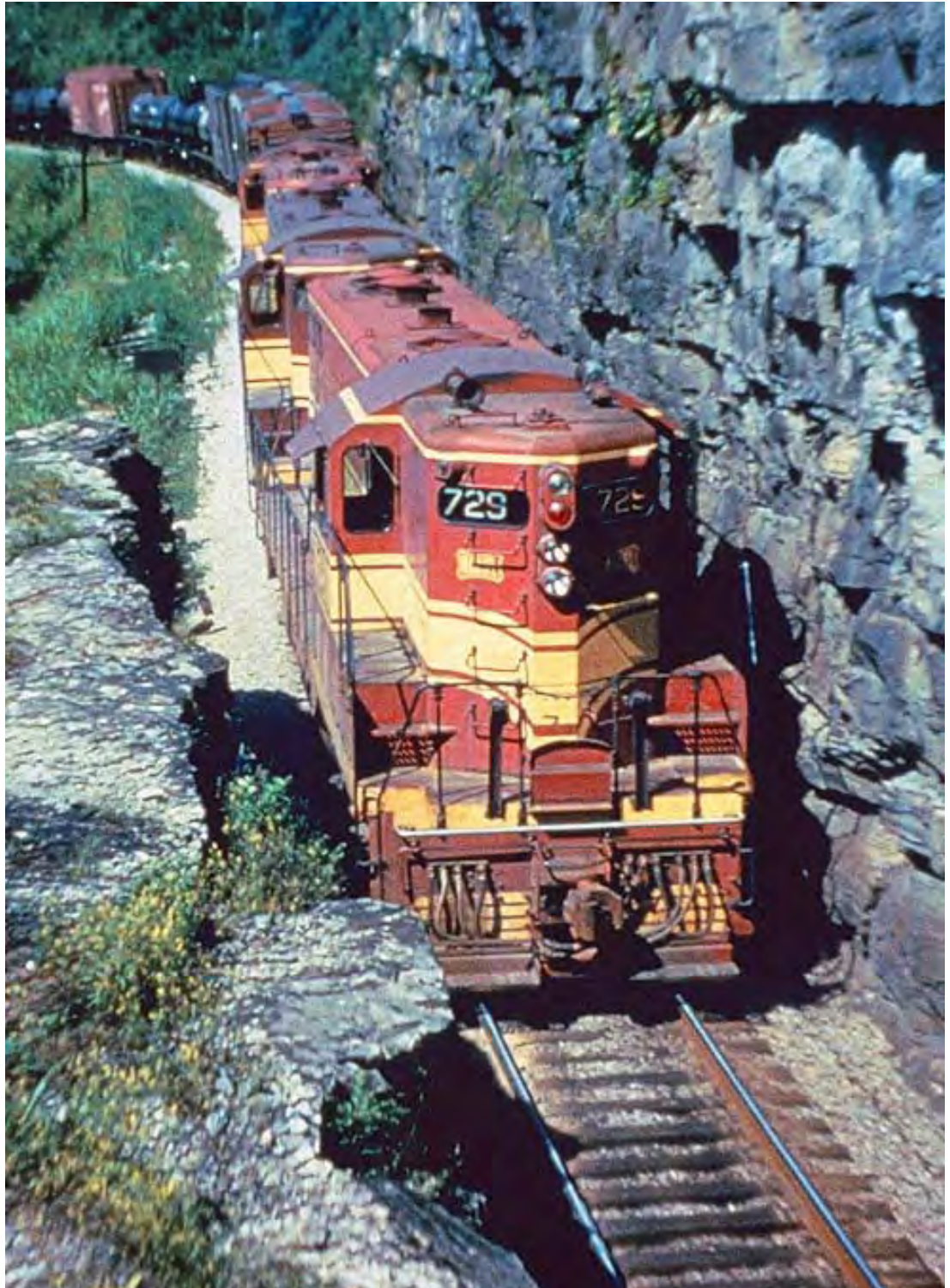
Business Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 PM in:

Brown Hall
Room 312
ETSU Campus,
Johnson City, TN.

Open House for viewing every Saturday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Work Nights are held each Thursday from 4:00 pm until ??

SPECIAL FOCUS THIS ISSUE RESEARCHING YOUR FAVORITE PROTOTYPE



NASHVILLE CHATTANOOGA & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY GP7 No. 729 APPROACHES THE CUMBERLAND TUNNEL SOUTH OF COWEN, TENNESSEE

ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY
RESEARCHING YOUR FAVORITE
PROTOTYPE RAILROAD

A MEMRR CLINIC
 By Ted Bleck-Doran



Earlier this year I presented the following clinic at a regular business meeting of the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders. The clinic focus is on the tricks and traps of researching your favorite prototype railroad. Today's modeler enjoys extensive resources when trying to learn about a favorite prototype. Even with the wide range of sources, the hobbyist might still overlook some important and hidden gems in his/her quest for information.

For the purpose of this clinic I chose my favorite line, the Nashville Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway. It was a mid-size Class 1 railroad serving Tennessee, Georgia, and Kentucky. While controlled by the Louisville and Nashville for most of its existence, the NC&StL developed a culture and existence all its own. Its merger with the L&N in 1956 marked the start of modern-day railroad consolidation.

So let's get started and see what's out there.

Part 1: Starting Points



In this age of the internet the hobby researcher has a wide range of resources right at their fingertips. A good place to

start is with an internet search. **GOOGLE** and **BING** are two of the more popular search engines. Using your internet browser (e.g., - **Microsoft's Internet Explorer**) type in the address line the desired search engine (e.g., - **GOOLE**). Select the search engine and type in the name of the desired railroad. A listing of possible internet sites with relevant information will come up.



A good place to start in to see if there is a road specific link to a history and/or preservation society.. In the case of the Nashville Chattanooga and St Louis RY there are two excellent society links: www.ncstl.com and www.lnrr.org. Historical society sites will usually have links to not only their web resources and newsletter archives, but also additional links to prototype and modeling resources. There may also be information including links to related modeling and prototype chat groups.

NOTE: The National Railway Historical Society in another great source. Members of our sister organization, the George L. Carter Chapter - NRHS, can help you find resources available through the National Railway Historical Society.



Once on a historical society web site, information on how to subscribe to the society's newsletter. The NC&StL Preservation Society publishes a quarterly newsletter filled with historical information, personal reminiscences, museum directory, events calendar, and society activities.



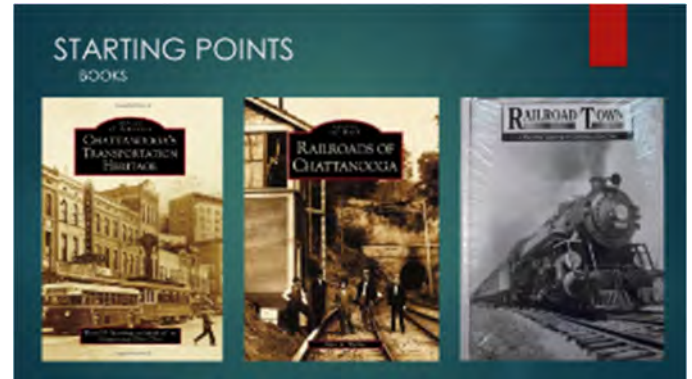
You may find that the society holds regular conferences and conventions. Attending a convention can lead to developing contacts with others interested in your railroad. The NC&StL Preservation Society holds annual "Reunions" at various sites along the right-of-way. Recent meetings have been held in Nashville, Paris Tennessee, Chattanooga, and, in 2016, Cowen, Tennessee.



An internet search will also turn up a listing of books that have been published related to your favorite railroad. You will find both books in print and many that are out-of-print. I was able to find classics such as Prince's volume on NC&StL steam, Shult's recent history and an out-of-print Photo collection from Carstens Publishing.



A search on EBAY.COM revealed additional volumes including Terry Coates volume on NC&StL stations and depots and Betsy Thorpe's retelling the tale of the Dutchman's Curve train wreck (the worse train wreck in American railroad history). Further searching on GOOGLE BOOKS surfaced a free e-volume on the legal history of the NC&StL.



A search on AMAZON.COM surfaced even more books including a pair of IMAGES series volumes and local historical society's volume on the Lebanon Branch of the NC&StL.



Videos can be a good source of information on the Prototype. Given that the NC&StL has been gone for 60 years, video footage of the line is virtually non-existent and rare. I checked out YOUTUBE.COM and found several clips of vintage 16 mm and 8 mm footage of the NC including shots of the City of Memphis (the Dixie Line's name train between Memphis and Nashville), as well as, footage of a freight nosing through the Cumberland tunnel northbound towards Cowen.

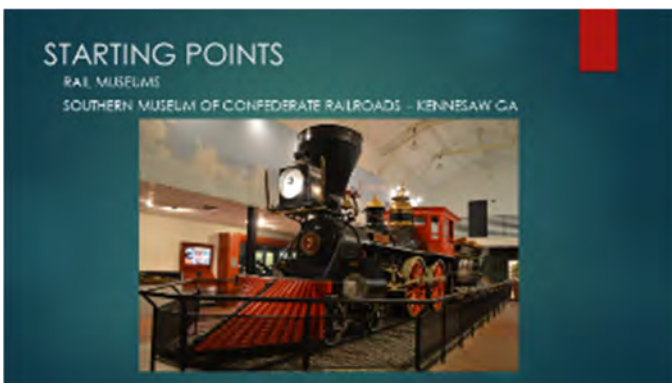
Modern videos are also available from companies like GREEN FROG PRODUCTIONS. The NC&StL mainline between Nashville and Atlanta is largely unchanged. GREEN FROG has series of DVD available showing the CSX operations over this portion of Dixie Line track



Another source of information can be found in various museum collections across the country. One of the largest collections of Dixie Line equipment can be found at the Tennessee Valley Railroad and Museum in Chattanooga. Passenger cars, a caboose, and several locomotives are on the property.



Many of the communities located along the former NC&StL mainline take great pride in their railroad heritage. Several like Cowen TN have established museums. Cowen boasts of 70-ton switcher No. 100, caboose no. 41 the original station, and recently added, a CTC tower all of NC&StL heritage.



Kennesaw GA's Museum of Confederate Railroads has the famed "General", NC&StL's old No.3 on display, while in

Atlanta the 4-4-0 "Texas" can be viewed. Both had significant roles in the Great Locomotive Chase during the Civil War.



Sometimes a real prize can be found in a city park as is the case of 576. It is the sole surviving example of big steam on the NC&StL - No.576 Dixie Class 4-8-4 (no it's not a Northern type if you are from the South). It is housed in Centennial Park in Nashville TN.

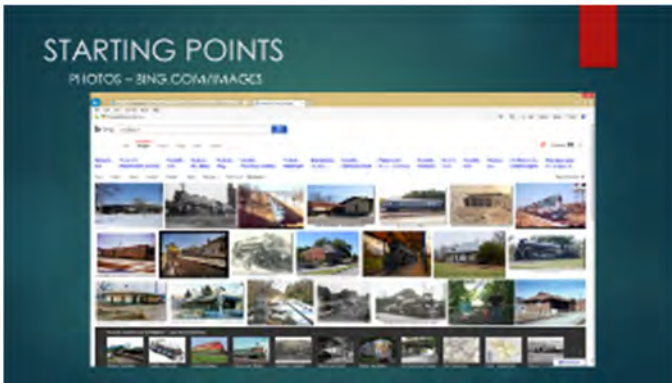


There are other NC&StL cars on display at other museums. The line's Dynamometer car can be found at the Kentucky Railroad Museum for example.

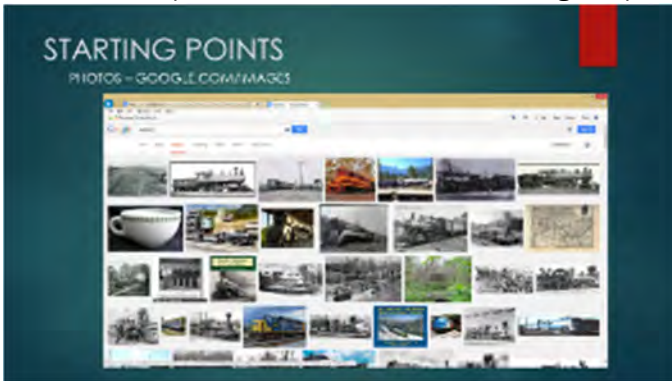


If your interest is in modeling a specific road and era, photos are always helpful. EBAY.COM is a good starting point. One can find an array of photos for sale. While it is best to buy

from the dealers on the auction site, viewing the pics can be a nice starting point to see what's available.



Doing a GOOGLE or BING photo search can also produce a great result. I find BING Images searches to be less cluttered with incidental photos and to return a broader range on pics.



GOOGLE image searched will often include unrelated photos and is not as accurate in its returns. In either case, the searches will usually produce good results. If not, try rewording the search request (e.g., - spell out the complete road name instead of using initials or recording marks).



Another useful hint is to follow the URL (web address) for each photo you select. This will usually link to other collections, galleries, and websites where related images can be found (e.g., - Railnet.com).



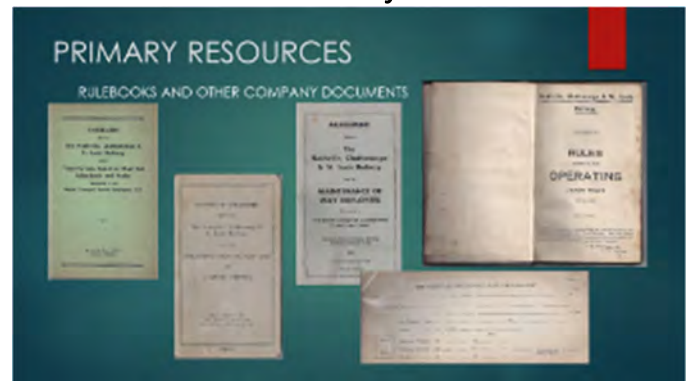
One can readily determine paint and lettering schemes for a wide variety of rolling stock. Even when the road has been absent from the scene for decades like the NC&StL RY.



Bringing up the tail end of our look at "starting points" for research, one can even find photos of maintenance of way and caboose or "cabin cars."

Next we will look at examples of Primary Resources, actual historical documents that can be useful in filling out the details of your favorite road.

PART 2: Primary Sources

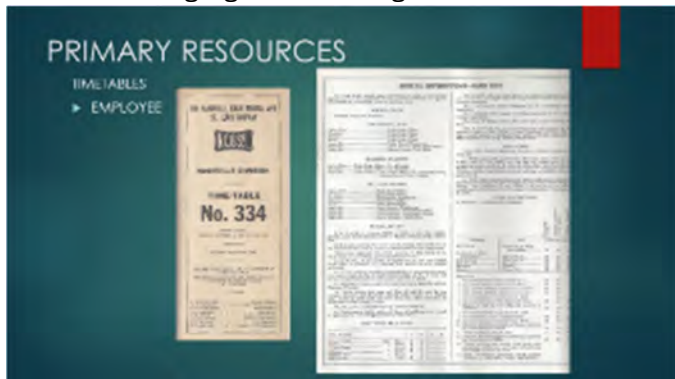


Primary sources are documents, publications, and artifacts that are original with the respective railroad. Secondary

sources are publications which interpret or provide commentary on the railroad from an historical perspective. Primary sources include things like rulebooks, operational manuals, union contracts, train orders, and other company publications.



An excellent source for information regarding operations of your favorite railroad are public timetables. These contain the operating schedules for the company's name trains and scheduled passenger trains. They frequently include information on seasonal equipment changes, status of stations and depots (e.g., - flag stop vs full service station). Having several timetables from different years in your collection will highlight these changes.



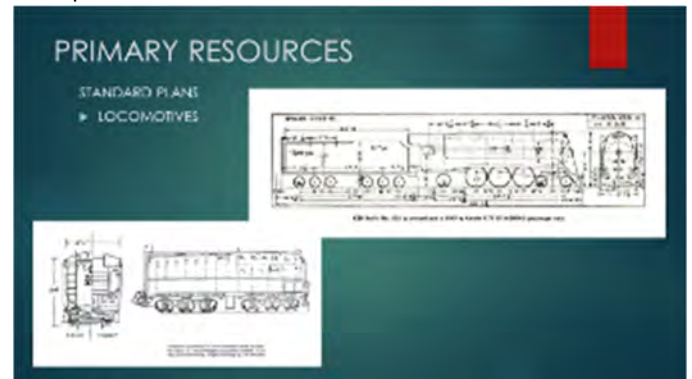
Employee timetables, while often harder to find, provide even more detailed information including schedules for 1st and 2nd class trains, specific operating restrictions for trains, tonnage ratings for locomotive classes, presence of CTC and dark (unsignaled) territory.



Postcards are another useful source on period information, frequently highlighting a depot or picturesque portion of track in its prime.



Frequently a railroad would publish promotional material highlighting travel suggestions, promote a new train service, or note a change in equipment such as modernization of the locomotive fleet. The NC&StL Ry went to great lengths around the turn of the 19th Century to promote its proximity to historic battlefields of Central Tennessee and Northern Georgia in order to attract the traveling business of veterans North and South who desired to return to the battle fields of their youth. The railway did extensive business in assisting transportation to numerous veteran reunions.



Most companies had books of standard plans. These included specifications for various locomotive classes...



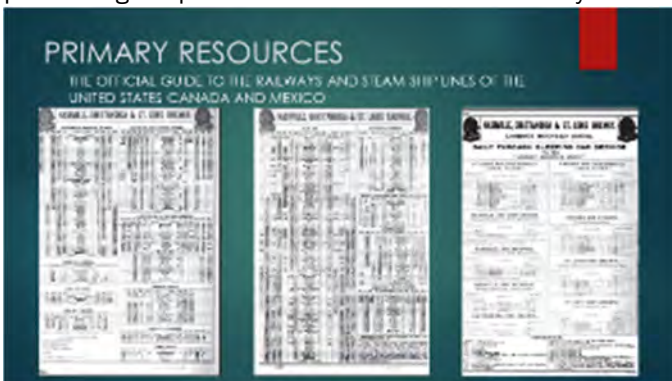
...car plans for passenger cars, freight cars, maintenance of way cars, caboose classes ... and ...



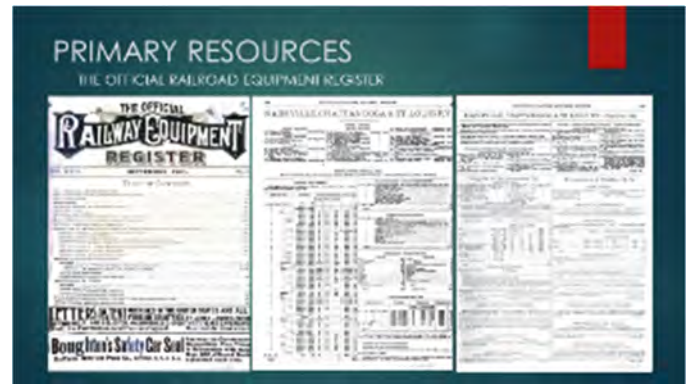
... structures ... Many of these standard plan books contained numerous examples of structure, cars and locomotives. I came across a Southern RY station floor plan booklet containing nearly 100 floor plans while surfing the internet ... for free!



The NC&StL RY Standard Plan book was a short 16 pages as many of the stations had been inherited through merger of lines constructed in the 1850's through 1880's. I was able to obtain .pdf copies of the drawings through another member of the NC&StL RY Preservation Society. I was able to obtain locomotive, passenger car, and MoW plans through purchasing a reprint from the L&N Historical Society.



As with public timetables, the Official Guide is a valuable resource regarding passenger train schedules. Guides were published monthly with regularly updated information. The George L Carter RR Museum Library has several editions of the Guide available. Other volumes from the 1900 through the mid-1930's can be found at Google Books as free e-volumes.



The Official Railway Equipment Register is a companion publication to the Official Guide. It was also published monthly with regular updating of equipment rosters for railroads and special carriers and car companies. If you model a specific era you will be able to build a credible car fleet with the roster information contained in the Register. Each edition listed the types of cars maintained by each railroad and the respective car numbers. Like the Guides, the library has several volumes available. Earlier editions can be found at Google Books. Several editions from the 1930's, 40's and 50's have been reprinted by organizations such as the NMRA. Volumes can be obtained at swap meets and hobby shows.



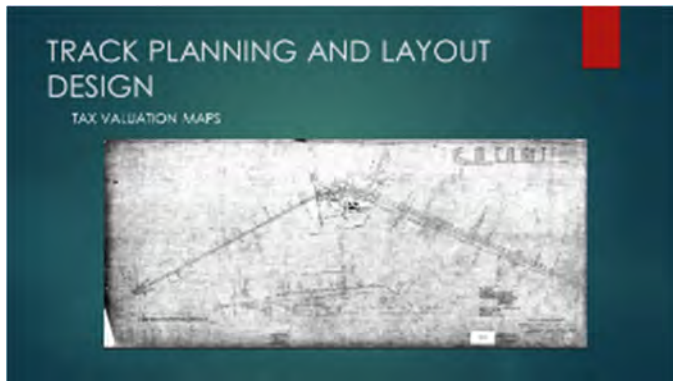
When planning a layout there are several sources to consider for track planning. Google Maps has provided the hobbyist with contemporary aerial (satellite) views of railroad rights-of-way. Screen shots of track plans can be easily enlarged and printed out.



Topographic maps available from the US Geodetic Survey also provide useful information showing contemporary and historic rights-of-way. One can get a feel for the terrain and countryside a line passed through. The maps however are not accurate enough to determine actual track layout and design.



One very useful set of maps to have are Track Profile and Alignment maps. Virtually all railroad has their engineering departments design these. The maps show the grades encountered along a right-of-way, as well as the curvature, location of bridges, culverts, road crossings, and company owned building and structures. The layout of yards and sidings are also accurately displayed. Each sheet represents 4-5 miles of track.



For tax purposes the railroad and states maintained Tax Evaluation Maps describing railroad property in detail. Several states have placed these maps on line and are readily available. One such state is Tennessee where the maps can be found on the State Comptroller's Office website. One disadvantage is that as railroad property was sold off, the maps were heavily edited with sale notations making it frequently difficult to discern the original details. Also the maps were originally approximately 60" x 30". They have been scanned a .pdf files so they can be printed full size. However, this can proved expensive. A 8.5"x14" copy will suffice in most instances.



Yet another source of information on track and buildings can be found in the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The Sanborn maps describe insurable properties in specific communities including rail related properties. As with tax valuation maps, there are internet sites with maps posted. I was fortunate to discover that communities along the W&A (Western and Atlantic) portion of the NC&StL in Georgia were available. The maps were filed by state, county, and community. There were map sets from a half dozen years starting in the 1890's. Each community had a master index map and detailed individual maps showing structures, highways, and track layout. I found the e-files were not as scalable and distinct when enlarged as the Tax Valuation Maps, but useful in their absence,



A final source are railfan related publications of railroad track atlases such as the Comprehensive Railroad Atlas series from SPV. These are updated occasionally and are published by regions. Like the tax and Sanborn maps there is quite a bit of detail to be found in these atlases.



As you can see by the final slide – we’ve only begun the cataloging of resources available to the modern day rail enthusiast researching their favorite line.

The resources described above can largely be found on the internet. If willing to travel many more doors will open up revealing interesting and intriguing discoveries regarding *your favorite railroad*.

UNUSUAL EQUIPMENT NORFOLK SOUTHERN DISTRIBUTIVE POWER CONTROL CAR



Watching Railroading DVDs can turn up some rare and interesting prototype ideas. While watching Green Frog Productions DVD *CSX 2: CHATTANOOGA TO NASHVILLE 1* happened across the screen shot below. A boxcar-like rail car appeared in front of two mid-train locomotives (an EMD unit

followed by a GE loco). The train was a Norfolk Southern heavy coal drag passing the Stevenson Alabama depot on joint CSX-NS trackage. The video was shot circa 1994. The car is actually required to house the electronic components for what was then an innovative distributive power lash-up.

Wouldn't it make for an interesting model of the prototype to include a distributive power control car when modeling trains in the 1990's?

UNUSUAL EQUIPMENT PT. 2 LORAM RAIL GRINDER EQUIPMENT Photos and text courtesy of Loram Rail Services



A Loram Rail Grinder in transit

Founded in 1954, Loram Maintenance of Way started out as a small operation consisting of two simple machines, and a handful of employees. Today, Loram has become one of the leading suppliers of track maintenance machinery and services in North America and the global market.



Loram RG400 Rail Grinder

Loram provides maintenance of way services to Class I and short line railroads, transits, and commuter rails.

A rail grinder in action was spotted on the Norfolk Southern main east of Jonesborough in mid-October. The NS routinely resurfaces its rails annually. In 2015 the NS has replaced ties, upgraded grade crossings and resurfaced rails on its mainline through Washington County.

By the way – has anyone seen a model of a Loram Grinder?

**UNUSUAL EQUIPMENT PT.3
CANADIAN PACIFIC BI-LEVEL AUTORACK**

What's so unusual about a CP Bi-Level Autorack? The following picture came from Green Frog Productions' CSX Vol. 3: Nashville to Louisville DVD. Shot in 1994-95, these now-vintage autoracks showed up in a mixed consist. When first introduced the 85-foot autorack was an open deck affair. Automobiles being transport from the manufacturing plants to dealerships were attractive targets for urban rock throwers, frequently arriving at their destinations with dent, pitted paint finishes, and broken windows. Railroads and auto manufacturers resorted to retrofitting these open cars with sheet and corrugated panels which afforded autos in transit some degree of protection. Instead of solid metal sheets, CP used what appears to be chainlike fencing to

shield those autos in transit. Ultimately the enclosed autorack provided the final answer, giving the rockers and taggers a bigger target while protecting their cargo.



**CSX TO REDUCE OPERATIONS IN
NORTH EAST TENNESSEE
CHANGES WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT ON THE AREA**

ERWIN, TN – CSX announced Thursday morning (October 15, 2015) it plans to reduce train operations at it Erwin, TN yard. Around 300 contract and management employee will be impacted. The decision, according to a press release, was due to “significantly reduced coal traffic through the region.”

CSX plans to close a locomotive service center, a project and car shop and eliminating switching operations at the Northeast Tennessee yard.

CSX released the following details in a press release:

Operations in Erwin primarily served coal trains moving from the Central Appalachian coal fields, and the diminished

traffic levels no longer support the activities performed there. The combination of low natural gas prices and regulatory action has significantly decreased CSX's coal movements over the past four years, with more than \$1 billion in coal revenue declines during that time.

Affected employees at Erwin will receive at least 60 days of pay and benefits. Contract employees also may have other benefits available in accordance with their labor agreements. Many furloughed employees will be eligible for jobs in higher-demand areas on CSX's network. Affected management employees will be offered relocation opportunities as they are available, or will be eligible for severance benefits.

CSX remains committed to delivering strong service to customers in the region. Remaining coal traffic, as well as merchandise traffic including grain unit trains, will be rerouted efficiently across other parts of the CSX network. Across Tennessee, CSX operates more than 1,500 miles of track, with facilities that include its division headquarters and a major yard in Nashville.

**OLD AND NEW TRAINS MIX IT UP AT
THE CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM
AND CHILDREN'S HARVESTFEST
HIGHLIGHT ACTIVITIES ON OCTOBER
31ST**

**PRECISION TRANSPORTATION: N&W AND
NS GLORY HERITAGE DAY BRINGS
REGIONAL FAVORITES TO POPULAR
UNIVERSITY TRAIN DISPLAY**

Once again, some of Appalachia's biggest steam engines and most colorful diesels will be operating on the displays at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum. Located at 176 Ross drive in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, this event, "Precision Transportation: N&W and NS Glory," will be focusing on the well-known Roanoke, Va.-based company now known as Norfolk Southern, reaching across decades of history.

The reason for adjoining past with present at this event is the fact that back in 2012 the railroad devoted a group of new locomotives to its own corporate past. These engines were painted in historically-derived schemes similar to the ones featured on their predecessor lines, like the Interstate, Nickel Plate, Wabash, and Central of Georgia. As a result,

trains running on this day will include steam engines from the past, when the old Norfolk & Western was the sole major US railroad still using them, and the Heritage-style modern diesels.

“We found that this was a great way to connect these eras together; both are significant in their own right,” says Geoff Stunkard, the museum’s Heritage Days coordinator. “With the railroad running both an occasional steam excursion as well as these colorful new engines right here on the NS mainline through Johnson City, it lets us paint a broad picture of how much this company cares about its past. We are looking forward to having models of these trains running here at ETSU at our event.”

From the earliest steam engines to the big articulated locomotives, the N&W was faced with daunting challenges from both its terrain and its largest commodity, coal. From the 19th century through today, it supplied power to the world, while offering shippers an easy way to get exports to tidewater at Norfolk. Through expansion, its beginnings in those little ‘hollars’ have led to the modern Norfolk Southern Corporation to compete across much of the eastern half of North America. With the slogan Precision Transportation, the old N&W made no excuses and simply worked to get the job done; it combined with the Southern Railway to become one of today’s ‘super systems’ in American railroading.

Since the date of the event falls on October 31 this year, the ‘Little Engineers’ Children’s Activity Room that is part of the museum will also host special activities on this day. Go to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum facebook page for details on this free Harvestfest event; no pre-registration is required. The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child’s activity room, and ongoing programs. There is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for display, including the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-remembered ‘Tweetsie’ line, the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad; this room, still under construction, again will be open for guided tours during event days.

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, the National Railway Historical Society chapter, membership opportunities, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum’s programs. Info can be found online at

<http://etsu>

or

<http://johnsonsddepot.com/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>

The Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) works in conjunction with the museum to demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects. More info can be found at

<http://www.memrr.org>.

Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum is located on the campus of East Tennessee State University, Campus Center Building, 176 Ross Drive. The entrance door is adjacent to the flashing RR crossbuck; for more information contact the Museum Director, Dr. Fred Alsop, at telephone 423/439-6838 or by email at alsopf@mail.etsu.edu.

2015 DATES TO REMEMBER: GEORGE L CARTER RAILROAD MUSEUM

- October 31:** Precision Transportation: N&W and NS Glory;
HarvestFest for Little Engineers
- November 14:** Homecoming at Carter’s Place – 8th Anniversary
- November 28:** George L Carter’s Fabulous Clinchfield Lines
- December 19:** Home For Christmas: Railroading in the Cold Weather States

CSX CUTTING KENTUCKY JOBS IN CORBIN

OCTOBER 20, 2015

BY CHASE GUNNOE

CORBIN, Ky. — Days After cutting operations in Tennessee and along the former Clinchfield Railroad, CSX Transportation says it will also cut the jobs for as many as 180 railroaders in its Corbin, Ky., shops.

Locals in Corbin told *Trains News Wire* early this morning that CSX managers met with railroaders to inform them of the bad news. Melanie Cost, a CSX spokeswoman, confirms the meetings and says the railroaders affected work in the car and locomotive shops which the railroad is closing. She cited the continued lack of coal moves as the reason.

"With low natural gas prices and regulatory actions, coal volume has declined significantly over the past several years, and those declines are projected to continue. CSX

alone has lost more than \$1 billion in coal revenue in the past four years," Cost says. She says about 100 railroaders will remain in Corbin to operate the yard and serve remaining local traffic.

According to a CSX news release made public minutes ago, the railroad's Corbin shops maintained, inspected, and serviced locomotives and freight cars for mostly coal trains heading to and from central Appalachia. With fewer coal trains, there is a reduced need for repairs. The railroad says "Corbin continues to be an important part of the CSX network for the movement of automobiles, consumer products and other freight."

The CSX main line through Corbin also received four additional trains that were diverted from the Clinchfield line.

Affected workers will receive 60 days of pay and benefits and the possibility of moving to other high-demand areas of the CSX network.

Last week CSX announced it would mothball the Erwin, Tenn., terminal and the 275-mile Clinchfield Railroad, cutting about 300 positions.

Trains News Wire will continue updating this story as more information becomes available.

**TWEETSIE UPDATE
PROGRESS ON THE ET&WNC LAYOUT
PROJECT – THE DOE RIVER GORGE**

Fred has been diligently working on the walls of the Doe River Gorge portion of the ET&WNC project He's added more rock castings, staining the rocks, and using up those wonderful trees crafted by Ken Harmon and Dean Small. You can find Fred working Thursday night and during Saturday open houses. In addition Mike Buster has been ballasting the Southern Ry track on the Rabetoy portion of the Tweetsie room layout.



Close-up of two rock coloring techniques: the foreground: pulpit rock was done by Bear Anderson; the background rock was done by Fred ALSop



Fred discussed his rock coloring technique as he works on the Doe River Gorge aisle



Fred is over-spraying the rock casting with a dilute black spray to bring out the highlights of the carved rock facing



Some of the rock wall lining the Doe River Gorge



Bare spots above the rock castings will be filled with forest vegetation – here Fred is planting a tree on the ridgeline

CXS RESOURCES IN THE GL CARTER LIBRARY
DVD'S THAT TELL THE CSX STORY

Given the news CSX has generated recently, it's probably a good time to highlight DVD titles in the GL Carter RR Museum library... and there are plenty:

The following titles are from Green Frog Productions. The show CSX action from the early 1990's to 2001. They are visually engaging and nicely narrated.

CSX	<i>Magnolia Cut-off on thee CSX</i>	c: 1993
CSX Vol. 1	<i>Atlanta to Chattanooga</i>	c: 1993
CSX Vol. 2	<i>Chattanooga to Nashville</i>	c: 1994
CSX Vol. 3	<i>Nashville to Louisville</i>	c: 1995
CSX Vol. 4	<i>Louisville to Cincinnati</i>	c: 1995
CSX Vol. 5	<i>Evansville to Chicago</i>	c: 1996
CSX Vol. 6	<i>Pittsburgh to Willard OH</i>	c: 1997
CSX Vol. 7	<i>Jacksonville to Plant City FL</i>	c: 1997
CSX Vol. 8	<i>Baltimore Service Line</i>	
	<i>Cumberland Business Unit</i>	c: 1998
CSX Vol. 9	<i>Willard to Deshler OH</i>	c: 1998
CSX Vol. 10	<i>Augusta to Spartanburg</i>	c: 1999
CSX Vol. 11	<i>Greenwood to Atlanta (Abbeville Subdivision)</i>	c: 1999
CSX Vol. 12	<i>Pennsylvania and Western Maryland Fall Spectacular</i>	c: 2000

CSX Vol. 13	<i>The Big Sandy (Sub): A Story About Eastern Kentucky Coal</i>	c: 2000
CSX Vol. 14	<i>Selkirk (Albany) NY: The Capitol District and the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys</i>	c: 2001
CSX Vol. 15	<i>Clinchfield's Autumn Spectacular</i>	c:

DVD's from American AltaVista		
	<i>This Is Clinchfield - Coal Story; Virginia's Baby, Dickenson County</i>	c: 2000
	<i>This is Clinchfield: CSX Hotshots - Erwin to Spartanburg</i>	c: 1991

DVD's from Kalmbach Publishing Co.		
	<i>Appalachian Conquest: Dream-Plan-Build Real Rails Edition</i>	
	<i>The West End: CSX's Mountain Division: Dream-Plan-Build Real Rails Edition</i>	

DVD's from Pentax.		
	<i>Into the Allegheny Range Vol 1: Hancock, West Virginia to Cumberland Maryland</i>	c: 1994
	<i>Pittsburgh Mainlines: Heavy Railroad Action Around the "Iron City"</i>	c: 2004
	<i>CSX Mountain Sub: Up, Over, Around and Through</i>	c: 2001

COORDINATOR'S MEETING
OCTOBER 2015
Minutes

The meeting was called to order by club president Fred Alsop with 9 coordinator's in attendance.

N Scale - Gary Gilliam reported that there is a lot of track work that needs to be done. Switches are burnt out, track joiners need replacing and trains are derailing (need couplers). They also need a couple of engines.

Tweetsie - John Edwards said that he and Frank Fezzie are working on the monitor placement. Fred Alsop said there are a couple of kinks in the track 1) The Truss Deck Bridge and 2) by Hampton Station. Gary Emmert asked if the tree had been trimmed that was touching the train. Fred Alsop will trim the tree and take care of widening the gorge.

Cope Layout - Gary Gilliam said that there are 8 or 9 locomotives that were donated by Jim Hobbs that are useful for the Cope layout. In the main gallery some of the lighting needs new bulbs.

G Scale - Mike Baker said he had cleaned the Little Engineer's Room and everything is running fine.

Communications - Roger Teinert stated that the club has been averaging 1 new member per week.

Train Show - Fliers have been printed and some have been taken to other train shows.

Election - Ballots are ready to be sent out.

Web-master - Bob Jones said that the Heritage Day's postings are fixed and train shows are listed through June 2016. He just received the Coal Road so it will be uploaded soon. Fred Alsop stated that the Carter Chapter is working on their web site and will have links to the MEMRR website. Eventually the museum and Tweetsie web sites will also be tied in so that we may cross link between sites.

Rip Track - Jim Hoyt talked about the donation of 51 cars from Jim Hobbs. There are quite a lot of Clinchfield which will be worked on for the next several weeks. He has finished 2 cabooses, he will need wheels to complete this task.

Newsletter - Ted Bleck-Doran said The Signal Bridge has been published and is 22 pages. There are a lot of modeling tips in this issue. He requested that Fred Alsop do an article on Shell Creek for the December issue.

Library - Gary Emmert stated that we have 17 new books. There are 60+ books available to members for a donation. We have received several donations for the archives and Jeff Stunkard found a box of DVD's in the upstairs storage room.

HO - John Carter reported that the hinges and pins have been acquired for the roll out module and they are still laying the track. Jeff Stunkard is working on kit-bashing buildings

for the module. Frank Fezzie used a CAD system and came up with 2 versions for the engine storage tracks.

President - Fred Alsop reported that there will be only 1 bus for the fall excursion. The museum had 99 visitors on Saturday, October 10th. We had 23 members at the museum as well. The Heritage Day press release is out and will be N&W. The November Heritage Day is Clinchfield

Fred Alsop adjourned the meeting.

*Submitted by
Debbi Edwards, Secretary*

ON THE HOME FRONT A LOOK AT MEMBERS' HOME LAYOUTS THE TENNESSEE OHIO EASTERN RAILROAD Photos and Captions by Jim Hoit

NOTE: *this is hopefully the first of a series of feature articles on the home layouts of MEMRR members. Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club has a wealth of talent. Usually we see only members' handiwork by the rolling stock and locomotives they bring to run on the club layouts. Occasionally we have the delight to see their skills exhibited in a clinic or layout project. While not every member has a home layout, those that do have created hidden gems.*

Jim Hoit is the first to provide photos and captions, sharing his layout with us. - thanks Jim!

The "TOE" Railroad has track rights along all Baltimore and Ohio and Southern Railway routes. This allows Jim to run trains suited to his love of B&O and SRy heritage.



East Tennessee Railroad #214 passes by the Johnson City depot with the mountains of East Tennessee in the background



Local youth engage in a pickup baseball game in Johnson City as a B&O freight passes by.



Southern #4501, a 2-8-2 steam loco on a railfan trip to the mountains crossing Brush Creek where a SUV passes under a wooden trestle



A company crew paints the LP Gas tanks at Volunteer Natural Gas Company in Johnson City – Volunteer Gas is at the intersection of Tennessee Street and State of Franklin.



Down at the ole fishing hole is where you'll find Jeremiah and Grandpa Jim when they're not out chasing trains... Here they are - just sitting on the dock on a picture perfect day. HEY JIM! CATCH THAT BIG ONE YET?



Rockville Lumberyard receives delivery as ET RR #214 sets out a car.



East Tennessee Railroad #214 passes along Market Street at the Moretz Farm... a freshly plowed field is ready for planting.



Moonshine still a thriving business up in the mountains of East Tennessee... revenuers beware! THERE'S SHINERS AROUND AS WELL AS BEARS.

THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

After a beautiful October with lots of color splashed on the trees and some unusually mild temperatures those bright leaves of yellows, reds, and oranges are falling into all our yards and the bearing of the trees means many of our activities will turn toward the indoors. That also means we may be devoting more of our time to our common hobby of model railroading and learning more about the prototype railroads. We welcome our newest members. Thank you for sharing your common interest in railroading with our organizations and our Carter Railroad Museum. We look forward to your company and extending our friendship through our hobby. We wish to express our best wishes to **Gary Gilliam** who seems to be present every time the museum doors are open, and often when they are not, for

his speedy and full recovery from his recent surgery. We all look forward to having his company in the museum again very soon.

November is an important month for us in many ways and the month marks milestones both locally and nationally. It is the anniversary month for the dedication of the George L. Carter Railroad Museum which will celebrate its 8th birthday on the 14th. We will have a little party to celebrate the event as we continue to build toward the museum's future. November is the month when we elect our officers for the coming year and we have nominating committees in place who have delivered a slate of officers and ballots that have been distributed to all our full members to cast their votes to elect those who have volunteered to lead our organization in the coming year. November is the month that begins the renewal of our memberships for 2016 and our treasurer is ready to accept your dues as soon as you can submit them. Dues levels have remained the same for many years now and the monies collected remain in the club's treasury to be spent on club projects and the expenses of maintaining the organization. November is National Model Railroad Month and November 18th is National Take a Toy Train to Work Day.

Lots of visitors continue to come to the Carter Railroad Museum on Saturdays. With our efforts to keep track of their numbers we have been using clicker-counters and we are averaging about 100 visitors each time we are open. As happy as I am to see these steady numbers that demonstrate the popularity of the exhibits and the railroad-themed experience we provide to the public for the university, the number of members who are present each Saturday to operate the museum and to interact with our guests is most impressive. We have been keeping a sign-in sheet for members for a number of weeks now and we are recording between 16 and 23 of our members each Saturday! That is terrific support for the hobby that we are all engaged in and important in sharing the responsibilities for having a public museum open and operating at full capacity. Our Little Engineer's Room continues to be a popular meeting place for children and we have the good fortune to have **Kelsey** and **Chris** actively engaged with their little charges and carrying on the tradition of having great support for our visiting children.

The great weekly turnout of our members is allowing me and others to work on the Tweetsie Project exhibits for many hours on Saturdays that serves to move us towards completion and smooth operation of that layout. **John Edwards**, **Mike Buster** and **Frank Fezzie**, with the help of other members are working on improving the operations of the little narrow gauge railroad by running the short consists over the layout from end-to-end to fine and correct the trouble spots. **Dean Small** continues to make scores of puffball trees while **Ken Harmon** is excelling at creating more realistic miniature trees for the mountain forests that will dominate much of the layout. I continue to work on the

scenery that will be the Appalachian backdrop for our 2-8-0 and 4-6-0 locomotives to travel through. I have most recently been working on the Pardee Point and adjacent sections that former member, **Bear Anderson**, began prior to his moving to North Carolina. The huge rock cliffs of that part of the railroad are beginning to take shape. We still could use a lot of help constructing the kits that will create the rolling stock that these locomotives will be transporting to various destinations between Johnson City and the Cranberry Mines and will gladly supply you with the materials necessary to let you construct as many as you would like to do. By the time you read this we should have received 50 pairs of RTR trucks from Blackstone to outfit our freight cars and a few for our passenger coaches as well. We will outfit each car with Sargent couplers to make all the coupling connections uniform for our trains.

George Riley, Marketing Director for White River Productions, told me in a recent email that the 2015 *HOn3 Annual*, 7th Edition will soon hit the newsstands with our 9 page article on the Shell Creek section of our Tweetsie Layout written by **Geoff Stunkard**. I have ordered 50 copies of the magazine for sale at the museum. They retail for \$19.95 and I will make them available to our members for \$15.00; so save a few dollars to purchase one for yourself, and perhaps others for a gift for a friend. It was terrific to have our museum's Tweetsie Project featured with a 10 page spread in this national/international model railroad publication in their 2014 edition; an accomplishment I am sure we are all very proud of (after all, how many model railroad clubs get their layouts into national publication?), but to be featured two years consecutively borders on being unbelievable! Congratulations to all of us and especially to those of you who have continued to work so hard on this layout that is becoming a terrific model railroad for us to operate, but that is important to the region for its historic context.

One more bit of information on the future progress of the Tweetsie layout. **George Riley** has agreed to use his Micro-Mark LaserKnife to fabricate some of the wooden sections that we will need to produce the dozen or so structures that will be the buildings that will represent the Cranberry Mine. **John Edwards** will work with me to create the scale drawings of the necessary buildings in a Corel-Draw format. These will be sent to George and he will use this state-of-the-art machine to laser-cut the pieces that will then be sent back to us for assembly. If this volunteer arrangement works we will use it to create the mine structures, the Cranberry store, several buildings for the Roan Mountain section of the layout and other wooden structures. If we find this arrangement is not working for us we will look into purchasing our own LaserKnife and doing all the work in-house. The advantages to doing the work here would provide more flexibility in the creation and assembly of the needed structures with refining them as necessary to fit the layout as well as perhaps producing a few kits that could be sold commercially. The big disadvantage would be the approximately \$2,000 the

instrument costs that would have to be taken from museum foundation funds. So, we will try working on this through the generosity of George and see where it takes us. George has strongly indicated that if we do the Cranberry Mine structures in wood using this new technology we may get another article on the Tweetsie Layout in his magazines in 2016.

Jim Pahr is once more coordinating the **Annual Christmas Party** for the Carter RR Museum and our organizations, the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS. We have chosen to go back to Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site (a place where our HO layout was housed by the site director, **Penny McLaughlin**, for 18 months just prior to our coming to ETSU) with the party scheduled for Friday, December 18th. This will be a pot-luck, covered dish affair with the clubs furnishing the meats and the flatware and dishes to eat our meal with. Dirty Santa will be there with a suggested \$15 value on the gifts if you want to participate. Some of the ladies have asked that there be two piles of gifts; one the traditional railroad themed versions that we have shared in the past, but also one for "ladies only". It appears that the women are tired of getting railroad gifts that go to the spouse or significant other, and would appreciate having some feminine things to exchange. So, this will be what we do; guys get a railroad gift for other guys, and ladies do what you feel is appropriate for your gift exchanges. Everything will work the way Santa has directed it in the past so choose and wrap you gift accordingly. Some folks will be coming around 4 p.m. to decorate the venue and get things set up. The meal will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The Carter Chapter NRHS's rail excursion was successful despite the slow ticket sales. We have had the good fortune to have sold out 3 buses for each of our last 3 rail trips, but this one only filled one 56 passenger bus (we had a few more late requests for tickets, but not enough to justify contracting a second bus). The trip was a Sunday trip, our first ever, that that may have influenced ticket sales. The day began with some misty rain, but cleared enough for a dry trip on the Big South Fork Scenic Railroad. However, we did experience some slowdowns and frustrations once we got to Stearns in the form of only the café at the ticket station being open for meals (the other restaurant in town was closed due to a recent fire) with only one waitress and a small cook staff. Our 56 hungry folks, plus the scores of other train riders brought food production almost to a standstill causing some not to be fed and a delayed train departure for everyone. The story was much the same when the train returned at 3:45 p.m. with strained food service for us before boarding the Premier Transportation bus for the ride back to Johnson City. We had a great train ride and the bus transportation was excellent, but the Sunday railroad management at Stearns was not up to the service we had in the past.

Museum benefactor, the late Rev. Howard Walker, gave his HO model railroad to the museum prior to his passing. A crew of **Jim Pahr**, **Dan McLeod**, **Gary Emmert** and **Paul**

Haynes are planning to make a road trip up to Howard's home in Joliet, IL over the weekend of November 14th to collect the HO locomotives, rolling stock, buildings and other accessories and bring them to the Carter RR Museum. The layout itself will be left in the basement of the home for any of Howard's railroading friends to have that may want it. Howard custom painted some of his locomotives and rolling stock for a personal railroad and they will be part of the collection we will receive. You all are aware, I am sure, that Rev. Walker donated most of the railroad books and many of the videos from his personal library for the museum library that bears his name as well as his collection of railroad china and conductors' hats. I appreciate our members making the long trip up to his home near Chicago to bring the remainder of his donated collections back to Johnson City.

At our October business meeting **Jim Pahr** presented a recommendation that we begin to recognize the outstanding service of many of our members to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum with the establishment and awarding of a plaque for a **Member of the Year** award. Following an enthusiastic discussion on the merits of such an award and some of the criteria for nominating individuals to receive it the motion was seconded and unanimously approved. We will begin accepting nominations from our members based on the information and criteria to be found in another section of this edition of **The Signal Bridge** and present the award to our first "**Member of the Year**" at the Christmas party in mid-December. I solicit your nominations and look forward to honoring one of our members annually with this new recognition of your outstanding service to the railroad museum.

The Carter Chapter NRHS has voted to sponsor one high school student to the NRHS's RailCamp program for the 2015 session. The chapter will establish criteria to select a student from one of the city or county school systems in the 6 counties of upper East Tennessee and will pay the tuition for that student. The following information from the NRHS website will tell you more about this well-established program for youngsters interested in railroading in North America.

About RailCamp:

2015 Session Schedules:

RailCamp East (Wilmington, Del.):

July 5 - 11, 2015

If you know an area high school student who is especially interested in railroading and railroads please make them aware of this opportunity. The Carter Chapter will be advertising this sponsorship to all the local school systems.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for all you do for the MEMRR and the George L. Carter Railroad

Museum. More than 20 years as a model railroad club whose membership is currently more than 120 is something to be very proud of for sustaining your organization and growing it as the hobby continues to transition with its use of more technology and better models. Having established and grown the Carter Railroad Museum over the past 8 years is also an important achievement as it has become a destination for many area residents on Saturdays and it has earned the respect and support of the administration of East Tennessee State University.

I especially want to thank the officers of our organizations who in addition to maintaining their own interest in their railroad-themed hobby, have given their extra time and energies to take on the added responsibilities of administrating our club with skill and dedication to them. The keeping of additional responsibilities of maintaining

membership rolls, collecting dues, balancing budgets and financial books, recording the organization's activities, creating newsletters, arranging programs and activities, conducting monthly meetings and the countless other activities that make any organization successful. It is a pleasure to be able to work with such talented and devoted individuals who make or organizations run so seamlessly and do it so well and with a smile. Thank you for your service and your continued support. Hear the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

Fred J. Alsop III
President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders
Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum

CHRISTMAS PARTY NEWS

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum Christmas Party is scheduled for Friday, December 18th at Tipton-Haynes to begin at 6pm. This year there will be 2 (two) separate tables for gifts for Dirty Santa. One table will be the traditional table of railroad related gifts that our members bring for exchanging. These gifts are to cost around \$15 -\$20.

The second table will be for distaff family members who would like to bring a gift that would be appropriate for a lady. The same pricing (\$15 -\$20) applies to these gifts. Several of our ladies have supported this idea and it should make for a better participation of spouses and significant others. Those ladies who are primary members of MEMRR may choose the table where they would like to place their gift.

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS SECRETARY REPORT - MINUTES OCTOBER 2015 BUSINESS MEETING

The meeting was called to order by club president, Fred Alsop at 6:38 p.m. with 17 members in attendance. He is pleased to announce that the club is getting about 1 new member each week.

Officers Reports:

Secretary: Debbi Edwards made a motion that the minutes from the September Business Meeting be accepted as reported by Ted Bleck-Doran, as published in the Signal Bridge. Motion passed.

Newsletter Editor: Fred Alsop reported that the Signal Bridge has 22 pages with articles on "N" track, scenery, pictures and more. There is a reminder that dues are due in November.

Treasurer: Gary Emmert gave an update of club income and expenses. President Fred Alsop explained how and why funds are set aside for the upcoming year. He also reminded members that if there is anyone that they feel should be an Honorary Member, next month's meeting is the time to propose the idea.

Webmaster: John Edwards reported that everything is up-to-date.

Vice President: John Carter reported that we currently do not have a program scheduled for November. If no one volunteers to do a program for next month we will have a video of some type of modeling technique.

President: Fred Alsop thanked the members that manned the museum on October 5th for Professor Ron Roaches' Appalachian Studies class visit. He also thanked Jim Pahriss for manning the museum sales booth and keeping up with the attendance on Saturdays.

We have started a member's sign in on Saturday's and it has been great to see how many members are coming into the museum. Thank you to everyone for the effort that you put in. We have been averaging 100 visitors on Saturdays.

President Alsop told members about receiving a History Award of Merit from the Washington County Historical Society Association. He said that even though his name is on the award, he feels that the award actually belongs to the club.

Old Business:

- 1) Planned learning sessions – Mr. Alsop spoke of possible ideas for the Thursday night learning sessions. If you have an idea or would like to present a session please see Fred.

- 2) Digitrax 402D Throttles – John Carter reported that 3 throttles have been purchased and are ready for programming. With 1 out for repairs we now have a total of 6 throttles. John Edwards reported that there are enough throttles in the Tweetsie Room.
- 3) 2016 MEMRR Officer Nominating Committee – Jim Pahrís read the list on nominees. A motion was made and passed to accept the slate of nominees as proposed. Ballots will be sent out to membership electronically. Completed ballots should be sent to Roger Teinert by November 12th or brought to the November Business Meeting.
- 4) Train Show – 139 vendor forms have been sent out. We are working on a letter requesting sponsorship. We still need tables for the show – any loans would be appreciated.
- 5) The Carter RR Museum / Carter Chapter Rail Excursion to Stearns, KY is on October 25th. We have 1 bus scheduled.

New Business:

- 1) The Carter Chapter is discussing the possibility of an overnight excursion. Mr. Alsop thinks that it is a great idea and thought that our club might want to participate. It would only be open to members of both clubs. “Just something to think about.”
- 2) Railroad Heritage is “Precision Transportation: N&W and NS Glory.”
- 3) Coordinators Meeting details will be published in the newsletter.
- 4) There are no updates to report regarding the Jonesborough Satellite Museum.
- 5) Mr. Alsop informed membership of the late Reverend Walker, his HO railroad collection and the donation that

he has made to the museum. He asked for volunteers to go with Jim Pahrís to pick up the donated items.

- 6) Jim Pahrís suggested that the club start having a “Outstanding Member of the Year” award. The award would be for any member of MEMRR or the Carter Chapter that members feel has been an outstanding member. Any member can nominate someone. A brief explanation as to why that person deserves the award is to be included in the nomination. Elected officers are excluded. Nominations are due at the November Business Meeting. Voting will be done by the both club officers. The recipient of the award will be announced at the annual Christmas party. Myra Hensley made the motion and Paul Haynes 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. The recipient of the award will receive a plaque and their name will be put on a club plaque. Gary Emmert will take the winner out to dinner.
- 7) Gary Emmert reported that Jim Pahrís visited Mrs. Jack Miller and she donated 68 VHS tapes and 25 books. Any duplicates will be available to members for a donation.

Announcements:

- 1) Next Coordinators meeting is November 12th at 6 p.m. All officers and coordinators should plan to attend.
- 2) Bluefield Train Show is November 7th & 8th.

After the call for volunteers Jim Pahrís provided a DVD presentation “DVD of the N&Ws J-Class Streamlined Steam Locomotives.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Debbi Edwards, MEMRR Secretary*

The Electronics Shop

Frank Fezzie

In the past few months we have completed wiring work on turnouts on the mainline of the HO modular layout. The Elk Park mine module, Gary's U.P. East corner module, and Fred's coal company module have turnouts that are fully operational from the DCC system and can be operated by throttle or by the dispatcher on his computer screen.

We have been working on the dispatcher's computer to update it to properly display these modules as well as prepare it for further changes to come, such as the diesel shop. Which brings me to the subject of this month's column, computers in model railroading. Our personal computers, whether desktop or laptop, as well as our smart phones and tablets can be used to enhance our model railroading experience, and oddly enough, I find they can also be a detriment of sorts, which I explain a little later.

This first step when utilizing a computer to assist in controlling a layout is to connect the computer to the DCC system that runs the layout using an interface device. There are devices to connect a computer to virtually every DCC system made, but each device is usually specific to one DCC system. In our case of connecting the computer to a Digitrax system, we have a choice of two interface devices to connect the computer to the Loconet, which in turn connects all devices in a Digitrax system. One option is the Digitrax PR3. This device will connect a computer to the Loconet, but in addition it will connect a computer directly to a piece of track, called a programming track, to allow programming of DCC decoders in locomotives. A drawback of the PR3 is that it is slightly more complicated to use.

The other choice is called a Locobuffer. It has the advantage of being a little simpler to use, but its limitation is that its function is simply to connect a computer to the Loconet. It cannot connect directly to a programming track like the PR3 can do. Another small limitation is that one piece of free software from Digitrax will not work with the Locobuffer, but

this is not a significant issue for most of us. At the museum, we use Locobuffers to connect computers to the HO modular layout and the Tweetsie layout.

With our computer properly connected to the control bus of the layout, in our case the Loconet, the next item required are one or more programs to accomplish the tasks that we need to computer to perform. There are an array of programs on the market to control model railroad layouts ranging in cost from free to hundreds of dollars.

Our primary piece of software is called JMRI, which stands for Java Model Railroad Interface. This program, written in the Java programming language, performs a broad array of tasks for model railroads. It is the product of thousands of man-hours of volunteer programmers. Improvement and fixes are constantly being installed into this program, and updated versions are released 2 or 3 times a year. Best of all, it is available free of charge, although the organization that supports it gladly accepts donations to help offset the data processing costs associated with maintaining the web site and distribution of the software package. JMRI can run on Windows computers, Apple computers, and Linux computers. It is compatible with nearly every DCC system on the market.

The JMRI program can be thought of as having sections dedicated to tasks that permit the computer to help you with your model railroad. The first of these sections is commonly referred to as DecoderPro®. It allows you to more easily program the decoders in your locomotives as well as store information about each locomotive in the computer as your roster. This information can include the value of every CV in the decoder, and the meaning of every function key recognized by the decoder, which in turn can appear on "smart throttles", making it much easier to operate the functions on each of your engines. In the near future we will begin making much more use of this section of JMRI.

A second section consists of software tools specific to your DCC system, in our case the Loconet, that allow you to monitor the system, configure components of the system and read back configuration information stored in those devices, and diagnose problems with the system. I use the tools in this section frequently as I work with Digitrax DCC systems on various layouts.

The third section is called PanelPro, and it performs two major tasks. First, it allows you to create control panels on your computer screen similar to those used by dispatchers on real railroads. These panels allow you to see how turnouts are set and change them as needed. In addition, if your layout has the hardware to detect occupancy of blocks by trains, this information can appear on your control panels as well. The second major task accomplished by the PanelPro section is to implement and operate signals on your layout. PanelPro can take the position of turnouts,

along with track occupancy information, and input from the dispatcher to determine what the signals on your layout should display based upon the rules that you put into place. We currently use PanelPro to implement panels that allow the dispatcher to control turnouts on our layouts. In the future we will use it to implement signaling on the layouts as well.

A fourth section, called Logix, allows you to automate your layout. Trains can start and stop automatically, and different routes can be selected for each train, based upon rules that you set in place. JMRI can even interface to your room lighting through the X10 system and allow the computer to move the layout from daytime to nighttime and back again. All of this can be further enhanced with scripts that layout series of commands for JMRI to execute.

A fifth section of JMRI, called OperationsPro, let you create manifests that route cars around your model railroad from shipper to receiver, and to provide train crews with the instructions they need to accomplish to moves. We will move into this section in the future as we refine operations on our layouts.

A sixth section of JMRI, called WiThrottle, allows your computer to support smartphones and tablets operating as regular wireless throttles on your layout. The computer needs to be connected to a router, and the smart phones or tablets need to load an app called WiThrottle for iPhones or Engine Driver for Android devices, both available at little or no cost. With this in place, the smart phone or tablet can act as a throttle, operating engines, and controlling turnouts on the layout.

A seventh section, called the Web Server, allows any device with a web browser, such as a smart phone, tablet, or computer, to connect to the layout and operate engines, and access the panels built under PanelPro to see the status of the turnouts, occupancy, and signals, and control all of these features.

As you can see, JMRI has an incredible range of features to allow you to have as much control over your layout by computer and by smart phones and tablets as you desire. And this brings me to my lament about the utilization of computers and DCC in layouts. These complex electronic devices, DCC and computers, allow us to do many wonderful and realistic things with our model railroads, but they also take up a significant amount of our time and brainpower to figure out how to run them and take advantage of everything that they can do. I remember that back in the days before DCC, it seems that we spent a lot more time running our trains, and a lot less time on electronics. If given the choice, I don't believe that I would give up DCC or computers on our layouts, but I have to try hard to not spend so much time with them that I forget that my hobby is model trains, not model train electronics.

If you have a question about electronics in model railroading, please send it to me via e-mail at frank@ffweb.info and I will

do my best to answer it for you, either directly or in this column.

**STAY UP WITH THE TIMES
KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP ACTIVE
AND
DON'T LET IT LAPSE**



MEMBER CLASS	FULL (WITH HOUSEHOLD)	STUDENT	YOUTH	DISTANT REMOTE	EMERITUS	HONORARY
DUES	\$30 (+ \$6 each adult/youth)	\$18	\$12	\$12	Free	Free

**MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB DUES
ARE PAYABLE IN
NOVEMBER, DECEMBER AND JANUARY**

Volunteer Matt Loser poses with Amtrak Veterans Locomotive ACS-64 No. 642 at Washington D.C.'s Union Station on October 4, 2015. Last year, P42 No. 42 was also specially painted as an Amtrak tribute to veterans. Photo by Carroll Hanson Courtesy of Washington DC Chapter NRHS - *Timetable*.

George L. Carter Railroad Museum
Member of the Year Award

At our October Business Meetings for the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders and the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS a motion to begin a new award to recognize a George L. Carter Railroad Museum "Member of the Year" was brought to the floor by Jim Pahrts and unanimously adopted by both organizations. The discussion for the guidelines for selection of the recipient, the nature of the award and the timing for the presentation produced the following criteria:

- The award will be presented annually during the RR Museum Christmas Party
The award will be in the form of a personalized plaque bearing the name of the awardee and the year of the award.
A plaque suitable for bearing the names of each annual recipient will also be displayed in the Carter RR Museum.
The selection of each annual winner will be done by committee composed of the officers and board of directors (BOD Carter Chapter NRHS only) from nominations submitted by full members of both the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS. The committee will be the "Awards Committee" and will be chaired by the Director of the G.L. Carter RR Museum.
Selection of the "Member of the Year" will be based on the number of nominations for one person for the award; the strength of the supporting statement(s) for the nominee; and the decision of the Awards Committee.
Deadline for submission of nominees' names will be 30 November each year the award is to be given.
Nominee Criteria are:
Full current membership in the MEMRR, the Carter Chapter NRHS, or both organizations for the year in which the nomination is received.
A "rank-and-file" member. No elected officer of either the MEMRR or the Carter Chapter NRHS shall be eligible during the term of their office for nomination.
Nominations are based on the nominee's active support of the Carter RR Museum, its public activities and educational outreach programs, and participation in these and similar events on a regular basis.
Individual nominations are to be limited to the naming of one candidate for the award only and must be made by a full current member of one of the above organizations. Members can nominate themselves.
The name of the nominee must also be accompanied by a short supporting statement explaining the reason for the nominating member's support for their candidate for the award.
Nominations are to be submitted by 30 November to any officer of the MEMRR, or to any officer or board member of the Carter Chapter NRHS, or to the Director of the Carter RR Museum.
The Awards Committee will meet in the first week of December to determine the winner of the award based on the preceding criteria.

Nomination Form

I would like to place the name of _____ in nomination for the "Member of the Year" Award.

I strongly feel that _____ deserves this distinguished award

Because he/she _____

Signed: _____