



THE SIGNAL BRIDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE MODEL RAILROADERS CLUB

AUGUST 2018 - MEMBERS EDITION

Volume 25 – Number 8

Published for the Education and Information of Its Membership

CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Fred Alsop

ALSOPF@mail.etsu.edu

Vice-President

John Carter

carterjohn92@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Gary Emmert

jbox1015@comcast.net

Secretary:

Greg Mundkowsky

fleetsaylor1981@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor:

Ted Bleck-Doran

Ted_mary@memrr.org

Webmasters:

Logan Heaton

Ben Merritt

Bob Jones

bobjonesmemrr@gmail.com



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 223,
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

SOUTHERN SHORTLINES

IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Part 6 – LESTER AQND CHESTER RAILROAD

Information from WWW.LANDC.RAILROAD and from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



In this issue we take a break from describing Genesee and Wyoming rail holdings in the deep South for a look at a small independent in South Carolina, the Alexander Railroad

FORMATION

In 1873, the **Cheraw and Chester Railroad Company** was granted a charter by a Special Act of the South Carolina General Assembly "to construct a railroad from Cheraw, in Chesterfield County, to Chesterville, in Chester County, by such route as shall be found most suitable and advantageous".

In those days, railroads were often built in sections using different contractors and money sometimes ran out before the line was tied together. This happened to the 3 ft (914 mm) narrow gauge^[1] Cheraw and Chester. In 1879, it made it the 22 miles (35 km) from Chester County to the Catawba River but did not cross it. On the other end, rail was laid from Cheraw to Pageland before the capital was exhausted in that direction. It operated for three years in these sections before being split. The Chester section was leased to the Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, which built a wooden bridge across the Catawba and extended the track one mile (1.6 km) beyond Lancaster in 1883. It was then leased to the Richmond and Danville Railroad, which in turn went into receivership. Meanwhile, the line from Cheraw to Pageland became the Chesterfield and Lancaster Railroad but never extended any further.

The receivers for the Richmond and Danville operated the line from Lancaster to Lenoir as one railroad but neglected to pay expenses. It soon returned the Cheraw and Chester to its stockholders.



COLONEL LEROY SPRINGS

Two years later, in 1896, the railroad was sold by court order at an advertised auction for \$25,000 to satisfy its debts. Its buyer, Colonel Leroy Springs, renamed the line the Lancaster and Chester Railroad and organized a company to run it.

In addition to Leroy Springs, the incorporators of the new railroad were William Ganson, R. C. McManus, W. T. Gregory, L. C. Payseur, James M. Heath and W. H. Hardin. All of the men were from Lancaster save for Hardin, who was from Chester. The capital stock of the company was \$50,000. On June 22, 1896, Hardin, also manager of the Chesterville and Lenoir, was elected manager and auditor of the line.

Spings did not have any personal experience in the railroad business. His interest in purchasing the line may have stemmed in part from the fact that his father, Andrew Baxter Springs, had been one of the contractors and directors for the Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, which helped form the towns of Rock Hill and Fort Mill, South Carolina. His grandfather, John Springs III, had been an early investor of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, the nation's first operating railroad, and had the privilege of having one of its early engines named after him in the days when engines were named instead of numbered. Springs' brother was president of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad (AT&O) that proceeded from Charlotte to Taylorsville before it ran out of capital. When he would refer to the AT&O in front of fellow businessmen, Springs would claim to be president of the

Lancaster, Klondike and Manila Western Railroad.



Although the railroad business as a whole was not prosperous, the newly created L&C did not have to look far for business. Springs had recently completed a textile mill in Lancaster to go with the mills he already owned in Chester, all of which supplied traffic to the railroad. Other businesses in both towns were also served by the L&C. The line connected with the Southern Railway at both ends; with Carolina and Northwestern Railway (itself later part of Southern) at Chester; and with Seaboard Air Line at Fort Lawn.

In 1899, both the Catawba River Trestle and Lancaster Depot burned a few months apart from one another. The cost to replace both structures nearly equaled what Springs and his associates paid for the railway three years earlier. However, this misfortune did allow the line an opportunity to upgrade by building a steel trestle to replace the original wooden one.

For the first six years of its existence, the Lancaster and Chester Railroad had the distinct disadvantage of being a 3 ft (914 mm) narrow gauge railroad. Thus, it was impossible to exchange cars with the main lines, which were 4 ft 8 ½ in (1,435 mm) standard gauge. Freight had to be unloaded from the main line cars in Lancaster or Chester and reloaded onto the smaller L&C cars and vice versa. Also, the L&C engines had to burn wood because the coal mines were on standard gauge lines and it was not economical to reload the coal on to smaller cars.

In 1902, Springs borrowed \$125,000 from the Southern Railway to convert the L&C rails to standard gauge. The railway also bought new coal burning locomotives as well as new rail cars. The East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad purchased the old rolling stock from the L&C. By 1913, the L&C owned three steam locomotives, nineteen box cars, two coal cars, two passenger cars, and two combines. Capital stock had risen from \$50,000 to \$500,000.

Then as now, odd-numbered trains ran eastbound and even-numbered trains ran westbound, against traditional railroad operating procedure. This is because before Springs bought the railroad, trains ran through from points north of Chester. Thus, they started their runs as southbound trains which, like westbound trains, normally have odd-digit numbers. They kept their odd numbers all the way to Lancaster on the Chester and Cheraw, even after they turned east at Chester.

Later that year, the Lancaster and Chester was persuaded to run a special passenger train to carry fans to a baseball series in Chester County between Chester and Dillon. There were as many passengers on that one train as the L&C ordinarily carried in an entire year. To make the most of the trip, several empty coal cars were attached in front of the passenger cars. When the train reached the Hooper Creek Trestle, one of the hopper cars derailed, taking the three coaches into the creek forty feet (12 m) below. Every person aboard was badly shaken or injured, and five lives were lost.

The seventy-one personal injury claims totaled more than \$130,000, nearly causing the L&C to go bankrupt. Two weeks after the Hooper Creek derailment, a fire destroyed the Lancaster Depot, which also served as a warehouse for the mill, costing the railway

an additional \$75,000. It took Springs two years to emerge from the courthouse with his railroad intact. He then was able to borrow enough money to get the line operating again.

In 1916, a hurricane-generated flood washed away the three-span Catawba River Trestle as well as the Cane Creek Trestle near the Lancaster Plant. For weeks, the L&C detoured over the Southern line to Catawba Junction and the Seaboard line to Fort Lawn to connect with its own line. A ferry was then built to take the place of the trestle, but this proved to be both slow and expensive.

A new trestle would have cost \$90,000, more than the railroad was worth before the old trestle was lost. The Southern Railway was not interested in taking the railroad back and building a new trestle. For a year, the option of abandoning operations and taking up the rails to sell for scrap was considered.

Springs then heard of a main-line trestle that was about to be abandoned by the railroad that owned it so they could replace it with a trestle that had double tracks. The trestle also included a bridge for automobiles. Colonel Springs bought this trestle and then sold it to the county for what he had paid for it. He was left with only the expense of moving the trestle to the Catawba and attaching it to the stone piers of the old trestle that were spared by the flood. The new trestle fit the piers of the old one.

The Lancaster and Chester resumed operations just in time to be taken over by the government during World War I.

ELLIOTT SPRINGS

Springs died in April 1931 leaving his empire to his only child, Elliott White Springs. Elliott Springs was born just weeks after his father purchased the L&C and had a genuine love for the railway. Under his leadership, the L&C began to prosper in the latter part of that decade, on the eve of the Second World War. In 1939, he brought the L&C national attention when he purchased the Loretto, a rail car that had originally been built for the former president of U.S. Steel, Charles M. Schwab. Springs carefully preserved the splendor of the forty-year-old car's Victorian design—Cuban mahogany paneling, crystal chandelier, velvet draperies, marble bath, and gold-plated beds. He had the Loretto remodeled for office use, then parked it on a siding near the White homestead in Fort Mill.



Lashup with L&C 401 and Greenville & Western 3751

As of 2001, the Loretto on display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina.

Springs had a flair for colorful advertising. One of the things he remains best remembered for is the menu he wrote and printed for the L&C dining car. This menu included: Long Island Ugly Duckling stuffed with Turnip Greens and Pearl Onions, Cannibal Sandwich with real collar buttons, Pork Barrel stuffed with Republican, Drawn and Quartered Democrat Roasted in Own Jacket, and Elliott Springs with Garlic and Chlorophyll. Also offered were an alligator pear for one dollar and a pair of alligators for two

dollars. Dessert was watermelon Jane Russell, pitted grapes and potted dates. That the L&C did not actually own a dining car at the time did not matter.

Springs rarely did anything in a small way and usually had fun doing it. It was his idea to appoint 29 vice-presidents to the railway, one for each mile of track. They included playwright Charles MacArthur, golfer Bobby Jones, artist James Montgomery Flagg, writer Lucius Beebe, radio man Lowell Thomas and his wartime friends Billy Bishop and Clayton Knight. Another one of these fictional vice-presidents was Ham Fisher, who seldom drew a freight train in his Joe Palooka strip without labeling it Lancaster and Chester.

However, it was striptease artist Gypsy Rose Lee, named vice-president in charge of unveiling, who got the most attention. Lee was brought to the attention of Springs by his friend, Agnew Bahnson of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She was a devoted fan of the rails and kept models of famous trains in her basement.

In addition to providing menus for dining cars that did not exist and the naming of the colorful vice-presidents, Springs listed a timetable for trains that likewise did not exist. They included The Shrinking Violet, The Black Label, The Purple Cow, The Red Rose, The White Horse and The Blue Blazes.

When the New York, New Haven and Hartford denied Springs his request for a pass by writing that they were granted only to those lines that generated traffic for its route, he wrote back, "I note that the New Haven does not consider the L&C Railway of sufficient importance to honor its officials with an annual pass. I have personally routed some two hundred carloads over the New Haven in the past three or four months but you may rest assured that I will do otherwise in the future."

When Springs moved into his office at the new company headquarters in Fort Mill, he found himself with a four-foot-high (1.2 m) and 120-foot-long (37 m) blank space on his walls. He proposed a mural of his railroad, the Lancaster and Chester, but several aerial photographers insisted this would be impossible. In spite of this, Springs sent well-known photographer Elliott Lyman Fisher up with company pilot Cecil Neal. They flew up and down the line until Fisher had photographed every foot of track—villages, mills, woodlands and fields. When several mountings of the prints failed to satisfy Springs, Fisher colored each slide by hand. One hundred and eighty lights illuminated the slides from the rear giving them a three-dimensional effect. The mounting of the mural allowed Springs to inspect his railroad any time he wished.



In 1946, the L&C upgraded its fleet by buying six diesel locomotives from the U.S. Army. These 65-ton Whitcomb locomotives had seen service in Italy during the war and burned about the same amount of oil to run that the old steam engines used for lubrication. The purchase of these engines made the L&C the first fully diesel-operated railroad in the state, something that Springs liked to boast of. The steam engines formerly used by the railroad were either sold or put out to pasture. However, these diesels did not spend long on the line as they were replaced by three 70-ton 600 horsepower (450 kW) GEs in late 1950. Among the Whitcombs, number 51 passed to the Allegheny and South Side Railway where it would stay until the end of that property.

In 1951, Gypsy Rose Lee was on hand in Lancaster to 'unveil' the new Williamsburg-style depot. Her six-year-old son, Erik, was also present and was photographed with his mother in the cab of one of the L&C's locomotives. In addition, Springs gave the L&C its slogan, "The Springmaid Line". He also outfitted a Rolls-Royce as a high rail inspection vehicle. In the late 1950s, the Railway adopted a light blue, gray and white paint scheme to replace the dark blue and white scheme of earlier diesels.

H.W. CLOSE

Elliott Springs died in 1959 and his son-in-law, H.W. Close, became president of Springs and the L&C. In 1961, a steel shop and engine house was built in Lancaster to replace the wood structure that was currently in use. In late 1965, the GE diesels were replaced by two new EMD SW900s. They were given the numbers 90 and 91 and are still in use by the Railway on a regular basis in late 2001. These locomotives handled the traffic on the line—much of the time making two freight runs a day—until December, 1984, when an additional EMD SW900 was added to the fleet and given the number 92. In 1996, two EMD SW1500's, numbered 95 and 96, were added, followed by four EMD SW1200s in 1998, which were numbered 93, 94, 97 and 98. In 2001, the line leased two more ex-Conrails units from Locomotive Leasing Partners, or LLPX, SW1500 #215 and SW1001 #91.

RECENT EVENTS

The L&C added another aspect to its operation in 1996 when Bob Willetts began a passenger car restoration program in Lancaster. The J.P. Henderson car was the first to come out of Lancaster. It is currently in charter service on Amtrak. In the late 1970s, this car had been in storage in New York and a state of disrepair. It was bought, then moved to Hartsville, South Carolina where a total renovation began. It went back into service in 1989 and was later bought by the Lancaster and Chester.

In 2006, the South Carolina shortline got some national railroad attention again in Pennsylvania. The New Hope and Ivyland Railroad restored their Baldwin steam engine 2-8-0 #40 to her original appearance as a 1920s-era freight locomotive when she worked for the Lancaster and Chester. When the L&C went diesel in 1947, the steamer went to the Cliffside Railroad in North Carolina. Due to the conversion from steam to diesel motive power on the Cliffside, the #40 was sold in 1962. Steam Trains Inc., a Pennsylvanian group of investors, bought the 2-8-0 and had it shipped to the Reading roundhouse in Wilmington, Delaware. By 1966, the equipment was again transferred to New Hope, Pennsylvania where the locomotive operates to this day. However, it is now again lettered for the NH&I.



On March 25, 2001, the L&C entered into a lease-purchase agreement with Norfolk Southern to operate the SB trackage in Lancaster County. It is the first expansion in route mileage since the inception of the L&C more than one hundred years ago.

On September 2, 2010, Gulf and Ohio Railways announced it was purchasing the Lancaster and Chester; the deal was planned to be completed by November 2010.^{[2][3][4]}

A LOOK AHEAD FOR THE L&C

In 2001, the Lancaster and Chester entered into a lease-purchase agreement with Norfolk Southern to operate the former SB line in Lancaster County. This extends from MP 89.5 near the Catawba River to MP 58.7 in Kershaw, a total of 30.8 miles (49.6 km). This ended years of negotiation between the two lines. Until then the Lancaster and Chester Railroad had virtually the same route-mileage since its inception in 1896. It passes over nine wooden trestles ranging in length from 74-to-321-foot (23 to 98 m) long Catawba River Trestle is a combination structure made of wooden trestle segments and four steel through trusses. Along the line lies 66 curves, the sharpest of which is 5 degrees 30 minutes. The steepest grade is a mile and half stretch west of Richburg called, appropriately enough, Richburg Hill. At 4.7%, it is said to be among the steepest in the Southeast. (This might even be more true now that NS stopped rolling trains over Saluda.)

The Railway invested heavily in its own line in the late 1990s, spending close to nine million dollars over a three- to five-year period. New rail was laid replacing 85 to 95 pound per yard (42–47 kg/m) rail with 127-132 lb/yd (63–66 kg/m) rail. Most of it is stick rail, through some welded sections were added on crossings and curves to simplify maintenance. In addition, the railroad tripled their locomotive fleet in that time period going from three units in 1996 to a total of nine by the end of the decade. Bridges were also strengthened. This allowed the Railway to begin using 286,000 pounds (130,000 kg) cars instead of the 200,000 pounds (91,000 kg) cars previously used. In time, the L&C plans to use 315,000 pounds (143,000 kg) cars.



There are now two interchanges on the line. One is with Norfolk Southern in Chester on their Charlotte to Columbia main. Traffic to and from the interchange on the NS end is handled daily with their local out of Rock Hill. The power on these locals are generally GP59s or high hood GP38-2s. NS Transcaer GP59 #4611 and Operation Lifesaver #4640 was power for most of October, 2001. An interchange with CSX-predecessor Seaboard Coast Line (and before that Seaboard Air Line) was built in 1981 in East Chester to replace the SCL interchange in Fort Lawn that was abandoned at the same time. Power on these trains can be anything from GP40s to wide noses—even LMSX #710 once or twice—to ex-Con B36-7s.

The lease agreement with Norfolk Southern effectively takes away the Lancaster interchange which had not been used in many years. Most of the L&C's traffic on the Original 29 is on the Chester end of the line and the car-hire charge was reduced if all interchange was handled there.

There was a time when the L&C's parent company was responsible for up to 90% of the traffic on the line, up to 13,000 cars annually at the six plants on the line. (The L&C also switched out the Eureka Plant in Chester. To get there, they had to cross Seaboard at grade while using the Southern Columbia to Charlotte main. The last time I saw this happen was in 1989.)

However, when Springs bought another company, a truck fleet came with it. The trucking side soon became more dominant and Springs-generated rail traffic dwindled from a couple of thousand cars of textile-related material annually to roughly one hundred cars a year at the Lancaster Complex in the early 2000s. That plant was closed in 2003 and soon torn down to make way for a park. The hundred cars that came out of that plant in later years was bales of corrugated cardboard which was taken a few miles up track to Bowers Fibers. When Springs stopped shipping there by rail, Bowers Fibers stopped receiving by rail. Springs-owned Grace Water Treatment Plant uses about 1,400 cars of coal a year. In terms of revenue, this was for many years the largest business served by the L&C.

In the late 1970s, the railroad, sensing that Springs-generated traffic would soon dwindle, created a 470-acre (190 ha) industrial park in Richburg near I-77. Formerly known as Carolina's Distribution Park, since renamed The L&C Railway Distribution Park, this area includes Guardian Industries, Porter-Warner and Thyssen Steel, which was the first industry to move there. Thyssen, which recently opened a second plant on the line, takes inbound coils of sheet steel and slits them for various industries, such as stampings for automobiles, lawn mowers and refrigerators. The Lancaster and Chester handles up to 2,400 carloads of sand and chemicals to park tenant Guardian Glass a year. Also, the Railway bought four gondolas for Guardian to ship cullet to the Richburg plant from Florida. (However, these gons, numbered 300 to 303, are in storage on line. Two of them are in Fort Lawn on the spur that once led to the cotton warehouses.)

The Railway owns more than 1,000 acres (400 ha) of land near I-77 in Richburg and hopes to attract other businesses to the area. But not at any cost. A Charlotte, North Carolina company was recently looking to build along the line. However, research into the company's past revealed a number of environmental citations. As a result of this finding, the Lancaster and Chester decided not to sell to this company.



For volume of cars, the largest customer on the line was at one time GAF at a section of track in East Chester near the CSX interchange. GAF has stopped shipping as much by rail. Archer-Daniels-Midland in Kershaw is currently the biggest customer on the line with estimates ranging up to 4,000 cars a year. Circle S at MM17 on the Original 29 handles some 3,500 cars a year. Furthermore, there is a shuffle train between the two feed mills. This was billed as an added bonus to L&C operation of the SB. Formerly, 18-wheelers, up to 60 a week, handled this traffic.

The L&C owns a fleet of boxcars—50-foot (15 m) cars built in 1979, 60-foot (18 m) cars built in 1996—that were used primarily by GAF, which manufactures rolled roofing-mat material. The 50 footers once numbered forty in total and were in the 200 to 239 block. Five were lost in a derailment in Arkansas while ten were sold to Lexington & Ohio Railroad in 2000. The 60 footers are

numbered 600 to 619. For a time, fifteen of these had been leased by CSX. I believe those have since been returned to service by L&C.

PPG Industries is also in East Chester. PPG manufactures 70 million pounds (32,000 metric tons) of fiber material annually that is used in such diverse products as computers and surfboards. Speciality Polymers, Union Carbide and Owens-Corning are also near the wye at East Chester.

Once every week to ten days, the L&C gets unit trains from Ohio for the Circle S Feed Mill now at Milepost 17 between Fort Lawn and Richburg. Both Norfolk Southern and CSX were vying for Circle S. But the L&C convinced the owner of the plant to locate on the L&C by making him see that, according to Steve Gedney, president of the L&C, 'he could have the best of both worlds here,' a reference to being able to choose the best rate between both Class 1 carriers that the L&C connects with. It was this business, along with the 4.7 percent grade at Richburg Hill, that prompted the Railway to purchase four ex-Conrail EMD SW1200s which arrived in 1998. One of these 1200s, 97, spent most of the first three years it was on the line at Circle S unloading the grain cars. As of early November, 2001, it had been replaced by LLPX SW1001 #91. When the SW1001 was returned to LLPX, the railroad put their SW900 #91 at the grain mill.

In all, the Railway handles about 14,000 cars a year in steel, coal, chemicals, glass, fiberglass, sand, corn, barley, soybeans and lumber. Steve Gedney, however, said that it is hard to project actual car loadings. However, this number is certainly an improvement from the 5,800 cars it averaged yearly during the 1980s. An additional 4,000 cars could be added if Circle S undergoes a planned expansion. L&C officials foresee moving between 18,000 and 20,000 cars a year in the future, but add that the line could handle upwards of 30,000 a year (on the original route) "without bumping into each other."

But it is the recent lease-purchase deal with Norfolk Southern that offers the most hope from growth on the Lancaster and Chester. "I think the main thing is our presence and having our operating headquarters in this area", Steve Gedney, the president of the railroad told this reporter.

"If we want to grow our business, which by doing that helps and assists the local economy whether it be in Lancaster County, Chester County or even York County, we do our own marketing in conjunction with the county economic developers for both counties to try to locate companies and factories that will use rail."

The primary customers on the new line are the Archers-Daniels-Midland plant in Kershaw and AmeriSteel on Riverside Road in Lancaster. Gedney envisions service to existing companies on the line that presently do not use rail.

"We are going to see what we can do initially with shippers that have been on the line that have stopped shipping like Thomas and Betts. They've got a rail siding going in there. We're going to talk to them and see if there's anything we can do to help their business which would put rail cars on the line."

Additionally, a spur was put in at Southern Gas north of the interchange in Lancaster. Southern Railway once served this business, but that spur had been taken up years ago.

The line has reshuffled the way they move the trains. In addition, they have put in 100 pound-per-yard (50 kg/m) switches. Presently everything that is on the main line right now on the Kershaw District is 85 lb/yd (42 kg/m) rail. This compares with the 127 to 132 lb/yd (63-66 kg/m) rail on the L&C's original line. New ties have been placed as well on all the curves. Gedney adds, "We've also done some bridge work on the 521 bridge. That's not major work, mainly just heavy maintenance."

Meanwhile, the L&C and Lancaster County Economic Development Corporation President Ray Gardner are seeking new business to the line. "We've already identified some land around Heath Springs and Kershaw," Gardner said and he suggested that it would be used to make a 200-acre (0.81 km²) park.

There are also two parcels of land in the northern part of the county. One is nearly 1,200 acres (4.9 km²) of land at Foster Park. This area is on Riverside Road. "It's zoned I-2," said Gardner, "heavy industrial. We hope to take advantage of that. On down Riverside Road near the airport, we hope the county is going to get us some land there."

"They didn't go out of their way marketing," Gardner said of how Norfolk Southern handled the line in Lancaster. "I'm not critical of them. But the L&C has got better service. They're more dependable. They're local. If you need something, you can drive down there to see them. They're eager just like we are."

The purchase of the former SB line in Lancaster has fueled speculation on whether the L&C will ever make it into Catawba where interchange with CSX could be easier for Kershaw. Or perhaps even into Rock Hill. But more than six years after the L&C's endcabs set steel on the SB rails, this has not happened yet. What has happened is that the L&C purchased their first non endcab units, two EMD GP38-2s that were originally leased from Helms Leasing after spending most of their career on Conrail. (They went to Norfolk Southern after the split.) They've also currently leasing four rebuilt GP38-2s from GMTX.

MORE RAILROAD HISTORY

In 1873 a Special Act of the South Carolina General Assembly granted a charter to the Cheraw and Chester Railway Company and provided: That the said company is hereby authorized to construct a railroad from Cheraw, in Chesterfield County, to Chesterville, in Chester County, by such route as shall be found most suitable and advantageous. Thus began the long and colorful history of the present day Lancaster and Chester Railway Company.

Proposed as a way to link distant regions of the country, the railroad was to be part of a larger system that would allow for the transporting of products to and from the South. The early intention was to build a 55-mile railroad that would connect the towns of Cheraw, Lancaster and Chester. After the investors had supplied enough money to build 30 miles of track from Chester to Lancaster, their resources were exhausted. The remaining track to Cheraw was never completed. The financial picture for these early investors did not improve. By June 1896, the Cheraw and Chester was under foreclosure, and by Court Order was sold at auction. Colonel Leroy Springs, founder of Springs Industries, purchased the railroad for \$25,000.00 on the Chester County Courthouse steps



L&C #32 at Chester, SC

Leroy Springs changed the name of the railroad to Lancaster and Chester, also known as The Springmaid Line, and began what would be a troublesome journey towards success. While Colonel Springs was starting a traffic base

of cotton and related materials for the mills, several calamities were also forming on the horizon. In April, 1899, the wooden trestle over the Catawba River burned. Within a month the depot at Lancaster was destroyed by fire. The depot was replaced the same year with the trestle being rebuilt in 1900. However, Springs had a much larger issue to overcome than the depot and trestle. The initial investors chose to construct the Railroad as a narrow gauge. By the beginning of the 20th Century, most railroads had converted to standard gauge track. Narrow gauge railroads such as the Lancaster and Chester could not interchange cars and locomotives with those of standard gauge track. This created a laborious and costly task of unloading and reloading cargo. This difference in track also created a problem economically for operating the railroad. Wood had to be burned for fuel rather than coal because the coal mines were located on standard gauge railroads and the coal would also be subject to the expense of unloading and reloading.



Wreck of #16 at Hooper's Creek - 1913

The economic message became clear to narrow gauge railroad owners. The L&C changed to standard gauge in 1902. By 1913, capital stock was increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000 or 5,000 shares at \$100 each. However, 1913 was to be a remarkably fateful year. The worst wreck in the railroad's history occurred on June 30, 1913 as the train was carrying fans to a large play-off baseball game in Chester. The L&C, with 79 passengers onboard, derailed. A freight car jumped the track, causing three passenger cars to plunge to the bottom of the creek. Hooper's Creek Trestle collapsed from the wreckage. Five people lost their lives in the wreck. Some two years later, Colonel Springs managed to settle the claims with the courts. However, after narrowly escaping bankruptcy, there was no money left to replace passenger car rolling stock and passenger service ceased.

While attempting to recover from the wreck, yet another tragedy awaited the L&C, this time dealt by Mother Nature. The flood of 1916 carried away the bridge over the Catawba River. Even though Colonel Springs had succeeded in borrowing enough capital to get the railroad back in operation from the wreck, it was doubtful this calamity would be overcome. Some of the officers talked of giving up and selling out. However, Colonel Springs was not going to give up the Railroad. Detours over the Southern and Seaboard Railroads were used for weeks. Later, a ferry was built to take the place of the bridge. In the meantime, Colonel

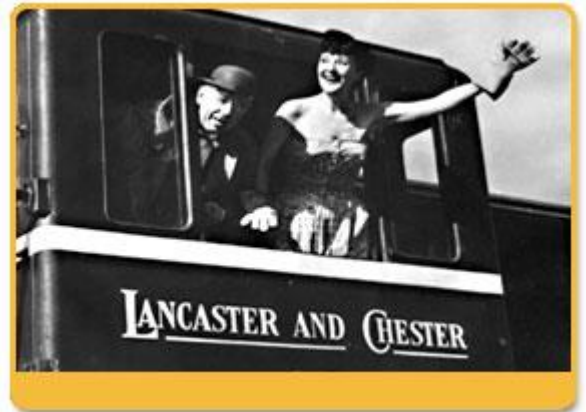
Springs had heard of a railroad bridge that was to be abandoned. The double span bridge was jointly used by vehicles, and jointly owned by the county. Springs was able to purchase the bridge and sell the portion used by vehicles back to the county for the full cost of the bridge. The second half of the bridge was brought to the Catawba River crossing using the same stone piles from the previous bridge construction.

Almost unbelievably, this was not the last in the line of tragedies. The railroad was brought yet more fame as a picture of an overturned car, resulting from a tornado, was carried by the nation's newspapers. According to several accounts, the first boxcar behind the engine was lifted off the track and deposited, bottom side up, clear of the tracks. The engineer proceeded on,

seemingly unaware of the event, as the rear cars coasted forward and coupled themselves to the engine.

This eventful era of the L&C came to an end with the death of Colonel Leroy Springs on April 7, 1931. The Colonel's son and successor, Elliott White Springs would take charge and bring the railroad through the hard times of the Great Depression with consistent profits and consistent notoriety. Railway cars were added and new warehouses were constructed. Twenty-nine Vice-Presidents were named to the Board of Directors, one for each of the Railroad's twenty-nine miles. This bold move was noted by The New York Times, partly due to the fact that the famed stripper, Gypsy Rose Lee, had been named Vice President of Unveiling.

These events were followed by a very creative [advertising campaign](#) carried out by Elliott Springs. Drawing on his past history of writing fiction, he generated a contrived timetable for six nonexistent trains including the Blue Blazes, the Shrinking Violet and the Purple Cow. The trains came with fabricated menus offering items such as Golden Goose Eggs, Back Bay Trollops with Harvard Accent and Split Dixiecrats with Frozen Assets



With Springs at the helm, the railroad continued to flourish financially as well as publicly. Through the 50's, property and equipment were purchased. The L&C converted to diesel power. Gypsy Rose Lee made several appearances in Lancaster, dedicating both the new depot and the purchase of fourteen new covered hopper freight cars.

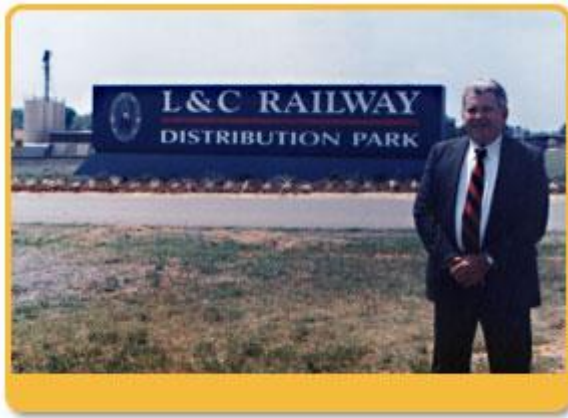
The death of Elliott White Springs, in October of 1959, brought to end yet another era in the history of the L&C. Springs left behind a legacy of contributions, one of which continues to touch the lives of people who live in this region, The Springs Foundation, which provides financial contributions to enhance education, health, and recreation programs in Chester, Lancaster and York Counties.

After the death of Elliott Springs, Bill Close became

President of the Railway. From 1959-1990 the Railway built a new Engine Shop, purchased new locomotives, bought new boxcars, and built the Carolina Distribution Park in Richburg, later renamed the L&C Railway Distribution Park. In 1989, Guardian Industries started operation as the newest and largest rail shipper in the Distribution Park.

In 1990 the L&C began an intensive diversification program to attract new industry to the line. Under the leadership of S. M. Gedney, who became President in 1990, the Railway has brought eleven (11) new customers into the area which when combined with existing industry expansion represent over \$250,000,000 of new investment to the region. In addition, the Railway has invested over \$9,000,000 in heavy rail, bridge rehabilitation, new freight cars and locomotives to handle 286,000 lb. loads and increased unit train movements





The new millennium has ushered in new opportunities for the L&C to expand its service area. In March of 2001, the L&C signed a lease purchase agreement with Norfolk Southern Corporation to operate 30.8 additional miles of track from Catawba Junction to Kershaw, SC. This line segment connects with the L&C's 29 miles of original main line at Lancaster. With a 100%+ increase in traffic volume and with its route miles and service area expanded by over 100%, the L&C Railway has positioned itself to continue growing at a steady, reliable rate. This strategy adds emphasis to President Gedney's quote in the book 1896-1996 Lancaster & Chester Railway. The First Hundred Years: Our commitment is strong and our future is bright.

Once upon an occasion, a trip to the Springs Recreation Park would allow for a ride on the only miniature steam driven railway in the world. On any given weekend, the Lancaster and Chester crew could be found operating the Lilliputian Branch of the railroad. In those days, the branch consisted of three locomotives, four passenger cars, two flat cars, and a caboose. There was more than one mile of rail with a turntable, a round house, a station, two sidetracks, a water tank and a tunnel. Thousands of children visited the park annually to ride the train. A portion of this train is already on display at the L&C Museum with the remaining portion undergoing renovations.

The highlight of the museum is a scale model replica of the original 29-mile route of the L&C. The railroad enthusiasts have taken on the responsibility of making exact replicas of every building and facility on the route, plus shrubs, trees and bodies of water.

RAILROAD MUESUM

Due to the diligence and hard work of several railroad buffs, including several L&C employees, the museum was established in the summer of 1995. Countless hours were spent preparing the site for the exhibition of hundreds of photographs depicting the railroad from the beginning to the present, railroad memorabilia, with information on the shortlines of the Palmetto state that have disappeared, and other relative artifacts. The museum opened for visitation in the fall of 1996.



The museum's current hours of operation are: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Open on the first and third Saturdays of the month with some exceptions for holidays. Please call for details at 803-286-2100

Those responsible for founding the Museum include:
 Travis Berry
 Manning Suttle
 James Beckham
 Ed Sharpe
 Walter Craig

when planning a visit.

The museum is located on the second floor of the station at 512 South Main Street, Lancaster, SC 29721

Admission is free with all donations appreciated





BETWEEN LANCASTER AND CHESTER									
EASTBOUND					WESTBOUND				
FIRST CLASS					FIRST CLASS				
MIXED			PASSENGER		Stations, Etc.			PASSENGER	
17	15	19						17	15
EX. SUN.	EX. SUN.	SUN. ONLY						SUN. ONLY	EX. SUN.
P.M.	A.M.	P.M.						A.M.	P.M.
7:00	9:30							5:50	7:45
7:15	9:50							5:10	7:29
7:24	10:20							5:00	7:21
7:30	10:30							4:45	7:15
7:40	11:00							4:30	7:05
7:48	11:15							4:13	6:55
8:00	11:30							4:00	6:45
P.M.	A.M.	P.M.						A.M.	P.M.
EX. SUN.	EX. SUN.	SUN. ONLY						SUN. ONLY	EX. SUN.
17	15	19						17	15
			38	0.0	LV. CHESTER	AR. P	F.		
			10	8.0	KINOC	N	16	30'	
			14	12.0	RICHBURG	D	6		
			16	15.0	BASCOMVILLE	A	9		
			31	20.0	FORT LAWN	D	7	10	
			3	23.5	GRACE	D	10	14	
			50	27.7	MILL	D			
			100	28.6	LANCASTER	D			
					AR.	LV.			



**THE VIEW FROM THE ENGINEER'S SIDE OF THE CAB.
MEMRR PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

I am just back from 3 weeks of birding and exploring in Malaysia and Borneo in time to meet the editor's deadline for this month's newsletter. The birding was very good and I saw numerous species of primates including Orangutans in the tropical rainforests. Now if I can readjust my biological clock to local sun time I will be back on schedule for East Tennessee. Let me begin by thanking all of our members who worked to keep the Carter Railroad Museum open and operating and who working on our layouts during my absence. It is most rewarding to know that I can take a personal leave of absence on occasion, even one lasting several weeks, and feel confident that all the things that have to be done to keep the museum open to the public and meet the responsibilities of its operation and the functions of the MEMRR and the Carter Chapter of the NRHS will be

handled by my fellow members while I am away. Good to be back and I am looking forward to seeing you all very soon.

I have read the email that our webmaster circulated to our members regarding the death of Mike Buster, Jr. in mid-July. Mike had spoken of his son's serious medical problems to some of us over the past year and we prayed for a positive outcome that was not to be. We all share Mike and his family's loss with heart-felt sorrow.

Parking Passes:

August is the month that many students begin another school year. Many of the area's public and private schools are already in session and the university will begin its classes the 3rd week of August. A lot of the construction that has been taking place on campus will be completed, but because

of the frequent rains this summer, some will not finish on schedule. So, be prepared for more traffic on campus in the coming weeks and fewer parking places. I will work with the Director of Parking to get our new annual volunteer parking passes issued before the current ones expire and make them available to you at the Carter RR Museum as usual. Remember, fill out the form for your pass with its identifying number and take only one per member so we will have enough. Please display your parking pass on the dashboard of your vehicle when you park on campus during weekdays (not necessary on weekends). If you park illegally plan to pay the citation if you get one.

Heritage Day:

The Heritage Day Event scheduled by our HD Event Coordinator, **Geoff Stunkard**, for August 25th will be **Vintage Mid-Western: IC, WAB, NKP, etc.** Those of you with locomotives and rolling stock that called the rails of the mid-west "home" please bring them on the last Saturday of the August and display them for our fellow members and the public. Let's get those prairie locomotives and them consists high-balling on our Southern Appalachian themed HO layout.

Annual Picnic:

Jim Pahr has had confirmation from **Tom** and **Kim McKee** that they will once again host our annual picnic at their lovely waterfront home on Boone Lake. Tom will have his G-Scale garden railroad running and the event always is a much anticipated social outing for our members and their spouses or significant others. The date will be **Saturday, September 15th at 4:00 p.m.** Other details will be soon forthcoming. Our webmaster will set up a site for you to confirm that you are attending and what dish you plan to bring so we can organize the meal and have a head count for our hosts. When we have further details you will be notified by email with a reminder also in the September newsletter. Put the date on your calendar now and make plans to attend as this is a wonderful outdoor social event that we have all enjoyed at the McKee's home for many years.

Annual Train Show:

The 3rd Big Annual Train Show was bigger than ever with more vendors attending than in previous years and a lot more publicity promoting the event was done across the region. The Train Show Committee began planning for the June 2019 train show almost as soon as the last vestiges of this year's show were removed from the venue on the ETSU campus. **Roger Teinert** and his volunteer committee did an outstanding job of contacting vendors, making arrangements for tables, coordinating publicity, and the countless other things that have to be done to make an event of this size happen. They, and all our members who helped before, during and after the show, are to be

commended for their efforts, their dedication to the task and the professional way they carried it out. Monthly meetings are taking place throughout the year and into next year by the committee planning the details for the event. If you would like to attend the meetings, and/or be part of the planning committee please contact Roger and let him know so you will be on the contact list for the meeting times and locations. My personal thanks go to the committee and to all of our members who worked on the show and at the venue when it was in progress. We could not do it without you and because of your efforts it has become one of the largest train shows in the southeast.

Modelers Needed:

Over the past few months several MEMRR members have sold their personal modules on the HO layout to the MEMRR Club. Some planning has already been done by club members for designing what some of the modules should have as a theme and what scenery might be added to them; and some work has been done on them to enhance their appearance. They provide a great opportunity for club members to work with other members to get these club modules themed with structures, roads, waterways, scenery, etc., so that we continue to improve the entire HO club layout. If you would like to bring your modeling skills and ideas to fruition on one or more of these modules come to the museum on any Thursday afternoon/evening "work night" and join in the conversation of what should be done on each module and then become involved in the "doing" that will make it an exciting addition to the layout. All of these modules have the potential to become very interesting parts of the larger layout, but they won't get there on their own; we need modelers to create the environment that will make each one stand out. Come and help us complete each one of them. You will also find that several module owners are working to create a new look on their modules so there is a lot of building activity going on our MEMRR layout. In addition, a lot of new track work has been installed and more is being installed to make the monthly operating sessions more efficient and enjoyable. Come be a part of the changes that are taking place on the HO layout.

Rail Excursions:

The Carter Railroad Museum is co-hosting with the Carter Chapter NRHS two upcoming rail excursions for the end of 2018. These are public service outreach programs for the citizens of the community and any profits made are shared by the museum and the Carter Chapter. Some of the funds raised by the Chapter have gone into the publishing of the book *Tales of the Rails* and to sending a high school student to the National NRHS RailCamp in Delaware the past 3 years. I encourage all of our members to take advantage of these locally arranged trips to help support the our railroad museum and the Carter Chapter's programs; but primarily

for the fun and enjoyment you will have as a participant riding a vintage train often pulled by a steam locomotive through scenic vistas. Detailed information about the trips and downloadable ticket information is available on the MEMRR, Carter Chapter, and Carter RR Museum websites. Here is some brief information to get you started:

- **Labor Day Weekend Excursion:** Saturday-Monday 1-3, September. Bus (limited to 56 participants) from ETSU campus to Elkins, WV. Two nights lodging, 3 train rides (Cass Scenic RR behind Shay locomotives; Cheat Mountain Salamander from Big Bald Mt. to Elkins; and Durbin Rocket Heisler locomotive); one dinner buffet at a steak house and one dinner at the Gandy Dancer Dinner Theatre. Breakfast include at the hotel. Rooms available as singles, doubles or triples. Deadline for getting on board this one is **August 17th**, so hurry and make your reservations.
- **Big South Fork Scenic Railroad:** Stearns, KY. Day trip with buses leaving from ETSU. 16 mile rail trip through the gorges of Big South Fork National Recreational Area and visit to the Blue Heron Mine interpretive center administered by the National Park Service. Excursion on **Saturday, October 27th**.

These are great opportunities to ride some trains in some very scenic places and to enjoy the excitement of a rail adventure with a lot of folks who also share and interest in railroads. Our folks put a lot of effort into arranging these rail trips and it is great when we have fellow members on board to share the adventure and to advertise our club and our railroad museum. Please plan to join me on one or both of these scheduled events.

Lots of events are available to our members and to the public through the efforts of our organizations. There are many parts of all of our museum layouts that are being worked on to upgrade their appearance and to make them more efficient in their operations. Operating sessions are being held for the first time in 2018 after many years of talking about having them. They occur the first Monday of every month and are open to all members. There are always things to do to test your modeling skills and the opportunity to learn new ones from fellow members. Bring you locomotives and consists to run on our layouts in HO, N, G and HOn3 scales; or come and run those that belong to the club or the museum and enjoy the fun of watching a locomotive you are controlling make it way across the rails of one of our layouts. Come to the museum and to the club meeting and the work nights and be involved in this great hobby of model railroading with others who share your interests and passions for the hobby. 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, ETSU

ANNUAL PICNIC



The George L. Carter Railroad Museum annual picnic will be held at 4PM on Sunday September 17th at Kim and Tom McKee's residence on Boone Lake. Their address is 159 Will Lane Road, Johnson City. Please park at the Living Word Lutheran Church, corner of N. Roan (TN 36) and Rockingham Road. We will run a shuttle service from the church to the McKee's. The shuttle service is required because of limited parking at the McKee's home. Need two more shuttle drivers with vans/suvs.

Please provide the following info to Jim Pahr at

pahrjsj@comcast.net or 423-753-8045

Number of guests attending (This is an ADULT ONLY EVENT)
Dish (s) you will bring (Need salads, vegetables & desserts)
The McKee's will provide the meat for the picnic and the museum will provide the necessary eating accoutrements.

FALL EXCURSION



Big South Fork Scenic Railway's SW-9 #106

The George L. Carter Chapter, of the National Railway Historical Society in conjunction with the George L. Carter Railroad Museum at East Tennessee State University, will conduct a train excursion on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway, Saturday, October 27, 2018

We will ride the former Kentucky & Tennessee Railway on a 14 mile round trip into the Daniel Boone National Forest and

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. This trip is full of spectacular scenic vistas, lush vegetation and mountain streams as it descends 600 feet into the gorge before stopping at Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp, a National Park Service outdoor interpretive site. Your ticket also includes admission to the McCreary County Museum in Stearns, KY.

Passengers should arrive at ETSU's parking lot No. 22A on Go Bucs Trail (accessible from Jack Vest Drive off State of Franklin Road or South Greenwood Drive off State of Franklin Road) at 6:15 a.m. to be checked in and loaded onto the bus by 6:45 a.m. with departure promptly at 7:00 a.m. **The bus will not wait for late arrivals and no ticket refunds will be made if you miss the bus.** There are no parking restrictions in this lot on the ETSU campus on weekends.

The price for this excursion is \$85.00. These prices include the roundtrip bus ride to Stearns, KY, your roundtrip train fare on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway. A "Coal Miner" box lunch and admission to the McCreary County Museum.

Ticket order forms and liability waiver forms can be picked up at the George L. Carter RR Museum (open Saturday's only from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.) in Johnson City or printed off by going to the G.L. Carter website at glcarternrhs.com or the memrr.org website, choose **NRHS News**, then **Ticket Order Form**. The signed liability waiver form **must** accompany the ticket request form. Please have your ticket requests in by October 13, 2018.

Make check or money order (no cash please) payable to: George L. Carter Chapter, NRHS.

Please mail the ticket request form along with the signed liability waiver form to:
George L. Carter Chapter, NRHS; Attn: Bill Beagen,
1091 Henderson Court, Jonesborough, TN 37659

For further information, contact: Bill

423/833-6906 or rrbill@embarqmail.com

Directions and map to parking lot will accompany ticket confirmation.



Big South Fork's Caboose #1

PAUL'S PICS
PHOTOS BY PAUL HAYNES
DWARF SIGNAL PRODUCTIONS

