

Birmingham was founded not on a river, but at the junction of two railroads. The city and the railroads were planned to exploit the mineral resources in north central Alabama - iron ore, coal and limestone – the key ingredients to make iron.

The crossing point of the first two railroads established the location of Birmingham, Alabama, in 1871. These railroads, later to become the L&N and the Alabama Great Southern were followed by 7 more trunk lines as well as numerous private industrial railroads.

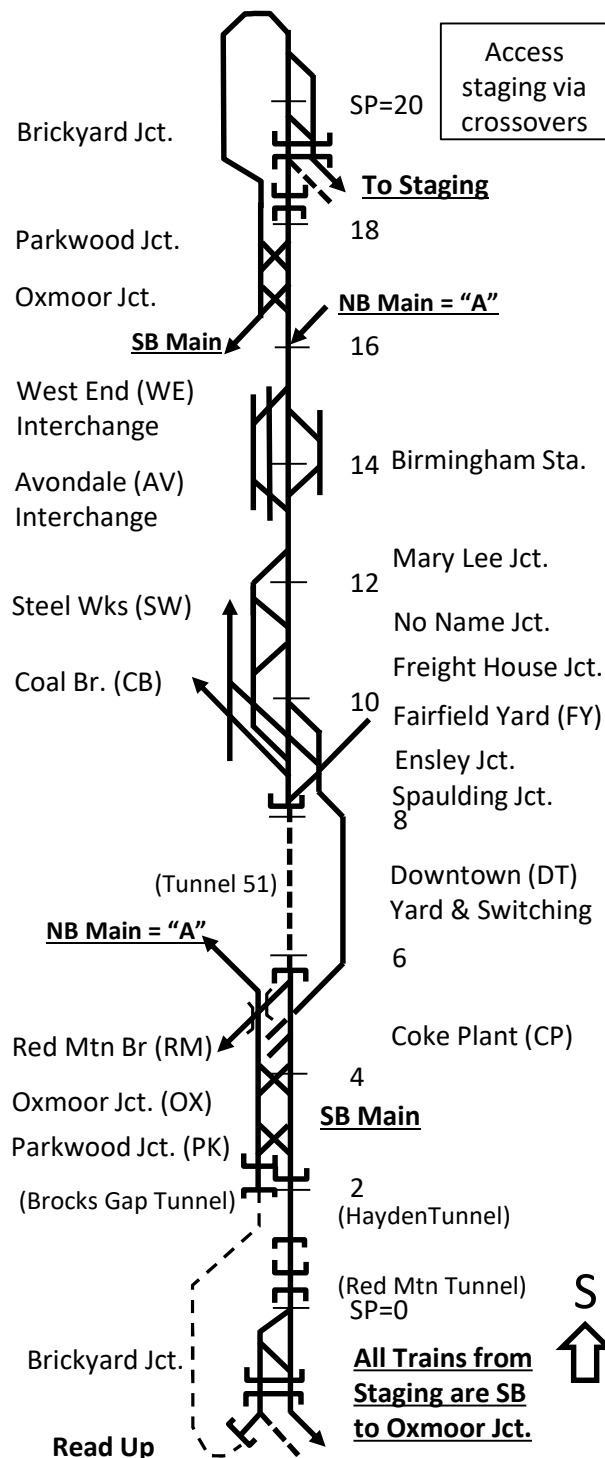
Iron had been made in the area that would become Birmingham before and during the Civil War – being shipped to Selma, AL by rail. Coal was mined some 30 miles south of the future city prior to the civil war but no rail lines came north.

The real development of the mineral resources would require the creation of a network of rail lines linking mines and quarries to blast furnaces, foundries and rolling mills – yet to be built!

Birmingham was laid out along the two initial rail lines which ran together for a distance where they crossed. This joint right-of-way was set aside as the “Railroad Reservation - Reserved for Mechanical Enterprises”. By 1885 the reservation was anchored by blast furnaces at each end.

In the late 1870’s local coal was found suitable for making coke to replace charcoal to make iron. Soon the Warrior Field which included the Pratt Coal Seam would supplant the Cahaba Field mined earlier. This enabled the first real growth.

By 1900, the iron industry was successfully expanded to include the direct manufacturing of steel from Birmingham’s iron. Birmingham’s phenomenal growth after this period earned it the nickname of The Magic City. Every railroad that could extended lines to Birmingham between 1880 and 1907 to participate in the development.



Birmingham District Model Railroad
Trains routed via NB Main diverge at Oxmoor Jct.

Birmingham District Model Railroad



An operations oriented, steam era, steel mill themed model railroad system representing Birmingham’s iron, steel and related industries

Served in 1935 by:

*L&N
 SOU/AGS
 AB&C/ACL
 IC/Frisco
 SAL
 BS*

Industrial Lines

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