



The Mid-South Flyer

November 2018



A Publication of the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc

Author/photographer Ken Boyd brings a fresh look at classic locomotives for November MidSouth Chapter meeting

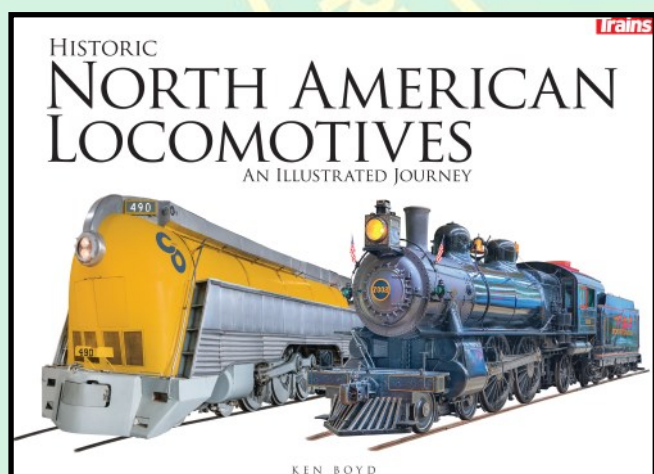


The Mid-South Chapter's year-long 10th anniversary celebration will wrap up in November with a presentation and book signing by Chapter member, author, and photographer, Ken Boyd.

An enthusiastic and award-winning photographer, writer, and rail enthusiast for more than four decades, Ken's work has been published in numerous books, magazines and journals. In 2014, Ken published through Voyageur Press (Quartos Group) a popular and internationally distributed book entitled *The Art of the Locomotive*. His new book – *Historic North American Locomotives* – was released by Kalmbach Media (*Trains*) in October 2018 and will be the feature of his presentation at the November 17 meeting.

Since the late 1970s, Ken has researched and photographed locomotives from across the United States, Canada and Europe. His photography is often idealized and romanticized. Compiling his extensive collection of photographs and fascinating information for his new book has been a work in progress for many years, and he has chosen to premier his new work for his fellow Mid-South Chapter members.

Beginning with the new millennium, Ken embraced and participated fully in the transformation of photographic imaging from film and the wet darkroom to digital capture and the computer. His approach to photography is simple – a clean, orderly and optimistic representation for every image.



In addition to his other professional activities, Ken has taught photography courses at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Samford University for more than 23 years. In 2011, the Shades Valley Camera Club, one of the oldest photographic societies in the country, recognized Ken with the "Master of Photography" distinction.

Besides locomotives, Ken has devoted much time to photographing historic watermills from across the eastern United States. A collection of his favorite mills will appear next year in a new publication by the University of Alabama Press.

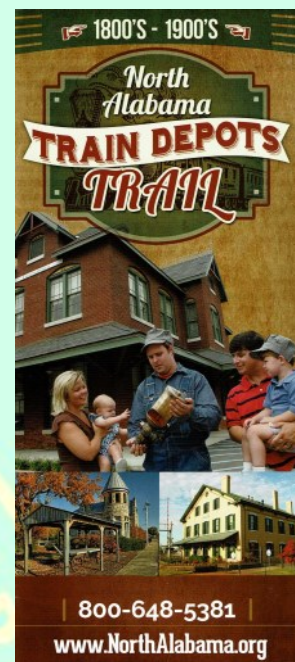
Ken and his wife, Dori, live in the Birmingham suburb of Hoover, Alabama. He is retired from Southern Company after more than 37 years of service.

Don't forget the date and time! The next meeting of the Midsouth Chapter will be at 2PM Saturday, November 17th at the historic Leeds Depot. Doors open at 1:30 and the train viewing platform is available before and after the meeting. Come early and mix with your fellow Chapter members!

North Alabama Train Depot Trail makes debut

The Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association recently unveiled two new brochures available to local residents and visitors to the north Alabama region. The North Alabama Train Depot Trail brochure invites train enthusiasts to explore historic depots and museums found in north Alabama while the North Alabama Motorcycle Routes brochure offers nine scenic motorcycle-inspired journeys across the region. Both brochures are available for download at northalabama.org.

The new North Alabama Train Depot Trail brochure spotlights 14 historic depots and museums, two train-related festivals, four train rides, 15 historic markers and a restaurant located throughout the 16 northernmost counties in Alabama. From Athens to Gadsden and Red Bay to Bridgeport, the journey takes train enthusiasts across north Alabama on a journey back in time. Housed in the museums are exhibits typical of the lifestyles of the late 1800s and early 1900s, local memorabilia, military items and railroad artifacts and signage. Of the 14 historic depots, many are located on the National Register of Historic Places and served as important Civil War railroad junctions.



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The Mid-South Flyer is published bi-monthly by the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society (R&LHS), Inc. The R&LHS is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study and preservation of railroad history. National and chapter dues are \$50 and include subscriptions to the Society's twice-annual magazine Railroad History and bi-monthly e-newsletter, The Mid-South Flyer.

Contributions, article ideas and reader comments are welcomed.

*Marvin Clemons, Editor
Email: mclemonsjr@gmail.com*

Editor's Corner "Hail and Farewell"



As the MidSouth Chapter celebrates the 10th anniversary of its founding and looks to the future, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed their time, talent and knowledge to the ***The Mid-South Flyer***.

Editing the newsletter is easy when you have good writers with interesting, informative and well-written material to work with. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all whose by-lines and photographs have appeared in these pages over the past ten years and 44 issues.

My goal as editor has been to keep the newsletter fresh and interesting, and never to allow it to become stolid and stale. For that reason, as the newsletter enters its second decade, this feels like the right time to refresh the "look and feel" of the newsletter.

I'm delighted to inform our readers that Mid-South member Ken Boyd has agreed to take the helm, beginning with the January issue. As you'll read on Page 1, Ken has impressive credentials as an editor, writer and photographer. Most important, Ken has remarkable energy and enthusiasm for the newsletter, which in turn will create interest and enthusiasm among our readers and contributors.

I will be working with Ken as he transitions into the job, and hopefully we won't miss a beat. Again, my thanks to all who have supported the newsletter through your readership and contributions. It has been my privilege to serve you!



Mid-South Chapter Update

Reported by James Lowery, Chapter President

Congratulations to the Mid-South Chapter and to all its past and present members on the occasion of the Chapter's 10th Anniversary!!! The celebration of the Chapter's 10th Anniversary has been continuing throughout the year and is now reaching a peak as we approach the end of the calendar year. As you may know, the year 2018 marks our 10th Anniversary, and November 2018 marks the month the Chapter began its meetings and its involvement in the historic Leeds Depot and the Leeds community. Plan to attend the Chapter's November 17th program meeting to celebrate with us this outstanding achievement!

John Henry Display

In other Chapter news, thanks to the efforts of member Tim Smith, all of the John Henry display material has been moved from our locked Exhibition Room out into the depot foyer so that everyone who comes to events at the depot can see, and learn from, the articles and images explaining the Leeds connection to John Henry. If you have never seen or read the materials we had on display in the Exhibition Room or are not aware of who John Henry was in real life (not just in the song), come check out the materials now on display in the foyer.

Mid-South Chapter Receives Tax-Exempt Status

We have received notice that the Mid-South Chapter has been granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. Previously, the Chapter had been using the national Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's tax exemption for raising money for the Chapter by having donations sent to the national R&LHS which then forwarded the donations to our Chapter. Now the Chapter can solicit donations and have them made directly to the Mid-South Chapter. Donations that members make in conjunction with their memberships will still be handled in the same way as an optional additional amount when the person joins or renews.

Chapter and Board Election

The Mid-South Chapter Board of Directors will be meeting in December, and part of the business it will be taking care of is creation of a slate of Board members and officers to recommend for election by the membership at the January 19, 2019, Chapter meeting. There are several vacancies in the current Board of Directors, and we encourage you to consider serving on the Chapter Board of Directors. The Board meets 4 times during the year to plan the Chapter's program meetings, to provide direction for the Chapter, to plan and implement projects that benefit the Chapter and especially the local historic railroad community, researchers, modelers, youth, and others interested in railroad history. Please consider submitting your name for nomination to the Board of Directors in order to help provide direction for the Chapter and to personally benefit from additional involvement in the Chapter. Contact me at (205) 908-0179 if you would like to discuss membership on the Board or would like to submit your name for election to the Board.

2019 Chapter Meeting Dates

We have set the following meeting dates for the 2019 Chapter Program Meetings, so please add them to your 2019 calendar, and plan to attend all the meetings:

January 19, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

March 16, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

May 18, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

July 20, 2019, PICNIC beginning at 12:00 Noon and program afterward

September 14, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

November 16, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

Regional History

Alabama Fuel and Iron Company, DeBardeleben's Last Comeback

By John Stewart

The name DeBardeleben and the Birmingham Industrial District go together. In the beginning, Henry Fairchild DeBardeleben (1840-1910) helped make Birmingham "go" in many ways. Henry DeBardeleben was a charismatic, visionary entrepreneur who not only started many enterprises which built Birmingham, but he also urged others to do so. And yet, Henry DeBardeleben did not always succeed. For all his successful ventures, he had several significant failures. Yet, he tried again and succeeded, even in the face of those who believed his ideas were likely to fail.

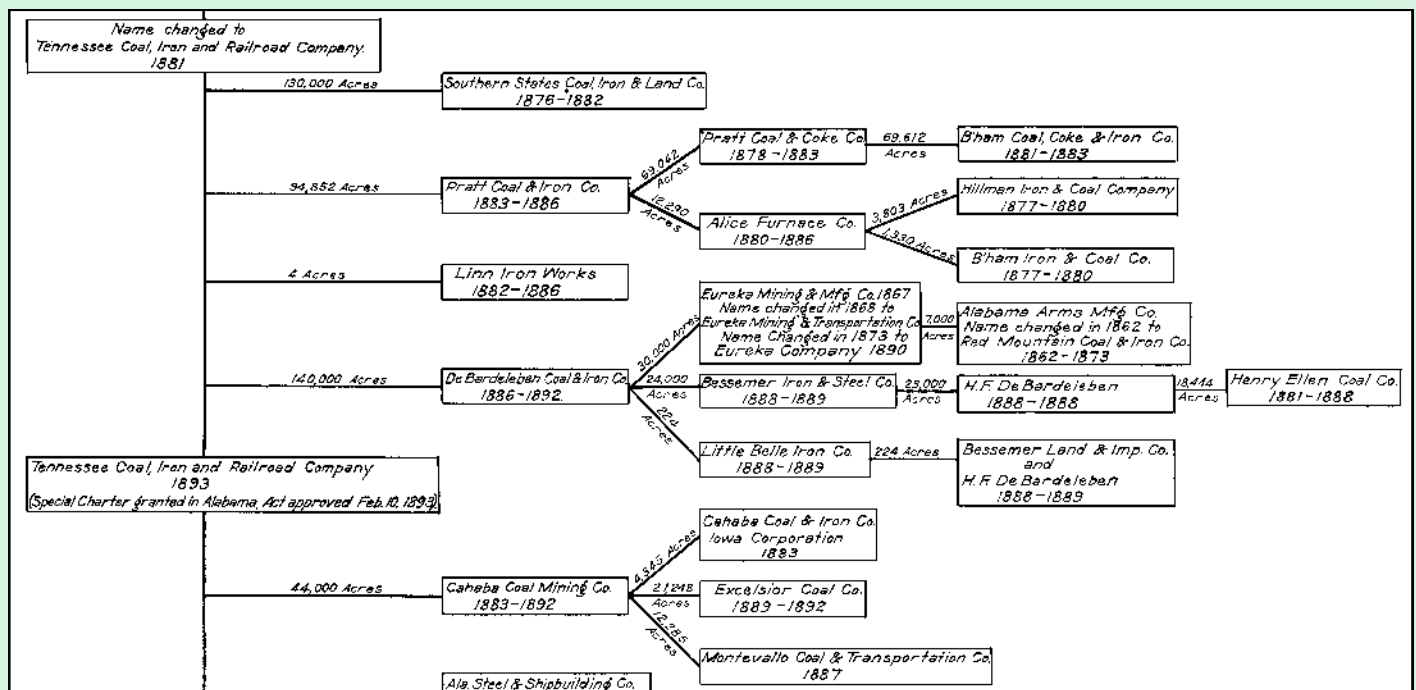
One of these enterprises was the Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, which during its heyday became the 4th largest producer of coal in Alabama at over a million tons per year. DeBardeleben achieved this by mining property (some leased) which others thought was not worth working.

Henry DeBardeleben's life and enterprises are well documented in Birmingham's industrial histories. Ethel Armes "The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama" has some 220 references to the DeBardeleben name. A good synopsis of his life is found in the Encyclopedia of Alabama, by contributor Dr. James Sanders Day. DeBardeleben was born in 1840, and was orphaned at the age of 10, subsequently becoming the ward of Daniel Pratt, the wealthy owner of the Pratt cotton gin company and namesake of Prattville, AL. Henry served in the Civil War, and married Pratt's daughter, Ellen. Henry and his father-in-law entered the fledgling Birmingham District when they purchased controlling interest in the Red Mountain Iron and Coal Company in 1872. This was the enterprise that built the Oxmoor Furnaces during the Civil War. Eventually this enterprise became the Eureka Company and produced the first coke fueled pig iron in the Birmingham District, on February 28, 1876.



DeBardeleben went on to partner with Truman Aldrich and James Sloss to begin development of the Browne Coal Seam, which they named "Pratt" after DeBardeleben's father-in-law. The Pratt Seam became the basis of much of Birmingham's industrial growth, as it was the largest of the three coal fields in the Birmingham District. This group formed the Pratt Coal and Coke Company and built a rail line from their Pratt mines to the Alice Furnace (1880), one of the anchor industrial enterprises in early Birmingham. This railroad became the basis of the Birmingham Southern Railroad.

As Day notes, DeBardeleben went on to invest and develop a wide range of industrial pursuits. He sold the Pratt Coal and Coke Company to Enoch Ensley of Memphis, and due to health concerns left Birmingham for a year. He returned and founded the Mary Pratt Furnace Company (1883) anchoring the eastern end of Birmingham's Railroad and Mechanical Reservation. Again, health issues intervened, and DeBardeleben left for the Southwest. (In the meantime, Ensley developed the Pratt Coal and Iron Company which was acquired by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and RR Co, or "TCI." Ensley became president of TCI upon reorganization in 1886.)



Returning to Birmingham once again, DeBardeleben founded the DeBardeleben Coal and Iron Company ("DCIC") and started the Bessemer Land and Improvement Company. The latter company sought to develop a new steel making center in competition with fledgling Birmingham. Bessemer soon boasted five blast furnaces and a large rolling mill, at the same time that the Ensley plant of TCI was being developed. Within a year, all of these enterprises in Bessemer were under the control of the DCIC. According to Armes, other interests developed by DeBardeleben included Oxmoor furnaces, vast holdings of Red Mountain ore, Champion brown ore, plus coal mines in Helena, Henry Ellen, Blue Creek, Blocton and Gurnee.

In 1891, TCI had gone through another reorganization and the new president was Nat Baxter of Nashville. Birmingham had been in "boom" mode since 1886. Mergers and acquisitions continued and DeBardeleben didn't want to be left out. He soon worked a deal with Baxter and TCI acquired the DeBardeleben Coal and Iron Company in a stock deal valued at \$10 million. In 1892, the merged companies formalized their organization and became the Tennessee Coal Iron and RR Co. The new version of TCI was capitalized at \$20 million. This included three major organizations: The Tennessee Company, DCIC, and Truman Aldrich's Cahaba Coal Mining Company. All told there were 12 companies merged into one, and Henry DeBardeleben had a hand in many of them. The new Officers were Nat Baxter, President, DeBardeleben, 1st Vice President, Truman Aldrich, 2nd Vice President and General Manager plus others who from the TCI.

But all was not well. The Tennessee Company, unknown to DeBardeleben at the time of the deal, was not on sound financial footing. In 1893 there was a general business recession, then called the "Panic of '93". Thus the new company, although rich in land, resources and new industrial plant construction, was short on cash. The nation's manufacturing business was very slow, which was reflected in the iron business. TCI managed to get through the crisis, mostly on the efforts of Truman Aldrich in New York raising money on the future value of the company's large volume of unsold pig iron.

By 1894, Henry DeBardeleben "persuaded that another boom was in the wind" (Armes, p. 427) tried to corner the TCI stock on Wall Street and take control of the company. He went to New York and tried to outwit the investors and manipulators of Wall Street and lost nearly all he had, including his TCI stock. He came home disgraced and resigned from TCI in late 1894 at the age of 54. Nevertheless, as shown in the above "family tree" of TCI, Henry F. DeBardeleben had a significant part in the growth and development of TCI as well as the

Birmingham District in general. (Source: US Steel, author's collection)

Armes "Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama" was published in 1910. Her last significant reference to Henry F. DeBardeleben is "after his resignation [1894]... he embarked on new enterprises and is at present [1910] Vice President of Alabama Fuel and Iron Company, and with his son [Henry T.] has begun the building of another mining enterprise in the Sheffield [AL] District."

The above account of Henry DeBardeleben's businesses is not meant to be complete but to show that so much of the early development of the Birmingham District included DeBardeleben's activity and development skills.

Major Coal Fields of the Birmingham District

There are three major coal fields in the Birmingham District: The Cahaba, the Warrior (largest) and the Coosa (smallest). The earliest development was in the Cahaba Field, which lies along the valley of the Cahaba River. An excellent reference book is "Diamonds in the Rough: A History of the Cahaba Coal Field" by Dr. James Sanders Day, a professor at the University of Montevallo. Published in 2013 by the University of Alabama Press, this book provides an excellent view of the earliest coal mining in Alabama, predating the development of the Birmingham District. Because of its recent publication, it helps to overlap the "end" of Armes coverage due to her publication in 1910. This book is available in the Birmingham Public Library and is pre-viewed on Google Books. It should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history of railroads and industry in Birmingham.

Day's book covers the development of the Cahaba Coal Field from the early 1840s. It was the coal field that supplied most of the coal mined in Alabama through the time of the Civil War. Although there were a few iron furnaces operating in this time period, they were typically fueled with charcoal rather than coal made into coke. Thus, early coal mining was for heating and limited small forging activities. Truman Aldrich was one of the early industrialists to mine coal with a view toward future development, and the use of geologic surveys. To this end, he enlisted the services and talents of Joseph Squire, who did a remarkable job of exploring and particularly of mapping the Cahaba Coal Field.

DeBardeleben had started mining in the Cahaba Coal Field as part of the formation of the DCIC. What appears to be a prospectus of that company dated 1890 show that it mined coal at Henry Ellen, in the Cahaba Basin -- Henry Ellen is named for DeBardeleben in his wife. A second mining site in the Cahaba Field was at Helena. The 1890 summary of DCIC, a new company in development, claims that the two sites, Henry Ellen and Helena, contained over 900 million tons of "steam and coking coal, especially suitable for domestic purposes". It may also be noted that these sites were 28 and 16 miles from Birmingham, although both were served by railroads. A third site at Blue Creek in the Pratt Seam was served by rail, and was closer to Birmingham and particularly Bessemer than either of the other two sites.

The Henry Ellen mining sites were acquired by TCI, and although listed among active TCI assets by 1900, TCI focused more on its Pratt Field mines, including those developed by DeBardeleben at Blue Creek, but in particular its Pratt Mines. Likewise, by 1900 TCI had contracted the Helena Mines to others receiving royalties for each ton mined. A great summary of the TCI operations in 1900 is provided in "Tennessee Coal & Iron Company, a Description of Plants and Mines", published by the company in 1900. It is available at Birmingham Public Library in the archives, and may be found online.

It seems likely that TCI focused more on Pratt Field mines because they were closer to Ensley, the site of the company's main plant. DeBardeleben's experiences and claims of coal opportunities at Helena and Henry Ellen did not seem to influence TCI's path of development. The sites at Henry Ellen and Helena lie at somewhat opposite ends of the Cahaba Coal Field and may have provided the basis for DeBardeleben's move to that Field when he made his comeback play in the Birmingham District.

Although not much is found about Henry F.'s activities from 1894 to 1905, we do know more about his son Henry T. DeBardeleben (1874-1948). Henry T. graduated from Howard (later Samford) College and owned by TCI. He then joined Watts Iron and Steel Syndicate in 1896, and Woodward Iron and related companies until 1904. He went on to Bon Air Coal and Iron in Tennessee, Woodstock Iron and Steel in Anniston, then later as President of Russellville Iron Ore and Metal in 1909-1910. Thus one might think that Henry F. had a good idea of what was going on in the iron industry by following the successful growth of his son's career, as outlined above from "Biographical Dictionary of American Business Leaders, Volume 1" by John N. Ingham.

Son Charles F. (1876-1941) likewise graduated from Alabama Polytechnic and went to work for TCI. He joined the Bessemer Coal, Iron & Land Company, becoming superintendent of its coal operation. He was a stockholder in the Little Cahaba Coal Company and opened the Piper Mines. He then joined his father in the founding of Alabama Fuel & Steel Company. (Cruikshank, Birmingham and Its Environs, p. 370)

Alabama Fuel & Iron Company

Henry F. DeBardeleben again entered the Birmingham District as a business owner in 1905 with the development of the Alabama Fuel & Steel Company. Henry F. was President, with Henry T. as Vice President, and Charles F. as VP and General Manager. In 1908 the company changed its name to Alabama Fuel & Iron Company, with new financial input from Nashville banker Jesse M. Overton, who became President. Henry F. became Vice President, and Charles F. retained his position as VP and General Manager. (Day, pp. 83-87) Henry T. remained a stockholder but no longer participated in the management of the company. He did remain in the coal business with the Maryland Coal Company, which eventually became DeBardeleben Coal Corporation. (This was a separate significant enterprise with coal lands in Walker, Cullman and Fayette Counties Alabama.)

Alabama Fuel & Steel began its operations in 1905 by opening two mines at Margaret, in St. Clair County, AL. This site was served by (an extension of the original?) Central of Georgia RR spur that served Henry Ellen sites, noted as "12.00 miles, Margaret to Margaret Jct, 1906" in ICC summaries. In 1906, it opened two mines at Acton, in Shelby County, with rail service provided by an 7.5 mile spur of the L&N RR extending northeast from Helena.

As noted above, the company changed its name in 1908. Banker Jesse Overton served at arms length from Nashville as President. In 1910, Henry F. DeBardeleben died and Charles F. took over the day to day operation and management of the Company. Jesse Overton subsequently died in 1921 in an auto accident.

In 1921, the Company opened two mines at Overton, in Shelby County, AL, with rail service provided by a new spur from the Central of Georgia, 7.3 miles from McCombs near Lovick, just west of Henry Ellen, to Overton. ICC records indicate the line was built between April 1921 and October, 1923. Other ICC records state a 9.8 mile branch "McCombs along the foot of Shades Mountain with a 3 mile branch (ICC FD 1142)."

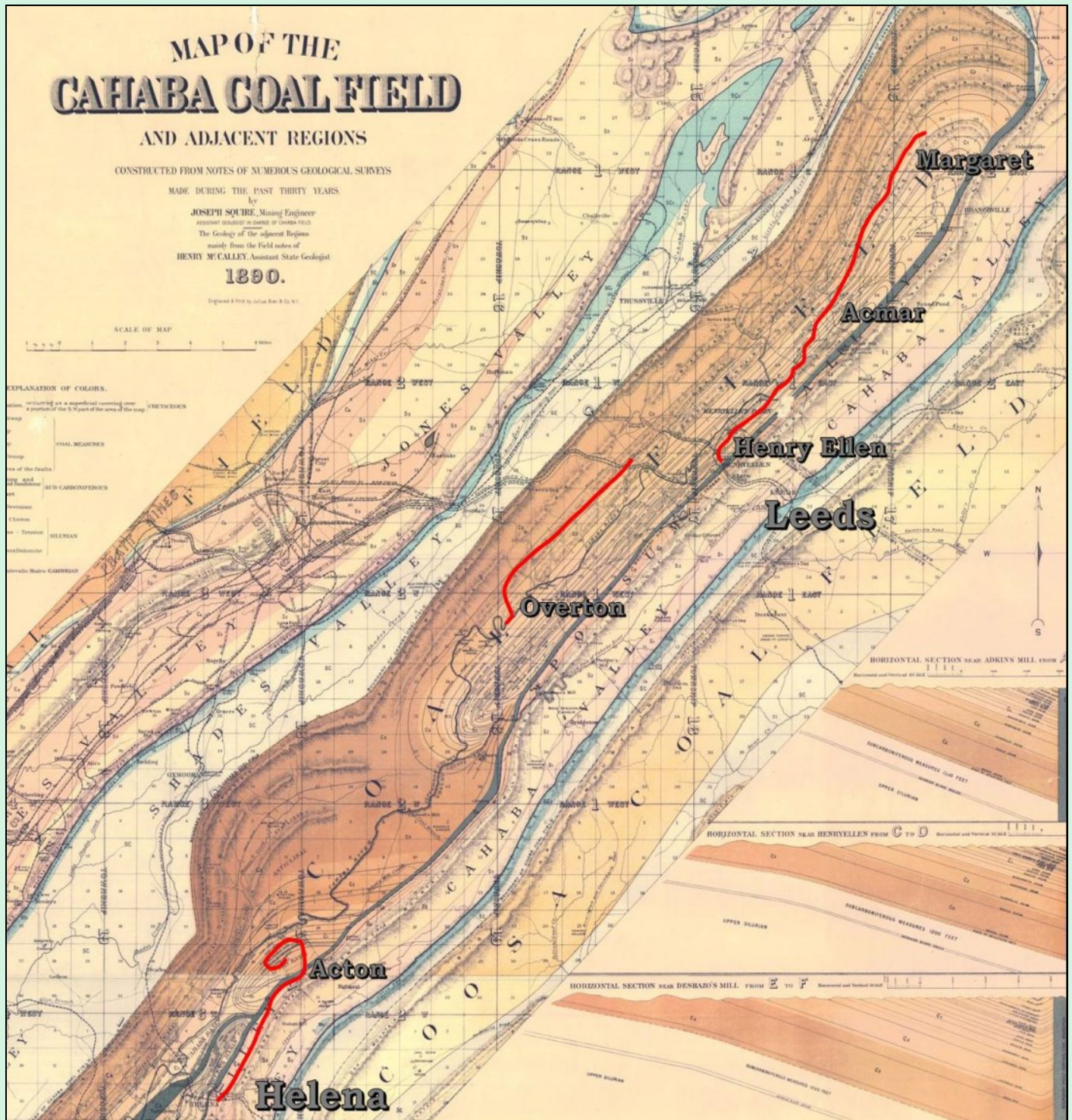
Operations at Acton ended in April, 1926, and the L&N RR received permission from the ICC to close the Acton spur line in September, 1927. (ICC FD 6463). Records indicate that others subsequently mined this property.

Operations at Overton ended in the mid-1930's according to Day's *Diamonds in the Rough*. The abandonment proceedings for the Overton spur were approved in February, 1940, but the report of the ICC records "applicant states that the mines are closed... and [the spur] has not been operated for 6 years and is not needed." Thus it would seem that the Overton operations had ceased by early 1934, which is consistent with Day's narrative.

Operations at the Margaret site grew to include mines at Acmar, and a coal washer at Colgate, located between the two. These seem to have been the real flagship operation of Alabama Fuel & Iron and there is more

information about them that at the Acton and Overton. Operations here ended in the early 1950's.

The 1890 map below (UA Map Archive) shows the AF&I Company mine sites and the three rail spurs superimposed by the author. In future installments we will take a look at each of these three sites in terms of physical plant and current historical remains.



Regional History

The Pullman Company in Birmingham

A Reprint from "The Pullman News"—April 1956

FAMILIES ARE TRAVELING TOGETHER more and more these days . . . and enjoying the convenience, comfort, and safety of Rail-Pullman. Families have a "Home on Wheels" when they travel by Pullman. No other form of travel, on land or above it, is so completely restful and so safe.

TON
ULLMAN

THE Pullman NEWS

APRIL • 1956

S.H.

Editor's note: From time to time, it has been our editorial practice to reprint an item of noteworthy importance to the history of the Mid-South region. "Travel by Pullman" was practically synonymous with national rail passenger service during its "golden era," and the company maintained a large network of offices and support facilities in major cities throughout the country. Birmingham was one such important Pullman Company location, with as many as 62 different Pullman cars, or "lines" passing through Terminal Station as late as 1948. The following article, featured in the April 1952 issue of The Pullman News., offers a rare glimpse into the workings of the Pullman Company in Birmingham in the 1950s.



THRIVING BIRMINGHAM is the steel center of the South. This is view of Birmingham from the side of Red Mountain.

This is a story about Birmingham, Alabama, and how Pullman's Birmingham Agency takes care of Pullman business there.

First, let's get a little background on this thriving, steel-center of The South.

As you stand on the crest of Birmingham's Red Mountain and gaze below—at its long valleys named Jones and Shades, you are looking down upon a city of more than 610,000 people in Birmingham's metropolitan area—an area which was forest, mountain, and farmland only 83 years ago.

Energy-paced Birmingham, youngest of the world's great cities, served by nine major railroads—Atlantic Coast Line, Central of Georgia, Frisco Lines, Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, Illinois Central, Louisville and Nashville, Seaboard Air Line, Birmingham Southern, and Southern Railroad, has emerged from the Alabama wilderness within the life's span of man.

In Birmingham alone, in this nation, are found in large quantities the three essential ingredients for the making of steel—coal, limestone, and iron ore. Birmingham is often called

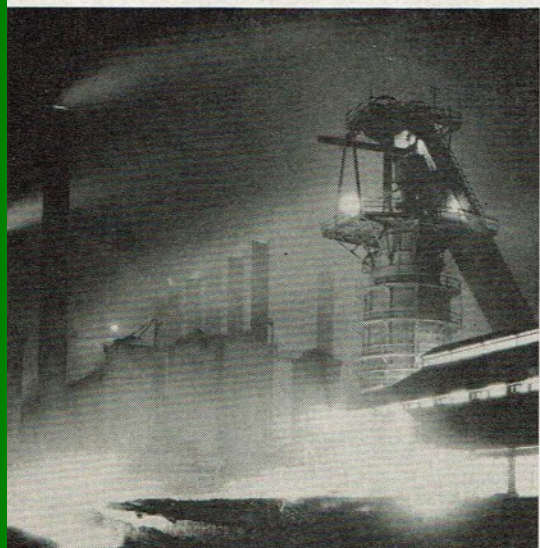
VULCAN (God of Fire, Forging and Smelting) located on top of Red Mountain, overlooking city of Birmingham. Statue is cast of Birmingham pig iron and stands 55 feet high on a 120-foot pedestal. Statue weighs 120,000 pounds.



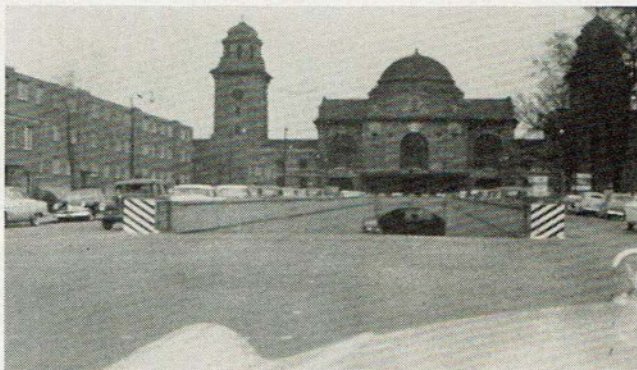
the "Pittsburgh of the South," because millions of tons of ingots, finished steel products and pig iron are manufactured there, as well as 60 per cent of the nation's supply of cast iron pressure pipe.

Appropriately, the world's largest iron man, known as Vulcan (God of fire, of forging and smelting), enjoys a spectacular mounting in Vulcan Park atop Red Mountain overlooking the city. Cast of Birmingham's pig iron in Birmingham foundries by Birmingham foundrymen working under the direction of the famed Italian sculptor G. Moretti, this mythical god of the forges first mission was Birmingham's exhibit at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Vulcan stands 55 feet high on a 120 foot pedestal and weighs 120,000 pounds. Vulcan is second in size only to the Statue of Liberty.

Birmingham's strategic position as an in-



FLARES IN THE NIGHT
... Birmingham's steel mills light the sky. Shown is Blast Furnace at night.



BIRMINGHAM has two passenger stations, Birmingham Terminal (left) was built in 1904 and has auto tunnel underneath. Its tall spires overlook the heart of the city. The historical L&N



Station (right) was built in 1874. 71 passenger trains are scheduled daily in and out of Birmingham.

land city is enhanced by her central geographical location in the South. Only 20 miles from the heart of this metropolis is the Port of Birmingham, giving water transportation to the city by a nine-foot barge channel, just 400 miles from the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, the gateway to South America, Europe, and all the world.

Located only 15 miles from the heart of Birmingham is Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Company's huge plant at Bessemer, Alabama. Primarily, this plant manufactures all types of freight equipment for railroads in the southeastern territory.

PULLMAN'S BIRMINGHAM AGENCY, which handles the operation of sleeping car service, enjoys unique advantages unsurpassed by any other Pullman agency in the nation. All of Pullman's operations in this agency are conducted under one roof, in one separate building built exclusively for Pullman.

Completed in 1950, this attractive, red-brick building is 62 feet long and 32 feet wide, containing store and linen room, agency and cashier's office, agent's private office, electricians' shop, cleaners' supply room, fireproof paint

and oil rooms, locker and shower rooms for all yard employees.

This building is located adjacent to the Terminal Station and within 200 feet of the Terminal Yard, containing six tracks which is almost exclusively used for the conditioning of Pullman cars, on the Southern, Central of Georgia, and Illinois Central Railroads. Cars are also serviced in our SAL yards, L&N Station and Frisco Yards. Our yard organization is set up under the supervision of Foreman C. E. Lindsey, who has served Pullman in Birmingham as foreman since 1934.

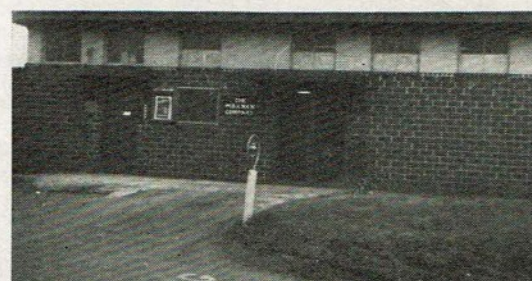
Birmingham Agency was established Nov. 15, 1906, with the appointment of C. W. Lewis. He was succeeded by G. M. Zimmer, F. J. Carten, F. P. Stultz and William Venn. A district was

AGENT'S office at Birmingham. Agent G. E. Wells is seated at right. At left is Assistant Agent E. G. Jones.



BIRMINGHAM AGENCY OFFICE—Front left—Clerk-Typist H. D. Pyron and Clerk-Typist W. D. Brockman (right). Back row—Steno-Clerk Mrs. Rose Carlton (Pullman News Correspondent) and Assistant Agent E. G. Jones.

PULLMAN SERVICE BUILDING at Birmingham. Building is adjacent to Terminal Station.





Conductor T. L. De-lorme, Birmingham Agency, one of leading salesmen operating on "Silver Comet."



Conductor Henley McWhorter, Birmingham, a leading salesman operating on "Birmingham Special."



Conductor R. W. Shores, Birmingham, a leading salesman operating on "Birmingham Special."

established Oct. 1, 1929, with a change in Mr. Venn's title to District Superintendent. He was succeeded by G. A. Stiles and J. N. Seabury. When Mr. Seabury retired on March 1, 1954, R. G. Brewer was appointed Agent and he was succeeded by G. E. Wells on June 22, 1955. Effective Aug. 1, 1955, the Montgomery Agency was closed, and all work at that point was placed under the supervision of Birmingham Agency. With the closing of Montgomery Agency, the Porters' roster was consolidated with Birmingham Porters' roster. All employee rosters coming under the jurisdiction of Birmingham Agency total 91 employees.

There are 71 passenger trains and 159 freight trains scheduled daily in and out of Birmingham, totaling 230 trains daily passing through the city, transporting thousands of passengers

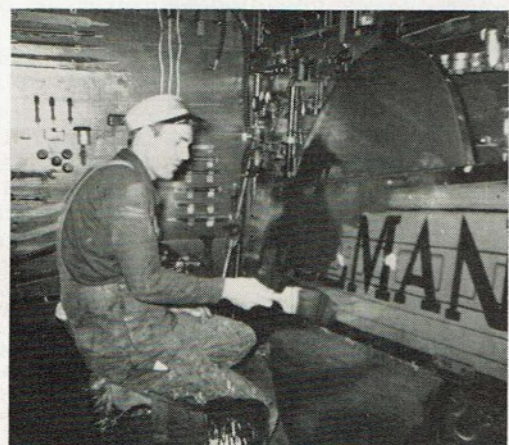
and thousands of tons of cargo across the Southeast and Southwest. Two passenger stations serve Birmingham. The historical L&N Station was built in 1874. The Birmingham Terminal was built in 1904 with auto tunnel



Conductor R. E. Hathaway, Birmingham, also among the top salesmen.



ELECTRIC SHOP, Birmingham Agency, l. to r.: Electricians J. W. Dobbs, F. L. Brockman and Foreman C. E. Lindsey. Electricians are overhauling condenser fan assembly.



PAINTER James A. Dorsett painting Pullman sign for Service Building at Birmingham.



CLEANERS at Birmingham, l. to r.: M. Johnson, Jonie Mae Cole, J. Watts, M. Sewell and Tyree Newell.

BIRMINGHAM AGENCY—Front Row l. to r.: Foreman C. E. Lindsey, Electrician A. L. Lambert, Carman E. C. Newell. Back row l. to r.: Leader Electrician W. B. McCullough and Electrician J. W. Dobbs, Painter J. A. Dorsett, and Electricians W. M. Simmons and F. L. Brockman.





STOREROOM AT BIRMINGHAM AGENCY showing Clerk-Typist W. D. Brockman examining storage bins.



BIRMINGHAM STORE 106 with Clerk-Typist W. D. Brockman examining storage bins.

underneath. Its tall spiral towers overlook the heart of the city. Famous passenger trains serving the Birmingham area are The Humming Bird, (L&N), Pan American (L&N), South Wind (L&N), The Silver Comet (SAL), The Southerner (Southern), and City of Miami (Illinois Central-Central of Georgia).

Birmingham Agency also handles all Pullman operations at Montgomery, Alabama. There are a total of 10 daily departures from Birmingham, and three daily departures from Montgomery. Birmingham Agency also handles movements out of Maxwell Field, Gunter Air Force Base, and in addition, Craig Air Force Base at Selma, Alabama, Fort Rucker at Ozark, Ala., Naval Air Base at Pensacola, Fla., Tyndall Field at Panama City, Fla., and Eglin Field near Crestview, Fla.

During July and August of each year, Birmingham Agency is called upon to handle large movements of various State National Guards, totaling as many as 125 cars, either arriving or departing from Fort McClellan at Anniston, Alabama, in a 24-hour period. Fort McClellan is approximately 50 miles from Birmingham. Handling these movements entails considerable planning and co-ordination of Pullman and Railroad people to assemble, service and operate trains in accordance with schedules set up by National Guard forces. This has been accomplished successfully by Pullman personnel at Birmingham over a period of years.

Agent G. E. Wells, Assistant Agent E. G. Jones and Foreman C. E. Lindsey recently became charter members of the Seaboard Sun Lounge Club. This club was started by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad with the delivery of three new, attractive and unusual glass-top, 6 double bedroom lounge cars, along with nine other new lightweight room cars. These cars were delivered to the Seaboard at Birmingham. The cars were inspected, checked, and stocked by our Birmingham forces and officially accepted and leased from Seaboard by Pullman.

While the number of Conductor operations only total two lines, requiring eight men from Birmingham to Washington and return, the Sales Program has been a prime requisite. Birmingham Conductors accounted for over \$20,000 of Pullman revenue from on-train sales in 1955. Conductors T. L. De Lorme, H. McWhorter, R. W. Shores, J. I. McWhorter, J. T. Dowling and R. E. Hathaway have turned in consistently high sales, as well as several of our extra conductors, W. W. Long, W. G. Atkins and A. L. Bellsnyder.

Yes, the big three S's—Sales, Service and Safety, are prime requisites with Pullman personnel at Birmingham. The employee lost-time record is one of the lowest in the nation. Numerous Birmingham car service employees' names appear regularly on the Service Honor Roll printed in The Pullman News. Competition is keen in the sales activity, with several of our Conductors competing for top honors each month.

Service is our business, and Pullman people at Birmingham are proud of it.

INTERIOR OF SUN-LOUNGE in new Seaboard car delivered at Birmingham recently. Foreman C. E. Lindsey (left) and Assistant Agent E. G. Jones.

SUN LOUNGE in Seaboard new car "Miami Beach" showing Clerk-Typist W. D. Brockman checking equipment.



Personal Remembrance

Frisco Memories at Memphis

By Phil Gosney

I can thank my parents for my interest in passenger trains. Growing up in Memphis in the pre-Amtrak era, there were a large number of railroads which offered passenger train service to my hometown. Six railroads, in the early 1960s, to be exact.

Luckily for me, we lived in the south and southeastern part of the city, with the Frisco tracks located not far from our home. It was a summer ritual for my mother to drive me, along with my younger brother and sister, to a wide spot along these tracks, near a large shade tree. Mom had served us our evening supper and we spent the remaining time, still in the heat of the summer days, trying to cool off in the park-like setting, as we had no air conditioning back then.

While my mom and sister remained in the family sedan, my younger brother would peel off, pitching rocks and flinging sticks skyward. I tended to gravitate toward the railroad tracks, inspecting the double track right of way and observing the emerald green block signal glowing for northward train movements.

On one early visit my senses were startled by a commanding train horn, approaching from the southeast. Immediately drawn to the sound, I noticed a passenger train led by two fire engine red locomotives, a waving engineman, and what seemed like an endless string of passenger cars. I was overwhelmed with the sight and sensation of this experience. I had just witnessed my very first Frisco passenger train, which turned out to be Train #106, the "*Kansas City-Florida Special*" (abbreviated "*KC-FS*") enroute from Birmingham to Kansas City.

I was captivated by the sight, and knew I had to see more of this Frisco passenger train. With promises to do more household chores, my mother now took us down two or three times a week to our shady trackside location, along South Parkway Boulevard, to view the "*Kansas City-Florida Special*" in the last, golden light of those summer days.

On future visits, I now tried to retain more details of the passing locomotives and passenger cars. The red locomotives were in 2000 series, always with a friendly wave from the cab, and had names upon them like "*Whirlaway*", "*Messenger*" and "*Truxton*". Next followed the head end mail, express and baggage cars in dark green livery, some even lettered for Central of Georgia and on occasion, a colorful purple Atlantic Coast Line baggage car was seen. The passenger cars were red and silver with names like "*Clayton*" and "*Kirkwood*." Sometimes a heavyweight coach was in the consist named "*Joplin*" or "*Enid*". Next followed a streamlined Pullman car named in the "*River*" series, and I also recall cars "*James River*" and "*Spring River*" in the consist. These cars contained 14 roomettes and 4 double bedrooms and operated from Kansas City to Jacksonville, Florida. Beyond Birmingham, the train operated over the Southern Railway.



Frisco E8 #2010 "Count Fleet" arriving at Memphis with #105, the southbound "*Kansas City-Florida Special*" in 1962. (Phil Gosney coll)

Another car occasionally seen in the consist was a Southern Railway stainless steel coach in the 800 series, continuing through to Kansas City as Southern's contribution to equalize the car mileage on this jointly operated train. The highlight was the last car on the train carrying the red markers. This was the diner-lounge which, although a heavyweight car, was painted red with shadow striping to match the stainless steel Pullman car ahead. I could see passengers sitting at tables being served dinner, with aromatic cooking smells emanating from the car as it passed. A bright red tail light, oscillating in a figure 8 pattern, signified the rear of the train.

After enough visits to our trackside location, I figured out that there were three diner-lounge cars being rotated in the consist bearing the names "*Kansas City*," *Birmingham*" and "*Memphis*." I felt great pride in seeing my hometown car "*Memphis*" pass by on the "*KC-FS*" as it continued on its journey toward Kansas City.

A deal with Dad

Captivated by these passing sights, I wanted to see more of this train up close. This required a major compromise and agreement for additional chores on my part. My father worked six days a week and his only day off was Sunday. He preferred to sleep late on this day and attend the late 10:30 morning mass at our local Catholic parish. Dad and I struck a deal that we would attend the earlier 7:30 am Sunday mass and then visit

Central Station. He would take me there to see the Birmingham-bound "*Special*," and in return I was to do more lawn work and household chores.

Central Station was owned by the Illinois Central, which operated the majority of the passenger trains at the station. There always seemed to be an IC train or switch engine switching cars around in the station. This depot was on the north-south passenger main line of the IC's Chicago to New Orleans mainline, and all trains did some switching at Memphis before proceeding on to their destinations. The Frisco and the Rock Island used Central Station, entering the town on an east-west alignment. This required passenger trains of both these roads to pull past and back into Central Station.



A Frisco switch engine sets out "*Red Bird*" #2021, which will take the "*Sunnyland*" connection to St. Louis. (Rick Burn photo, Phil Gosney coll)

Next to the IC, the Frisco was the busiest road at Central. While the "*KC-FS*" could number as high as 17 cars, it required some major switching at the station. In addition, there was the secondary "*Sunnyland*," which was the local train operating on a schedule opposite of the "*KC-FS*". There was also the River Division "*Sunnyland*" which operated from Memphis to St. Louis, along the west bank of the Mississippi River in Missouri.

Each road was responsible for switching their own passenger trains, so the Frisco employed two "depot jobs," primarily for switching out head end cars. The passenger cars generally were untouched, but the head end mail, baggage and express cars were set out or picked up here. Some cars operated Kansas City to Memphis, some between Memphis and Birmingham only, and others ran all the way to Birmingham or beyond to Florida.

Several visits to Central Station found a most friendly switching crew which worked the southbound "*KC-FS*". The engineer invited me to ride around in his EMD switcher while adding or deleting some head end cars of this train. As it turned out, the engineer, Mr. James Campbell, lived on the next street over in my neighbor-

hood. He was most gracious and accommodating to visits to his home or at the depot by an inquisitive young boy seeking knowledge about Frisco operations. In fact, every Frisco employee I encountered displayed pride in the Frisco, and was most willing to share details of their job and duties.

I learned that the trainmen (conductors and flagmen) worked Memphis to Birmingham on the passenger trains, while the engineer and fireman changed out at Amory, Mississippi in each direction. There were three engine crews in the rotation that worked the four trains between Memphis and Amory, and they worked seven days a week. I soon met all three senior engineers who held these runs and learned they worked south on “KC-FS” to Amory and back to Memphis on the “Sunnyland” for their next round trip.

While riding with Mr. Campbell on his “depot job” one morning, he looked out his engine and gave a wave to the outbound “KC-FS” engineer. “That is Mr. Ellis,” he explained, “and he also lives in our neighborhood. Why don’t you visit him and ask for permission to ride the engine?” Well, needless to say I soon visited with Mr. Elijah Ellis during his layover in Memphis, and he was most gracious, as were all other Frisco employees I had met. He informed me that they never turned the two red locomotives at Birmingham, just change ends. So the two engines he had south on the “KC-FS”, would come back, in reverse order, for his northward trip.



The “Kansas City—Florida Special” takes on carloads of mail and express at Central Station in Memphis. (Marv Clemons coll)

He also explained that a new policy was in effect and that I had to get written permission in order to ride in the locomotive cab with him. I contacted the highest railroad officer in Memphis, and soon a large envelope arrived at my home. It was a liability release form, three pages in length, which had to be witnessed and signed, in triplicate. It was dutifully signed, witnessed, and promptly returned.

Ten days later Mr. Ellis informed me my cab ride had been approved for Friday, August 7, on Train #106 from Amory to Memphis. That date will forever be a cherished memory. My instructions were that I would ride in the coach on the “KC-FS” from Memphis to Amory, where I would lay over two hours and return to Memphis in the cab with Mr. Ellis on the “KC-FS”.

A grand tour of Amory

When I arrived in Amory, Mr. Ellis met me at the station, having made his southward trip on #107, the “Sunnyland”, which had arrived in Amory in the wee hours at 3 AM. During our wait, we had lunch at a café across from the station. “Station” really isn’t the correct term, for what was the station had been torn down. In addition to a small waiting room for passengers, the replacement building served as headquarters for local railroad officials and CTC (Centralized Traffic Control) dispatchers who controlled the track from Memphis to Birmingham. I was introduced to all of the officers, dispatchers and train order operators and given a look at the CTC machine, where I learned that a fast freight, #138, was running ahead of our train, #106.

As predicted, #138 arrived about ten minutes ahead of our train, making a quick crew change before taking off toward Tennessee yard, located on the southeast side of Memphis. That train remained ahead of us all the way to Memphis and never delayed us. After all, we had station stops at Tupelo, New Albany and Holly Springs, Mississippi, while the fast freight ran non-stop to Tennessee Yard.

After our tour, Mr. Ellis and myself walked out to the west end of the station platform to wait for the arrival of our train. Soon an oscillating headlight appeared, horn blaring as the red diesels approached the platform.

The lead engine stopped right in front of us, and I quickly noted the engine number as #2010, with *"Count Fleet"* lettered under the cab window for the 1943 Kentucky Derby winner. The trailing E-8, #2022, the highest numbered passenger locomotive in the fleet, wore the name *"Champion."*

Cab ride to Memphis

My trip in the engine cab would be 128 miles and last a bit over three hours. Trailing the two "Red Bird" passenger E-units, as they were called, were 12 cars including eight head-end mail, express and baggage car with four passenger cars bringing up the rear. One of these was a "Chair-Lounge Buffet" which provide light meal service en route. Sadly, the diner-lounge and Pullman sleeping car, which had operated from Kansas City to Florida, were discontinued in the spring of 1964.

A quick, five-minute pause was all that was needed for the crew change and exchange of passengers and mail in Amory. Mr. Ellis attached a small mirror to the clear Lucite wind shield outside his window, which allowed him to observe his train on the curves. Soon we heard two shrill blasts from on the train's communicating whistle, a signal from the conductor to highball out of town. We were off for Memphis, about 20 minutes late, and I settled in to observe our veteran engineer at work. Cracking open the throttle, whistling two blasts of the horn and releasing the train brakes, Mr. Ellis made an imperceptibly smooth start. I would witness his refined train handling abilities throughout the trip route to Memphis.



Listening attentively as veteran Frisco engineer Mr. Ellis explains the working of his "steed," a young Phil Gosney soaks up the sights, sounds, and smells of his first locomotive cab ride aboard his favorite trains, the "Kansas City—Florida Special."

Until my cab trip, I never realized how much work a locomotive engineer did to keep the train moving safely. His hands were always moving, blowing the horn, setting the train brakes, bailing off the engine brakes, keeping power applied and stretching out the train's slack for smooth handling. In addition, he would call out all the signals, knowing the speed limits of every curve, bridge or permanent restriction on his territory. Keeping the train under full control and in compliance with each speed limit was a demonstration of Mr. Ellis's experience, professionalism and dedication to his craft.

I noted how fast he came into each station, such as Tupelo or New Albany, but he knew the precise amount of air brakes to apply so the passenger portion of the train would always pause directly in front of the waiting passengers. Although each station stop was only averaged five minutes, there was still a heavy volume of mail and express being loaded in the mail and baggage cars of our train. We did take the siding north of Tupelo once, but it was "running meet" and we did not have to stop for the southbound freight train which sailed on past us.

Despite the swift operation and deft train handling, we arrived Memphis Central still 20 minutes late. It was all over too soon, and I regretted having to leave the cab of “*Count Fleet*”. I was so impressed by the experience that I decided right then and there, at the tender age of 13, that my career goal was to become a locomotive engineer!

Five years later, at age 18, I secured my first railroad employment in Chicago as a trainman. I can proudly say that I was promoted to locomotive engineer at age 23, and worked continuously for 48 years and 9 months in train and engine service before retiring from Amtrak in March 2018.

I can thank my parents, and the dedicated and loyal Frisco employees in Memphis, for nurturing and guiding me toward a most rewarding and enjoyable career as a locomotive engineer. I was truly blessed to have such great life on the railroad. And it all began as a young kid growing up in Memphis, waving at the “*Kansas City – Florida Special*” passing by on those warm, summer evenings.

Epilogue: As an aside, on August 8, the day following my Frisco cab ride, the Rock Island’s “Choctaw Rockette”, the longest RDC (Rail Diesel Car) run in the country, made its final trip. The wave of passenger train discontinuances rolled on, and on September 17, 1965, the “Kansas City-Florida Special” also made its final trip. Frisco would end all of its passenger train service in December 1967, and the Rock Island and L&N ended their remaining service to Memphis within a few months’ time. After Southern discontinued its last train from Union Station, in late March 1968, the Illinois Central became the only passenger carrier to serve my hometown of Memphis.



Memphis native Phil Gosney wasn't the only rail fan who admired the Frisco and its colorful passenger trains. Just down the road in Birmingham, another teenager, Lyle Key, was taking photos of the Frisco. One of Lyle's favorite train watching locations was at the massive coaling tower at Carbon Hill, Alabama. On a late summer day in September 1965, Lyle caught the “*Kansas City—Florida Special*” led by Engine #2020, “*Big Red*” en route to Memphis.

Golden Era Classic



*Fall color along Double Oak Mountain, Alabama, on the Central of Georgia
(Stan Burnett photo, dedicated to CofG fan Donnie Strickland)*