



January 2021

# THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



Entering a New Decade of Service

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

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# A NEW COLORFUL LOOK AT OLD RAILROAD PHOTOS

Tom Alderman

## JANUARY VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Zoom Teleconferencing Meeting

January 23, 2021

Saturday, 2:00 pm **CENTRAL TIME**

As a youngster growing up in Savannah, Georgia, Tom's early fascination with trains was fueled by two close relatives who both worked for Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) as engineers on the crack passenger trains between Savannah and Florida. Tom's later years of academia took a different direction – he attended college on a full-music scholarship, and he currently serves on the music staff at Roswell United Methodist Church, where he was privileged to design and oversee the construction of their new pipe organ in 1989, one of the state's largest instruments.

After college, Tom was able to put his love of trains into a part-time job at one of Atlanta's best hobby shops as a custom painter of models. His specialty was early diesels of the southern fallen-flags, namely ACL, Seaboard, and Central of Georgia. While always pursuing an interest in railroad modeling (HO and later N-scale), Tom also became a prolific railfan photographer and collector of old historic photos. Tom was always frustrated at the lack of available color photos of early diesels, especially in the south. He began experimenting with the art of adding color to vintage photos. With the encouragement of veteran black and white photographers such as David Salter, Shelby Lowe, and J. Parker Lamb, Tom continued to pursue this facet of the hobby into the modern computer age, while still maintaining a huge collection of digital images of current train operations. He often spends several hours each week at locations such as Kennesaw or Austell, where he photographs the latest diesels and equipment.



His presentation on January 23 will basically be an overview of the history of color railroad photography and the connection to the colorful diesels of the late 1930s. He will also give a brief description of how the color is added to an existing black and white photo and pointing out the techniques that closely resemble custom painting an HO model (masking, overspray, gloss coats, etc.). He also plans to show some rapid transition sequences showing the multiple color layers going onto a black and white image and many "before & after" shots. He plans to keep the program moving and always leave time for questions.

Tom resides in Marietta with his wife, Pamela, their son Patrick, and their three dogs. Tom's daughter, Emily, is a music teacher at Woodstock High School.





# CHAPTER NEWS

## WELCOME NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

We extend a hearty welcome to the following new Chapter members:

Katie Teipel (Pittstown, New Jersey, and University of Alabama)  
T. Stanley Sims (Vestavia Hills, Alabama)  
Philip Stead (Ball Ground, Georgia)  
William Strong (Germantown, Tennessee)

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

It is time to renew your Mid-South Chapter and national R&LHS memberships for 2021 or to join if you are not already a member. The web address to join or renew online or to print the application form is as follows: <http://rlhs.org/Membership/index.shtml> If you have any questions about membership or joining, contact Warren Jones (Membership Chair) at [wjones1302@gmail.com](mailto:wjones1302@gmail.com).

## UPCOMING MEETING

The January 2021 Chapter meeting will be the first one that the Chapter has conducted using Zoom teleconferencing technology. We hope that all of you will join us for that meeting using the Zoom link that will be provided in the email notices of that meeting.

### Instructions for Downloading the Zoom Software/App

1. Open your computer's internet browser and navigate to the Zoom website at [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us).
2. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click "Download" in the web page's footer.
3. On the Download Center page, click "Download" under the "Zoom Client for Meetings" section.
4. The Zoom app will then begin downloading.

### Participating in the Meeting

1. You will receive an e-mail prior to the meeting that will include the link to the Zoom meeting.
2. Save that e-mail.
3. A few minutes prior to the start time of the meeting, click on the indicated link in that e-mail to take you to the Zoom meeting.
4. The computer or tablet or iPad or smart phone that you use to join the meeting must be the same one on which you downloaded the Zoom software/app.
5. Follow Zoom prompts, if any, to join the meeting.
6. Join using Internet Audio if possible.
7. Within Zoom, you will be able to mute your microphone and/or turn off your computer camera as you wish.
8. Be patient when first joining the meeting because participants are placed in a "waiting room" until the Meeting Host brings you into the meeting.

## ELECTION OF CHAPTER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Chapter meeting in January will be designated as the Chapter's "Annual Meeting" at which the Chapter members will be electing or re-electing Officers and Board members for positions whose terms of office have expired. The Chapter Board of Directors has created the following slate of candidates for the indicated positions, and these will be voted on at the January Chapter Meeting:

### Board Members

Ken Boyd  
Nicholas Costas  
Peggy Lowery  
Tim Smith

### Officers

Vice President – Dr. Carl Marbury  
Secretary – John Troulias  
Treasurer – James Lowery

## MID-SOUTH FLYER

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 annually and include subscriptions to the Society's twice-yearly magazine *Railroad History*, quarterly newsletter, and the chapter's e-newsletter and the *MID-SOUTH FLYER*. Contributions, article ideas and reader comments are welcome.

*Ken Boyd, Editor*

[kenboydphotography@yahoo.com](mailto:kenboydphotography@yahoo.com)

## Member Moment

The Member Moment this month features Bob Greene. If you would like to be featured and tell your story, please contact Warren Jones ([wjones1302@gmail.com](mailto:wjones1302@gmail.com)). The story should total 400 words or less and ideally include a photo or drawing.



# REMEMBRANCE HONORING RALPH HONEYCUTT

*Contributed by Marvin Clemons*

Alabama's rail fan community has lost one of its most senior and accomplished advocates for railroad preservation.

Ralph Honeycutt, a founder and past president of the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum and supporter of the Mid-South Chapter, passed away at age 98 at his home on Christmas Day, 2020.

Growing up in Birmingham and having a keen interest in the district's extensive railroads, in 1963 Ralph helped organize Birmingham's first association for railroad enthusiasts, the Heart of Dixie Railroad Club. Ralph was an enthusiastic volunteer and assisted in the restoration of donated railroad cars. He helped organize the Club's steam excursion program, serving in all capacities from car attendant to trip master.

Ralph served on the Club's board of directors and was elected president for several terms. As president, Ralph was instrumental in helping establish a permanent home for the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum at Calera, Alabama. He helped arrange the relocation of the Museum's equipment from Birmingham and for the acquisition of 10 miles of abandoned railroad right of way for operating the Museum's tourist train.

Retiring from AT&T after 42 years of service, Ralph became a regular volunteer at the Museum, working as a member of the train crew and wherever help was needed. During this time, he learned about the formation of the Mid-South Chapter at Leeds, and well into his 90's Ralph became a regular at chapter meetings, learning about, and contributing his deep knowledge of, the history of the Birmingham and region's railroads.

One of Ralph's most admired railroad subjects was Birmingham's magnificent Terminal Station, which he witnessed being demolished after the Heart of Dixie's futile attempt to save it. My last encounter with Ralph was in 2018 when he came out in a rainstorm to attend a presentation on the station's history. It was a delight to see him still looking so well and alert at age 96.

I only pray to have some of Ralph's inquiring mind and still be learning about our fascinating hobby at his age. May he rest in peace.



Marvin Clemons with Ralph Honeycutt





## CHAPTER UPDATE

*James Lowery, President*

### COVID-19 UPDATE RELATIVE TO THE CHAPTER

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 situation continues to “plague” all of us, as well as the Mid-South Chapter, in the sense that it has negatively impacted our ability to have in-person meetings and to visit with railroad friends and acquaintances. The chapter’s Year 2020 in-person already-scheduled meetings for March, May, and September had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. However, the Chapter has still been active to the extent that it could be under the unusual circumstances. Examples of Chapter activities that have continued during this time are as follows:

- ◆ Publishing the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* on its regular schedule.
- ◆ Instituting and publishing (generally weekly) the MSC e-Newsletter e-mailed to the entire Chapter mailing list.
- ◆ Guided tour of Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark and the locomotives on display there.
- ◆ Continuing to install historic railroad location signs as part of the Chapter’s Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project.
- ◆ Participation by Mid-South Chapter members in the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum Members Picnic as part of the ongoing collaboration between the two organizations.
- ◆ Continuing historic railroad research (often in response to inquiries or questions by Chapter members or by the general public), especially when that research could be conducted online or by asking local railroad, mining, or industrial history experts.
- ◆ Continuing to give PowerPoint presentations covering local railroad history topics via Zoom teleconferencing.
- ◆ The Chapter Board of Directors has continued to meet regularly (via Zoom teleconferencing) to handle the business of the Chapter.
- ◆ Chapter website manager, member Lamont Downs, has been working with national R&LHS personnel who are converting the national website (which hosts the Chapter website) to a different platform. Lamont reports that the transition is going well and that the Chapter website will be converted intact. If you have not visited the Chapter website recently, its URL remains [https://www.rlhs.org/Chapters/mid\\_south.shtml](https://www.rlhs.org/Chapters/mid_south.shtml)
- ◆ Continuing planning for the Birmingham Terminal Station exhibit to be housed in one of the rooms at the Leeds Depot.

Your Chapter’s Board of Directors is committed to continuing to provide you with quality railroad history information and frequent opportunities for learning even when in-person meetings are not feasible.

### CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORT

In the past, the Chapter President has given an annual report (covering January through December) to the Chapter members at the January (in-person) meeting, and the Chapter President also has submitted another annual report in May to the national R&LHS Board of Directors (covering June through May). This year, because we will not be meeting in person in January 2021 and because a second annual report to national has always been out of sync with the one presented to the Chapter members in January, we are going to start in 2021 having only one annual report per year to serve both purposes. Each year, the annual report will be based on the timing requirements of the national Board of Directors for the annual report to them (currently in May), and that annual report to national also will be sent to the Chapter members at that time.

Please let me know at [JLowery2@gmail.com](mailto:JLowery2@gmail.com) if you would like to be sent a copy of the annual report sent to the national R&LHS Board of Directors last May.



## SLOSS FURNACES TOUR LAST NOVEMBER

The Chapter “meeting” in November 2020 was a guided tour of the Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark. Earlier in the year, the Chapter had scheduled this tour to feature the two newly painted locomotives on display there – a steam engine and a diesel engine – so, when the COVID-19 situation came along, we were still able to have this Chapter “meeting” because the bulk of it was an outside activity.

We first were treated to an excellent presentation and discussion about the history of Sloss Furnaces and iron-making in the Birmingham area. Following that presentation in the meeting room by our tour leader Richard Neely, he took us on a tour of the historic blast furnaces and explained their operation and workings. The tour concluded with Richard showing and explaining the steam and diesel locomotives and the painting preservation work he had done on them. He also showed us other major rolling stock currently stored at Sloss Furnaces awaiting his paint brush for future preservation. (See tour photos below.)

A big “Thank You” to Richard Neely for the great historical information and tour, and a big “Thank You” to Karen Utz and Ty Malugani for making the facility available to us for this tour.

We plan to repeat this tour later in 2021 for anyone who was not able to attend it in November.



Photos from Sloss Furnaces tour. Photos by James Lowery.





# HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

*OFFICIAL RAILROAD MUSEUM FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA*

Here at HoD, we recently wrapped up our final new event, "Christmas at the Station," created specifically for 2020. This year has been a roller-coaster ride for everyone. Back in January, we had high hopes for many museum projects but then COVID sidetracked most everything. We even had to close our doors for several months. Finally in June, we were able to open at reduced capacities and with numerous safety practices. Nearly all of our regular events had to be cancelled, but fortunately several new ones were created to better meet safety concerns. One success story out of 2020 was the return of the S&S narrow gauge train, which has become popular with families. Another success has been in volunteer recruitment. We have been fortunate to see a number of new volunteers join. We do not know what 2021 will bring, but we are hopeful for a better year. Happy New Year to ALL!



## ***HoD Annual Membership Meeting***

Tentatively set for January 23 but no further details available at this time. Election of three new trustees will take place as Jimmy Summers, Mike Walker (who is eligible to run again), and Mark Walker roll off the board.

## ***Project Focus 2021***

With museum funding still limited, current restoration plans for early 2021 will focus on our 1952 CB&Q dining car. Shelby County graciously awarded a \$20,000 tourism grant to assist with the repairs. We are currently locating professional contractors to assist with stainless steel repairs and electrical inspection of the car. Additional cleaning and inspections will also take place. Our plan is to return this car to operational status at the earliest possible opportunity.

## ***Current Restoration Projects***

- ◆ 1926 L&N RR Tavern/Lounge Car "Alabama Club" HVAC and generator work nearing completion. Hope to locate funding for completion of interior painting.
- ◆ 1952 CB&Q RR dining car, "Silver Cuisine," roof repairs continue and evaluation of the electrical system planned for early 2021.
- ◆ 1951 MOW Flat Car (formerly DODX) work started on the installation of new wood decking.
- ◆ 1953 FM H12-44 No. 1850 and 1942 EMD SW1 No. 904 both receiving some cleaning and preliminary inspections but restoration for these projects are currently lacking funds.

## ***Train Crew Training***

No dates set, but hoping for late January and early February for all crew safety training.

## ***Upcoming 2021 Train Rides***

Planning has already started on our 2021 operating season. Our team is reviewing a number of events for early Spring. Our hope is to start regular runs in early March, which is earlier than years past. You can stay up-to-date on our events by following us on Facebook or Twitter. You can also check updates on our main web page and our web page calendar of events.

Visit [www.hodrrm.org](http://www.hodrrm.org) to learn more.



# LYNNVILLE RAILROAD MUSEUM

## *A REGIONAL DAY TRIP ON YOUR OWN*

*Ken Boyd*

Lynnville, Tennessee, is a charming and picturesque little town in south-central Tennessee, about an hour south of Nashville and about 55 miles north of the Alabama state line. Because Lynnville is only about 10 minutes off I-65, the town is an easy drive from Huntsville or Decatur and less than 2 1/2 hours from Birmingham, making this a very pleasant and feasible daytrip for many.

The town of “Old Lynnville” dated to about 1810, but was partially burned during the Civil War. After the war, the town picked up and moved to the current location where the Nashville & Decatur Railroad intersected with the Cornersville Turnpike. At one time, the town included a sawmill, several gristmills, brickyard, tin shop, quarry and other businesses. Lynnville became an agricultural rail hub for the area, with cattle, hogs, mules, horses, poultry and eggs traded and shipped across the region.

Today, the town features about 59 somewhat historic structures. The population is about 500. The CSX mainline divides the downtown area into east and west sides. Several popular shops and eateries cater to the locals and tourists, but the highlight in Lynnville is the railroad museum depot. The current depot is actually a reconstruction; the original passenger depot was torn down after passenger service ended.



**Lynnville Depot and Lynnville Railroad No. 7 (Republic Steel Corporation No. 294). The CSX mainline can be seen just to the right of the red L&N caboose. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)**



The depot museum is small but provides educational exhibits that highlight something of what a working train station might have been like back in the day. No admission is charged, and the facilities and grounds are clean and orderly.

The depot interior is arranged for self-guided viewing of exhibits with a massive, detailed and beautiful 4-8-2 steam locomotive model, Illinois Central Railroad No. 2614, displayed down the center of the building.

During a recent visit, the museum was not attended but was unlocked. After hours, the outside displays are open and accessible. Police presence was obvious, and the officers were courteous and helpful. Parking was free in a nice lot beside the depot.

Even with the pandemic, the atmosphere on a fall Saturday was festive in Lynnville. People were walking around, the restaurants were busy and everyone was enjoying the day. The town is small and everything is walkable.

The historic Iron Horse Hotel is located just across the tracks. This is an interesting building and now operates as a sandwich and antique-type shop. The hotel is literally feet from the CSX mainline. In fact, the only real intersection in the town, the old hotel, the depot, and the mainline all converge at one point with the rail warning system.

This area of Tennessee is popular with tourists. The Jack Daniels distillery is nearby as well as other 19th century points of interest. Pulaski, Tennessee, is a larger bustling and booming town about 20 minutes south of Lynnville on Highway 31.



**Inside the depot at Lynnville Railroad Museum with model of Illinois Central No. 2614, a Baldwin Locomotive Works 4-8-2 engine, on display.  
(Photos by Ken Boyd.)**



Outside and adjacent to the CSX mainline is a beautifully restored Baldwin Locomotive Works 2-6-2 Prairie-type steam locomotive lettered Lynnville Railroad No. 7. The locomotive is painted black with red trim. The cab is clean and relatively complete with easy-access steps for visitors.

The locomotive dates to 1924 and was built for the St. Louis & O'Fallon Railway in East St. Louis, Illinois, where it hauled coal trains. In an interesting and well-traveled career, it next went to Manufacturers Railway Company in St. Louis, then in 1941 to River Terminal Railway in Cleveland, Ohio, and in 1948 to Republic Steel Corporation in Birmingham, Alabama, where it was assigned No. 294. Somewhere during these operations, the front wheelset was removed, probably after a derailment. It was retired after 37 years in use.

In 1964, the locomotive was donated to the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum in Birmingham, where it was displayed outdoors in the area now redeveloped as Railroad Park on the south side of the elevated mainlines through downtown. The locomotive came to the Lynnville museum in 1997 where it has been cosmetically restored for display. Wheels have been placed under the front of the engine to make it look more complete.

For the enthusiast, the locomotive is said to weigh 195,000 pounds with 51-inch drivers. It could carry 7,000 gallons of water and 12 tons of coal. Operating boiler pressure was 200 psi.

Railcars at the museum include a 1923 Pullman Passenger Coach (which inside has a sub-museum honoring nearby Milky Way Farms), a 1950 wood deck flat car, and a 1971 L&N caboose. A freight dock at one end of the museum includes carts, crates and other items that might be expected at a working depot.



**The restoration and transformation of Lynnville Railroad No. 7 are amazing! Shown here as Republic Steel Corporation No. 294, the same locomotive, before restoration and as on display in downtown Birmingham during the late 1980s. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)**





For many, the best part of the Lynnville museum visit is the 1927 Lynnville Railroad No. 7 (Republic Steel Corporation No. 294) Prairie-type 2-6-2 Baldwin steam locomotive.

It was ordered by the St. Louis & O'Fallon Railway for pulling coal trains. After several changes in ownership, it came to Republic Steel in Birmingham and was retired after 37 years of service. The engine was donated to the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum and was acquired by the Lynnville Railroad Museum in 1997 where it has been nicely restored.

The cab is fully accessible to visitors and appears to be relatively complete with attention to visitor safety.

At the museum, the locomotive is lettered for Lynnville Railroad as No. 7.

#### SOURCES:

Ken Boyd, The Art of the Locomotive, Voyageur Press, 2014.

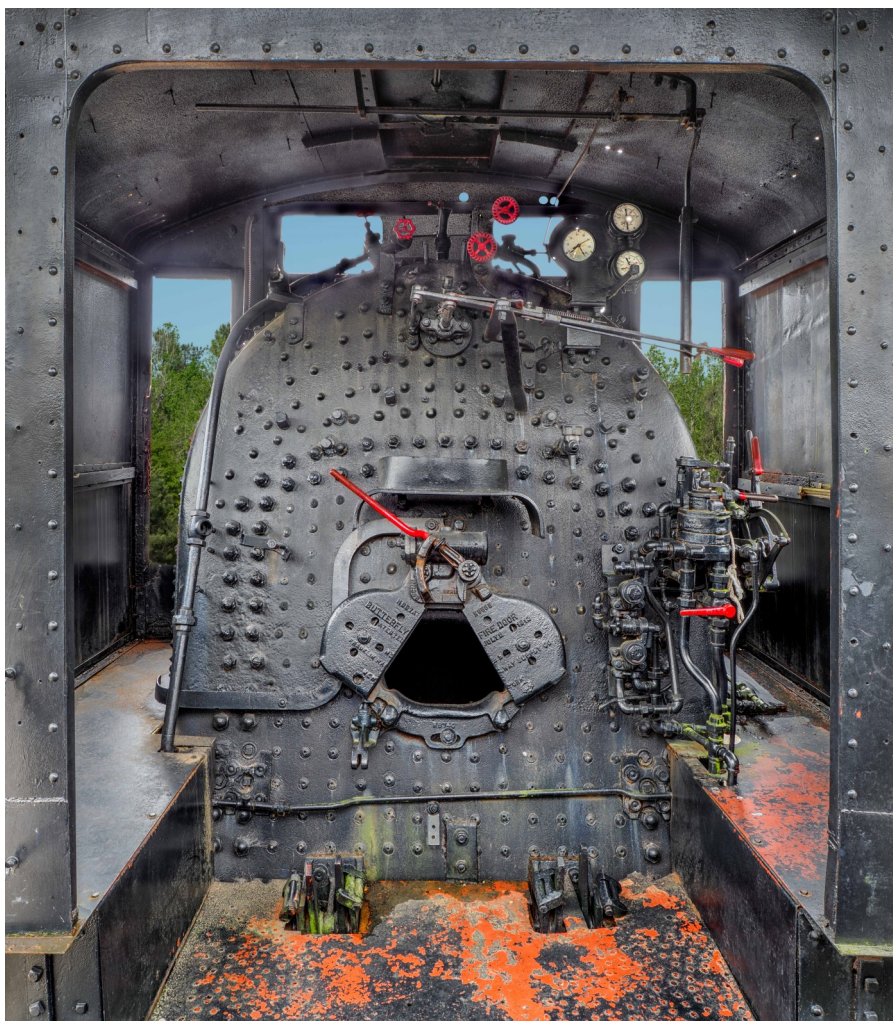
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<https://www.tnvacation.com/local/lynnville-lynnville-railroad-museum>

<http://www.visitlynnville.com/historicdowntownlynnville>

<https://www.tnvacation.com/local/lynnville-lynnville-historic-downtown>





# MEMBER MOMENT

## *IT STARTED WITH THE SUNSET LIMITED*

**Bob Greene**

So how did a retired environmental lawyer and sometime law professor get mixed up with a group of folks who love trains and railroad history? Good question.

Two of my earliest memories are of a train trip my mother and I took from El Paso, Texas, to Washington, DC, in June or July of 1946. Rose Candelaria was a young WWII widow who had just remarried, and I was her two-year old son traveling to meet my new father. I have vivid, if somewhat disjointed, memories of the Pullman coach sleeper berths on the Sunset Limited and of the Southern Crescent crossing Lake Pontchartrain. Then, there is the arrival at DC's Union Station and being met by Charlie Greene my new dad.

Charlie loved trains. He had wanted to work for the Railway Mail and had worked briefly for the New Haven Railroad as a younger man. Instead, he spent most of his career with the CIA, but that is another story. Charlie and I "played" with HO trains and took every opportunity to experience the "real" ones. I'm quite sure our layout was never completed, but we did run some trains, and I still have a few of his locomotives and rolling stock.

Fast forward about 50 years. I was practicing law in downtown Birmingham when I was invited to hear a project presentation for a leadership development program. The "project" was a proposed railroad park in downtown Birmingham. I was intrigued and became involved. That involvement eventually became the Friends of the Railroad District (FoRRD), and I became its first president. FoRRD shepherded the planning of Railroad Park for about 10 years and then was succeeded by the Railroad Park Foundation, which raised the money to make those plans a reality. FoRRD also ensured that the City of Birmingham recognized its title to the Frisco locomotive then located at the Fairgrounds, thus saving it from the wrecking ball and paving the way for the current relocation to Sloss Furnaces.

Unfortunately, what was lost in the development of Railroad Park were the efforts of the Birmingham Railroad Heritage to create a railroad history museum in the area now occupied by Railroad Park. I was briefly involved with that organization and still have its papers. However, as I look at the Powell Steam Plant, newly remediated and sitting empty, I wonder if those efforts might not find new life.



**Bob Greene at Railroad Park (top) and with Frisco No. 4018 at Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark (above).**



# THE MARCO POLO AND OTHER HISTORIC PRIVATE RAILCARS

Warren Jones



**The Marco Polo was presented to the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, Georgia, near Atlanta on November 14, 2020.  
(Photo from Southeastern Railway Museum Website.)**

On November 14, 2020, John Friedmann, Norfolk Southern VP Network Planning and Optimization, presented the Marco Polo railcar to the Southeastern Railway Museum. At the presentation, he made the following remarks: “The Marco Polo holds a unique place in Norfolk Southern history, and we couldn’t think of a more appropriate location for the car to be displayed than at the Southeastern Railway Museum. As we move our headquarters to Atlanta, forging relationships with surrounding communities like Duluth and organizations dedicated to preserving railroads like Southeastern Railway Museum will be critical to making Atlanta feel even more like home.”

“The Marco Polo is a critical piece of railroad history, and we are honored Norfolk Southern has entrusted us to help preserve the railcar and its story for future generations,” said Sue Kelly, interim executive director of the Southeastern Railway Museum. “Railroads played an invaluable role in transporting presidents across the country. President Roosevelt had a unique connection to Georgia, and on his trips to Warm Springs, he regularly passed through Duluth and by what is today the museum,

and we’re excited to welcome the car back home.”

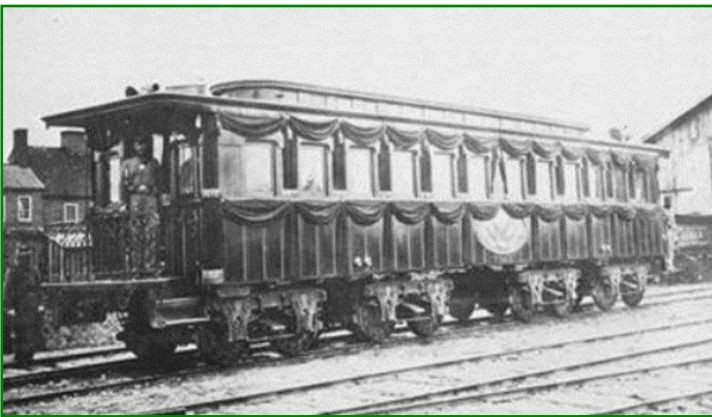
The Marco Polo was built in 1927 by the Pullman Company as a business car, in that era sometimes called “Varnish” luxury equipment. It was part of a special group of six cars that were made available for VIP chartering. To add further prestige to their identity, members of the group were given the names of world explorers. The other five were: Henry Stanley, David Livingston, Robert Perry, Roald Amundsen and Ferdinand Magellan. In addition to president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Marco Polo was chosen by visiting dignitaries including: Madame Chaing Kai-Shek of China, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and the presidents of Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Philippines and Czechoslovakia.

The Central of Georgia, now part of the Norfolk Southern, bought the Marco Polo in 1944 and converted it into an office. After the merger of the Southern Railway with the Central of Georgia, the car was renamed the “Savannah” and was displayed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and at Union Station in Washington, D.C.



The practice of chartering railcars for the president ended after the United States entered World War II and the Secret Service suggested that the president needed a specially equipped and armored railcar. The Ferdinand Magellan was selected and rebuilt for service as United States Railcar No. 1, the predecessor of Air Force 1. After refitting, this rolling fortress weighed 285,000 pounds with 5/8 inch steel plating on its roof, sides and floor and three-inch bullet-proof glass windows. The outside identification was simply the word "Pullman" to blend in with the other train traffic when secret travel was needed. It was last used by President Reagan for a series of "whistlestop" speeches through Ohio on October 12, 1984. Its current owner is the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

The Marco Polo joins the "Superb," another historic Pullman car at the Museum. It was donated by the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad in 1969 and has recently been renovated. The Superb was built in 1911 and was used to transport the body of President Warren G. Harding after he died in 1923. It was also used by President Woodrow Wilson.



**The United States (Lincoln Funeral Car).**  
(Image Public Domain.)

### Some Firsts About Presidents and Trains

(The first five presidents never rode on a train)

- The first president to record a train ride, although after he left office, was John Quincy Adams (6<sup>th</sup> president) in the fall of 1830. It was on "the new and frightening horse-drawn railway cars" of the Baltimore and Ohio from Baltimore to Relay House, Maryland.
- The first president to ride a train while in office was Andrew Jackson (7<sup>th</sup> president) on the Baltimore and Ohio from Ellicott's Mills, Maryland, to Baltimore on June 6, 1833. The cars were pulled by the steam engine "Atlantic."
- The first presidential candidate to campaign by rail was William Henry Harrison in September 1836, even though in that day campaigning was considered a violation of political proprieties. His race was unsuccessful, but in 1840 he was successful

and became the first president-elect (9<sup>th</sup> president) to travel by train to his inauguration.

- The first of several presidents with railroad experience was president James Buchanan (15<sup>th</sup> president). He was president of the Portsmouth & Lancaster Railroad. Later Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland and Harry Truman were all employed by railroads prior to their presidency.
- The first president to use the U.S. presidential private railcar named the "United States" was Abraham Lincoln (16<sup>th</sup> president). Unfortunately, the first and only use of this car was to transport Lincoln's body from Washington, D.C., to Springfield (April 21 – May 3, 1865) for burial. Its construction was completed in 1865 at the Alexandria, Virginia, Car Shops of the United States Military and was designed as a "compromise" car with extra wide wheel treads for use on standard gauge up to and including five-foot gauge that was common in both the north and south. The trip to Springfield used 24 railroads and 42 locomotives! The exterior of the car was painted a rich chocolate brown trimmed with faint lines of red. The car was not preserved and was eventually destroyed by a fire. However, The Historic Railroad Equipment Association has built a full-scale replica that is planned for permanent display at The Star Barn Village in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. A photograph of the original car in 1865 is shown below.

The book "Famous First Facts," claims that the very first private railcar was provided by showman P. T. Barnum for superstar Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind, often called the "Swedish Nightingale." The car was part of a Barnum promotional tour of the United States for Lind during 1850 – 1852, paying her for 150 performances at the rate of \$1,000 each. This remarkable singer donated her proceeds of this tour to charities in Sweden.

### Chapel Railcars

Another fascinating private railcar story is the group of 13 chapel cars that traveled about in the wild west from the 1890s to the 1930s. These cars were designed to provide both a place for religious services and living space for pastors. Three surviving chapel cars are on exhibit: "Messenger of Peace" – Northwest Museum at Snoqualmie, Washington; "Grace" – Green Lake, Wisconsin; "Emmanuel" – Prairie Village near Madison, South Dakota.

### Private Railcars Today

At its peak in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an estimated 2,000 private railcars were in use. They may be an endangered species, given the recent Amtrak policy stating that it is making "drastic cuts in operating charter services run by private owners."

### Presidential Locomotives

A feature to review presidential locomotives is currently in development for a future issue of *MID-SOUTH FLYER*.





The Lincoln funeral car (replica) exhibit at Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth, Minnesota, September 2017.

Photo by Ken Boyd.

**Editor's Note:** Warren Jones is computer science professor emeritus at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and is Board member and Membership Chair of the R&LHS Mid-South Chapter. He grew up near the Southern Railway Depot in Gainesville, Georgia, where his Dad worked for 17 years. He enjoys railroad history research in his retirement, is author of the article "Chasing the 301: A Biography of a Steam Locomotive" published in *Lines South*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2018, and has an article under preparation for a future issue of *Railroad History*.

## REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

**NOTE:** Modelers may be interested in the floor plans for the Superb on page 395 and the Magellan on page 398 of the Withers book, chapel cars in the Appendix of the Taylor book, the United States in the Trostel book and several private cars of individuals in the Beebe book.

[American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners](#) – promotes the enjoyment of private railroad passenger cars, experience as a car owner, charter client or passenger.

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Kane, Joseph N. et al "Famous First Facts: A Record of First Happenings, Discoveries, and Inventions in America", H. W. Wilson Company, 1997.

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[Private Railcar Travel](#) – Private railcars available for charter.

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[U. S. Railcar No. 1](#) – The refurbished version of the Ferdinand Magellan for the exclusive use of the president, now in Miami at the Gold Coast Museum.

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## THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



Queen Adelaide's Saloon, No. 2, railway carriage, built 1842. This is the oldest known surviving royal railway carriage. The carriage design looks somewhat like a horse-drawn carriage of the time and is detailed with gold trim and hand-painted armorial trim. The interior includes a bed and other specific appointments for the queen. The locomotive to the right is North Eastern Railway No. 1275, a 0-6-0 design from 1874. These exhibits are from The National Railway Museum in York, United Kingdom. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)