



September 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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Chapter Modeling Layout Visit — Thank you to Carey Ketchum for hosting a tour of his model railroad layouts on August 21. About 25 people attended, both from the Mid-South Chapter of the R&LHS and from the Steel City Division model railroad club. Two layouts were showcased, one a 1955-era layout and the other a 2000-era layout. Both layouts feature train lines primarily from the southeastern U.S. (ACL, FEC, GM&O, L&N, SAL, SCL, Southern, etc.) and are extremely detailed with numerous "mini-scenes."

Light Painting for Locomotives — The July issue of *THE MID-SOUTH FLYER* included an article on photographic light painting for locomotives and other subjects. Because of the positive comments and response to this article, a workshop is currently being planned with the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum for the fall season. Anyone interested in participating or observing should contact the editor.

Model Railroads for the Holidays — Who does not love model trains at Christmas? From a layout circling a tree to an elaborate display in a store, museum or other public space, the holidays would not be the same without model trains! The November issue of *THE MID-SOUTH FLYER* will include a modeling feature by John Stewart, a modeling Member Moment by Cary Ketchum and other fascinating information on model railroading.

The editor would also like to include information on local and regional model railroads that members can visit during the holidays as the column entitled, *Regional Daytrips on Your Own*. If you would like to share information for this column, please email (kenboydphotography@yahoo.com).

Mid-South Chapter Meeting Update — With COVID cases resurging across the region and the country, plans to resume in-person meetings and programs at the Leeds Depot remain on hold. However, the Chapter Board regularly considers options for meetings, either in person on location or virtually through Zoom.

Member Moment

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

GENERAL RAILROAD NEWS

Amtrak Statement on Senate Agreement for the Infrastructure Bill — "We applaud the Administration and the group of bipartisan Senators for putting forward this historic level of investment in Amtrak and passenger rail. If enacted, Amtrak will work to put these funds to use, rebuilding core infrastructure, replacing equipment and, with the FRA and state partners, bringing more Amtrak service to more people across the nation, creating thousands of new jobs and reducing America's carbon footprint." (See the Amtrak [Corridor Vision](#) for the 15-year Amtrak strategic plan.)

Programming on Railway Journeys — For anyone interested in documentary television series on rail travel, two current options are excellent:

- [Mighty Trains](#) on Smithsonian.
- [Great Scenic Railway Journeys](#) on PBS.

Consult your cable provider for times and dates. Episodes are also available for replay on U-Tube and other websites.

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.

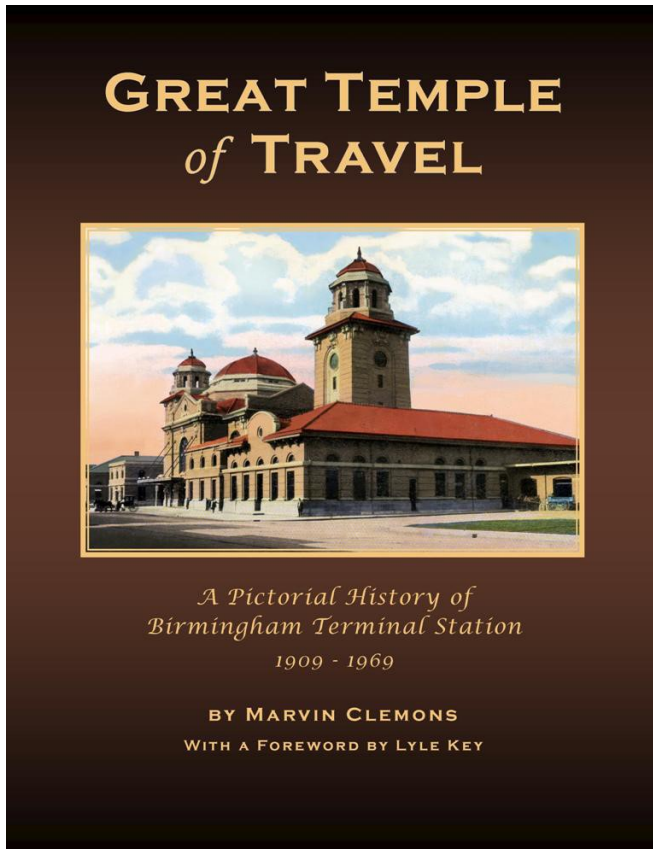
Ken Boyd, Editor

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TERMINAL STATION EXHIBIT EXPANDS, GAINS MOMENTUM

“A work in progress, and much more” might be the most appropriate description of the expanding Terminal Station exhibit planned for the Historic Leeds Depot.

To recount, in January 2020 Vulcan Park & Museum generously donated the display materials from the Museum’s 2019 Alabama Bicentennial exhibit, “Terminal Station: Birmingham’s Great Temple of Travel,” to the Mid-South Chapter for permanent display in one of the depot’s former waiting rooms.



Great Temple of Travel
A Pictorial History of Birmingham Terminal Station
 1909—1969
 By Marvin Clemons



Vulcan Park & Museum Exhibit Entrance, January 2020.
 Photo by Jeff Newman.

More recently, the Chapter applied for and received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to partially fund development of a design plan and the purchase and installation of exhibit materials. The design is currently under development by Phillip Ratliff with Vulcan Museum, in consultation with Mid-South member Marvin Clemons and guidance from Mid-South President James Lowery.

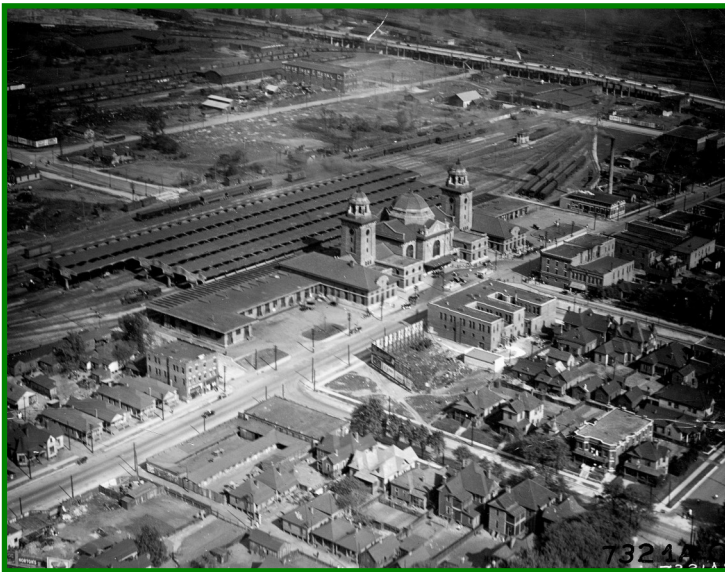
As plans have evolved, the original concept for the Terminal Station exhibit has expanded to a much broader theme, highlighting the importance of railroad stations and depots to the development of the Birmingham District.

Current planning focuses on using the depot's front waiting room and entrance foyer to feature the two extant depots remaining in the District, the 1884 Leeds Depot and the 1916 Bessemer Depot, anchored by the Terminal Station exhibit. Photographs and drawings of former District depots, including those repurposed for other use, will be included to illustrate the variety of construction and designs used by the different railroads.

The expanded displays will require additional funding, which hopefully will be provided by a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission. No timeline has been established for completing the exhibits, contingent on funding and finalizing the exhibit design plan.

In the meantime, the acquisition of additional historical images and documents related to the Terminal Station continues by "Great Temple of Travel" author Marvin Clemons. While no second edition of the book is planned, a supplement featuring many previously unpublished images, documents and historical information is anticipated. Several photos planned for the supplement are included here for a sneak preview.

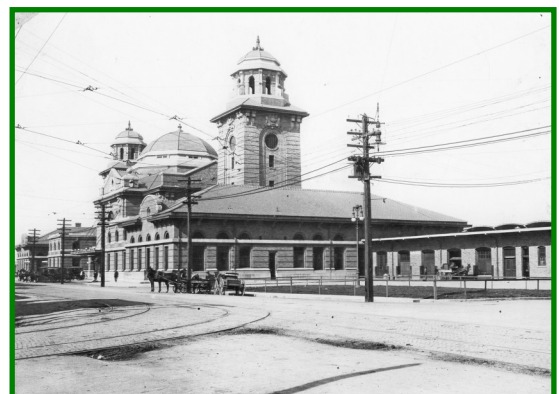
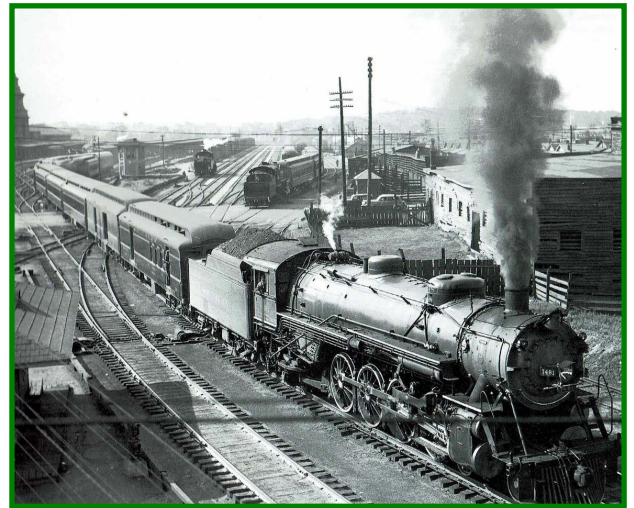
For readers who have not yet purchased a copy of the book or would like to order additional copies, the author is offering signed copies for a reduced "Mid-South members only" price of \$35.00 including free shipping. Email mclemons@bhamrails.com to order your copy.



(Above) A 1918 aerial view of Terminal Station aglow in afternoon sunlight.

(Above right) Southern Train #40, the "SUNNYLAND" seen departing for Atlanta in February 1944.

(Right) Newly opened Terminal Station in 1909, as seen from the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and 26th Street.





(Images clockwise from above)

New streamliner "SOUTHERNER" departing on inaugural trip to Washington D.C., March 31, 1941.

Frisco's "KANSAS CITY-FLORIDA SPECIAL" departing for Memphis, June 1964.

Picking up tickets from the station ticket counter. Baggage room entrance is seen on the right.

British "FLYING SCOTSMAN" during servicing stop on American tour, November 2, 1969.



CONFESSIONS OF A RAILFAN HERETIC

Lamont Downs

To be perfectly honest, I'm not actually sure if I'd even qualify as a railfan. I'm not particularly interested in locomotives (including steam), scanner frequencies, flash mobs or tourist lines, and I do all my model railroading on a computer. But I do love railroads, an aberration which may put me into a different category altogether.

Show me a pre-millennium signal, switch stand or station and I'm all attention. The design of a railroad yard is of absorbing interest (needless to say, maps—the more detailed the better—are a special favorite). A railroad mainline that runs through a narrow alley between two century-old buildings, to directly emerge crossing a main street (an actual Bessemer and Lake Erie routing in Greenville, Pennsylvania), is down-right heaven.

I grew up surrounded by rail lines. Warren, Ohio, was a major part of the region's "Steel Valley" (Pittsburgh to Cleveland) and featured the Erie (two mainlines!), Pennsylvania (the heavy duty ore line to the Lake Erie boats) and the Baltimore & Ohio's Lake Division to Painesville (once a narrow-gauge line). During the day, one frequently heard train horns from all directions. Waiting for a train at a grade crossing was routine.

In addition, I had relatives in Washington state, which meant a cross-country train trip every few years. This involved the Erie to Chicago, a van transfer to Union Station, and the Burlington/Northern Pacific *North Coast Limited* the rest of the way, complete with domes. Guess who grabbed the front seat at first opportunity?

I started railroad photography in 1969 with a second-hand Kodak Stereo Camera, shooting about 2,500 slides before switching to digital around 2000. Scans of many of those slides are available on my [website at http://www.twinplanets.com/rr/slides.html](http://www.twinplanets.com/rr/slides.html). The quality is not great (cheap film, mediocre lenses) but many of the scenes preserved are long gone today.

In fact, while I respect those who have raised railroad photography to an art form, for me it's an invaluable tool for documenting existing (especially endangered) lines, stations, signals, etc. as well as the occasional abandoned grade. Rarely do I cross a rail line without snapping a shot out the passenger window (my wife and longtime partner Pat does most of our driving). Taking a thousand shots on a trip is not unusual. After all, "bytes are free..."



Lamont Downs



HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

OFFICIAL RAILROAD MUSEUM FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA

This summer has seen some rather good ridership numbers on many Saturdays, but as schools return to session, ridership has slowed. Summer heat and continued COVID concerns strain our volunteers as they staff trains and tackle work projects. Without these volunteers, the HoD could not exist. Thanks to all of you who volunteer whether with HoD or Mid-South Chapter.

We now have a new office employee, Carol Aldridge. She will be working in our gift shop Tuesday through Saturday. Having her onboard will now allow us to open our gift shop during the week once again. She will also help with other office tasks and field phone calls. Next time you are at HoD, stop by the gift shop to welcome Carol.

Many fall special events will be returning and tickets are now on sale for many of them; please read below for further:

Restoration Project News:

- ◆ 1926 L&N RR Tavern/Lounge Car "Alabama Club" interior painting is progressing
- ◆ 1952 CB&Q RR dining car "Silver Cuisine" summer heat has slowed progress.
- ◆ 1959 GE center cab locomotive, former Alabama Power #107, hope to perform repairs on one of two motors this fall.
- ◆ 1951 MOW Flat Car (former DODX) work continues with new wood decking.

Upcoming 2021 Train Rides:

Operating Every Saturday - Regular Run

Now - September 25

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am & 1:00 pm
- ◆ Regular Ticket Price \$13 for adult or child
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes
- ◆ S&S ticket price \$3.50; or All Day pass \$10

Pumpkin Junction

October 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am, 1:00 & 3:00 pm
- ◆ Special Event Pricing \$17 for adult or child
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes
- ◆ Event details posted on our web site

Fall Foliage Special

November 6 & 13

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am & 1:00 pm
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes
- ◆ Ticket prices coming soon. Event details posted on the HoD website.



Visit www.hodrrm.org to learn more about upcoming events.

North Pole Express & Christmas at the Station

Christmas runs are on the schedule once again as NPE tickets went on sale in July. As of this writing, roughly 65% of available NPE tickets have been sold. Starting Friday night November 19 and running for 5 weekends, the popular train ride to the North Pole returns. Many families have made this event an annual family gathering.

For daytime train rides, Christmas at the Station replaces former Santa Express. These rides will take place on Dec 4, 11, & 18 at 10am & 1pm. Tickets will be \$18 a person.

HISTORIC PARK AT ROSS BRIDGE

A REGIONAL DAY TRIP ON YOUR OWN

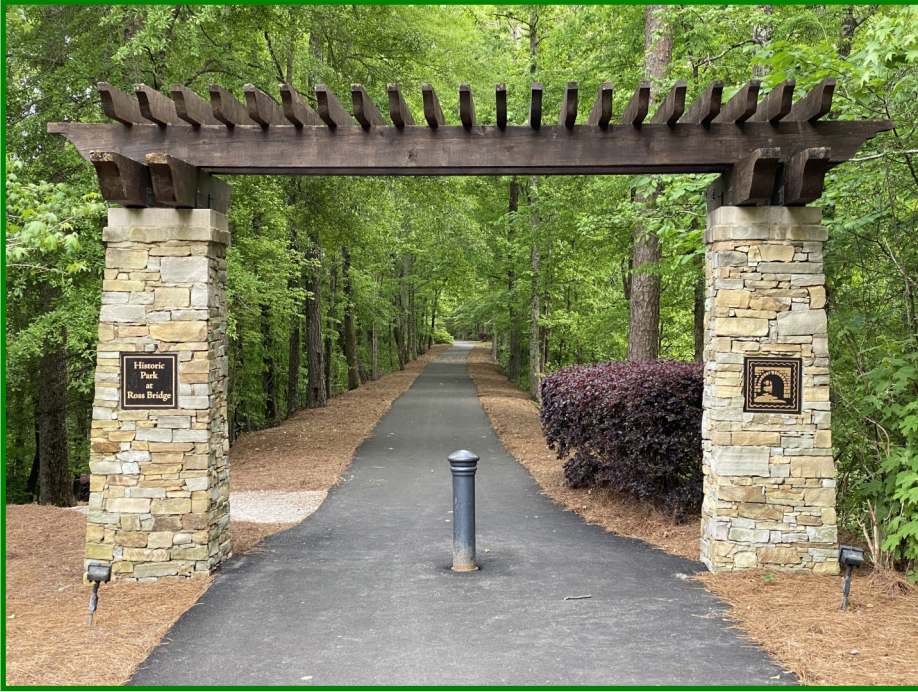
Ken Boyd



Historic Ross Bridge Railroad Culvert and Ross Creek. The original railbed as seen above the culvert is now a walking trail. This photo was taken from a walking trail and foot bridge across the creek. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)

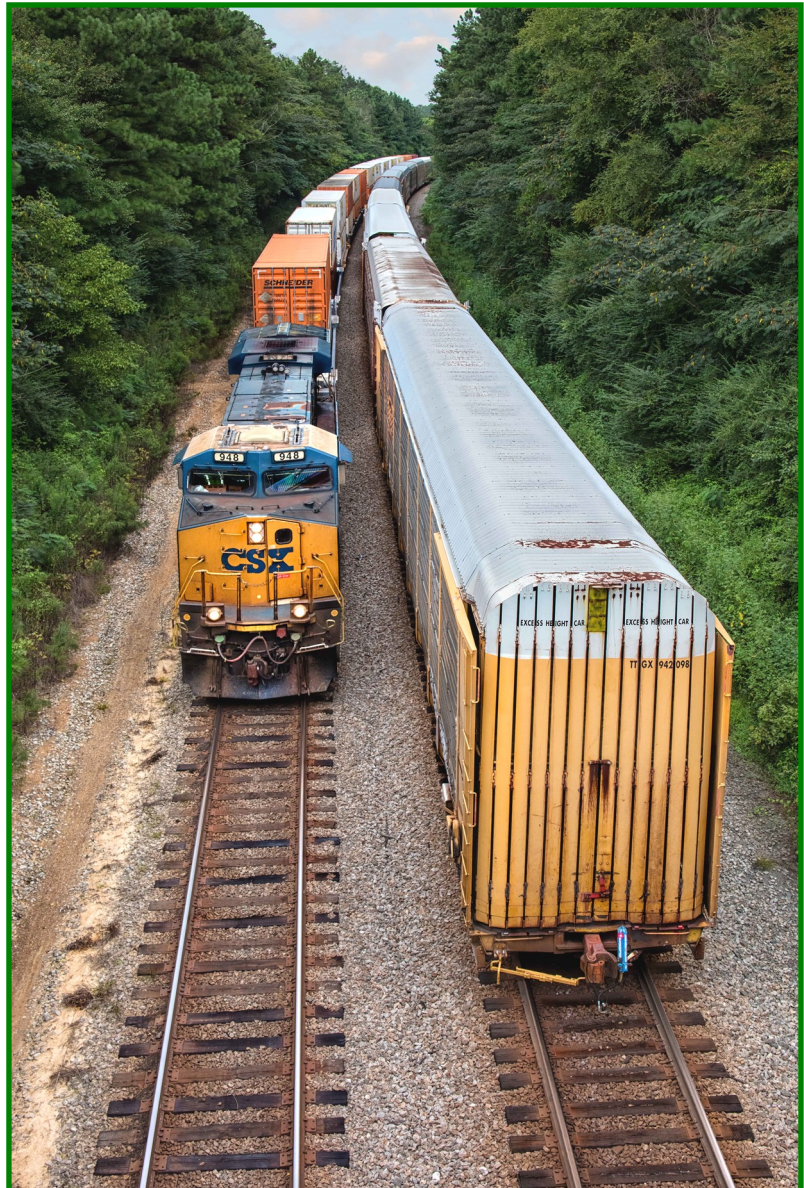
The Historic Park at Ross Bridge is located in Hoover, Alabama, in the Shannon Valley at the base of Shades Mountain and just west and south of Birmingham. The story of historic Ross Bridge begins in 1858 when the James Ross family discovered the beautiful setting of the valley and creek. They purchased about 140 acres for cotton farming.

Near the end of the American Civil War, the Confederacy approached Ross with plans to construct a railroad through his land to bring iron ore from the Oxmoor Furnaces to the Confederate arsenals at Selma and to transport men and supplies quickly through the region. The railroad was built by The South & North Alabama Railroad, which had been chartered in 1854. The line was completed in 1871 and included a stone bridge or culvert across the creek, now known as Ross Creek.



Entrance to Historic Park at Ross Bridge. The walking trail follows the original railbed over Ross Bridge. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)

Busy CSX mainlines pass under the Ross Bridge Parkway but no longer use the historic Ross Bridge, which is located a short distance to the south of this modern crossing. (Photo by Ken Boyd.)



In 1872, The South & North Alabama Railroad became part of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad (CSX system today). The bridge served as part of a railroad mainline until 1908 and as spur line to the Oxmoor Furnaces from 1908 until 1927. Today, two busy CSX mainlines pass nearby but no longer cross the historic Ross Bridge.



Set in a charming and inviting little park today, the picturesque stone bridge remains as a rare example and testament of Civil War era railroad construction. The bridge and park are located between Alabama Highway 150 and Lakeshore Parkway along the Ross Bridge Parkway near the expansive and fashionable Ross Bridge residential community and resort and golf complex. Trails along the parkway and through the historic park are popular with family groups, young and old, runners and hikers, and photographers and historians. The Historic Park at Ross Bridge has often been described as “magical” by visitors!



The park is easily accessible from either I-65 or I-459. From I-65 South, take exit 255 and turn right onto Lakeshore Parkway toward Oxmoor and then left onto the Shannon Wenonah Road, which becomes the Ross Bridge Parkway; the park will be on the right past the Ross Bridge golf course and resort. From I-459 South, take exit 10 to AL 150/John Hawkins Parkway toward Bessemer and turn right onto Deer Valley Parkway/ Ross Bridge Parkway; the park will be on the left before reaching the golf course.

This wooden toy train is appropriate for this railroad park and popular with children. Benches are located all along the walking trails. The park is beautifully landscaped and well maintained. (Photos by Ken Boyd.)

THE “MAN O’ WAR” MAKES A COMEBACK

Marvin Clemons



A colorful “Man o’ War” emblem was attached next to the vestibule doorway of each coach.

Recollections from the heyday of rail passenger travel in the South include many popular trains with exotic names like the “City of Miami,” “South Wind,” and the “Pan American.” Immediately before and after World War II, these and other fine trains were inaugurated or re-equipped with new streamlined lightweight equipment, as railroads invested millions of dollars in a bid to lure travelers back to trains following the war.

But the brief post-war resurgence in rail travel was not to last. With increased competition from an expanding Interstate Highway system and the growth of air travel, rail travelers increasingly switched from trains to planes and automobiles. By the late ‘60s, passenger trains had all but vanished from the rails before Amtrak took over what remained of passenger service in May 1971.

As trains were discontinued, passenger cars were either scrapped or sold off to tourist lines or private individuals. Some of the surviving equipment not taken by Amtrak would ultimately find its way to railroad museums and preservation groups.

In 1990, one such group, the Southern Appalachia Railway Museum (SARM) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, acquired its first passenger car, the **Fort Oglethorpe**. Built in 1945 by the Budd Company, the **Fort Oglethorpe** was purchased by the Central of Georgia Railway to equip its new passenger train, the “Man o’ War.” The new train consisted of all lightweight streamlined cars built entirely of stainless steel and named for military installations located along the Central of Georgia’s lines. The consist included combination baggage-coach **Fort Mitchell**, coaches **Fort McPherson** and **Fort Oglethorpe**, and round end tavern-observation car **Fort Benning**.

Inaugurated in July 1947 and named in honor of the once-famous racehorse, the four-car “Man o’ War” was scheduled to make two daily round trips between Atlanta and



In 1954, the “Man o’ War” is seen departing Atlanta Terminal Station for Columbus, Georgia. The original four-car consist is punctuated by an extra coach plus several head-end cars of mail and express.



An interior view of the lounge section of observation car **Fort Benning**. Note the framed photograph of the train's namesake "Man o' War" racehorse.

Columbus, Georgia. During its early years, the train proved very popular with travelers on business and shopping trips to Atlanta, and for military travel to the Army's training center at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

But by the mid-1950s, increased competition from bus lines and the convenience of automobiles precipitated a steady decline in passenger revenues. Consequently, in 1955 the Central of Georgia reduced the train's schedule to one daily round-trip, followed in 1957 by removal of the non-revenue observation car. Shorn of its pride, the lame "Man o' War" hobbled through the 1960s until finally being sent to pasture in May 1970 when the last "Man o' War" departed Atlanta for Columbus.

For the next decade, the former "Man o' War" cars were used by the Central of Georgia's new owner, Southern Railway, on its remaining passenger trains. When Southern exited the passenger business in 1979, the cars were sold off to different owners scattered throughout the country.

After SARM acquired the **Fort Oglethorpe** in 1990, attention turned to locating the three remaining cars in hopes of reassembling the original "Man o' War" consist. In 1999, SARM acquired the train's other

coach, the **Fort McPherson**. This car had roamed as far away as Alaska, and its acquisition gave the museum half of the trainset.

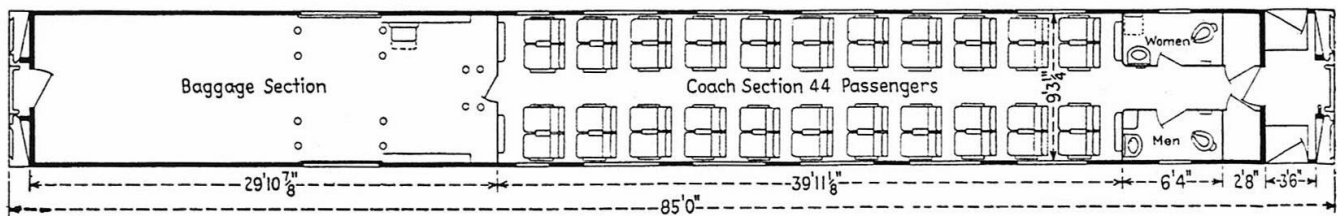
Another decade passed until 2013, when the East Tennessee Rail Car (ETRC) acquired the train's observation car **Fort Benning**. ETRC invested its own resources for moving the **Fort Benning** from Yakima, Washington, where the car was being used as part of a shopping mall, to Oak Ridge for restoration.

At long last, after three more decades of searching and hoping, SARM recently acquired the last of the "Man o' War" cars, the combination baggage-coach **Fort Mitchell**. Arrangements have been made between the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad in Ohio and ETRC for moving the car to SARM for restoration to its original configuration.

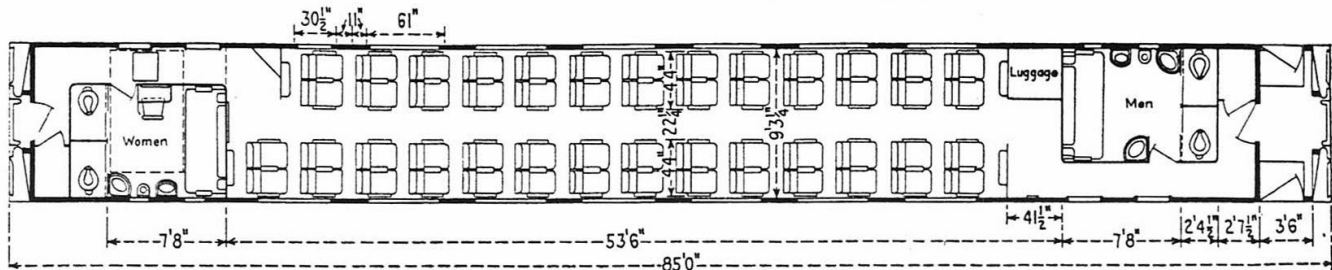
Coach **Fort Oglethorpe** has already been restored to operating condition and **Fort McPherson** is currently undergoing restoration. Once all cars have been restored, the original "Man o' War" consist will be reassembled for the first time in more than 50 years.



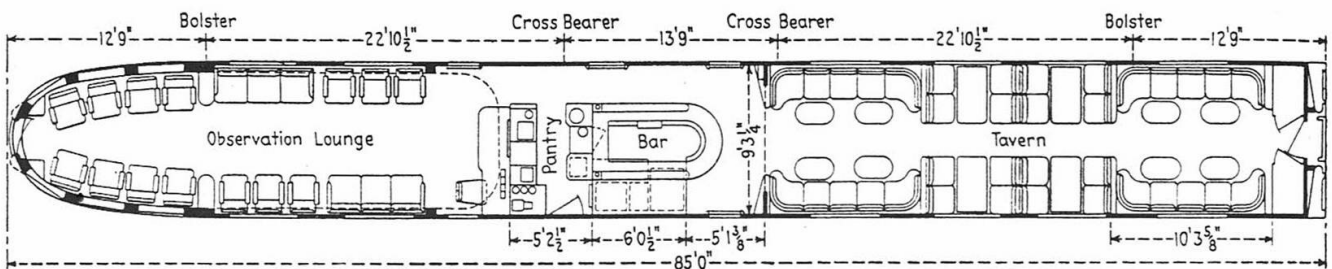
A colorful Central of Georgia "E7" passenger locomotive with the "Man o' War" in tow drifts down Pine Mountain en route to Columbus, Georgia. A year before this photo was taken in 1958, the train's round-end observation car had been discontinued.



Fort Mitchell (44-seat passenger-baggage)



Fort Oglethorpe and Fort McPherson (54-seat coaches)



Fort Benning (56-seat tavern-observation)

(All three floor plans from the Collection of the Central of Georgia Railway Historical Society)

A diagram showing the floor plan of the “Man o’ War’s” passenger cars.

The four-car stainless steel trainset cost \$360,000 in 1945.

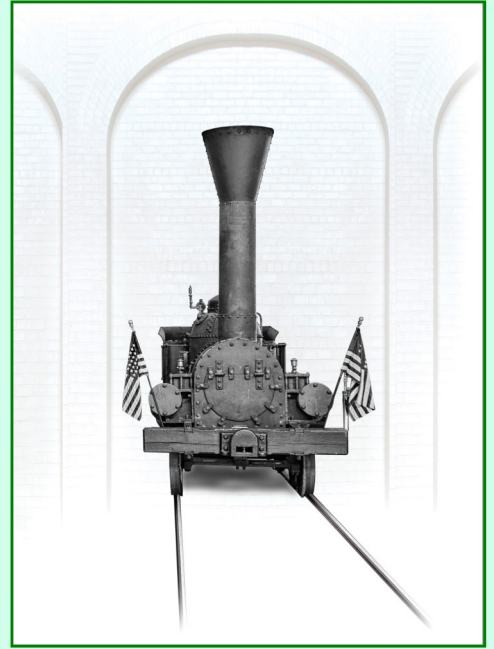
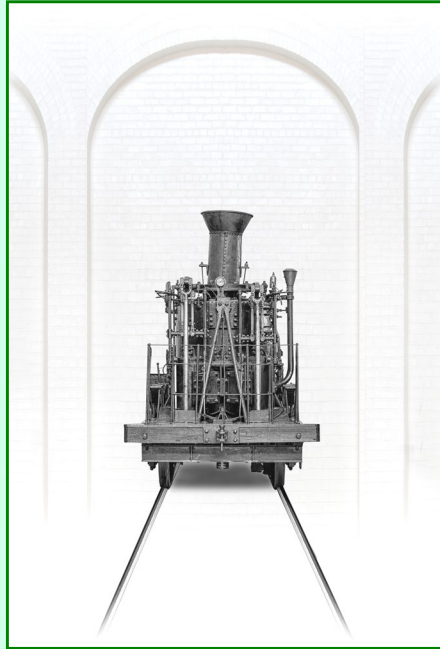
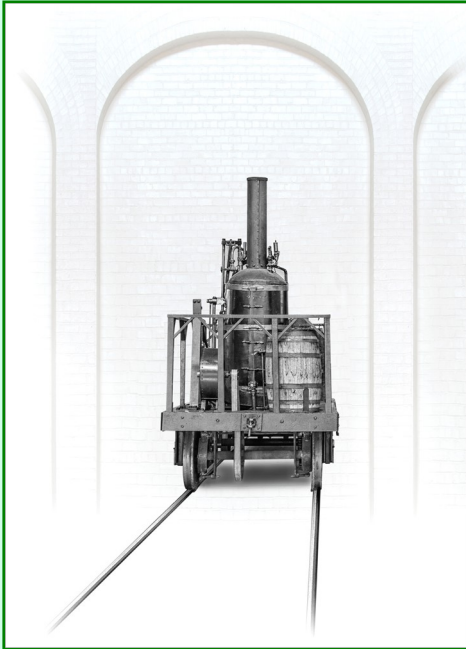
So what does the future hold for the reconstituted “**Man o’ War?**” In a perfect world, we’d hope to see the once famous “racehorse” galloping over its favorite turf, the Central of Georgia, through the hills of north Georgia in excursion service between Chattanooga and Summer-ville. At the very least, we can expect her to go on display in well-groomed condition at the SARM site at Oak Ridge.

But in whatever stable the “**Man o’ War**” may eventually bed down, after so many years’ absence from the

paddock, she’ll be a welcome sight for the many admirers of home-grown, Southern-style passenger trains from that last “golden age” of rail passenger service.

(Southern Appalachia Railway Museum is a 501(c)3 corporation founded in 1990 in Tennessee. East Tennessee Rail Car Services, Inc., provides rail freight car, passenger car, and locomotive maintenance as well as switching services and equipment leasing).

THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



Early American Locomotives

These photographs were recently recognized with an award in the 2021 Center for Railroad Photography and Art's John R. Gruber Photography Competition. The theme for the competition was "Three of a Kind." From left, the *Tom Thumb*, the *Atlantic / Andrew Jackson* and the *LaFayette*. (These locomotive images are from the book, *Historic North American Locomotives* (Kalmbach Media / Trains, 2018) by Ken Boyd.)