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# THE LAST YEARS OF THE GEORGIA RAILROAD MIXED TRAINS

by Lyle Key



GRAND FINALE - Friday, May 6, 1983 was a beautiful spring morning in the Peach State, and SBD 6051 - a GP38-2 named "Franklin M. Garrett" - is ready to roll Georgia RR's main line mixed train toward the morning sun on its last run from Hulsey Yard in Atlanta to Harrisonville Yard in Augusta.

The story of the Georgia Road mixed trains seems to have a unique fascination for rail fans, and the almost universal interest in those operations generated an incredible number of articles in virtually every rail fan oriented magazine. There's an old adage that railroad subjects interest rail fans in inverse proportion to their practical business significance, and I think you'll agree with me that the widespread interest in the Georgia Road mixed trains was far out of proportion to their importance as a means of transporting passengers.

On December 27, 1831, the State of Georgia granted a charter to the Georgia Railroad Company. Section 15 of the charter provided that:

“The stock of the said company and its Branches shall be exempt from taxation for and during the term of seven years from and after the completion of the said Railroads, or any of them; and after that, shall be subject to a tax not exceeding one-half percent per annum on the net proceeds of their investments.”

Section 12 of the charter further provided:

“that the said Company may, when they see fit, rent or farm out all or any part of their exclusive right of transportation or conveyance of persons, on the Railroad or Railroads, with the privilege to any individual or individuals, or other company, and for such term as may be agreed upon, . . . .”

Four years later, on December 18, 1835, the charter was amended so as to confer banking powers and privileges upon the corporation. The corporate name was also fittingly changed to the “Georgia Railroad and Banking Company.”

A little over 45 years later, on May 7, 1881, the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company exercised its previously noted authority to “rent or farm out” its railroad properties and leased them

to Col. William M. Wadley of Monroe County for a term of 99 years. Ten days later, Col. Wadley assigned half of his leasehold interest to L&N, and two weeks after that first assignment, he assigned the remaining half of his original leasehold interest to The Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia. As you may have guessed, The Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia controlled The Central of Georgia Railway Company. Unfortunately for The Central Company, it was at that time in receivership, and a federal court ordered it to convey its leasehold interest in the Georgia Railroad to The Mercantile Trust Company of New York as security for certain indebtedness. Mercantile Trust Company then sold at public auction in New York what had been The Central Company's one-half interest in the Wadley lease, and that one-half interest was acquired by L&N in February of 1893. L&N thus had complete control of the Wadley lease, but approximately six and one-half years later, on August 9, 1899, it assigned to ACL one-half of its leasehold interest.

Like “Clinchfield Railroad”, “Georgia Railroad” was not a corporate name but a name used to refer to the leased railroad properties of the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company. The Georgia Railroad was operated by the L&N and ACL pursuant to their equal, one-half interests in the Wadley lease. In more recent times, the Georgia Railroad, the Atlanta & West Point Railroad Company, and The Western Railway of Alabama were managed like a separate operating division, and the head man on the property carried the title “President-General Manager.”

Back in the 1920's, during the golden age of America's rail passenger service, Georgia Railroad provided extensive passenger service not only on its Atlanta-Augusta main line but also on its several branches. Four pairs of daily passenger trains covered the 171-mile run between Atlanta and Augusta with one pair of daily commuter

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**A RARE CAR TYPE - Georgia Road coach/caboose #170 brings up the rear of train #31, the westbound Macon Branch mixed. This shot was taken at the Milledgeville depot on February 16, 1976. All photos for this article are by the author.**

trains called the *Picayune* serving each end of the main line. Four pairs of daily trains provided frequent passenger service over the 18-mile long Washington Branch and the 10-mile-long Monroe Railroad, and the latter line even had one additional southbound train on Sunday mornings! These branch line trains were not identified as “mixed trains” in the timetables, but Georgia Railroad historian Forrest Beckum made a compelling case for the proposition that they probably handled freight as well as passengers. Two pairs of daily passenger trains traversed the 40-mile long Athens Branch and the 78-mile long Macon Branch. Even the Lexington and White Plains Branches, 4-miles long and 14-miles long, respectively, rated one pair of daily, except Sunday, mixed trains.

Georgia Railroad did not operate dining cars, but Pullman “Buffet-Broilers” *Gertrude* and *Penelope* provided meal service into the '20's. In the fall of 1927, *Gertrude* was pulled off trains 7 and 8, and Georgia Road's last on train food ser-

vice came to an end.

The White Plains Branch was abandoned in 1927, and on March 5, 1928, operations on the Athens Branch were completely restructured with two pairs of daily mixed trains replacing the two pairs of daily passenger trains. Effective August 19, 1928, a bus operated by Georgia Railroad subsidiary Georgia Highway Transport Company replaced the mixed trains on the Monroe Railroad.

The Great Depression understandably had a drastic impact on Georgia Railroad passenger service, and effective June 7, 1931, eastbound Macon Branch passenger train No. 30 began operating as a mixed train. No. 31, its westbound counterpart, became a mixed train on July 19, 1931. After that change, all regular rail passenger service on the Georgia Railroad's branches was provided by mixed trains.

By 1940, passenger service on the Georgia Road had been reduced to two pairs of daily passenger trains between Atlanta and Augusta, three pairs of daily mixed trains between Washington

and Barnett, one pair of daily mixed trains between Macon and Camak, and one pair of daily except Sunday mixed trains between Athens and Union Point and between Lexington and Crawford. The Lexington Branch was abandoned in 1947.

Over the ensuing years, some through sleeping car lines involving the main line trains were eliminated, but night trains 3 and 4 continued to handle through Atlanta-Wilmington, North Carolina sleepers into the early '60's. The Coast Line was, of course, headquartered in Wilmington until 1960, and one of my now retired colleagues vividly recalls travelling aboard those sleepers enroute to and from business meetings in Atlanta. One morning, Phil Beverly rolled out of his lower berth coming into Atlanta and upon entering the men's lavatory, was intrigued by the sight of a man deftly shaving with a straight razor aboard the rocking and rolling heavyweight Pullman. To the best of his recollection, the man with the straight razor never sustained even the slightest nick.

The main line service wasn't especially noteworthy in the early to mid-'60's, but it was very surprising to find that Georgia Railroad still provided mixed train service on its Athens, Macon, and Washington Branches. As was previously noted, the 10-mile long Monroe Branch had been "freight only" for some time. The branch line mixed train service had been reduced to one pair of daily except Sunday trains on all three of the branches, but it was simply amazing that these intriguing anachronisms still existed at all. According to popular legend, the Georgia Railroad's charter provided that it was exempt from taxation so long as it provided passenger service over its lines.

In the September, 1967 issue of *Trains*, Journalist Don Phillips' outstanding article on the Georgia Road's branch line mixed trains astutely observed that despite the popular wisdom, Georgia Railroad's tax exemption was not directly linked to its provision of passenger service. As I would later confirm through firsthand experience, Phillips accurately summarized the situation by stating that while the tax exemption wasn't expressly conditioned upon the railroad's providing passenger service, the railroad's attorneys had advised against eliminating the highly visible passenger service since such action might encourage the State of Georgia to once again challenge the continued validity of the charter tax exemption.

The State had not been bashful about challenging the tax exemption, and the issue had been considered by the Supreme Court of the United States on at least eight occasions!

OCTOBER 28, 1962

# GEORGIA RAILROAD



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## WEST POINT ROUTE

Former L&N Vice President and General Counsel Joe Lenihan was concerned that since the charter section conferring the right to lease the railroad did not refer to the conveyance of freight but rather to the “. . . exclusive right of transportation or conveyance of persons’, . . .” the State could argue that the lease was invalid if all passenger service on a line ceased. A somewhat broader concern was that if all passenger service was eliminated, the state would argue that the charter tax exemption was invalid since the charter must have contemplated that passenger services would always be an integral part of the Georgia Railroad’s operations.

In case you’re wondering why the Monroe Branch became freight only despite the concern about the tax exemption, the Monroe Railroad had been created pursuant to its own charter. The tax exemption granted by the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company’s charter was thus inapplicable to the Monroe-Social Circle line.

As we moved into the later years of the

1960’s, some rapidly developing changes were in the offing for Georgia Railroad’s passenger operations. In the autumn of 1967, the U. S. Post Office abruptly eliminated virtually all of the nation’s R.P.O. cars, and the resulting loss of vital mail revenue prompted a veritable cascade of petitions seeking authority to discontinue numerous passenger trains. Georgia Railroad had been contemplating seeking discontinuance authority for one of its two pairs of main line passenger trains, and the termination of R.P.O. service on night trains 3 and 4 resulted in the prompt filing of a train-off petition with the Georgia Public Service Commission. Doomed by the loss of critical mail revenue, the night trains between Atlanta and Augusta were discontinued in March of 1968.

As a brief aside, you might be interested to know that when Georgia Railroad President-General Manager Donald Strench wrote ACL General Counsel Prime Osborn that he was considering filing an application to discontinue one pair of the main line passenger trains, ACL President



**COACH SECTION OF COACH/CABOOSE** - This shot shows the coach section of Georgia RR coach/caboose #169. This unusual car is in service on the Macon Branch mixed, and the photographer is the only passenger.

Tom Rice wrote Mr. Strench to express his concern about the impact such discontinuance would have on the connecting Coast Line passenger trains. In that August 15, 1966 letter, Mr. Rice wrote:

“As you know, both Georgia Railroad trains connect with Coast Line trains out of Augusta and handle through traffic. The discontinuance of either train by Georgia Railroad is certain to adversely effect Coast Line trains Nos. 50 and 51 or 54 and 55, and I feel that we should, therefore, coordinate our efforts in this regard.”

That sort of high level concern about passenger traffic certainly helps explain why ACL and successor SCL fielded high quality passenger trains right up until the Amtrak takeover.

Getting back to the main theme of our story, the discontinuance of night trains 3 and 4 left day trains 1 and 2 to serve passengers between Atlanta and Augusta. Trains 1 and 2 had an incredible total of 22 possible stops on their 171-mile runs. No. 1 was scheduled to make its run in five hours and 30 minutes with an 11:10AM departure from Augusta and a 4:40PM arrival in Atlanta. Train No. 2 was on a somewhat faster five hour and 5 minute carding with an 11:15AM departure from Atlanta and a scheduled 4:20PM arrival in Augusta. Since trains 1 and 2 made their runs at virtually the same time of day, their operations required two sets of power and equipment.

To its great credit, the Georgia Road soon made some significant changes in a sincere effort to revive ridership on its surviving pair of main line passenger trains. On July 1, 1968, Nos. 1 and 2 began operating on substantially faster three hour, 45 minute schedules designed to give passengers a full day in Atlanta. Train No. 1 began departing Augusta at 6:00AM with a 9:45AM arrival in Atlanta Union Station. Train No. 2 left Atlanta at 6:00PM with a 9:45PM arrival in Augusta. In response to subsequent requests by passengers, the schedules were adjusted on several occasions to provide for later departures from Augusta and earlier departures from Atlanta. In addition to providing faster and more convenient service for passengers, the new schedules made it possible for Georgia Railroad to cover its main line passenger operations with just one set of motive power and

equipment

Passengers were accommodated in classic heavyweight coaches of Georgia Road's "80 series."

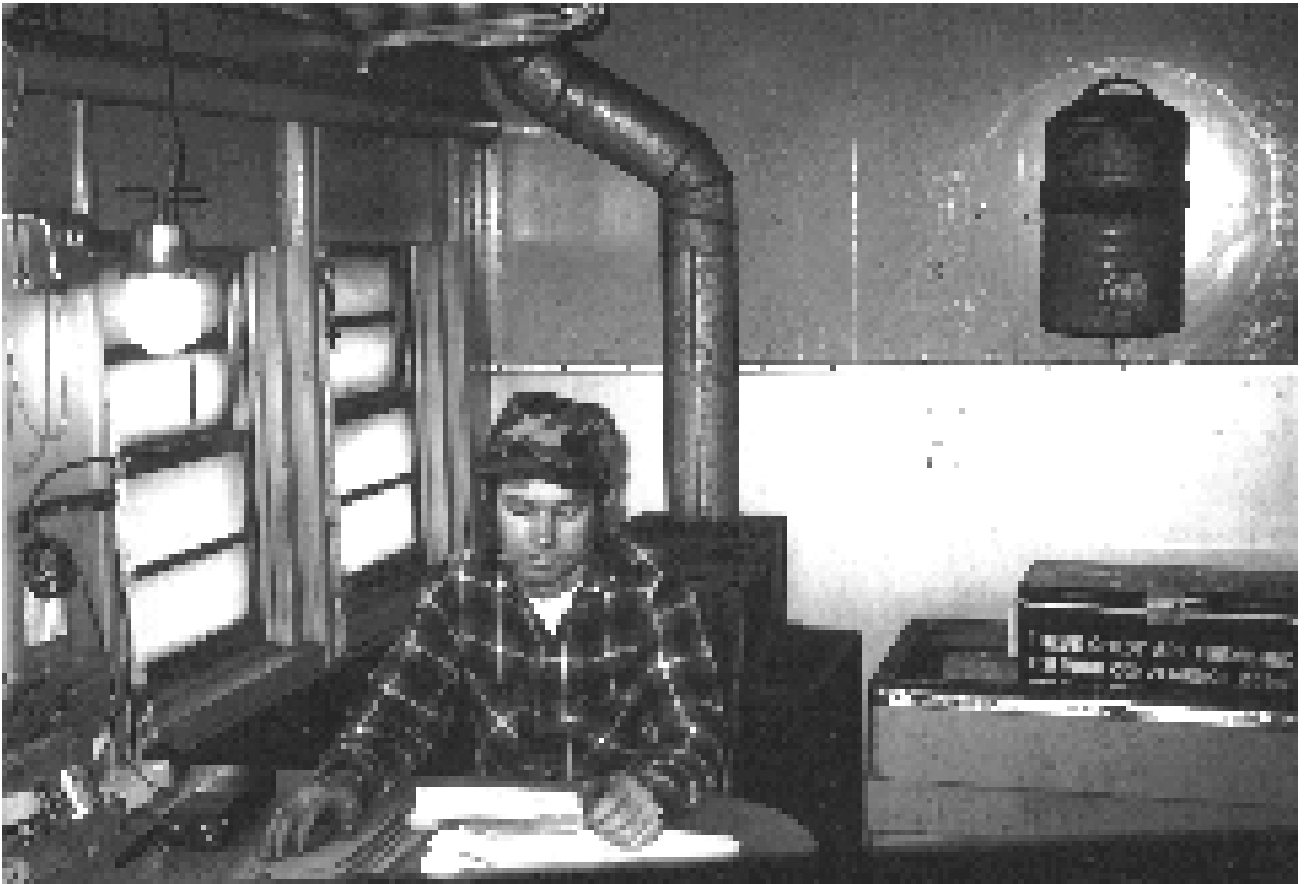
By the late '60's, very few railroads were advertising their passenger services, but Georgia Railroad advertised its improved main line passenger service in local newspapers and on radio in Augusta. Unfortunately, the improved service did not attract enough additional business to even pay for the cost of the advertising, and on many if not most trips, the passengers could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

During this period, the Georgia Road even considered acquiring a RDC for the Atlanta-Augusta run but dropped the idea for several reasons: cost of acquisition and rehabilitation, difficulty in obtaining spare parts, risk to the engineer in the event of a grade crossing accident, and union resistance to reducing crew sizes.

On April 7, 1968 and on January 27, 1969, respectively, Georgia Railroad pulled its main line passenger trains out of Augusta Union Station and Atlanta Union Station. In Augusta, the trains used the SCL passenger station for an interim period and later moved to a small structure in Augusta's Harrisonville Yard. In Atlanta, the Georgia Road passenger trains arrived and departed at a new facility directly across from the State Capitol Building. In late 1975, Georgia Road ceased using the passenger facility across from the Capitol and originated and terminated the trains at Hulsey Yard.

Frustrated by its unsuccessful efforts to attract more passengers and/or effect further cost reductions, Georgia Railroad's management decided something further had to be done to reduce the substantial losses incurred by Nos. 1 and 2's operations. On July 1, 1969, the main line passenger trains commenced handling a maximum of 50 loaded, through freight cars per train. Thus began the well-publicized era of the so-called "Super-Mixed" trains which in those early days were still primarily fast passenger trains with a limited number of through freight cars added to the rear.

Also in 1969, the heavyweight coaches on Nos. 1 and 2 were replaced by two lightweight, streamlined coaches from the West Point Route: WofA 106 and A&WP 120. These Budd-built cars



**CATCHING UP ON PAPER WORK - Conductor J. D. Ogletree catches up on his paper work in the caboose section of Georgia Road coach/caboose #169 at the rear end of the Macon Branch mixed.**

became available after discontinuance of through-car service on the *Crescent* via the West Point Route, and both were relettered "Georgia." Two other *Crescent* veterans, WofA 10-6 sleeper *Alabama River* and sister *Chattahoochee River* from A&WP, also wound up on the Georgia, and they occasionally stood in for coaches 106 and 120 on the main line mixed trains. After the lightweight passenger cars arrived, most of Georgia Road's aging heavyweights were sold to a scrap dealer in Florida.

Effective March 29, 1972, Nos. 1 and 2 were discontinued, and Georgia Road began handling the main line passenger equipment on newly established westbound freight No. 103 and eastbound freight No. 108. At that time, the previously imposed limit of 50 loaded, through freight cars on each main line mixed train was rescinded, and coaches 106 and 120 were sometimes trailed by 200 freight cars. Trains 103 and 108 set off and picked up freight cars at local stations along the main line so the fast runs between Atlanta and Augusta ceased with the discontinuance of Nos. 1

and 2. In its continuing evolution, the main line passenger service had thus deteriorated to an unsightly coach cut into the consist of a long, slow freight train.

Effective December 28, 1980, the frequency of operation for 103 and 108 was reduced from daily to daily except Sunday.

During that same era, the Georgia Road's branch line mixed trains were also experiencing various equipment and operating changes. On April 30, 1972, cabooses replaced heavyweight coaches on the Washington and Athens Branch trains. Some of the cabooses were equipped with passenger car seats for mixed train service. Coach cabooses in the 167 through 170 series remained in use on the Camak-Macon line until November 2, 1979. In 1969, these renumbered 80's series heavyweight coaches had undergone extensive modifications which included the addition of a conductor's office at one end.

The branch line mixed trains had been operating daily except Sunday for many years, and the railroad had used several different approaches to

serve the branches. At one time, the same train served both the Athens and Washington Branches, but passengers were not permitted to ride over the intervening main line segment between Union Point and Barnett. For many years, the Macon Branch mixed trains originated and terminated at Harrisonville Yard in Augusta, and they likewise did not carry passengers over the main line stretch between Augusta and Camak.

Speaking of Camak, no story about the Georgia Road mixed trains would be complete without mention of Rachel's Cafe which was next door to the Camak depot. This strategically located beanery was well-known to Georgia Road trainmen, passengers, and rail fans, and in years past, the dinerless main line trains picked up box lunches featuring Rachel's fried chicken during their stops at Camak. Rachel's was reputed by some to have the best fried chicken in Georgia, but I cannot personally confirm that claim. On the one occasion I had an opportunity to eat at Rachel's, it was midafternoon, and the fried chicken was already sold out. By the way, the cafe was not owned by a woman named Rachel but by a man whose last name was Rachel.

During the final years of mixed train operations, the Washington Branch was worked by the Union Point switcher, and the Macon Branch was served by turns that operated between Macon and Milledgeville and between Milledgeville and Camak. Through service over the Athens Branch ceased around September 10, 1982 after the lightly trafficked line deteriorated to FRA Class I condition. The maximum operating speed over Class I lines is 10 m.p.h., and at that speed, it was difficult for a single crew to make the 80-mile round trip and perform all the necessary switching. Georgia Road thus proposed to serve the north end of the branch with the Athens switcher and the south end of the branch with the Union Point switcher leaving a 12-mile gap with no shippers and no regular train service. There would thus be no through train to handle passengers between Athens and Union Point, and the Georgia PSC granted the railroad's petition for permission to offer substitute highway passenger service by taxi or railroad company vehicle. No one ever availed himself of this substitute service during the seven and one-half months it was available.

Going into the decade of the 1980's, the Georgia Railroad still operated daily except Sunday mixed train service on its main line and on its Athens, Macon, and Washington Branches. As I previously mentioned, substitute highway passenger service replaced Athens Branch mixed train service in September of 1982.

The Wadley lease had been extended for an additional term of 50 years on December 28, 1972. In the early '80's, the Family Lines began discussing with Georgia Railroad and Banking Company the possibility of purchasing the Georgia Railroad properties it had been leasing. The Georgia Railroad and Banking Company, which had long since been solely involved in the banking business, was agreeable, and the closing date for the conveyance was scheduled for November 4, 1982. Since the Georgia Railroad assets were being purchased by Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company, which did not have a charter tax exemption, there was no need for further concern about losing the tax break if passenger service was discontinued. On November 5, 1982, the day after the closing, SCL filed with the Georgia Public Service Commission its petition seeking authority to discontinue all remaining passenger service on the former Georgia Railroad lines.

For several years, I had been handling cases involving service changes for the mixed trains, and my colleague John Humes and I were assigned the interesting task of obtaining Georgia PSC authority to completely discontinue the service. As a rail fan with a special interest in passenger service, I hated to see the mixed trains go, but I knew that the service they provided had long since ceased to be required or even desired by the public. I was furthermore very much aware of the almost total lack of public response to Georgia Road's significant efforts to build up its passenger traffic in the late '60's. Based on several trips on the mixed trains, I also knew that while they had been romanticized in the rail fan press, a ride on the mixed trains was in reality a very slow, dirty, and downright grueling experience. Mixed trains doubtless provided essential transportation services to remote areas in years long past, but they are not at all appealing to people accustomed to the speed and comfort of modern-day travel.

The Georgia Public Service Commission





**FIRST HAND LESSON IN RAILROAD HISTORY - With its coach and caboose full of school children, Georgia Road's last Washington Branch mixed rolls north toward Washington, Georgia on April 29, 1983.**



held three separate hearings in Atlanta over the next few months, and those proceedings rank among the most interesting experiences of my career as a railroad lawyer. During this period, one of Dan Rather's national newscasts concluded with an entertaining five minute special report on the mixed trains titled "The Disoriented Express."

We anticipated that the protestants would vocally complain about the quality of the mixed train service so we submitted extensive evidence establishing that the public hadn't even used the Georgia Road's "pure" passenger trains despite fast, convenient schedules and local advertising. Florence Division Superintendent George McNeill, who much to his dismay now had responsibility for the mixed trains, also testified regarding the Coast Line's post war efforts to attract passengers with 100 mile-an-hour trains, streamlined light-weight equipment, and exquisite dining car service. Superintendent McNeill recalled that despite that high quality service, the traveling public turned from passenger trains to interstate highways and jet airliners. We essentially argued that the quality of the mixed train service was commensurate with the demand, and that while the service was admittedly very basic transportation with no frills, it was available on virtually all of the former Georgia Railroad lines at fares well below those of competing modes. For example, the one-way fare for the 171-mile trip between Atlanta and Augusta was only \$5.74 with a round trip fare of \$10.35.

Several shippers, public officials, and even well-known rail fan Forrest Beckum testified in support of Seaboard's application.

Most of the protestants conceded that the mixed trains were not providing any necessary transportation service and that most of the few riders were using the trains for excursion purposes. Most of the riders were in children's groups which would travel a short distance and then detrain. During the entire year of 1981, a total of 714 passengers rode the main line trains, and 252 used the branch line services. Of these 966 total mixed train passengers, 693 were from children's groups. In any event, most of the protestants urged the Commission to order Seaboard to operate "real" passenger trains between Atlanta and Augusta and some urged that passengers should still be able to ride cabooses on the branch line trains.

Although the hearings dragged on much

longer than any of us anticipated, they were not without their moments of humor. After listening to testimony about how the main line mixed trains sometimes terminated their runs short of their terminals because of the 12 hour limit mandated by the Federal Hours of Service Law, Commissioner Bobby Pafford proclaimed that "I think I could hitch up a mule to a wagon and get to Augusta faster than the mixed train."

Even though the hearings were at times comical, we could not afford to take the proceedings lightly. You may recall that in the late '70's, both Southern and Rio Grande were rebuffed in their efforts to discontinue their last passenger trains, despite substantial losses, and were ultimately forced to join Amtrak. Even more to the point, Soo Line had unsuccessfully sought authority to discontinue its lightly used mixed trains in Michigan and Wisconsin. We were thus very pleased and relieved when the Georgia PSC granted the authority we sought by order dated April 5, 1983.

In anticipation of a favorable decision, I had talked to several people concerning the possibility of doing something special for the last runs of the main line mixed trains. No one seemed very interested until one morning when Vice President Corporate Communications Ray Bullard picked me up at my bus stop and gave me a ride to the office. Ray thought the idea had some merit and later that week had an opportunity to discuss the proposal with Seaboard System President Dick Sanborn. Fortunately, Mr. Sanborn was very much a rail fan at heart, and he immediately authorized Ray Bullard to proceed with plans for sending the mixed trains out in style.

We discussed the possibility of running a special passenger train from Atlanta to Augusta and return with leased Amtrak equipment, but everyone ultimately decided that since the public was fascinated by these trains because they were mixed trains, they should make their last runs in that fashion. In order to ensure good time-keeping and avoid injuries caused by slack action, we decided to run the passenger cars on advance sections of 103 and 108 along with a limited number of through freight cars. The advance sections would leave Atlanta's Hulsey Yard and Augusta's Harrisonville Yard at 9:00AM and meet in Union Point. Box lunches with fried chicken — although not from Rachel's Cafe — would be available for



**EARLY ON A FROSTY MORNING - On February 13, 1976, Georgia Road train #50, the southbound Athens Branch mixed, rolls by the beautifully restored depot at Winterville, Georgia. A heavy, early morning frost fits in with the town's name.**

passengers at Union Point, and if desired, riders could change trains to return to their points of origin. Advance 108 was scheduled to arrive in Augusta at 2:45PM and advance 103 would be due in Atlanta at 3:00PM. In order to ensure that those would be the last mixed trains and concentrate our efforts on them, the last runs on the main line would be made one week after the last runs on the branch lines. The last runs on the branch lines were set for Friday, April 29, 1983, and the final main line runs were scheduled for Friday, May 6, 1983.

Notwithstanding the Public Service Commission's order of April 5, there was still some uncertainty as to whether we would actu-

ally be able to discontinue the mixed trains according to the planned schedule. Pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice, the protestants could still avail themselves of a petition for reconsideration or rehearing, and the filing of such a petition would automatically stay the discontinuance authority. We had no way of knowing if the protestants were aware of that procedure or if they would take advantage of it, but we decided that we should not merely wait to see if they took action and thereby leave ourselves open to the risk of an eleventh hour stay on the eve of the final runs. Consistent with our resolve to take the offensive, we dispatched to the Commission a petition dated

April 14 seeking waiver of the automatic stay provisions of the Commission's rule governing petitions for rehearing and reconsideration. This "beat them to the punch" strategy paid off, and the Commission granted our petition by letter dated April 19. We later learned that the Protestants had indeed been planning to file a last minute petition for rehearing with a request for a stay, but after our petition was granted, their opportunity for obtaining an administrative stay was foreclosed.

There remained, however, a possibility that the protestants would seek judicial review of the Public Service Commission's order and ask the reviewing court for a stay pending disposition of the appeal. During the last runs, I frequently called our local counsel in Atlanta to determine whether someone had gone to court to seek a last minute stay.

Although we had a good basic plan of action, there were a number of important details that had to be worked out very quickly. Fortunately, Owen Pride from the Seaboard Corporate Communications Department stepped forward and agreed to make the necessary arrangements for the last runs. Owen had previously worked in the Coast Line's Passenger Department and had at one time served as a Passenger Service Representative aboard ACL's top trains such as the *Florida Special* and *Champion*.

One of Owen's first challenges was to assemble a sufficient fleet of open window coaches. We had no idea how many people would want to ride the last runs, but we thought it would be prudent to count on a fairly big crowd. In mid-April, Owen borrowed six former Clinchfield coaches from CSX partner Chessie System, and one of those yellow cars was typically added to 103 and 108 during their final three weeks as mixed trains. Passenger loadings understandably increased during those final weeks of regular operations, and one group from Atlanta enjoyed a catered champagne brunch aboard 108! Owen had special tickets printed for the last runs of the main line mixed trains, and on April 28, he issued a news release advising the local media of the arrangements for the final runs.

On April 29, the branch line trains made their last runs with one yellow Chessie coach each along with their regular cabooses. The coaches were a last minute addition after I received calls indicat-

ing that the ridership would overflow the cabooses and passed that information along to Trainmaster Neil McNeill. Passenger counts were: Washington-Barnett 72, Milledgeville-Camak 23, and Macon-Milledgeville 41.

Not realizing that we had very limited capacity and did not want to over-advertise the last main line runs, our District Sales Manager in Augusta enthusiastically promoted the final runs of the mixed trains in the local media, and we promptly oversold our seating capacity. Fortunately, Kentucky Railway Museum (KRM) came to our rescue with another four ex-Clinchfield coaches giving us a barely adequate fleet of ten cars. KRM President Allen Kempe accompanied the KRM cars to Atlanta and was on hand for the big event on May 6.

Friday, May 6, 1983, turned out to be an absolutely perfect day with clear skies and cool temperatures. Advance 103 consisted of two locomotives, SBD GP16 4978 and Western Railway of Alabama GP40 6795, seven through freight cars, seven coaches, and SCL caboose 825. First 108 had two GP38-2's — SBD 6051 *Franklin M. Garrett* and former L&N 6013, one KCS box car, three coaches, and L&N bay window transfer style caboose 6608. The *Franklin M. Garrett* was named to honor a prominent Atlanta historian, and on April 14, it had been freshly repainted in the new Seaboard System color scheme for use on the last mixed train out of Atlanta.

No loaded, through freight cars were on hand at Hulsey Yard in Atlanta that morning so Superintendent George McNeill directed the switch crew to add the empty KCS box car to make advance 108 a bona fide mixed train. We were very happy to have all ten coaches since a total of 530 passengers rode the last trains during the course of the day. Compare that ridership figure to the grand total of 714 main line passengers for the entire year of 1981!

Owen Pride and former L&Ners Bob Etheridge and Norm Beasley served as "Passenger Service Representatives" on those last runs, and the trip must have been quite a contrast to Owen's past experiences on the *Florida Special*.

By the way, streamlined coaches 106 and 120 were not used on the last runs despite my efforts to have them included. The cars were somewhat disreputable, but they had been given a \$9,000

refurbishing in 1979, and the refurbished half of each coach was at least habitable.

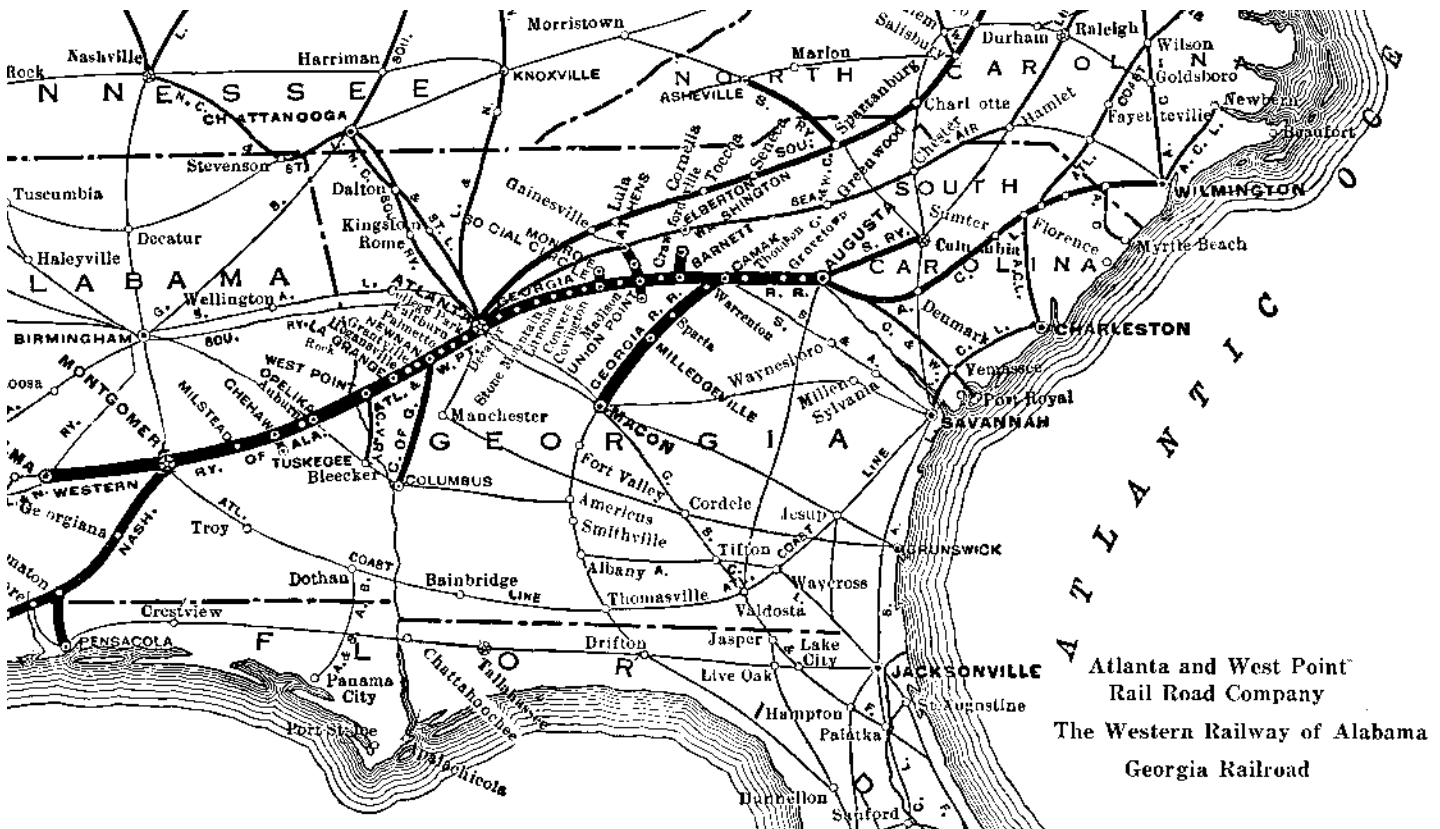
At Union Point, the three lead coaches on advance 103 were switched over to the rear of advance 108. Train 103 thus proceeded to Atlanta with four coaches — two KRM cars in L&N blue and two yellow Chessie cars — and advance 108 headed for Augusta with six — two KRM cars in Clinchfield's Pullman green and four yellow Chessie cars. Advance 103's 6:13PM arrival in Atlanta's Hulsey Yard marked the end of Georgia Railroad's colorful mixed train service.

## EPILOGUE

Georgia Road coach 120 was rebuilt in 1985 as a track observation car and is still serving in its new career as CSXT 318. In 1993, the 318 was appropriately named the *Georgia*. Coach No. 106 did not fare as well. It sat in the weeds at Waycross for years and was ultimately sold. Caboose coaches 168, 169, and 170 — veterans of the branch line mixed trains — were purchased by a CSXT carman in Atlanta who planned to use them in conjunction with a friend's restaurant in Austell,

Georgia. Unfortunately, the plan did not work out, and he scrapped the cars at Hulsey Yard in 1985. In June of 1984, occasional mixed train substitute *Alabama River* was converted to technical research car SBD 774501. It was subsequently renumbered SBD 994501 and is currently based at Waycross. Sister car *Chattahoochee River* was stored at Waycross until the fall of 1989 when it was purchased for use on the New Georgia Railroad. Ex Georgia Railroad GP38-2 *Franklin M. Garrett* is now CSXT 2702, and as late as April 7, 1990, it still bore the Seaboard System paint scheme and Mr. Garrett's name. However, according to Alan Brougham's "Bull Sheet," 2702 is now a nameless locomotive in CSXT's standard colors.

Today, only the former Georgia Railroad main line and the Camak-Milledgeville portion of the Macon Branch survive as parts of CSXT's rail system. The Athens Branch was abandoned along with the Milledgeville-Macon segment of the Macon Branch. The Monroe Branch is now operated by a shortline that calls itself "Great Walton Railroad Company," and the Washington Branch is operated by OmniTrax under the name "Georgia Woodlands Railroad." Camak is the only open agency on the former Georgia Railroad. Camak's famous Rachel's Cafe is closed and torn down, so



## GEORGIA RAILROAD LOCAL SCHEDULES

READ DOWN		MAIN LINE		READ UP	
*4	*2	Miles	ATLANTA, GA. TO AUGUSTA, GA.	*3	*1
<b>CORRECTED TO OCTOBER 28, 1962 (Eastern Time)</b>					
Y PM	Y AM			AM	PM
9 00	9 45	0	Lv ATLANTA.....Ar	7 00	5 15
9 18	10 03	6	" Decatur.....Lv	6 35	4 50
		9	" Scottdale....."		
		11	" Clarkston....."		
	10 21	16	" Stone Mountain....."		4 30
		21	" Redan....."		
9 45	10 37	25	" Lithonia....."		4 12
9 52	10 45	31	" Conyers....."		4 00
		38	" Almon....."		
10 12	11 10	41	" Covington....."	5 45	3 40
10 30	11 31	52	" SOCIAL CIRCLE....."	5 26	3 20
d10 38	11 42	59	" Rutledge....."		3 06
10 52	11 58	68	" Madison....."	5 00	2 50
d11 01	12 08	75	" Buckhead....."	f 4 50	2 40
	f12 14	79	" Swords....."		f 2 33
	f12 18	81	" Carey....."		f 2 30
11 22	12 30	88	" Greensboro....."	4 32	2 20
11 36	12 45	95	" UNION POINT....."	4 24	2 10
		101	" Robinson....."		
f11 50	1 03	107	" Crawfordville....."	f 4 05	1 52
	1 12	113	" BARNETT....."		1 44
	1 22	120	" Norwood....."		1 33
12 14	m1 27	124	" CAMAK....."	3 40	1 27
	f 1 41	128	" Mesena....."		f 1 14
12 25	1 50	134	" Thomson....."	3 25	1 07
		139	" Boneville....."		
	2 05	142	" Dearing....."		12 53
	2 12	146	" Harlem....."		12 47
	2 25	156	" Grovetown....."		12 34
1 30	3 05	171	Ar AUGUSTA.....Lv	2 20	12 05
AM	PM			AM	PM
<b>VIA A. C. L.</b>					
#54	#50			#55	#51
2 00	4 10		Lv AUGUSTA.....Ar	1 25	9 30
6 45	8 20	338	Ar Florence.....Lv	8 50	5 00
9 45	10 40	421	" Fayetteville....."	6 05	2 30
12 20	12 35	511	" Rocky Mount....."	4 20	11 50
10 45	AM	448	" Wilmington.....Lv	5 00	PM
AM	AM			PM	AM

Note.—No. 3 will be held at Augusta one hour to protect connection with A. C. L. No. 55. A. C. L. No. 50 will be held 25 minutes protecting connection with GA. No. 2, and ACL No. 54 will be held three hours for No. 4 when passengers are reported.

No. 4-54	ATLANTA-WILMINGTON SLEEPER		No. 55-3
PM			AM
9 00	Lv ATLANTA (GA. R. R.).....	Ar	7 00
1 30	Ar AUGUSTA (GA. R. R.).....	Lv	2 20
2 00	Lv AUGUSTA (A. C. L.).....	Ar	1 25
4 17	Ar ORANGEBURG (A. C. L.).....	Lv	11 06
5 45	Ar SUMTER (A. C. L.).....	Lv	9 55
6 45	Ar FLORENCE (A. C. L.).....	Lv	8 50
7 35	Lv FLORENCE (A. C. L.).....	Ar	8 10
9 08	Ar CHADBOURN (A. C. L.).....	Lv	6 24
10 45	Ar WILMINGTON (A. C. L.).....	Lv	5 00
AM			PM

Car J-4 ★6 Seats, 6 Roomettes, 4 D. B. R. Atlanta-Wilmington.  
 ●Car A-53 ★6 Seats, 6 Roomettes, 4 D. B. R. Wilmington-Atlanta.  
 ●—Sleeper must be vacated on arrival Atlanta.  
 ★—Air-conditioned.

## GEORGIA RAILROAD LOCAL SCHEDULES

Read Down		MACON DIVISION		Read Up	
†30 Mixed	Miles	MACON TO CAMAK		†31 Mixed	
<b>(Eastern Time)</b>					
Y AM				PM	
7 50	0	Lv MACON.....	Ar	1 40	
f8 00	4	" Mogul.....	Lv	f1 26	
f8 10	9	" Postell.....	"	f1 15	
f8 20	14	" James.....	"	f1 05	
f8 32	20	" Haddock's.....	"	f12 52	
f8 50	30	" Blandy.....	"	f12 32	
9 05	33	" Milledgeville.....	"	12 25	
	42	" Carrs.....	"		
f9 31	46	" Devereux.....	"	f11 51	
9 50	54	" Sparta.....	"	11 45	
f9 55	57	" Granite Hill.....	"	f11 38	
	59	" Culverton.....	"		
f10 12	65	" Mayfield.....	"	f11 15	
10 30	74	" Warrenton.....	"	10 55	
10 40	78	Ar CAMAK.....Lv		10 45	
AM				AM	▲

### ATHENS DIVISION

†50 Mixed	Miles	ATHENS TO UNION POINT		†51 Mixed
<b>(Eastern Time)</b>				
Y AM				PM
4 30	0	Lv ATHENS.....	Ar	2 25
f 4 45	7	" Winterville.....	Lv	f1 55
f 4 48	9	" Dunlap.....	"	f1 50
f 4 56	13	" Arnoldsville.....	"	f1 30
5 06	17	" Crawford.....	"	1 20
f 5 12	20	" Hutchings.....	"	f1 03
f 5 20	24	" Stephens.....	"	f12 55
f 5 30	27	" Maxeys.....	"	f12 47
f 5 42	33	" Bairdstown.....	"	f12 35
5 48	34	" Woodville.....	"	f12 30
6 30	39	Ar UNION POINT.....Lv		12 20
AM				PM

### WASHINGTON TO BARNETT

†60 Mixed	Miles	(Eastern Time)		†61 Mixed
AM				AM
10 40	0	Lv WASHINGTON.....	Ar	8 30
11f00	8	" Ficklin.....	Lv	f8 10
11f07	11	" Hillman.....	"	f8 04
11 14	13	" Sharon.....	"	7 57
11 30	17	Ar BARNETT.....Lv		7 45
AM				AM

#### EXPLANATION OF SIGNS

d—Stops to let off passengers.  
 f—Flag stop. †—Daily, except Sunday. \*—Daily  
 m—Box lunches available on request to train conductor in advance.  
 ‡—Daily, except Saturday.

I'll never get to sample Mr. Rachel's fried chicken. Even Georgia Railroad and Banking Company is gone, bought out by First Union Bank of North Carolina.

For a few years, passenger service made a glorious comeback on the old Georgia Railroad. The state-backed New Georgia Railroad operated periodic excursion service over the former Geor-

gia Road between Atlanta and Stone Mountain. A connecting track was constructed so that the New Georgia's trains could cross over to the Stone Mountain Railroad trackage which circles the huge granite monolith. Regrettably, New Georgia ceased all operations in 1994, and its locomotives and passenger cars were sold at auction in 1995.

**BY TRAIN TO AMERICA'S  
PLAYGROUND:**

**FLORIDA EAST COAST RAILWAY  
PHOTOGRAPHER HARRY M. WOLFE**

**and his images of  
FLAGLER'S FLORIDA,  
1925-1958**

will open on April 23, 1996, at the  
SANFORD L. ZIFF JEWISH MUSEUM of FLORIDA  
301 Washington Avenue  
Miami Beach, FL 33139

The exhibit will run through September 1, 1996, and is open to the public daily, except Mondays, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For further information you can call either the Museum at (305) 672-5044 ext. 16, FAX (305) 672-5933 or exhibit curator Seth H. Bramson at (305) 628-6633 or (305) 757-1016, FAX (305) 895-8178 or (305) 628-6504.

The exhibit celebrates the work of the FEC's company photographer, Harry M. Wolfe. Credit for Wolfe's work was given to the railroad. This exhibit says "Thank You" to Wolfe, who captured photographic images of the people and places that shaped the state's east coast.

Because Wolfe was Jewish, and because both Miami and the FEC are celebrating their centennials in concert, the ZIFF MUSEUM was selected as the ideal venue for the exhibit. Curated by nationally known FEC and south Florida historian Seth H. Bramson, the exhibit features an extensive selection of Wolfe's finest photographers interspersed with FEC Railway artifacts and memorabilia from Bramson's renowned collection.

## Minutes of the Southeast Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

The February meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society was held in the 13th Floor Conference Room of the CSXT GOB on Thursday, February 8, 1996 at 6:30 P.M. A quorum was present. Chapter Vice Chairperson Bill Howes chaired the meeting. The minutes of the January meeting were approved. The treasurer's report showed \$366.61 In checking, \$1258.66 In savings and \$19.68 In petty cash for a total of \$1644.95.

### Old business -

Chairman Smith is working on a letter to Don Hensley thanking him for the gift of R&LHS Bulletin No. 86.

Bill Howes reported the surplus R&LHS Bulletins are close to being released from Sacramento. They will be added to our one book in the chapter library.

The project to place historic items in the GOB lobby is on schedule and will be partially in place over the weekend.

### New business -

Bob Kredel has sent a new roster of National and Florida members. The Southeast Chapter is listed with 55 members. We are the 5th largest chapter behind the New York Chapter with 64 members.

Dues notices are in the mail.

The 1996 Convention and Annual meeting will be in Reno, NV May 30th to June 2nd.

Arthur Lloyd is the convention chairman and always puts together a great time.

### Committee Reports -

Cliff Vander Yacht has articles for future issues of the Southeast Limited, but can always use additional material.

There was no report from the Trip Committee.

Rules for the 1996 Photo Contest will be available by the next meeting.

### Announcements -

The Jacksonville Train Show will be February 17.

The NRHS will be having a trip to central Florida June 22 & 23. See Arby.


### Meeting Programs -

Ed Mueller showed videos from his steamboat collection. They were on the Tall Stacks gathering in Cincinnati in 1992, the recovery of the river steamer *Arabian* from a farmer's field in Kansas and a dive on a wreck off of Daytona Beach.

The March meeting will feature the Pacific Northwest. This is the postponed program from the February meeting. Jim Smith will have some slides, but encourages members to bring their slides of the PNW (Pacific North West). Mark Bennett will furnish the goodies.

Future meetings include Joe Elliot in April showing slides from a METRA cab ride on the BNSF speedway and Frank Dewey in May with a program on railroad stations.

Respectfully submitted,





## **Minutes of the Southeast Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society**

The March meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society was held in the 13th Floor Conference Room of the CSXT GOB on Thursday, March 14, 1996 at 6:30 P.M. A quorum was present. Chapter Chairperson Jim Smith chaired the meeting. The minutes of the February meeting were approved. There was no treasurer's report.

### Old business -

Chairman Smith is drafting a letter to Don Hensley thanking him for the gift of R&LHS Bulletin No. 86.

The historical display is now in the lobby of the CSXT GOB. Several members aided Lisa Helphenstine in creating the display and have pieces included in the project. Lisa is still looking for SAL material to help balance the work.

### New business -

Guests at the meeting were Dick Hosmeyer, former B&O trainmaster at Grafton, WV and Bruce Daviess and his wife. The Daviess' had several boxes of material from their father's collection.

The 1996 Convention and Annual meeting will be in Reno, NV May 30th to June 2nd. The convention headquarters will be the Flamingo Hilton Hotel. Already 100 people have expressed an interest in attending.

Bill Howes has the collection of about 8000 photos recently obtained by the National and will keep them at his house until he can move them to Sacramento.

Progress continues on the book being published by the R&HLS with photos from the R&LHS collection.

### Committee Reports -

The trip committee is shooting for a June trip to south Florida.

Larry Brennan passed out proposed rules for the 1996 Photo Contest. Briefly they are:

1. Three categories - Slides, color print, black and white print
2. Slides must be 2x2
3. Prints must be mounted, matted or framed.
4. Images must have been taken by the entrant.
5. Images must have been shot in the last ten years.

### Announcements -

R&LHS annual convention May 30, 31 & June 1.

The NRHS will be having a trip to central Florida June 22 & 23. See Arby.

### Meeting Programs -

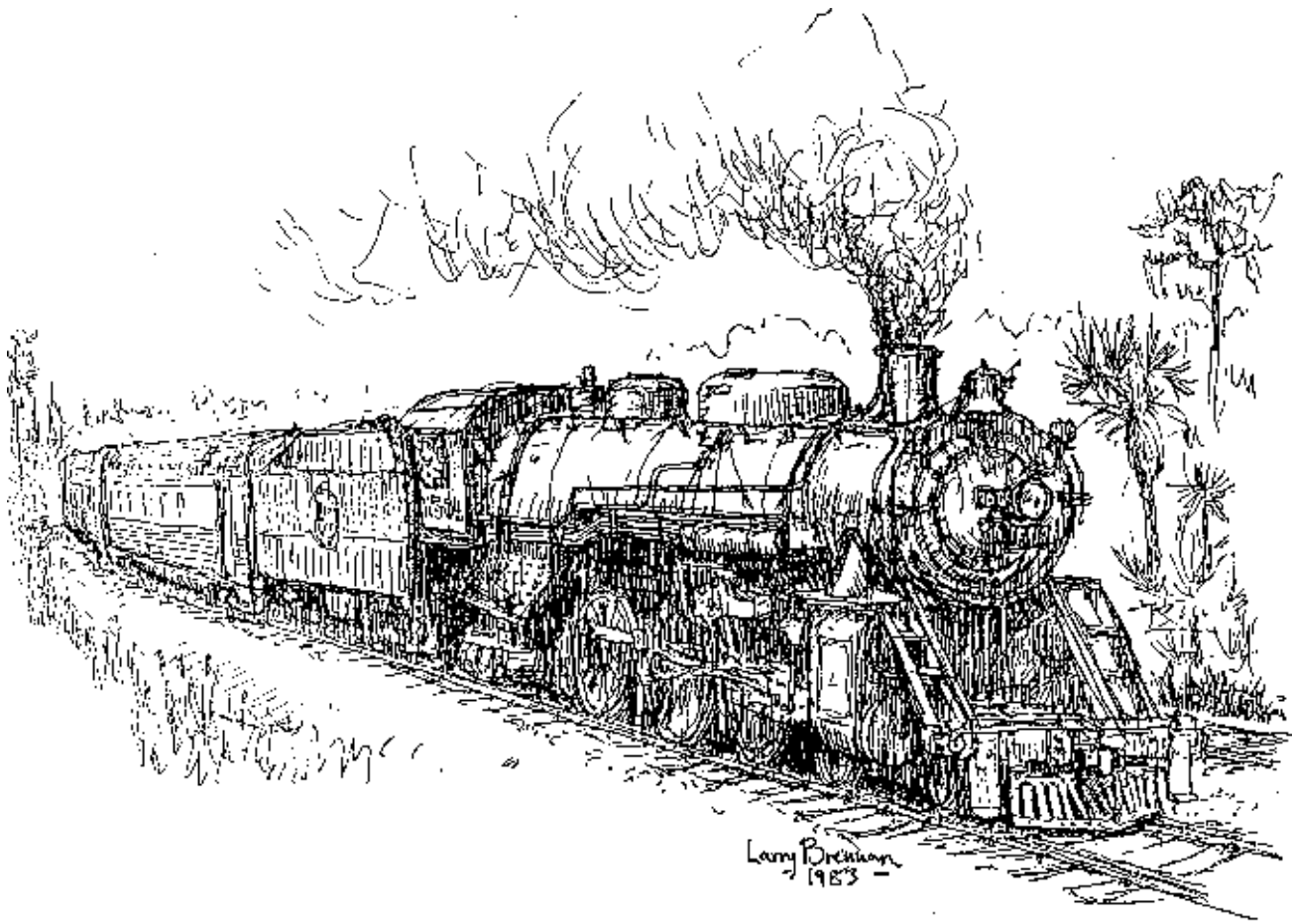
The program featured the Pacific Northwest with slides by Jim Smith, Frank Dewey and Barry Baines.

The April programs will be a METRA cab ride with Joe Elliot. Goodies will be brought by Frank Dewey with help from Jim Wilk.

Future meetings include Frank Dewey in May with a program on railroad stations and Art Towson in June with a new B&O video.

Respectfully submitted,





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Railway & Locomotive Historical Society  
Southeast Chapter  
P. O. Box 664  
Jacksonville, Florida 32201