



Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.
Southeast Chapter
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The Jacksonville & Southwestern Railroad

By Ed Mueller and Bill Howes



Jacksonville & Southwestern Railroad Company engine #23 at Newberry, Florida. It is an 1887 American 4-4-0 built by Baldwin Locomotive Works. W. H. Sealey is the man in the white shirt. Florida Photographic Collection.

Wellington Cummer saw to it that a railroad was constructed to further his timber business. Incorporated in February, 1899, the railroad was known as the Jacksonville & Southwestern Railroad. Completed prior to mid-November, 1899, the railroad opened to passenger and freight service, with two trains a day operating at scheduled times in addition to the carrying of logs to the Jacksonville mills. It was designed primarily as a logging railroad, however, the roadbed was reasonably well constructed. The track was initially laid to a 4 foot, 9 inch gauge, with light 60 pound rail (60 pound rail means that in a yard [three feet] of railroad track, one of the steel rails would weigh 60 pounds). The railroad's route was from Cummer's mills in northwest Jacksonville, to Newberry, Florida in Alachua County, a distance of 86 miles.

Leaving their Jacksonville mill on the Trout River, the route ran westerly and parallel to the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. Just north of Baldwin, the Jacksonville & Southwestern swung southerly at a place know as Baldwin Station. Then it commenced a southwestern direction going by places such as Sapp, Britt, Raiford, Johnston, Lake Butler, Dukes, Santa Fe, Cadillac and Haile. The route is generally near the alignment of Florida State Road 121 today.

The railroad was incorporated on February 4, 1899 and had a capital stock of \$450,000. It was a standard gauge railroad and was served by at least eight locomotives, seven of these had been manufactured by the Baldwin Company between 1879 and 1901. Four had been obtained from the Wichita and Western Railway and two from the Shenandoah Valley Railroad. Engine #27 was purchased new from Baldwin. The eighth locomotive, #5, was built by the Pittsburg Locomotive Company.

Southeast Limited

Jacksonville & Southwestern Locomotives

The existing records of the J&S motive power came from the Atlantic Coast Line RR list, showing the locomotives from the predecessor company in the purchase of 1904, as follows:

J&S							ACL	
No.	Builder	C/N	Date	Type	Cyls.	DD	No.	From
5	Pittsburg	573	1882	0-6-0	18x26	44	148	Allegheny Valley #5
21	Baldwin	4800	1879	4-4-0	16x24	63	477	Shenandoah Valley #2
22	Baldwin	5335	1880	4-6-0	18x24	50	249	Shenandoah Valley #24
23	Baldwin	8355	1887	4-4-0	17x24	63	543	Wichita & Western #7
24	Baldwin	8243	1886	4-4-0	17x24	63	541	Wichita & Western #4
25	Baldwin	8344	1887	4-4-0	17x24	63	544	Wichita & Western #6
26	Baldwin	8242	1886	4-4-0	17x24	63	542	Wichita & Western #3
27	Baldwin	18726	1901	4-6-0	18x24	54	269	New

The sons and son-in-law of Wellington Cummer were listed in the Jacksonville City Directories as being officers of the railroad, its office was on the third floor of the newly built Dyal-Upchurch building, one of the first masonry buildings built after Jacksonville's great fire of May 3, 1901. The Cummer Museum of Arts & Gardens was established in 1958 by Ninah Cummer. Her husband, Arthur Gerrish Cummer was Wellington's son.

Eventually the railroad was sold in 1903 to C. W. Chase, and he in turn sold it a short while later to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad on July 28, 1904. The Atlantic Coast Line, upon acquiring the property, straightened several curves and eliminated three bad hills. The track was also upgraded with heavier rail.

The J&S alignment formed the Jacksonville-Burnett's Lake portion of the mid-century ACL's Ocala District, including the route of the St. Petersburg section of the *West Coast Champion* (Trains 191 and 192) via Gainesville and the St. Petersburg-Jacksonville connection (Trains 37 and 38) with the *Havana Special*.

Except for short sections at either end, most of the original J&S lies abandoned. However, a segment of the right-of-way between Jacksonville (just west of I-295) and Baldwin has been converted to a very nice paved bike trail.

Portions of the J&S can still be found today. Cummer Street off Evergreen is just north of E 59th St. where the J&S terminated. That's the railroad just north of the Gateway shopping center on Norwood Ave. I-295 bridges the railroad halfway between the Commonwealth Avenue and Pritchard Road exits. I-10 crosses over the old right-of-way at the Baker/Nassau county line a half mile west of the Nassau/Duval county line.

Announcements:

- April 14th - R&LHS trip to the Folkston Funnel Summer "Annual Railwatch"
- May 10th - Southeast Chapter Meeting
- May 12th - Amtrak's "National Train Day"
- May 17-20th - R&LHS Annual Convention, Birmingham, AL

SOUTHEAST CHAPTER OFFICERS

William F. Howes Jr. **Chairman**
Arthur L. Towson **Vice-Chairman**
Stephen J. Vertescher **Secretary**
Robert L. Van Nest **Treasurer**

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Florida East Coast Industries to develop private passenger-rail service

From: PROGRESSIVE RAILROADING; Friday, 23 March 2012

A little more than a year ago, Florida Gov. Rick Scott killed the state's high-speed rail project when he returned federal High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail funds to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Now, a privately owned railroad has plans to implement passenger-rail service connecting Orlando and South Florida.

Today, Florida East Coast Industries Inc. (FECI) announced it plans to develop All Aboard Florida, a privately owned, operated and maintained passenger-rail service that would run 240 miles to Miami, Cocoa and Orlando. The service would operate along 200 miles of existing tracks between Miami and Cocoa, and along 40 miles of new track into Orlando. The system eventually could be expanded to include connections to Tampa and Jacksonville. The project will cost about \$1 billion.

The company launched a feasibility study for the project several months ago, and an "investment-grade" ridership study and engineering work are under way, according to a press release. Now, FECI will begin to work with local, state and federal officials, as well as communities along the route.

Because the project currently is in what All Aboard Florida spokesperson Christine Barney terms the "due diligence" phase, FECI has not yet determined what type of trainsets it will need to purchase or what firm will operate the trains, she says. Once ridership and environmental reports are completed, the company will be able to issue a project timeline.

At least one date has been issued: FECI plans to launch All Aboard Florida in 2014, a timeframe that's realistic because the majority of the service will operate along tracks already in service on the Florida East Coast Railway L.L.C. (FEC), Barney says.

The studies under way also will help FECI determine train speeds. The company plans to operate trains at top speeds of 100 mph to 110 mph, says Barney. And while the line's operations, maintenance and ownership will be "100 percent privately funded with no risk to the state," Barney did not rule out the possibility of obtaining at least some public funds for the line's construction.

"What, if any, minor participation from the state may be required is premature to say at this time," she says. The passenger-rail service won't present any risk to FEC's operations, either, says Barney.

"Florida East Coast is continuing to invest in the trade infrastructure and maintenance, and they are making a lot of investments at the Port of Miami and Port Everglades," she says. "They will continue to build additional mainline capacity to handle additional freight growth, and freight capacity will not be negatively affected."

All Aboard Florida would be designed to serve business travelers, as well as families and tourists. With stations proposed in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Orlando, passengers could connect with local transit services.

FECI owns and develops real estate and transportation-related businesses in the state of Florida, and owns FEC, a 351-mile freight railroad that operates along the state's eastern coast and connects with South Florida ports.

—Angela Cotey

THE RAILWAY & LOCOMOTIVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

Southeast Chapter Meeting of March 8, 2012

The meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society was called to order at 6:45 PM at the Acosta Room in the CSX Building by Chairman Bill Howes.

Secretary's report: Minutes from the February 14, 2012 meeting were distributed and unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: The 2 year CD is due for renewal on 5/9/2012 and will be reinvested. The \$5000 in the bank account will be reduced to \$3000 and the difference will be invested in a CD. The Treasurer's report was distributed and approved unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Trip Committee: Carl Corsi accepted the Chairmanship of the Trip Committee to be assisted by Larry Shugart and Jim Smith. The first trip will be the Folkston Georgia Annual Railwatch on April 14th. Trips that were suggested are:

- 1: Day Trip: Check out rail facilities and sights in Jacksonville.
- 2: Day Trip: Waycross GA.
- 3: Day Trip: The Roundhouse Museum in Savannah GA.
- 4: Day Trip: Tour of Jaxport.
- 5: Overnight Trip: Follow some of the route of the Great Locomotive Chase. Visit the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw GA.

Southeast Limited: Jim Smith is requesting material for inclusion in the *Southeast Limited* from all members who wish to contribute. He also reports that the April issue will be published at or close to on time.

Web Site: Cliff Vander Yacht reports that there is nothing new on the Web site and reminds everyone that the address is **RLHSSEC.ORG**.

Old Business:

- Jacksonville Train Show:** The chapter netted \$68 and the National netted \$13. One (1) new member joined.
- Music DVD:** Price is set at \$10.00 per copy, with a discount of 40% when 4 or more DVD's are purchased.
- Meeting Room:** It was agreed to stay in the Acosta Room as new portable A/V equipment has been obtained.

New Business:

I.R.S: Chairman Howes reports that the chapter has lost it's tax exempt status and must reapply to restore the privilege. He then displayed a rather voluminous sheaf of papers that is the application and instructions.

Announcements:

- Deland Railroad Show:** To be held on April 14.
- Norfolk and Southern:** Has announced that it will paint 18 locomotives in "heritage" colors.

The business meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Program:

May's Program: Will be a video whose topic is Allegheny Rails

Respectfully submitted by Steve Vertescher, Secretary