

# Whistle Stop



**Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum**  
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**Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage**

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CLINCHFIELD Office Car 100, WVRHS&M's latest acquisition, is seen on duty in 1972 heading north while passing CRR's Kingsport station. Could that smoke plume in the distance be coming from a Challenger? More on page 3. [Photo by Mike Woodruff; used with his permission.]

## *July 22<sup>nd</sup> General Membership Meeting*

This month's General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum will be held at 6:30 pm on July 22, 2013 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Our program this month will be on the topic of Motor / Track road cars, a fun and informative DVD, presented by Terry and Anita Worley. You'll also hear details about the upcoming fall excursions to Charlottesville, VA and Asheville, NC along with details about our new passenger equipment – the CLINCHFIELD 100. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

## *Member Notes*

By Nancy Jewell

Our sympathy is extended to George and Margaret Holley on the death of George's sister, Blanche Holley Martin, in late May, 2013. Also, sympathy is extended to Hugh and Linda Wise in the death of Linda's sister, Patricia Combs Smith, on July 3, 2013, in Bristol, Va.

Please keep Bob Yaple and George Holley in your thoughts as they deal with health concerns. As always, let us know of a member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office phone number is 423-753-5797 or call Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. Thanks for your help.

## *Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report*

By Bob Yaple



Bob Yaple, Art Devoe and Don Findley performing major interior work on the St. Augustine, testament to the many long, hard hours of volunteer work that goes into making our equipment truly top-of-the-line.

As most of our members know, Bob Yaple has been in the hospital with some medical problems for the last couple of weeks, so the Mechanical Report will be brief this month.

Work is progressing on WATX 500 St. Augustine (formerly the Clinchfield). The mechanical crew is replacing water damage flooring in the car and installing baseboard heat. [See left photo.] The seats are getting new upholstery along with new foam. New carpet is being installed on the ceiling and under the windows. Several leaking windows have been repaired. The letter boards are being extended to allow the original car letter board names to be put on the car. ("FLORIDA EAST COAST" on the top

board above the windows and "ST. AUGUSTINE" on the lower board below the windows.)

## *Fall WVRHS&M Rail Excursions*

Tickets for this fall's excursion sponsored by the Watauga Valley RHS&M and the North Carolina Transportation Museum Foundation are now on sale. Starting at Spencer, NC, the destinations this year will be Charlottesville VA on October 12 and Asheville, NC via the famous Old Fort Loops on October 13. Please go to at <http://nctrans.org/Home.aspx> for information, details and orders. WVRHS&M is on our seventh year in hosting the first class section of this train. Since our train will be bigger and better than ever, we need more volunteers to staff the train. Appended to the end of this newsletter is the Excursion Workers Sign-up Form. Return it either at the July membership meeting or mail by August 4 to Watauga Valley RHS&M, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432. **Please sign up - we need volunteers in all areas for the excursion.**

## *In the News*



## *CLINCHFIELD CAR 100 COMING HOME*

As reported in the last Whistle Stop, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum has purchased ex-CLINCHFIELD Business Car 100. Car 100 was built in 1911 for the ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD; the car was originally a coach numbered ACL 985. In 1932, the ACL rebuilt the car into full operating dining car named "Orlando". The "Orlando" operated from 1922 to 1951 on the ACL's main line between Washington, DC and Miami, FL on many of its famous trains. The car was serviced at the ACL's main passenger shop in Rocky Mount, NC.

In 1951, the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD decided that the original "Clinchfield" office car was getting too old to keep in service and started searching for another car to step in to serve the CRR. In May 1951, the CRR purchased the "Orlando" from the ACL and brought it to Erwin, TN for major rebuilding from ground up in the CRR car shops under the direction of Chief Mechanical Officer P. O. Likens. After nearly 2 years of major conversion and restoration, the CRR had a new office car name "Car 100". Car 100 made its first test run in August 1953.

Car 100's first official run was in November 1953 when it served as Santa Clause's official car on the CLINCHFIELD SANTA TRAIN. It kept that title from 1953 to 1969 when the CLINCHFIELD purchased another platform car and named it the "White Oak" and later the "Blue Ridge".

In 1968, Mr. T.D. Moore took over the General Manager's job of the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD and put new life into Car 100. Mr. Moore brought back to life the CLINCHFIELD 1 steam locomotive and put together a 14 car excursion fleet. The special excursion train operated from November 1968 to May 1979 hauling passengers over the CLINCHFIELD. Car 100 served as the tail car on many of the trips. Mr. Moore used the car to entertain customers during the excursions. Besides its many trips to Elkhorn City, KY and Spartanburg, SC, the car was used on the Barter Theater specials to Abingdon, VA on the SOUTHERN RAILWAY and NORFOLK & WESTERN; used on the Howard Baker Special to Memphis TN; and made many trips to Jacksonville, FL for staff meetings. It was seen all over the FAMILY LINES SYSTEM in operation during the 70's and 80's.

During the late 1970's, Car 100 was painted in the FAMILY LINES paint scheme: grey, red and yellow. It wore these colors until it was retired from the CLINCHFIELD and sent to Jacksonville, FL for evaluation for the CSX office car fleet in 1983. The car was stored at the CSX West Jacksonville Office Car track until 1984 when it was sold to a private party in the Tampa / Orlando area. Car 100 was sold again to Bill Bedell from Florida in 1985 who kept the car up and running along with a lot of restoration work during the years of ownership. The car first went to Fernando Beach, FL from 1985 to 1991. Mr. Bedell had the car painted and moved out of Fernando Beach back to CSX office car track in 1991. Later it was moved to the old CSX round house in Jacksonville, FL. In 1995 Car 100 was moved to the ABERDEEN CAROLINA & WESTERN RAILWAY. Car 100 was then moved to the LANCASTER & CHESTER RAILROAD in Lancaster, SC in 1996. Car 100 was used for many years on the L&C on their annual Santa Train. Mr. Bedell did some major restoration of the car while on the L&C property.

On June 10, the WVRHS&M purchased the car from Bill Bedell and the weeks after got the car upgraded to Federal Railroad Administration standards for movement [continued on next page]

over main line service. Since the car had not moved much during its stay at the L&C, some problems were found with the air brake system which had to be repaired before the car could be moved on NORFOLK SOUTHERN. Mike Tilley and Nick White went down to Lancaster the end of June and put the AEI identification tags on the car; added the new reporting marks (WATX 100) on the side of the car; and lubricated the journal boxes and stenciled all reporting requirements on the car.

On July 12, 2013, after nearly 17 years at the L&C RAILROAD, Car 100 was moved over the NORFOLK SOUTHERN mainline to be placed on display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer. It will remain there until WVRHS&M makes room available at our yard in Jonesborough. Plans for the car at this point are get the 100 interior cleaned and get the car painted back in the CLINCHFIELD paint scheme of Pullman green with the gold duplex stripes. The car will retain its name CRR 100 but will operate as WATX 100.

WVRHS&M is planning to extend the track back 30 feet at the Jonesborough Coach Yard to handle this one extra car. As noted above, Car 100 will go on display at the North Carolina Transportation Museum until such time that our track extension has been completed in Jonesborough. Future plans are to get the car ready for the 100 year anniversary celebration of the CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD. Other plans are to have it on display throughout the area showing the heritage of the CLINCHFIELD.

WVRHS&M NOW HAS A ROLLING PIECE OF RAILROAD HISTORY. CLINCHFIELD 100 IS COMING BACK HOME AFTER 30 YEARS OF ABSENCE! WELCOME BACK HOME OLE GIRL!!!!



## *Abingdon Station Exterior Remodeling Completed*



Charles Seaver of the Historical Society of Washington County (VA) sent along these photos of the beautifully-completed restoration work on Abingdon's ex-N&W Depot. The Society occupies the entire building, with its library, featuring a glass ceiling, in the old waiting room at the east end of the building. A work room and archive occupies the western part. The lobby area, also with a glass ceiling, currently contains a small gallery of O. Winston Link photos from his portfolio, "A Day on the Abingdon Branch". These pictures belong to the town's William King Regional Museum and Arts Center that periodically rotates the displays.

If only, years ago, Johnson City had been blessed with leaders of such foresight ....

## *MEMORIES OF BEING FORCED UP-THE-ROAD FIFTY YEARS AGO – Part 4*

by Abram Burnett © March 23, 2013

[This installment concludes Abe's memories of braking in Glade Spring 50 years ago with three personal experiences.]

### **OILING UP THE CAPTAIN**

One autumn night we were leaving Glade Spring early and it was just beginning to grow dark. I was on the caboose with conductor Saylor Beard (his real name) who had "hired old" and who, even though he was near 60, could hold only the Conductors' Extra List out of Roanoke. (I think Saylor hired around 1947 or 1948.) I do not recall whether he had been force assigned to the Second Saltville job, or whether he had been set down on a "vacation relief" assignment.

Now, when taking charge of a caboose, the flagman had a number of unwritten duties. First and foremost, he took a piece of cotton waste and wiped the coal dust out the conductor's seat in the cupola. If he failed to do this, he heard about it. Then he wiped out the seat on his side of the cupola. Next he made sure all three wall lamps and the red and white flagging lanterns were filled with kerosene, and trimmed the wicks, if necessary. Then he swept out the caboose and supplied it with ice and water. One thing the flagman never forgot to do was fetch a big block of ice from the ice house and chip it into the five gallon galvanized water bucket, using the ice pick which was stuck in the wall of every caboose, just above the little sink.

On the day in question, I must have had other things on my mind (I had just turned 19 years old) as I completely forgot to fill the lamps with oil. And so it came to pass that, leaving Saltville on our return trip, Saylor Beard sat down on the horsehair bunk cushion to write up his wheel report, using a big clip board. Since it was growing dark, he lit the kerosene lamp on the wall, but in a minute or so the flame sputtered and died. He jacked up the wick and lit the lamp again. Same results ... the flame died again. Having figured out my failure to fill the lamps, he began grumbling and calling my abilities and intelligence into question in a very unambiguous way.

"Oh, I'll fix that, Captain" I said. (We always addressed the conductor as "Captain" back in those days.) Quickly I grabbed the oil can (which held about a gallon and a half of kerosene,) unscrewed the filler cap on the lamp, and began filling the lamp's oil tank, leaning over the seated Captain to do the job. Just at that moment the slack ran in for some reason, I lost my balance, the oil can's spout came out of the filler hole, and kerosene went all over Saylor, his shirt, his bald head, and even worse, all over his sacred wheel report which was, by this time, half finished! The things he said about me, I cannot put into this memoir. Lesson learned.

I once asked Saylor Beard how he had acquired his name. He said, "The week I wuz born, there wuz two preachers in town, Saylor and Flory. My mother named me after them both." End of issue.

### **A VERY CLOSE CALL**

The second personal experience I shall relate concerns the closest brush with death I ever had in my 46 year railroad career. It happened at the upper (or west) end of Saltville Yard, and I had only been on the railroad three or four months. We were classifying the train we would take back to Saltville, switching out the Radfords', the Roanokes' and the Bristols'. Conductor Nip Eller was working the switches at the upper end of the yard and head end brakeman Peco Norris was kicking the cars and pulling the cut levers. The other brakeman was [continued on next page]

probably somewhere coupling air hoses. We had a lot of empty hoppers for Bluefield that night and my instructions were to ride the first cut of empty hoppers down Track 3, stop them in the clear, "catch" the other empties as they were kicked down into the track against me, and keep drifting the entire string of cars downhill as more cars were cut into the track. It was an unnecessary exercise and such a thing would never be done today, but that's the way we worked back then. Given the fact that we had two green-horn men (myself and the other brakeman) working in the darkness, it was also an unwise move and in retrospect I would even say it was a dangerous thing to have done.

I rode the first cut of four empties into the track and, using the hand brake on the west end of the easternmost car, slowed them to a crawl. Then several more small cuts came in against me, and I drifted the string of cars further down the track. In the darkness it was, of course, impossible to anticipate when the next cut of cars would strike the cars I was riding. And then came a tremendous impact when a cut of about eight hoppers, moving much too fast for conditions, hit the cars I was riding. I remember hearing the crash and feeling the surge of motion as the car I was riding accelerated from a near stand-still to about 15MPH, all in a split second. I lost my balance, my feet came off the brake platform and I was dazed. The next thing I remember was dangling from the end of the car, my right hand in a death-grip on a grab iron, and looking down at the shiny rail and the crossties moving just a few feet beneath me in the darkness. That was a close call, indeed. The lesson learned was always to choose a brake so located that, in the event of a bad impact, the body would be thrown against the end of the car, not away from it. No safety rule I have ever seen embodied that piece of wisdom. That night's frightening experience will go with me to the grave.

### **TRIED AND SENTENCED IN JUST SIX WORDS**

The third incident I shall relate is an embarrassing one, and concerns throwing a derail under an engine.

As I have mentioned earlier, the only thing high-speed about the Saltville Branch jobs was "The Quit." After arrival back at Glade, everyone raced to get the engine put away and to "register off duty." And so on this particular night I was doing my usual duty of working the high-level switch stand on the East Leg of the Glade Spring Wye to put the engine away on the Engine Track. Now, this switch had a pipe-connected derail associated with it. The derail was there to keep a stored engine from moving off the track unexpectedly. And, of course, it was dark ... and it was a Friday night. The conductor and the engineman, who lived locally, wanted to go home, and the three Roanokers on the crew wanted to catch No. 18 or No. 42 and shake the dust of Glade Spring off their feet for a weekend.

Frog Lester, the engineman, came into the Engine Track with his two GP-9s on a tear. He must have gone past me at 20MPH. He already had the headlights and the lamps in the number boards extinguished. After the engines went sailing past me and disappeared in the darkness, I waited for a short period and then horsed the switch lever around to close the switch. Immediately a series of harsh metallic sounds emanated from the darkness ... Boom, Crash, Bang-Bang ... the sound of engine wheels being lifted off the iron and then coming back down again. I had thrown the pipe-connected derail right under the moving engine!

Running down to the area, I could see by the light of my lantern that the pipeline leading to the derail had been grubbed completely out of the ground and uprooted from its fastenings on the crossties. The big iron derail itself was broken cleanly in half, but the engines were not derailed. (Fortunately, it was a one-way derail, not a both-directions derail.) And [continued on next page]

where was Engineman Frog? Nowhere to be seen! After making his thumpety-bump ride backwards over the derail, he had completely disappeared in the darkness and gone home, without staying even to comment!!! So I caught the passenger train and went home, too.

Being young and new, I was almost afraid to return to work on Monday afternoon, but return I did. When registering on duty at the depot, not a word was said about Friday night's incident by either the conductor or Engineman Frog. When we walked over to the Engine Track, we found the section gang just finishing up the work of installing a new pipeline and derail. But again, not a word was said by anyone. The situation was entirely disregarded, as if it had never happened. And likewise on Tuesday, and likewise on Wednesday. So I thought I was off the hook for throwing a derail under a moving engine....

And then came Thursday.... It happened as we were going to work. No. 45, the Tennessean, pulled into the Glade Spring station and down off the engine crawled a man in a white shirt and straw hat. It was Mr. J. C. Irvin, the Radford Division Trainmaster. None of us had ever seen Mr. Irvin, but we all intuitively knew who he was.

The conductor ran to the caboose. Engineman Frog Lester quickly went to the far end of the engines on the Engine Track and found a way to look busy. The other brakeman ran to couple some air hoses somewhere. And that left only me, standing beside the high-level switch stand at the Engine Track. I had nowhere to hide.

Mr. Irvin walked slowly up to me. He did not introduce himself, but looked me squarely in the eye and said sternly, "What do you know about this?" pointing to the broken derail in the pile of mangled scrap the section crew had piled up near the switch. Fortunately, it had rained over the weekend and the iron on two broken halves of the derail clearly showed rust. "B-B-But, Sir ... The pieces are rusted. This must have happened some time ago!" I said. Mr. Irvin looked straight into my eyes for about ten terrifying seconds and then, without another word, turned and walked slowly back to the depot. Perhaps, in his mercy, he had remembered some similar incident from his own young days on the railroad. "What do you know about this?" Just six words, but with them I had been tried, found guilty, and sentenced. I never heard another word about the incident, and I never laid eyes on Mr. Irvin again. Nor did I ever again throw a derail under moving equipment.

So Glade Spring, although an inconvenient assignment, was a good place for a new brakeman to break in. In those days the railroad had not one whit of a training program. A new hire was issued a Rule Book, a Safety Book and a Time Table, but they were put in one's grip and never discussed. A new man learned, solely by osmosis, the bad habits of the older men. And in retrospect I now understand why the older men were so crabby. They were not teachers by nature, they did not enjoy breaking in new men, and far worse, as senior members of the crew, they were responsible for what the new men did.

Would I today go back and work the Second Saltville Shifter again? In a heartbeat.

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## ***GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD EXCURSION***

The Watauga Valley RHS&M will be operating our summer excursions on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad on Saturday, August 17. We are happy to announce that the trip is a near sell out at press time.

## Photo Section



Mike Tilley and Nick White journeyed to the LANCASTER AND CHESTER shops in Lancaster, SC to prepare for the CLINCHFIELD 100 for transport to the NCTM. On this day the 100 is getting the brake valves put back on and the oil level in the journal boxes checked and filled. Clockwise from top: (1) The car as it sits in the L&C yard; (2) Mike Tilley applying the stenciling of our reporting marks; (3) tightening one of the journal oil fill bolts. (4, 5) Interior shots show a well-maintained car







Gary Price snapped this photo while attending the recent Railroad Day at Virginia's Natural Tunnel, hosted by NORFOLK SOUTHERN and the Natural Tunnel State Park. The event was held for members of the community to learn about safety near railroad tracks and facilities and to enjoy the history and beauty of the area. Guests had the opportunity to take guided tours through the tunnel; a geologist discussed how the tunnel was created and how it has evolved over the years. Casey Thomason, acclaimed NS photographer, conducted a workshop on safe, creative, and legal ways to photograph trains. Also on site was an Operation Lifesaver unit accompanied by a volunteer who discussed highway-rail safety and trespasser awareness. At left: the VIRGINIAN RAILWAY Heritage Locomotive as staged inside the opening of the 850-foot tunnel. A walkway provided a safe platform for taking photographs.

The Watauga Valley Whistle Machine helped Kingsport celebrate the 4th of July by participating in their annual parade. Members volunteering to accompany the machine had a great day and the truck raised club awareness. Special thanks to Ian Ring and Walker May for walking the parade route handing out club membership brochures. Kudos to Frank Rohrer and Mike Tilley for running the Whistle Machine. Part of the crew is captured in this photo from left to right: Ian Ring, Walker May, Frank Rohrer and Mike Tilley. Not pictured are Nick White, Penny May, and Lois Tilley. If you know of someone that would like to lease the Whistle Machine, please have them call our office at (423) 753-5797.



## Upcoming Events



July 27: The Whistle Machine will be at the Cradle of Forestry [Train History Day](#). US Hwy 276 near Brevard, NC.



September 7-8: The schedule for TWEETSIE RAILROAD's two-day "Railroad Heritage" special event has been published on-line. Go to <http://tweetsie.com/special-events/railfan-schedule/>.



September 14: Erwin, TN Train Show at the National Guard Armory.



October 4: The Whistle Machine will travel to Greenville, SC for the COTTON MILL blowing event.

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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**TIME VALUE MATERIAL**

## FALL 2013 EXCURSION WORKERS FORM

OCTOBER 12 and OCTOBER 13, 2013, CAR HOST ASSIGNMENT REQUEST FORM

MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

I/WE WOULD LIKE TO SIGN UP FOR FIRST CLASS CAR HOST SERVICE ON THE SPENCER, NC TO CHARLOTESVILLE, VA ROUND TRIP EXCURSION ON OCTOBER 12, 2013 AND THE SPENCER, NC TO ASHEVILLE, NC ROUND TRIP EXCURSION ON OCTOBER 13, 2013.

WVRHS&M WILL PROVIDE FREE TRANSPORTATION TO SPENCER, NC AND BACK TO JONESBOROUGH, TN. WE WILL LEAVE JONESBOROUGH AT 7:30 AM ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11. YOU ARE ALSO WELCOME TO DRIVE DOWN TO SPENCER IN YOUR OWN CAR IF YOU WISH. WVRHS&M WILL PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION BACK TO JONESBOROUGH ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 AND ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 14.

ALL CAR HOSTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE THEIR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS AT SALISBURY SUPER 8 AT A SPECIAL RATE OF \$54.95 PER NIGHT. YOU WILL NEED TO CALL 704-738-8888 AND ASK FOR WATAUGA VALLEY NRHS SPECIAL RATE.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AT THE HOTEL BY AUGUST 22, 2013. YOU WILL NEED ROOMS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11 AND SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12. STAYING ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 IS OPTIONAL.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO SIGN UP FOR THIS GREAT TRIP TO SERVE AS CAR HOST. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AT THE JULY MEMBERSHIP MEEETING OR MAIL IT TO: EXCURSION WATV, P.O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN, 37605-0432, BY AUGUST 4. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE 423-753-5797.