



The Mid-South Flyer

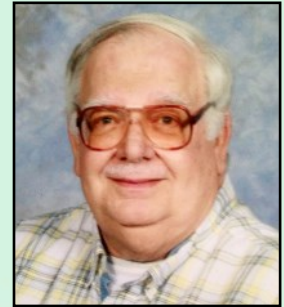
March 2018



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

March program

Locomotive expert Tom Lawson to bring slide program featuring one chapter of his life with locomotives



Pick most any industrial or short line locomotive, from steam to early diesel, and Tom Lawson has more than likely either shot it, shopped it, or sold it.

Growing up in Birmingham in the early 1950s, at age 11 Tom began photographing what was left of mainline steam power, only to watch it quickly disappear as railroads switched from steam to diesel. Still hungry for steam action, Tom turned his attention to the handful of local industrial railroads still operating with steam—Republic Steel, U.S. Pipe & Foundry, and Woodward Iron.

But soon the fires of the remaining steam would also drop, and Tom turned his attention to the plentiful numbers of industrial diesels roaming Jones Valley. And as the railfan fates would have it, he was fortunately befriended by the a kind Birmingham Southern diesel shop foreman who patiently introduced Tom to the historical significance of early diesel-electric model locomotives.

Tom's interest in industrial diesels led him to a job at U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works, where he spent the majority of his time as foreman at the busy Ensley Locomotive Terminal. After seven years working in the trenches learning the operating characteristics of a variety of engines, Tom entered the world of second-hand locomotive sales with Birmingham Rail & Locomotive Co. and Republic Locomotive Works. (Actually, Tom brokered his first locomotive deal with the acquisition of a Shay for Twin Seams Mining Co. in Hellerman, AL—while still a freshman in high school!) He later leveraged his years of experience in locomotive sales and service to form his own company, Locomotive Marketing Inc, specializing, as he says, from "critters to 100-tonners."

Now retired from his sales business, Tom has parlayed his interest in locomotives into a successful writing and publishing career. Under the moniker of Cabbage Stack Publishing, Tom has published several titles including "Logging Railroads of Alabama," "Locomotives of the Southern Iron & Equipment Co," and "Shay The Supplement." Tom's self-published books are highly collectible, commanding top dollar from reputable book sellers.

Tom's latest book title, "Steel Mill Railroads, Volume 6—Southern Style," was published in 2013 by Morning Sun Books, Inc. Mid-South Chapter members may recall that Tom presented a talk on his book at the March 2014 meeting. On Saturday, March 17, Tom returns to the Leeds Depot to present a slide program featuring dozens of images of industrial locomotives taken during his tenure with Birmingham Rail & Locomotive. As Tom says, bring along your notebook and be prepared to learn!

Don't forget! The MidSouth Chapter meets Saturday, March 17 at 2PM at the Leeds Depot



Steam on a perfect day — *As any rail photographer will tell you, if you shoot often enough there will eventually come a time when all of the photo elements of subject, background, camera angle and lighting combine to produce a great shot. When Mid-South member Donnie Strickland set out on a recent Saturday to follow SR #4501 pulling TVRM's first springtime trip to Summer-ville, GA, he knew he had a gorgeous, cloudless, blue-sky day for photography. What he couldn't predict was finding the ideal spot to catch the train sauntering downhill through Chickamauga Battlefield with a classic country home for a backdrop, and just enough white smoke for added flavor. What a great shot!*

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The Mid-South Flyer is published quarterly 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 and include subscriptions to the Society's twice-yearly magazine Railroad History and quarterly newsletter, and the chapter's e-newsletter, the Mid-South Flyer. Contributions, article ideas and reader comments are welcomed.

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Editor's Corner



Having enjoyed the privilege of editing *The Mid-South Flyer* for the past ten years, it's been very satisfying to introduce informative and often entertaining bits of regional railroad lore and history to our readers. Each issue has presented a fresh challenge of finding the right balance of news, history and photography to satisfy a diverse audience with very broad interests in railroads.

Whatever success the newsletter has enjoyed over the years is owed to a group of very capable writers, each a historian in his own right. Issue by issue, you've seen their by-lines time and again: John Stewart, David Lester, Lyle Key, Stan Burnett, John Browning, Warren Jones. Their knowledge and writing skills consistently have produced thoughtful articles and commentary worthy of any publication, and we are indeed grateful for their contributions to our little newsletter.

With his issue, we introduce our newest contributor (and new Mid-South member) Tom Badham. Tom is a local historian and editor of the Jefferson County Historical Association's newsletter, and will be sharing his writings with both publications. I think you will greatly enjoy and learn from Tom's historical accounts of both topical, and frequently obscure railroad subjects.

Another avenue for introducing deserving articles written by Mid-South members are occasional reprints from other publications, which may have been missed by our readers. This issue features a first-person account by member Carl Ardrey of his brief experience flagging aboard the *Southern Crescent* between Birmingham and Meridian. Carl's entertaining and earthy account gives you a real feel for working on board a passenger train. Our thanks to Bill Schafer, editor of the Southern Railroad Historical Association's *TIES Magazine*, for his kind assistance and for granting permission to reprint Carl's article.

Member Profile

Meet Gavin Turner, railroad photographer

Reported by Marvin Clemons, with photos by Devin Turner

Some kids grow up with a fascination for trains, some enjoy watching trains, and some like playing with toy trains. And then there's Gavin Turner.

You see, as the Mid-South Chapter's youngest member, Gavin takes his trains seriously. Come meeting time, you'll find him out on the depot platform right next to the big boys, camera in hand, anxiously waiting to grab a shot of the next passing freight. Gavin's parents, Devin and Amanda Turner, are right there beside him, sharing in their son's excitement.

According to his dad, Gavin's interest in trains began innocently enough when the two-year-old got his first toy train set. But soon he was begging to be held up by his grandparents to see the trains passing by their Pell City home. Then, beginning at around age 6, Gavin started taking photos of passing trains with his parents' tablet. Around age nine he started taking railroad photography seriously, collecting photos of the different Norfolk Southern Heritage units passing through town.

While sharpening his camera skills, Gavin has learned to make use of the latest technology for locating and tracking trains. Using an app on his smartphone along with his scanner, he monitors the movements of Heritage units through Alabama so he can be set up and ready to shoot them. He also takes photos of foreign line engines, including BNSF, UP, CN, CSX, and others.



Gavin's parents support their son's hobby with frequent trips to nearby train locations, such as the viewing platform at Irondale to photograph the constant parade of trains passing in and out of Norris Yard. Family vacations often include stops at popular train-watching venues like Georgia's "Folkston Funnel" on the busy CSX main line north of Jacksonville, Florida.

When not taking pictures of trains, like any other kid Gavin enjoys sports, including basketball, swimming, and golf. Asked if he thinks his son will ever outgrow his love for trains, Devin said, "I think he will always have a true passion for trains that will never go away."

We certainly hope so. Because Gavin, and other boys growing up with a love for trains, are the future of railroading, and will one day become the safekeepers of railroad history.

(Editor's note: Our thanks to Southern Railway Historical Association TIES editor Bill Schafer for his help and permission to reprint the following article by Mid-South member Carl Ardrey. © 2017 Southern Railway Historical Association)

"FLAGGIN' ON NO. 1



BY CARL ARDREY

On Sept. 24, 1978, I established my trainman's seniority with the Alabama Great Southern Railroad, otherwise known as Southern Railway's Crescent Division. Some of the crewmen knew me from riding steam excursions, and one of the senior conductors, "Red" Cottrell, made a suggestion: "If you can get a uniform, tell the call office, and you'll get all the extra passenger work since you're now on the extra board."

Now, that sounded like an idea. A brief search with the help of Bill Cox, a family friend, led me to a widow lady who had a complete Southern flagman's uniform in my size. It was a 16-ounce serge, winter uniform, so a lighter-weight black suit would be required for summer work, with appropriate holes cut for buttons and insignias. I notified the call office and waited for one of the regular men to lay off.

The *Southern Crescent*, passenger trains 1 and 2, ran tri-weekly south of Atlanta on my seniority district, and a minimum passenger day



"The crew parked in a fenced lot at what was left of the old Terminal Station . . ." Here's Southern train No. 1 at Birmingham behind E8 6908 on June 1, 1978, about three months before Carl's memorable trip. BILL SCHAFER PHOTO

for pay purposes was 150 miles instead of the 100 miles you got if you were in freight service. In other words, you worked 1.5 times as many miles to get a day's pay as a counterpart riding the caboose on a freight. I was afraid it would be a long wait for the call.

One morning in late October, Tuesday the 24th to be exact, the call office rang. "Ardrey, do you really have a uniform?" I replied in the affirmative. "Flaggin' on No 1, on time". Wow—this was it. A quick polish of my black work boots and I was ready.

We were required to report 30 minutes ahead of the call for "prep time." I probably showed up earlier than that. The crew parked in a fenced lot at what was left of the old Terminal Station. I waltzed into the crew room quite confident, until I realized I was the only one in the room without gray hair. When I had the opportunity, I spoke to the conductor, "Bubba" Pope, who was top of the seniority list and had been injured in the 1974 derailment of the *Southern Crescent*

1, ON TIME™

"I was positioned in the rear vestibule of the last car . . . talking to some passengers who thought I knew a lot more than I really did."



"Bubba and I walked to the rear of the train in preparation to backing out of the station . . ." Train 1 backs out of Terminal Station en route to Meridian and New Orleans. Second Avenue North, which Carl flagged, is just beyond the

baggage-dorm; by this time, the train is also occupying the gated L&N crossing at this point. E8s 6914-6916 are the two lead units. (The 6914 is presently under restoration at Chattanooga). April 1974. BILL SCHAFER PHOTO

at Cottdale, Ala.—ironically on the day I graduated from high school. I told him that I had never worked the job before but guessed he knew that. "Well, you've hung around here enough that you ought to know what to do." How about that? They all knew me from the many photos I had taken of the train over the last two years.

Bubba and I walked to the rear of the train in preparation to backing out of the station. He told me to test the backup hose ("monkey tail") before instructing the engineer to start shoving. We began the shove, I flagged the crossing at Second Avenue North, shoved across the L&N gate, and out on the Alabama Great Southern south main at the puzzle switches under the watchful eye of 27th Street Yardmaster Eddie Johnson. Then we headed south and picked up orders on the fly at 14th Street Tower from a three-headed train-order stand mentioned July-August 1995 *TIES*.

The only regular station stop on my crew



"Then we headed south and picked up orders on the fly at 14th Street Tower . . ." The Southern Crescent accelerates past 14th Street Tower in Birmingham as the fireman snags the orders for the engine crew. Another set of orders is mounted on the lower stick and will be caught by a trainman from a Dutch door back in the train. The train-order stand had three heads—the fireman got the top, the baggageman got the middle, and the flagman got the bottom. Date: 1977. PHOTO BY CARL ARDREY

district (Birmingham–Meridian) was Tuscaloosa, Ala. It was uneventful, and my only duty was to stand by, look important, and let the experts do their jobs. It was a learning experience though, since Bubba told me in no uncertain terms that I was not to handle a stepbox under any circumstances. That was the job of the porter.

We also stopped at Eutaw, Ala., which was a flagstop, and then we hit the nine-mile tangent to Boligee, which usually meant fast running. I was positioned in the rear vestibule of the last car (the parlor dome car) to observe the hotbox detector at Bermul while also talking to some passengers who thought I knew a lot more than I really did. In the event that a hotbox was detected, the red light would flash on the detector. It was the flagman's job to observe if the light was flashing and stop the train. The Atlanta Hotbox Center would call to be sure the train was stopped and give the location of the hotbox.

Today it was "highball the box." Not long after passing the detector, there was a loud whoosh of air, and the brakes were applied in emergency. I noticed the brake valve for the backup hose was still there on the scissors gate, but where was the air hose? Sure enough, the air hose had separated from the valve, and we were in emergency at 79 m.p.h. The train glided to a stop and I got down and closed the angle cock. Bubba was looking back from his normal post



"We also stopped at Eutaw, Ala., which was a flagstop . . ." The Eutaw depot in October 1969. FRANK ARDREY JR. PHOTO, DAVID SALTER COLLECTION

in the head coach, and I gave him a highball, radioed the engineer, and off we went. The hose that connected the brake valve to the train line was long gone. I walked forward and told Bubba what had happened. He was satisfied and we carried on. I thought that was the end of it, but I was wrong.

We swapped out with the "Northeastern"

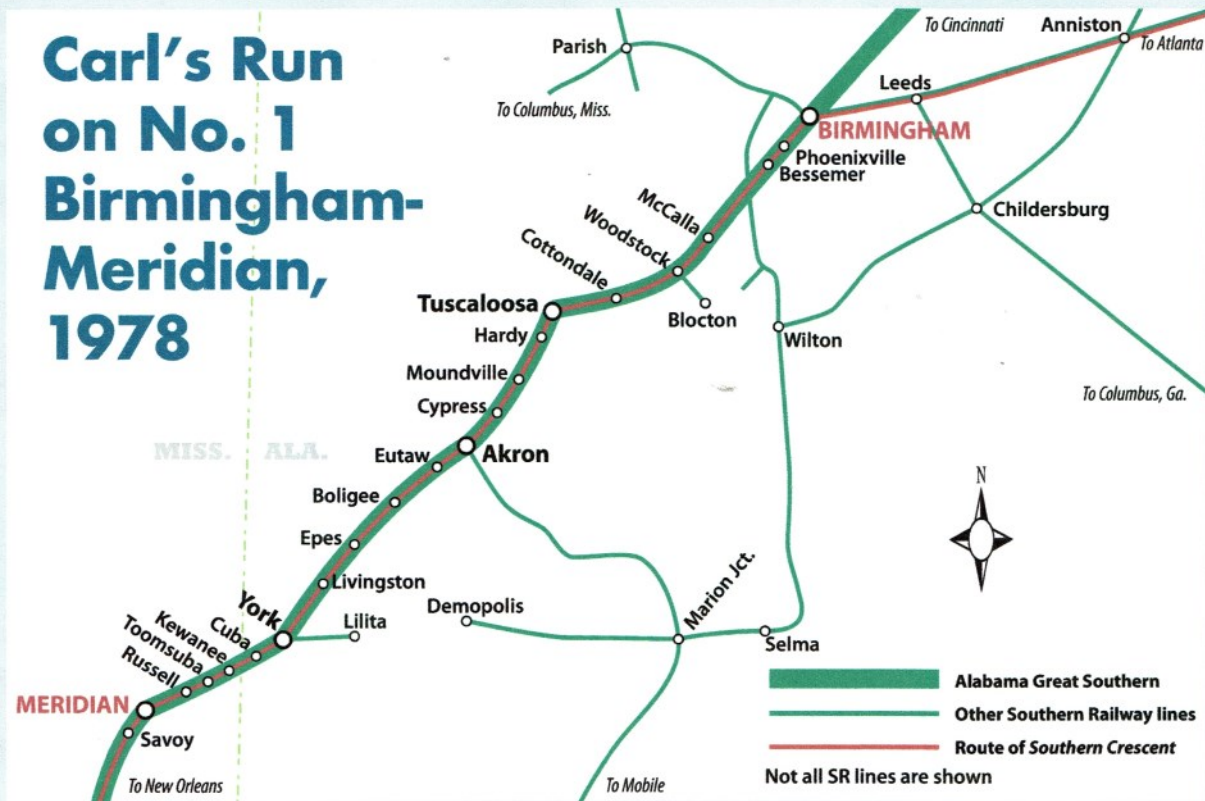
crew in Meridian, Miss. (so called because they worked the territory of predecessor New Orleans & Northeastern between Meridian and the Crescent City). I told the flagmen that the monkey tail had blown off enroute and all that was left was the valve. He had a fit, even though there were two spares hanging just feet from where we were standing. He needed the monkey tail to back into



"I was positioned in the rear vestibule of the last car (the parlor-dome car) . . ." Train 1 has a high green at the GM&O crossing as it pulls away from Tuscaloosa, Ala., on a cold, rainy Jan. 7, 1973. The parlor-dome car is the same one (SOU

1602) as on Carl's 1978 trip. Look closely and you can see the red flag and monkey tail on the accordion gate, and a trainman standing in the vestibule. BILL SCHAFER PHOTO

Carl's Run on No. 1 Birmingham- Meridian, 1978



New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal, and I suspected he didn't want to get his hands dirty attaching a new one. I also suspected he thought I was going to do it for him. I told Bubba about my relief's reaction but can't write what Bubba said in reply. I found out then that I was Bubba's man and I had his full support.

We got in a cab and went to the crew's hotel to get our rest. Not long after arriving, the phone rang. It was John Delaney, who was superintendent of terminals at Meridian, and he wanted to know what had happened to the backup hose. I told him the story, but wasn't sure he was satisfied. Finally I told him "Mr. Delaney, we were running 79 miles an hour when it blew off, and I didn't think you would want me to take the time to walk back a couple of miles to find it." Well, he said, he guessed not. Case closed. The next time he saw me he got a big laugh out of it. Turns out he had already talked to "the captain." Bubba had told him what had happened.

After a nice breakfast the following morning at Wideman's Restaurant in Meridian, we headed north on No. 2. The trip was uneventful, except for one passenger. I was walking



"We swapped out with the 'Northeastern' crew in Meridian, Miss." E8 6907 pauses under the 22nd Street Viaduct in Meridian as it makes the station stop with the final southbound *Southern Crescent*, on the afternoon of Thursday, Feb. 1, 1979. The next train to stop here will be the northbound Amtrak *Crescent*, Southern train 820, on Feb. 2. Old Meridian station is white structure at left. Note that train 1 has six E8s on the head end; under Amtrak operation, the train will run daily, with three E8s (instead of four), so an extra set of power is on the way to New Orleans to cover Feb. 3's *Crescent* departure. CARL ARDREY PHOTO

through one of the sleepers and stepped into a bedroom with an open door to let a passenger pass down the narrow aisle. I looked over my shoulder to speak to the passenger in the bedroom and imagine my surprise to see Ed Hauber, an old friend. At the time, he was trainmaster at Mobile, had caught the train in Hattiesburg, and was on his way to visit family in New Jersey. I don't know who was more surprised, him or me.

On arrival at Birmingham, we reversed the procedure at The Puzzles as I backed the train into Terminal Station with the help of the conductor and the trainmaster from Mobile. My dad, Frank, met us when the train arrived, and recorded the occasion on film.

And so ended my one and only official trip working the *Southern Crescent* before Amtrak took over the following February. I made many more official trips on the Amtrak *Crescent* as flagman with Bubba Pope, whom most people hated, but he liked me, took me under his wing, and taught me all the tricks of the trade. I handled the transportation, took care of station stops, and anything else that came up under his watchful eye.

A year or more later, the phone rang one morning and it was James "Steve" Stephens, who was the trainmaster at Attalla, Ala. He wanted to know if I knew how to work the conductor's job on 819. (Number 19 was Amtrak's number for the southbound *Crescent*, and 800-series trains on the Southern were trackage-rights trains, which included the Amtrak's; hence, to the Southern, the train was 819.) I was not yet a promoted conductor, so this was a pretty big deal. I told him sure. "Bubba's got a funeral to go to, no one's in town, but he said you could work it with no problem. Show up on time."

Imagine everyone's surprise in the crew room that morning when they realized I had gold buttons on my uniform!



ABOVE: "On arrival at Birmingham, we reversed the procedure at 'The Puzzles' as I backed the train into Terminal Station . . ." Southern train 2, from New Orleans, shoves across the puzzle switches as it backs into Birmingham's Terminal Station in 1976. On this trip, Southern's coach-dome, 1613, is on the rear. Dormant Sloss-Sheffield iron mill is at left. CARL ARDREY PHOTO



ABOVE: "My dad, Frank, met us when the train arrived and recorded the occasion on film." The late Ed Hauber, in bell bottoms, and Carl Ardrey, with long hair, uniform, and radio, at the end of Carl's first (and only) official round trip as a Southern Railway employee on the *Southern Crescent*, Birmingham, Ala., Oct. 25, 1978. Rear car of train 2 is behind Ed at left; steam train excursion consist is laying over at right and will deadhead behind SOU (Texas & Pacific) 2-10-4 No. 610 to Atlanta the next day, Thursday, October 26. Carl recalls that his 16 oz. serge uniform was hot (in terms of weather, not appearance)! FRANK ARDREY PHOTO

RIGHT: Excerpt from April 1978 public timetable, showing the tri-weekly *Southern Crescent* schedule south of Atlanta. Carl's district was the 152-mile segment between Birmingham and Meridian.

READ DOWN ★ 1		ATLANTA-NEW ORLEANS SOUTHERN TRI-WEEKLY		READ UP ★ 2			
Su-Tu-Th	8:55AM	1019	633	Lv. ATLANTA (Peachtree Stal) (ET)	GAAr	Mo-We-Fr	7:10PM
Su-Tu-Th	10:18AM	1183	735	ANNISTON (CT)	AL	Mo-We-Fr	3:41PM
Su-Tu-Th	11:55AM	1286	799	Ar. BIRMINGHAM	"Lv.	Mo-We-Fr	2:10PM
Su-Tu-Th	12:10PM	1286	799	Lv. BIRMINGHAM	"Ar.	Mo-We-Fr	1:55PM
Su-Tu-Th	1:21PM	1375	854	TUSCALOOSA	"	Mo-We-Fr	12:22PM
Su-Tu-Th	1:55PM	1431	889	Eutaw	"	Mo-We-Fr	11:48AM
Su-Tu-Th	2:20PM	1472	915	Livingston	"	Mo-We-Fr	11:23AM
Su-Tu-Th	3:15PM	1531	951	Ar. MERIDIAN	MSLv.	Mo-We-Fr	10:50AM
Su-Tu-Th	3:20PM	1531	951	Lv. MERIDIAN	"Ar.	Mo-We-Fr	10:45AM
Su-Tu-Th	4:28PM	1622	1008	Laurel	"	Mo-We-Fr	9:35AM
Su-Tu-Th	5:05PM	1668	1037	Hattiesburg	"	Mo-We-Fr	9:03AM
Su-Tu-Th	5:22PM	1694	1053	Purvis	"	Mo-We-Fr	8:44AM
Su-Tu-Th	5:49PM	1732	1076	Poplarville	"	Mo-We-Fr	8:21AM
Su-Tu-Th	6:34PM	1800	1119	Sicliell	LA	Mo-We-Fr	7:37AM
Su-Tu-Th	7:50PM	1857	1154	Ar. NEW ORLEANS (CT)	"Lv.	Mo-We-Fr	6:46AM

Form 604

SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM
CONDUCTOR'S WIRE REPORT OF TRAINS

Number	Date Filed	Start	End	Time

Date _____ 19__

Train _____ Engine _____ of _____ 19__

Arrived at _____
_____ minutes late, with _____ Cars

Left _____
_____ minutes late, with _____ Cars

Passengers loaded on divisions _____ in coaches _____ Pkg _____
In Pullman _____ Pkg _____ OH _____

Delays: _____

Conductor _____

ABOVE: Example of passenger conductor's delay report form 604, which differed from the form used by freight conductors. Carl continued to use these forms into the early Amtrak era. Southbound, they were turned into the ticket agent at Meridian, who was still a Southern employee. Northbound, the forms were thrown off to the operator at 14th Street Tower, Birmingham, as the Amtrak *Crescent* passed. CARL ARDREY COLLECTION

★ IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The Southern Railway System's application to discontinue Trains 1 and 2, "The Southern Crescent," April 6, 1978, has been suspended pending investigation by the I.C.C. Please consult again.

ABOVE: Not long after Stanley Crane became Southern's president, it became painfully apparent that the *Southern Crescent* equipment would soon require a heavy rebuild or replacement. In April 1978, Southern applied through regulatory channels to discontinue the train, but was rebuffed by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Amtrak was willing to take over operation of the train, so a deal was struck, and effective with the origin departures of Feb. 1, 1979, Southern trains 1 and 2 became Amtrak trains 19 and 20. This note appeared adjacent to the schedule columns in the April 1978 public timetable.



ABOVE: It's 1982, and the occasion is Bubba Pope's last trip arriving in Birmingham from Meridian after working Amtrak's *Crescent* one last time. He is headed down the stairs from the platform of the former-L&N station, which Amtrak preferred to Southern's Terminal Station. Carl is behind him, and at the top of stairs on the right is E. J. Early, who retired "off the other side" just months earlier. BIRMINGHAM POST-HERALD PHOTO, CARL ARDREY COLLECTION



LEFT: Authentic Southern Railway flagman's hat and uniform that Carl wore the only time he was part of the crew of the *Southern Crescent* in August 1978. The uniform had belonged to a Southern flagman who had passed away; a family friend, Bill Cox, knew the widow and suggested Carl contact her. Fortunately, the outfit was just Carl's size. CARL ARDREY PHOTO

Regional History

“Catfish,” The Only Ingalls Locomotive

By John Szwajkart (Edited by Tom Badham)

(Condensed from the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad Historical Society Newsletter, 1986. Used by permission)

Towards the end of World War II, the Ingalls Ship Building Division of Birmingham's Ingalls Iron Works Company understood that their ship building market, mainly the US Navy, would go from boom to bust. Looking for a different product to market, they hit upon the idea of building locomotives. Many of the ships Ingalls built had diesel engines and Ingalls was certainly proficient at steel fabrication. They could order the specialty parts such as the engines, wheels and axles. They'd design and fabricate the rest.



Ingalls had been building ships in Pascagoula, Mississippi since 1938. The company's shipbuilding facility produced troop ships in World War II as well as escorts, aircraft carriers, submarine tenders and net layers. After the war, Ingalls produced amphibious assault ships, destroyers and in the 1950s, nuclear-powered attack submarines. In the late 1960's the facility became a division of Litton Industries.

In 1944, Ingalls also knew that there would be a large market for new switch engines and long-haul locomotives, since many of the nation's train engines had been pretty well worn out during the war. Also, diesel-electric engines were rapidly replacing the older, less efficient, much worn steam locomotives.

What the Ingalls designers came up with looked completely different from any other diesel locomotive ever built. The Ingalls locomotive was the only example its builder ever produced. It was the prototype for a full line of diesels with which an unknown, brand new locomotive builder would challenge the established diesel-electric locomotive builders.

The single prototype unit built was Ingalls' model 4-S, an engine variously described as a road switcher, transfer unit or switcher. The diesel was intended to be an all-purpose engine. Introduced into what was expected to be a lucrative market, the unit proved to be a monumental sales failure. It was sold eventually and, though an orphan, survived long beyond an expected useful life. In fact, it outlasted many of the units produced by the other major builders of the time, and even some of the better-known builders themselves.

Ingalls had experience in the installation and maintenance of diesel generator equipment. Over the years, the yard had been installing them in many of the Navy vessels it had been constructing. A large ship is like a small city and needs large quantities of electricity. Diesel generator sets provided this power and installation of them was old hat to Ingalls. Although their experience was primarily with stationary installations, it did not seem too great a change to move into the more mobile railroad environment.

Ingalls was, nevertheless, unproven in the railroad market. The older, entrenched builders of steam and diesel-electric locomotives such as EMD, Alco, Baldwin and Fairbanks Morse had their well-established lines of locomotives and open friendly lines of communication to railroads motive power departments.

Design of Ingalls' diesel line began and specifications were drawn. As was the practice of the yard, outside suppliers provided most of the components, while Ingalls planned to do the fabricating and assembly. Some of the companies chosen were existing marine suppliers who modified their products to meet railroad requirements.

Superior Marine Engines was one of them, and provided the diesel prime mover, with a specially modified and extended frame necessary to accept the generator and motors. Most of the electrical equipment was supplied by Westinghouse, known to both the marine and railroad industries. Other suppliers included those established in the railroad market: Standard Steel Works, Timken Roller Bearings and General Steel Castings.

Five different models were proposed ranging from a 660-horsepower switcher to a 2,000-horsepower passenger unit. All would use the Superior prime mover, in either six- or eight-cylinder configurations. Of the five proposed models, only a 4-S, was built. Design of the unit was completed in July 1945. Construction began late that year. By March 1946, the 4-S was ready for road testing.



The unit had a high, flat nose that reached almost to the top of the unit. Its turret-like cab was raised above the body roof line, almost like the pilothouse of a ship. Windows fore and aft, gave crews all-around visibility but not quite the 360-degree visibility claimed by Ingalls. Portholes on the sides provided light in the interior and added to the boat-like appearance. Behind the cab there was what appeared to be a clerestory, or raised section in the middle of the unit. This provided clearance for part of the diesel inside and additional room for some of the cooling equipment.

The design also gave the crew better visibility to the rear. Also, equally interesting at the rear of the engine was a vestibule and windows which were provided for crew convenience. Ingalls claimed this was

for switching crew comfort and protection when running. When fully ready for the road, the unit required 1,000 gallons of fuel, 150 gallons of lube oil, 280 gallons of cooling water and 28 cubic feet of sand. The Superior diesel was an adaptation of its standard marine design. Turbocharged, its inline eight cylinders produced 1,650 horsepower which reduced to 1,500 useful horsepower because of the auxiliaries.

Two railroads served the Pascagoula area, the Louisville & Nashville and the Mississippi Export. Of the two, the MSE was willing to conduct the initial tests. The Mississippi Export line is a 42-mile short line was controlled by the Gulf Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Southeastern Mississippi that served one of the greatest concentrations of heavy industry in the state. Ingalls was a large customer of both the MSE and the Gulf Mobile & Ohio railroads. Ingalls oversized shipments of raw steel and finished parts moved over both railroads in sufficient quantities to warrant the GM&O's interest in the locomotive.

The locomotive now numbered 1500 (for its horsepower rating) performed as expected and was sent off line for tests and demonstrations. It first was sent on the L&N, then to the Tennessee Coal and Iron, the Seaboard, the Southern and finally the Gulf Mobile & Ohio. The stint of testing did successfully demonstrate its reliability and versatility, but none of the testing roads or any others for that matter, were impressed enough to place an order. Unwanted, the 1500 returned to the shipyard.

Ingalls had no intention of keeping its prototype for sentimental reasons. It needed a sale! Although they didn't initially place an order, GM&O management had expressed interest in the unit before testing began. No doubt in part, their interest was prompted by the fact Ingalls was a major shipper through Mississippi Export. In a special deal, Ingalls offered the GM&O the unit for \$140,000 which was accepted. Ingalls quickly refurbished the unit and repainted the nose stripe to the then current GM&O color scheme and markings with the number 1900 applied to the car body.

The unit entered revenue service in June 1946, but Ingalls never generated another order for any of their planned models. Within months, Ingalls quietly dropped out of the railroad diesel manufacturing business and returned its attention to shipbuilding once again. It was the shortest-lived effort of any locomotive builder in railroad history.

The unit spent its days shuttling freight between Mobile and Pascagoula until it was taken out of service in 1966 and scrapped in 1967. It gained the nickname "Catfish" because it had been designed to run in high water and would seriously vibrate at low RPM's. Twenty years of hard service was quite an achievement for prototype locomotive that no railroad wanted to buy.



Golden Era Classic



50 years ago? Why, it seems like only yesterday, when on a warm, late-winter day we witnessed the Central of Georgia's northbound *Seminole* glide in to Opelika, Alabama for a station stop. The month was February, and indeed the year was 1968, and nothing in the picture—not the shiny E-units, nor the long train of express and passenger cars—belies the awful fact that in only two summers hence, the *Seminole* would make its last station stop, ending 60 years of service between Chicago and Florida. And not only this train, but other great named trains like the *Silver Comet*, the *Humming Bird*, and the *Kansas City—Florida Special* would also vanish from the timetable. And it still seems like only yesterday. *Marvin Clemons photo*

