



# *The Mid-South Flyer*

Summer 2018



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

## Sloss Furnaces curator to bring the music of the Birmingham District's earliest laborers to the July picnic



Karen Utz

In the early 20th century, when Birmingham was a young and growing industrial city, Jones Valley rang out with the melodic sound of workers singing and chanting as they performed their daily tasks around the district's mines, mills, and railroads. Theirs were the songs of migrants pouring into the district, bringing with them their culture and music from the hills of Appalachia, to the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta. Singing helped to shorten the long days of monotonous, back-breaking labor, and created an identity bond among co-workers.

According to the Encyclopedia of Alabama, "Alabama's earliest labor music included agricultural songs of the Scots-Irish and African-American field hollers and work songs, all of which appeared in early folklore collections. With industrialization, new song forms arose among the primarily African-American workers in coal mines, at the Mobile docks, on the railroads, and in the Birmingham steel mills. African-American railroad workers, known as gandy dancers, developed a call-and-response chant that was synchronized to the timing of group manual track labor. African-American steel workers developed an exceptional musical culture featuring protest songs sung by quartets. The songs and tunes of the various labor genres reflected their hardships and provided entertaining relief from strenuous and repetitive manual labor."

In an effort to document the unique music styles brought together by the Birmingham district's early laborers, in 1999 Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark produced a book entitled "Spirit of Steel: Music of the Mines, Mills, and Railroads in the Birmingham District." For the Chapter's July program, Karen Utz, Sloss Furnaces curator and interim executive director, will present a program based on the book. Entitled "Music of the Mines, Mills, and Railroads," Karen's program features the personal histories and recollections of these early Birmingham musicians and their families, together with an outstanding array of recordings ranging from soulful ballads and blues, to union songs and old-time fiddling. Copies of the book will be provided for the audience to follow (and sing!) along.

In addition to her work with Sloss Furnaces, Karen is adjunct history instructor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has authored "Sloss Furnaces" for Arcadia Publishing and co-authored "Iron and Steel: A Guide to the Birmingham Area Industrial Heritage." She is a contributor to "Work, Family, Faith: Women of the Twentieth Century South" and "Man Food: Recipes from the Iron Trade." Karen serves or has served on various committees for the Southeastern Museums Conference, the Society for the History of Technology, the Alabama Academy of Sciences, and the American Association of Museums. She is also the Mid-South Chapter's newest board member!

Please join us for the annual Mid-South Chapter July picnic, followed by Karen's entertaining program!

**Note the date and time time!** The annual MidSouth Chapter Picnic will begin at **11:30AM** on Saturday, July 21 at the Leeds Depot, followed by our regular meeting program at **2:00PM**. If you haven't, please register your attendance at the picnic with Lamont Downs at [deshtiran@gmail.com](mailto:deshtiran@gmail.com).



# Mid-South Chapter Update

*Reported by James Lowery, Chapter President*

## Welcome to the Mid-South Chapter's Newest Board Member

We welcome newly elected Karen Utz to membership on the Mid-South Chapter Board of Directors. Karen is the Curator/Historian and Interim Executive Director at Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark in downtown Birmingham. Her work and knowledge at Sloss Furnaces has been outstanding throughout her career there, and, most recently, she has spearheaded the project to have the Frisco steam locomotive at the new Sloss entrance painted and the rust removed. Go by sometime and check out the refurbished locomotive, and thank Karen for continuing to do what is necessary to preserve that great locomotive. Karen also will present the program at our picnic meeting on July 21st, and we are looking forward to a time of historic music and fun.



## 10th Anniversary Year Celebration Continues

The Chapter's 10th Anniversary celebration is well underway. The Chapter newsletter continues to honor the 10th Anniversary; many of our program speakers this year are from other states in our Chapter's coverage area (Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, Tennessee, and Alabama); and in November the Chapter is planning a banquet to celebrate our 10th anniversary. More details to follow.

## Chapter Attendees at National Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Annual Convention

MidSouth Chapter member Bill Jones has submitted a report, illustrated by member Richard Morris, of the wonderful activities and train rides that were part of the recent Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Annual Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri (a complete report follows). MidSouth Chapter attendees included Richard, Bill and his wife, and myself and wife, Peggy. As President of the Mid-South Chapter, I am a member of the national Board of Directors, and I attended the Board meeting at the beginning of the convention. I can report that the Society is in very good shape and that its strategic and operational directions are sound and will continue to provide meaningful services and resources to the Society's members and to the historic railroad community in general. The historic research and excellent publications that have been part of the Society since its inception continue and are made possible by your dues and contributions.

Plan ahead to attend the 2019 R&LHS Convention that will be held May 8-11, 2019, in Ogden, Utah, because it will be a significant event to attend. The Convention will be held in conjunction with the celebration commemorating 150 years since the Promontory Point Golden Spike. My, how time flies! Think back on how railroads and transportation in the United States and around the world have evolved and advanced since that significant day in our history. Be a part of the celebration; plan to attend the convention. *(Editor's note: Better hurry if you want a room at the convention rate. At press time, rumor has it that the hotel is, or is almost, sold out.)*

## MidSouth member launches on-line Railroad Slide Gallery

Mid-South Chapter member Lamont Downs has announced the posting of a Railroad Slide Gallery, featuring color slides taken between 1969 and about 2000. Included are many "fallen flags," such as New York Central, Erie Lackawanna, Rock Island and many others, covering ninety-nine railroads/entities and 24 states and Canada. Downs estimates that the final size of the gallery will be in the vicinity of a thousand slides when complete. The gallery can be accessed at <http://www.twinplanets.com/rr/slides.html>. *(Editor's note: If you'd like to see how well railroads can be photographed and documented, check it out !)*



## Editor's Corner with Marvin Clemons

This issue's column is a noticeable departure from our usual "corner" format, dealing with a subject both personal and of note to those with a love for Southeastern railroad history, and the L&N in particular.

By now, most if not all of our readers have learned of the tragic loss of Mid-South member Lyle Key. Lyle died on May 2 from a head injury following a fall at his Nashville home. The sudden news of Lyle's untimely death still reverberates among his many friends and colleagues, leaving some like myself still in a state of disbelief.

For me, Lyle's passing was like losing a brother; indeed, we were college fraternity brothers in Lambda Chi Alpha, Lyle as a graduate of the University of Tennessee, and myself from the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Before that, we were friends from high school years, having met through the (then) Heart of Dixie Railroad Club. Growing up on opposite sides of town, we had a territorial love for Birmingham's railroads, Lyle predominantly as a fan of his beloved Louisville & Nashville, Frisco, and ACL, and myself a devotee of Southern, Seaboard, and Central of Georgia.

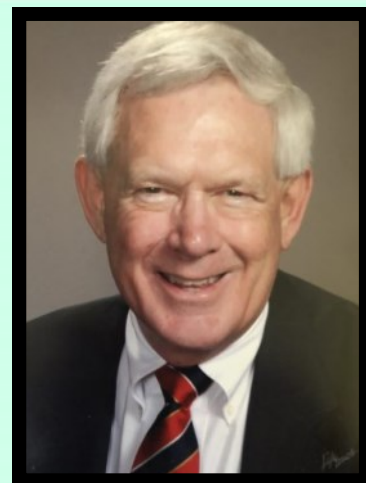
Our respective interests led us both to work for our railroad of choice. After graduation from law school, Lyle went to work in the L&N's legal department, moving through several mergers to become CSX regional vice president for Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. After a brief employment with Southern Railway at Birmingham and Atlanta passenger terminals, I left for the U.S. Army and a career in journalism and public affairs.

Other than occasional contact through mutual friends, over the years our paths seldom crossed. Then almost 40 years after we first met, in 2004 I invited Lyle to join me on a charter excursion over the Tennessee Central out of Nashville. We spent the day reminiscing about our "happy days" spent railroading around Birmingham, which led to a discussion about co-authoring a book on Birmingham railroads as we knew them. The rest, as they say, is history, and in 2007 we self-published *Birmingham Rails, The Last Golden Era*.

Starting from scratch with just a handful of photos and our memories, producing *Birmingham Rails* became the catalyst for turning an old acquaintance into a deeply personal friendship. Deciding and dividing responsibilities for writing and editing, design and layout, and administrative duties required a great deal of mutual trust and confidence in each other's abilities, and a commitment you wouldn't expect from someone you don't know all that well.

It was through that experience that I came to really know Lyle's personal qualities and character. I had always thought of him as a mild-mannered, unassuming guy. But the Lyle Key I came to know was among the most truly generous, considerate, and kind-hearted individuals I've had the privilege to know. Over the course of several years of daily grinding out the book together, Lyle would meet my occasional obstinance with a soft tone and a reasoned response. Always the diplomat, he would yield on a lesser point just to make me "right," when in fact, we both knew I was *wrong*.

During the course of publishing the book, Lyle introduced me to his broad list of railroad contacts, many of whom became new friends. Among the most memorable was Frank Ardrey, whose prized collection of Birmingham photographs comprised the majority of the book's 400 images.



Lyle Key

### The Mid-South Flyer July 2018

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.

Marvin Clemons, Editor  
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## Editor's Corner with Marvin Clemons

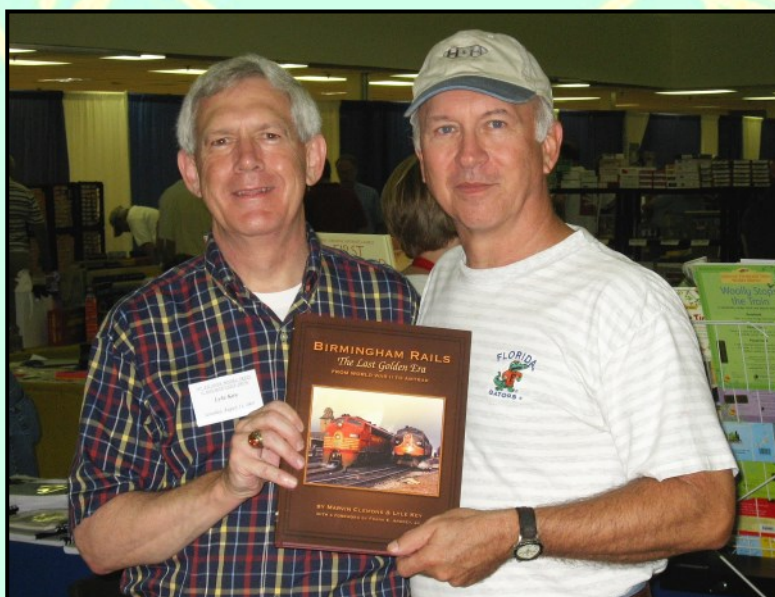
Lyle also persuaded Frank to write the book's foreword, lending the book instant credibility, which in turn led to favorable reviews in the railroad press. Unexpected recognition for our effort came in 2009, when the book was chosen for the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's George Hilton Book Award.

Ten months after publication, Lyle and I celebrated when the limited edition sold out. Happy to be reunited with our families after five years in the book business, in 2008 we dissolved our publishing partnership and began to enjoy retirement. Later that year, largely as an outgrowth of local interest in the book, and with the support of then R&LHS president Parker Lamb, the R&LHS Mid-South Chapter was formed. Lyle became a charter member, contributing a stream of articles to the chapter newsletter and presenting programs on his favorite topics, the L&N, Birmingham Mineral, and Birmingham streetcars. More recently, Lyle had looked forward to presenting a program at the Chapter's July meeting on his "other favorite railroad," the Frisco.

Another eight years would pass before Lyle and I would be reunited in a publishing effort. when he generously offered to write the foreword to my new book, *Great Temple of Travel*, a history of Birmingham's Terminal Station, a subject which also held many memories for Lyle. A book foreword by Lyle was the equivalent of a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, and I was honored to receive his endorsement.

I've not spoken of Lyle's contribution to the preservation of railroad history through his many other publications, including his popular first book, *Midwest Florida Sunliners*, along with many dozens of articles, photographs and commentaries. Nor have I mentioned his many kind deeds to benefit railroad museums and historical societies throughout the Mid-South region. Just ask the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum where they would be (literally) if Lyle had not used his tactful influence to persuade CSX to relocate the museum's rolling stock from Birmingham to its new home in Calera, Alabama. Or ask the L&N Railroad Historical Society what Lyle's legal assistance has meant in helping to establish the Society's corporate structure. There are numerous other instances where Lyle helped historical groups obtain ownership of the town's depot, or acquire a railroad artifact for a museum collection, or receive donations from his personal collection.

Over the course of his life, Lyle freely gave to others and enthusiastically supported their causes. His dedication to his faith, his family, and his friends was evidenced by many small and larger acts of kindness and generosity. He was genuinely modest and unassuming in his acceptance of praise or recognition, preferring to put others first. In all, Lyle Key was a special man, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.



Atlanta Rail Show, August 2007



# Watching trains and streetcars from Granny's front porch

By Lyle Key

*Editor's note: Lyle Key wrote the following unpublished memoir for "Birmingham Rails" and had granted permission for it to appear in this issue of "The MidSouth Flyer." It is highly nostalgic of a time when passenger trains and streetcars roamed the Birmingham District, and a vivid reminder that change comes to all, a fitting subject for Lyle's last newsletter article.*

**M**y great-grandmother was a spry little lady with snow-white hair, and I always knew her as "Granny." Granny lived next door to Blessed Sacrament Church on Pearson Avenue in Birmingham's West End, and for a little boy who loved watching trains and streetcars, her house was in a perfect location. The streetcar track on Pearson Avenue was used by #1 South Bessemer, #2 West End, and #3 Travelick so one didn't have to wait long for a streetcar to roll by. The beautiful new PCC cars took over on the #2 West End line on August 31, 1947, but #1 South Bessemer and #3 Travelick continued to use the older equipment.



*Birmingham Electric streetcar on Route 2, West End passing the intersection of 2nd Avenue, No and 19th Street in 1951*

Behind the houses on the other side of the street, one could see the trains on the double track main line of Southern Railway subsidiary Alabama Great Southern. That was the route for Southern trains to and from both Mobile and New Orleans, so like the streetcar line, the railroad stayed busy. The southbound trains could slip up on me very quickly since they didn't have to blow for a grade crossing from the time they crossed Center Street until they approached the nearby crossing. The northbound trains were easy to hear coming, however, since they had to blow for several grade crossings to the south.



*"The Goldenrod" pauses at Bessemer depot, June 1940*

My earliest memories go back to the late '40's when steam still was very much alive, and it almost was as thrilling to hear the steam trains coming as it was to see them pass. The new diesels seemed pretty neat, however, and the highlight of my day was watching the streamlined *Southerner* zip past with a green E-6 and seven shiny silver cars. To add further variety, the *Goldenrod* still was powered by one of Southern's Fairbanks-Morse motor cars, and it passed Granny's house everyday en route to and from Mobile. When I got a little older and was able to stay up later at night, I was able to watch the lighted windows on the southbound *Pelican* flash by as it highballed through West End on its overnight run to New Orleans.

Since I was a lad of tender years, I had no inkling of the major changes that were afoot on both the railroad and

the streetcar line that ran in front of Granny's house. First of all, I noticed that the steam locomotives weren't coming by as often, and soon, they weren't coming by at all. The #3 Travelick streetcar was discontinued in late 1951, and then in July of 1952, the elimination of the #1 South Bessemer car line brought an end to all non-PCC streetcar service in Birmingham. That left the PCC cars on the #2 West End line, and even that service came to an end on March 27, 1953.



*Lyle's earliest memories of steam-powered passenger trains would likely have included an AGS Mountain-type 4-8-2 like #6694, seen above in March 1946 storming through Irondale, Alabama with AGS #42. Hugh Comer photo, Marvin Clemons collection*

It wasn't the same without any steam locomotives on the Southern and without any streetcars on Pearson Avenue, but there still were plenty of diesel-powered freight and passenger trains to watch on the railroad. Then Granny passed away, and my visits to her old house in West End came to an abrupt end. Blessed Sacrament Church bought Granny's house and demolished it to build a new rectory, and repaving projects obliterated all traces of the once busy streetcar track on Pearson Avenue. The *Goldenrod* and the *Pelican* eventually were discontinued, and Southern merged with Norfolk & Western to form Norfolk Southern Corporation.

Needless to say, much has changed since those carefree days I spent at Granny's house as a little boy. Blessed Sacrament Church still looks the same and remains an active parish, but the old church school building on Cotton Avenue stands vacant with an uncertain future. The former Southern Railway main line through West End is another constant, and it continues to thrive as a busy, double-track railroad. Today, that NS main line is primarily a freight corridor, but twice a day, it still witnesses the passage of Amtrak's *Crescent*, the successor to the old *Southerner* and the last passenger train in Birmingham.



*The "Southerner" of Lyle's early childhood. Southern Railway photo*



# R&LHS National Convention Report

*Reported by Bill Jones, with photos by Richard Morris*

**T**he R&LHS annual convention this year was held in the mid-continent U. S., in St. Louis Missouri, May 30th – June 2nd. The convention's base of operations was the restored St. Louis Union Station, a Hilton Hotel operated property. Check-in was on Wednesday afternoon, with dinner on your own in downtown St. Louis.

On Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, we began our day with a continental breakfast at the hotel and then boarded buses for a quick trip over the Mississippi River to the East St. Louis side and a windshield tour of the Union Pacific's intermodal yard at Dupo, Ill., formerly a Missouri Pacific facility. Then, return-



*The restored St. Louis Union Station, now a Hilton Hotel and headquarters for the 2018 R&LHS convention*



*Built in 1939, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy's "Silver Charger," was the last of the Burlington's Zephyr trains*



*Terminal RR of St Louis SD-40 #2009 pulled the inspection trip around the TRRA's St. Louis terminal area*

ing back over the Mississippi River, we headed west toward Kirkwood, Mo., the home of the National Museum of Transportation. Lunch was waiting upon our arrival, and when finished we had time to explore and enjoy their many exhibits and ride their historic trolley. One of the featured exhibits is the *Daniel Nason* (see *Railroad History*, Spring-Summer 2018, number 218, pages 68-75). After several hours at the museum, we then returned by bus to our hotel for a buffet dinner and the program presentations: "Railroads of St. Louis" by Ron Goldfeder and "The Frisco in Missouri" by Pat Hiatt.

Friday dawned early and hot. We again had breakfast at the hotel and then boarded our buses for a quick trip north and across the Mississippi River to the Melvin Price Lock and Dam where we observed an alternate, and early, form of transportation, river barge. We were afforded the rare opportunity to walk along the top of the dam and view barges passing through the locks underneath us. We then returned to our hotel for departing on a city circle tour by train, courtesy of the Terminal Railroad Association (TRAA). We left the terminal station trackage and crossed over the Mississippi River by way of the MacArthur Bridge, toured and circled around the East St. Louis area, went beside the TRRA's Madison Yard, crossed back over the Mississippi River via the Merchants Bridge, and finally back to the terminal sta



tion and hotel for our Annual Meeting and Presentations. Our own James Lowery was recognized for The Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project, followed by presentations on "Beebe and Clegg" by John Gruber and John Ryan, "The 1877 Uprising or The St. Louis Soviet" by Mike Matejka, and "Tiff Differs on the DeSoto Subdivision" by Norbert Shaklette.

Saturday was another day of bus riding, about 175 miles one way, to Monticello, IL and the Monticello Railway Museum. Upon our arrival, we were met at the Monticello depot and conference room for a box lunch. When finished, we boarded the Museum's train and went a short distance out to their grounds where we were able to enjoy their extensive collection of equipment and artifacts, most in very good condition and sporting fresh paint. More train rides were available until we had to board our buses back to St. Louis. Our evening meal was delayed a couple of hours due to cooling problems on one of the buses, but we still enjoyed the evening meal at the hotel. Our evening programs were "The Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis" by Lawrence Thomas, "The J. W. Barriger III National Railroad Library" by Nick Fry, and "The Daniel Na-son" by Ron Goldfeder.

Sunday was departure day, and some attendees took advantage of a behind-the-scenes tour of the hotel and station complex before leaving.

This year's annual convention was a great success with a record attendance. Next years annual convention and meeting will be held in Utah in connection with the 150th Anniversary of the "Golden Spike" Ceremony. See you there!



*Included in the circle tour consist was the dome-coach "Southern Hospitality," a former Union Pacific car owned by St. Louis Union Station*



*Wabash F7 #1189 idles with the Monticello Museum's excursion consist*





*Editor's note: The following article appeared in the 2nd Quarter 2018 issue of Lines South, the magazine of the ACL & SAL Historical Society, and is reprinted with permission by the Society. Our thanks to Editor Larry Goolsby for the use of the article.*

## The Last Circle Trip

by Marvin Clemons Jr.



One of the joys of railfanning in the 1960s was the availability of same-day, or overnight, out-and-back trips one could take by train. For example, from my home base in Birmingham, you could catch the morning train out on the Seaboard, Central of Georgia, or Louisville & Nashville and be back home in time for supper, or at least well before bedtime. If in a nocturnal mood, the Southern, Frisco, and Illinois Central offered overnight trips departing late afternoon or early evening, returning in time for breakfast.

But the ultimate passenger train adventure, if you had the time and money, was to make a circle trip aboard several different trains over connecting lines. Usually requiring a full day and night's journey, one could sample a variety of passenger train accommodations, from coach to Pullman, and in many cases still enjoy the amenities of dining and lounge car service.

In March 1968, it was just such a circle trip that my rail buddy, Stan Burnett, and I chose to do on the spur of the moment. I was home on leave from the Army before heading overseas, and with passenger trains in rapid decline we decided to take one more "grand tour" by rail.

Time being of the essence, we decided our schedule could not require more than a weekend. Examining our latest passenger timetables, we looked for schedules that would closely connect and give us maximum daylight for photography. Happily, we discovered a routing that would include not only our favorite trains but would allow us to ride over new territory and return us home in style with dinner in the diner, all a railfan could ask for.

And so, on a chilly Friday evening in late winter, Stan and I set out for Birmingham's Terminal Station to secure our one-way tickets departing at 10:50PM aboard the Central of Georgia's *City of*

*Miami*, connecting in Waycross, Georgia, with Seaboard Coast Line's *Champion* connection for Montgomery, thence a very tight 10-minute connection – rail travelers must have faith! – with L&N's *Humming Bird*, arriving back in Birmingham at 6:10PM the following evening. All told, our journey would cover 774.5 miles over three railroads, all in the space of only 19 hours, 20 minutes. Try that in 2018!

### Ridin' on the *City of Miami*

The first leg of our circle trip began with an on-time departure aboard the "City," as we affectionately called the *City of Miami*, still operating with a heavy winter consist of 17 cars led by two IC E-units. After checking in with long-time Central conductor and friend Jim Rutledge, we took

up our forward posts in the near-empty dome coach of Missouri Pacific vintage. We felt suspended in space from our perch high above the rails, as we twisted our way across the mountainous terrain heading east on the Central's Columbus Division. For the rest of the night we napped intermittently between station stops and train meets, anticipating the dawn and the first call to breakfast.

To borrow from an old tune, "Nothing could be finer than (breakfast) in the diner," especially if it was served in an Illinois Central twin-unit diner featuring "I.C. Griddle Cakes" and a pot of railroad-strong coffee. Somewhere around Tifton, now on SCL (ex-ACL) rails, we headed downstairs and into a warm dining car swirling with appetizing breakfast aromas. After a delicious "I.C. Special" breakfast of



In March 1968, the *City of Miami* still sported a round-end observation-lounge – a perfect ending to a lovely train, along with a twin-unit diner and two dome cars, one each for first-class and coach passengers. By the following January, the twin-unit diner would be replaced by a single dining car, and the Pullman dome would be eliminated along with the observation. But on this date, the car adds class to the scene at the Waycross passenger station just before the *City* leaves for Jacksonville. —Marvin Clemons photo





**Above:** The *Seminole's* scheduled 9:15AM arrival from Jacksonville provided a convenient connection with the "Little Champion" for Florida passengers en route to south Georgia and Alabama points. It wasn't to last, however, for on June 3, 1969, the once-proud *Seminole* disappeared forever from the timetable. SCL E8 575 leads a "scalped" version consisting of three head-end cars and two coaches as the train prepares to head west. —Marvin Clemons photo

**Right:** SCL 525 strikes a bold look for a little train at the head of the "Little Champion." The venerable former ACL E7 was typical of the regularly assigned power on the Montgomery local with its three-car consist of a baggage-coach combine, local coach, and the connecting through New York coach. —Marvin Clemons photo

bacon and pancakes smothered with maple syrup for all of \$1.90 plus tip, we moved back to the observation car to watch the tracks fade into the distance along the long tangent into Waycross.

Knowing we'd forfeited the *City's* high-speed dash to Jacksonville, I felt a tinge of sadness as I snapped a photo of the observation car pulling out of Waycross. But as the long chocolate-and-orange consist disappeared around the South Wye connection to the Jacksonville main, my spirits were lifted by the sight of our connecting train, SCL No. 89, affectionately dubbed the "Little Champion," waiting to depart over the former ACL's "Bow Line" via Valdosta and Thomasville to Montgomery.

### **Peanuts, Pecan Groves, and Cattle Farms**

The railroad town of Waycross was primarily known for its large freight classification yard and locomotive repair facility. But as we were to learn, it also served as a busy connecting point for



The former ACL depot at Valdosta was built to the standard tile roof and brick construction commonly found on larger station buildings in Coast Line territory. All the markings of a small-town depot are present—the ubiquitous train order semaphores, a green Railway Express Agency truck picking up express, even a couple of the local citizenry propped up in a window sill taking shade from the morning sun. The block signal in the foreground is the approach to Southern's GS&F crossing just to the west of the station. —Marvin Clemons photo



While the scheduled meeting points of the locals varied from timetable to timetable, in March 1968 the meeting point was at Dothan, Alabama. On this day the trains have an on-time meet at 1:06PM, with westbound No. 89 being held out of the station awaiting the departure of No. 90. In this west-facing view, the wait provided the photographer with a nice shot of an SAL piggyback trailer parked at the adjacent unloading ramp. —Marvin Clemons photo



rail passengers traveling to and from the Northeast and Florida to points in Alabama.

Shortly after the *City's* departure, the southbound *Champion* from New York pulled into Waycross on time at 8:10AM. A switch engine quickly coupled up to the *Champion's* rear coach and sat it over onto our little train. As we prepared to board, SCL No. 18, the northbound *Seminole* from Jacksonville, arrived with its short consist of a few head-end cars and two heavyweight coaches. A few passengers got off and would later board our train. Checking my Waycross Division employee timetable, I was surprised to learn that No. 89 was required to wait 15 minutes for the *Seminole* when passengers were reported. At a time when other southern railroads (notably the one of that name) were eliminating connecting trains at every opportunity, SCL still attempted to provide convenient connections whenever possible.

Upon boarding the "Little Champion," we were directed to the coach originating in Waycross. I failed to get the car number, but as I recall it was a regularly assigned lightweight coach. Coupled behind was the through coach from New York, a former ACL 270-series car which, according to Larry Goolsby's *Atlantic Coast Line Passenger Service*, was acquired in 1950 from the Chesapeake & Ohio when C&O canceled its planned *Chessie* streamliners. Following our 9:30AM on-time departure, we stepped back into the through coach for a look, and were so impressed by its comfortable ride and lounge seating area that we decided to switch cars.

Our day-long journey through endless fields of peanuts, pecan groves, and cattle farms proceeded at the leisurely authorized speed of 59 m.p.h. Our first scheduled stop was the small hamlet of Homerville – this was, after all, a local train – before arriving at Valdosta and a crossing with Southern's Georgia Southern & Florida division. Next was a brief stop at Quitman, then on to Thomasville for a scheduled five-minute stop and enough time to grab a Coke at the station. Our little train offered no food service, but happily the crew had brought some extra snacks along and gladly shared them with a couple of hungry railfans.

Speaking of our crew, and with apologies for not getting their names, both the conductor and flagman were most cordial and allowed us full access to the vestibules for picture-taking. Truthfully, there weren't that many good photo opportunities, though



**Above and below:** The superior ride and arrangement of No. 89's ex-ACL, ex-C&O center-lounge coach prompted the Circle Trip riders to move to that car. These photos show interiors of one of these six cars (series 270-275) that Budd built for the C&O in 1948 and that ACL purchased in 1950. —ACL photos, ACL & SAL HS collection



I've wished I had taken more just to document the route, considering the Bow Line may well be orphaned by CSX.

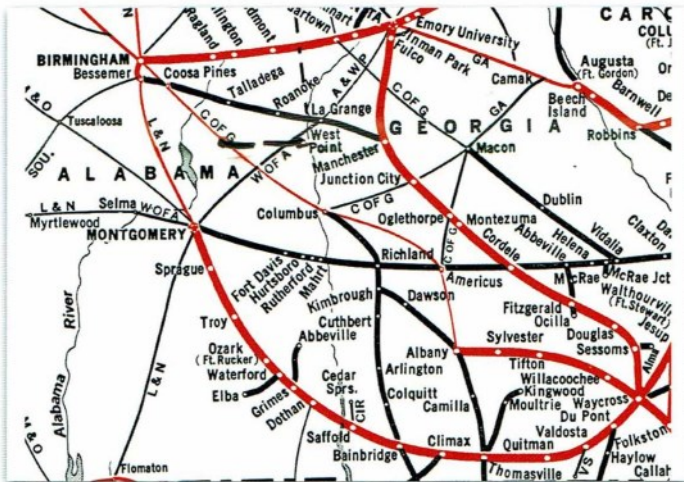
On we ambled along the undulating right-of-way to Bainbridge and another crossing at grade, this time with the former SAL line from Richland, Georgia, to Tallahassee. Then it was on to a stop at Donalsonville before crossing into Alabama and an on-time

meet at Dothan with No. 90, our eastbound counterpart.

### **L&N to the Rescue**

After a 10-minute stop at Dothan, we were once again under way for a roller-coaster ride through south Alabama's hilly Wiregrass region. As we zipped along headed for an on-time 4PM arrival





in Montgomery, we became a little concerned about making our tight connection with L&N's *Humming Bird*, scheduled to depart for Birmingham at 4:10PM. But just in case we missed, we had a backup plan to take the next train for Birmingham, the *South Wind*, departing at 1:50AM, the following morning. That would still get us home on Sunday, and so what if we did have almost 10 hours to kill in Montgomery. Just more train-watching bang for the buck!

As we approached the yard limits about a mile south of Montgomery's Union Station, our train slowed as expected and then ... uh-oh ... stopped! In a panic, we asked the conductor what was happening and were told we were being held out for a southbound SCL freight moving out of L&N's S&NA yard. And wouldn't you know the *Humming Bird* was already sitting in the station ready to depart for Birmingham on time!

Sensing our plight, the kindly conductor radioed the stationmaster and asked if the *Bird* could be held for two connecting passengers. A short time later our train began moving again, and a few minutes later we pulled under the shed across the platform from L&N's waiting train. Already 10 minutes late, the L&N conductor anxiously waved us on board, and as quickly as the vestibule steps came up, we were on our way.

As we jumped aboard, we caught sight of an L&N office car bringing up the rear. We thanked the conductor for waiting, and he informed us that the official on board the office car had given permission to hold the train. We thought of asking if we could go back to the office car and thank him personally, but decided not to press our luck.

Happily situated in our coach seats on the last leg of our journey, it was time to celebrate with dinner in the diner. And so, with the setting sun casting an orange glow across the barren corn fields of Alabama, we sat down to a fine L&N-style repast as the *Humming Bird*

### CITY OF MIAMI

From Chicago and Florida December 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31. January 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30. February 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29. March 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30. April 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29 and every other day thereafter.

Read Down		TABLE 14		Read Up	
IC 53	CofGa 52			IC 52	CofGa 53
SCL 5				SCL 6	
8 40 AM	Lv CHICAGO (Central Station).....	CST	ICRR Ar	5 40 PM	
8 50 AM	Lv 63rd Street, Woodlawn.....	"	" Ar	5 30 PM	
9 39 AM	Lv Kankakee.....	"	" Ar	4 38 PM	
10 50 AM	Lv Champaign.....	"	" Ar	3 30 PM	
11 28 AM	Lv Mattoon.....	"	" Ar	2 35 PM	
1 30 PM	Ar CARBONDALE.....	"	" Lv	12 15 PM	
10 10 AM	Lv ST. LOUIS (Union Station).....	"	" Ar	2 40 PM	
12 15 PM	Ar CARBONDALE.....	"	" Lv	12 30 PM	
1 45 PM	Lv CARBONDALE.....	"	" Ar	11 55 AM	
1 50 PM	Lv Cairo.....	"	" Ar	10 50 AM	
5 55 PM	Lv Fulton.....	"	" Ar	9 45 AM	
8 12 PM	Lv Jackson.....	"	" Ar	8 30 AM	
10 20 PM	Ar BIRMINGHAM.....	"	" Lv	3 40 AM	
10 50 PM	Lv BIRMINGHAM.....	"	" Ar	3 10 AM	
3 25 AM	Lv Columbus.....	EST	COFGA Ar	12 15 AM	
3 35 AM	Ar ALBANY.....	"	" Lv	10 15 PM	
4 40 AM	Lv ALBANY.....	"	" Ar	10 10 PM	
6 32 AM	Lv Tifton.....	"	" Ar	9 05 PM	
7 55 AM	Ar Waycross (Plant Ave.).....	"	" Lv	7 50 PM	
8 00 AM	Lv Waycross (Plant Ave.).....	"	" Ar	7 45 PM	

### SEMINOLE

Read Down		TABLE 16		Read Up	
IC 9	CofGa 10			IC 10	CofGa 9
SCL 17				SCL 18	
4 45 PM	Lv CHICAGO (Central Station).....	CST	ICRR Ar	10 40 AM	
4 55 PM	Lv 63rd Street, Woodlawn.....	"	" Ar	10 20 AM	
5 47 PM	Lv Kankakee.....	"	" Ar	9 30 AM	
7 10 PM	Lv Champaign.....	"	" Ar	8 15 AM	
7 54 PM	Lv Mattoon.....	"	" Ar	7 25 AM	
10 20 PM	Ar CARBONDALE.....	"	" Lv	4 50 AM	
6 30 PM	Lv ST. LOUIS (Union Station).....	"	" Ar	7 15 AM	
8 30 PM	Ar CARBONDALE.....	"	" Lv	5 00 AM	
10 45 PM	Lv CARBONDALE.....	"	" Ar	4 05 AM	
11 50 PM	Lv Cairo.....	"	" Ar	3 00 AM	
12 55 AM	Lv Fulton.....	"	" Ar	1 50 AM	
2 00 AM	Lv Jackson.....	"	" Ar	12 35 AM	
7 50 AM	Ar BIRMINGHAM.....	"	" Lv	7 00 PM	
8 20 AM	Lv BIRMINGHAM.....	"	" Ar	6 35 PM	
12 10 PM	Ar COLUMBUS.....	"	" Lv	2 25 PM	
10 25 AM	Lv ATLANTA.....	EST	" Ar	6 05 PM	
1 25 PM	Ar COLUMBUS.....	"	" Lv	3 20 PM	
1 40 PM	Lv COLUMBUS.....	"	" Ar	2 55 PM	
4 10 PM	Ar ALBANY.....	"	" Lv	12 40 PM	
4 30 PM	Lv ALBANY.....	"	" Ar	12 30 PM	
4 58 PM	Lv Sylvester.....	"	" Ar	11 47 AM	
5 03 PM	Lv Poulan.....	"	" Ar	11 36 AM	
5 16 PM	Lv Ty Ty.....	"	" Ar	11 23 AM	
5 30 PM	Lv Tifton.....	"	" Ar	11 10 AM	
5 42 PM	Lv Enigma.....	"	" Ar	10 48 AM	
5 49 PM	Lv Alapaha.....	"	" Ar	10 40 AM	
6 05 PM	Lv Willacoochee.....	"	" Ar	10 25 AM	
6 20 PM	Lv Pearson.....	"	" Ar	10 07 AM	
6 35 PM	Lv Millwood.....	"	" Ar	9 53 AM	
7 15 PM	Ar Waycross (Plant Ave.).....	"	" Lv	9 25 AM	
7 35 PM	Lv Waycross (Plant Ave.).....	"	" Ar	9 15 AM	

**Top left:** This 1968 map of SCL's passenger routes (heavy red lines) and connections illustrates the Circle Trip route from Birmingham southeast via the Central of Georgia to Albany, Georgia; from there via SCL to Waycross; from Waycross back west and northwest to Valdosta, Dothan, and Montgomery; and finally via L&N from Montgomery north to Birmingham. —Marvin Clemons collection

**Middle left:** This schedule from the December 15, 1967, SCL timetable (which remained in effect until April 1968) includes the *City of Miami's* timings as it traveled overnight from Birmingham to Waycross. —Larry Goolsby collection

**Bottom left:** The *Seminole's* December 1967 schedule illustrates the connections it provided in both directions westward with the "Little Champion" at Waycross. —Larry Goolsby collection



winged us safely home from what was to be our last weekend rail adventure.

**Epilogue**

When Stan and I made our last Circle Trip in March 1968, we knew that the days were numbered for Birmingham's handful of remaining passenger trains. What began as a slow decline in schedules and services in the early 1960s turned into wholesale abandonment following the elimination of mail movements by train in the fall of 1967. One of the first Birmingham trains to go was SCL's Passenger, Mail & Express locals Nos. 5 and 6, followed by the *Silver Comet* on January 18, 1969. Much to its credit, SCL maintained the *Comet's* full dining car and Pullman service until its last trip. By the end of 1969, with only three trains left to call, Birmingham's Terminal Station, the once "great temple of travel," itself was abandoned and demolished.

As for the trains we rode on our last Circle Trip, the *City of Miami* hung on, albeit dirty and disheveled, until Amtrak eliminated its route on May 1, 1971, along with the "Little Champion" between Waycross and Montgomery.

The most ignominious ending, however, came the following year to L&N's *Humming Bird*, our final ride home. Like other railroads, by the late 1960s L&N was experiencing mounting operating deficits from passenger service, especially following the loss of railway post office contracts. In April 1968 L&N petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to discontinue the train, and after extended legal proceedings, on January 9, 1969, the ICC finally granted permission.

To avoid a possible contest by the labor unions and another delay by the courts, on the morning of January 9 L&N clipped the wings of the southbound *Bird*, abruptly terminating the train in Birmingham. With little notice, the train's remaining passengers were herded aboard a waiting bus to complete their journey to Montgomery and beyond.

The railroad's rude act was lambasted in the local press, and L&N officials later acknowledged that the decision to abruptly kill the *Humming Bird* en route was, to say the least, a public relations faux pas ... an event made even more unthinkable to two young rail fans who, only months before, were welcomed on board the waiting train.

**Above right:** The "Little Champion"—the Waycross–Montgomery connection for the north-south *Champion*—took this leisurely schedule across south Georgia and southeast Alabama. —Larry Goolsby collection

**Below right:** The Cincinnati–New Orleans schedules page of L&N's passenger timetable for December 15, 1967, included this northbound listing for the *Humming Bird* and *South Wind* between Montgomery and Birmingham. The *Wind's* later timings provided a backup plan in case connections couldn't be made with the *Bird*. —Larry Goolsby collection

**CHAMPION**  
EFFECTIVE FROM MONTGOMERY DECEMBER 14.

Read Down		TABLE 13				Read Up	
SCL 18-89						SCL 90-17	
7 30 AM	Lv JACKSONVILLE.....	EST	SCL	Ar		9 10 PM	
9 15 AM	Ar WAYCROSS (Plant Ave.).....	"	"	Lv		7 35 PM	
9 30 AM	Lv WAYCROSS (Plant Ave.).....	"	"	Ar		6 50 PM	
10 00 AM	Ar Homerville.....	"	"	Lv		5 53 PM	
10 40 AM	Ar Valdosta.....	"	"	Lv		5 15 PM	
11 05 AM	Ar Quitman.....	"	"	Lv		4 53 PM	
11 50 AM	Ar Thomasville.....	"	"	Lv		4 25 PM	
11 55 AM	Lv Thomasville.....	"	"	Ar		4 20 PM	
12 12 PM	Ar Cairo.....	"	"	Lv		3 53 PM	
12 32 PM	Ar Climax.....	"	"	Lv		3 30 PM	
12 42 PM	Ar Bainbridge.....	"	"	Lv		3 18 PM	
1 12 PM	Ar Donalsonville.....	"	"	Lv		2 50 PM	
② 12 39 PM	Ar Gordon.....	CST	"	Lv		1 30 PM②	
12 51 PM	Ar Ashford.....	"	"	Lv		1 19 PM	
1 06 PM	Ar Dothan.....	"	"	Lv		1 06 PM	
1 16 PM	Lv Dothan.....	"	"	Ar		12 56 PM	
1 47 PM	Ar Ozark.....	"	"	Lv		12 15 PM	
2 22 PM	Ar Brundidge.....	"	"	Lv		11 38 AM	
2 45 PM	Ar Troy.....	"	"	Lv		11 13 AM	
③ 3 16 PM	Ar Ramer.....	"	"	Lv		10 44 AM	
4 00 PM	Ar MONTGOMERY.....	"	"	Lv		10 10 AM	

**Table J**  
December 15, 1967

Miles		The Pan-American 8 Daily	The Humming Bird 6 Daily	The Crescent 8 Daily	The South Wind 16 See Note 1	The Gulf Wind 8-11 Daily
0	Lv Cincinnati, Ohio.....	PM 9.45	AM 8.10	↑	↑	↑
3	Lv Latonia, Ky. Ohio River.....	f	f	↑	↑	↑
114	Ar Louisville.....	6.30	5.00	↑	PM 12.50	↑
114	Lv Louisville.....	6.05	4.35	↑		↑
156	Lv Elizabethtown, Ohio.....	f 3.57	f 2.30	↑		↑
199	Lv Cave City, Tenn. Nolin River.....	C 3.17		↑	A 9.37	↑
228	Ar Bowling Green.....	2.48	1.20	↑		↑
228	Lv Bowling Green.....		12.50	↑		↑
494	Ar Memphis.....		5.00	↑	A 9.37	↑
228	Lv Bowling Green.....	2.48	1.00	↑	8.15	↑
301	Ar Nashville.....	1.10	11.35	↑	8.00	↑
301	Lv Nashville, Tenn. Cumberland River.....	12.45	10.50	↑		↑
355	Lv Lewisburg, Tenn.....		11.31	↑		↑
408	Ar Athens, Ala.....	S 10.36		↑		↑
421	Lv Decatur.....	10.16	8.15	↑	A 5.37	↑
454	Lv Cullman.....	f	B	↑		↑
506	Ar Birmingham.....	8.30	6.25	↑	3.55	↑
506	Lv Birmingham.....	8.10	6.10	↑	3.40	↑
604	Ar Montgomery, Ala.....	6.00	4.10	AM 5.20	1.50	↑
604	Lv Montgomery, Ala. Alabama River.....	5.20	3.40		AM	↑
648	Lv Greenville.....	U 4.05	H 2.29	U 4.05		↑
663	Lv Georgiana.....	V	V	V		↑
684	Lv Evergreen.....	V	V	V		↑
709	Lv Brewton.....	V	V	V		↑
722	Ar Flomaton.....	2.35	1.00	2.35		↑
0	Lv Flomaton.....	2.00	12.50	2.00		PM
44	Ar Pensacola, Fla.....	12.45	11.40	12.45		1.35
0	Lv Jacksonville, Fla. (S.C.L.).....	1.35		1.35		4.35
369	Lv Pensacola, Fla.....	4.35	4.40	4.35		3.25
413	Ar Flomaton.....	3.25	3.30	3.25		2.10
722	Lv Flomaton.....	2.10	12.55	2.10		V
737	Lv Altmore.....	V	V	V		V
758	Lv Bay Minette.....	V	V	V		V
782	Ar Mobile.....	12.40	11.40	12.40		12.40
782	Lv Mobile.....	12.15	11.25	12.15		12.15
822	Lv Pascagoula, Miss. Pascagoula River or "Singing River".....	f 11.18	T 10.31	f 11.18		f 11.18
842	Lv Biloxi.....	10.46	10.07	10.46		10.46
848	Lv Edgewater Park.....	W 10.30		W 10.30		W 10.30
855	Lv Gulfport.....	10.22	T 9.51	10.22		10.22
864	Lv Pass Christian.....	K 10.05		K 10.05		K 10.05
870	Lv Bay St. Louis (St. Louis Bay).....	9.56	T 9.29	9.56		9.56
874	Lv Waveland.....	Z	Z	Z		Z
927	Ar Carrollton Ave. New Orleans, La.....	8.35	8.20	8.35		8.35
		PM 8.30	AM 8.15	PM 8.30		PM 8.30

From Jacksonville; see Table E, page 4



## Regional History

# 1960s Birmingham in black & white

*A Photo Album by Bill McCoy*

Railroad photography has been through many phases over the years, from the large format, black & white negatives common before WWII, to 35mm Kodachrome slides popularized in the 1950s and 60s, and now practically all-digital. Not as common are images shot on 35mm black & white film, the old Kodak Plus-X and Tri-X. Some rail photographers preferred shooting 35mm black & white to color (or in some cases, what they could afford), and managed to capture good quality photos with the better single-lens reflex camera.

One black-and-white shooter of the 1960s-era was Bill McCoy, a retired railroad traffic representative who worked in the Seaboard Air Line's Birmingham agency in the mid-60s. Bill was mainly interested in the variety of industrial locomotives working around the Birmingham district, but he also captured images of Seaboard and other main line roads. Bill has shared his collection with us, and we are happy to present a selection of his images from a half century ago. (Our apologies for the occasional pixilated sky resulting from the PDF grayscale conversion).



Alabama By-Products 0-6-0 switcher #4046 at Tarrant, AL



Federal Barge Lines ALCO RS3s #60 & #61 at Port Birmingham



Southern F3 #4165 at Norris Yard diesel servicing rack

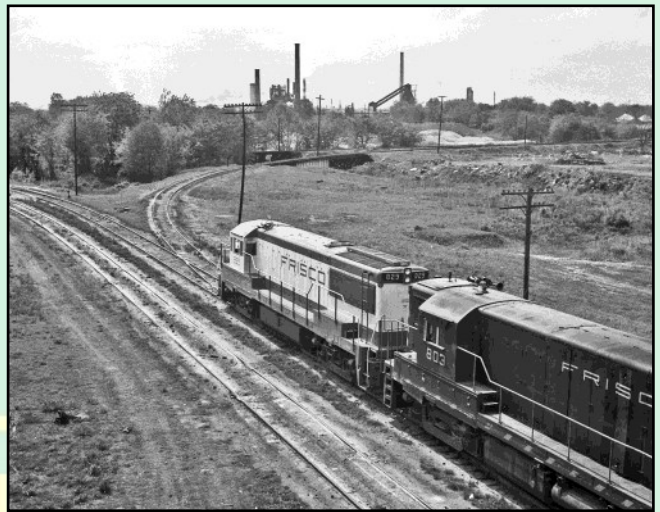


Birmingham Southern ACLO RS2 #150 and RS3 #153





SAL geeps await assignment at 32nd Street yard ready track



A Memphis-bound Frisco freight approaches E. Thomas Jct



Rarely-seen SAL ALCO F1 #4201 at SAL's 32nd St yard



Another rarity, Frisco U25B #804 at East Thomas Yard



A mix of L&N power tied up next to the old Boyles Yard roundhouse at left





Frisco E8 #2016 *Citation* awaits servicing after arriving at Terminal Station with the *Sunnyland*



And last, but far from least, is this vintage shot of US Steel Fairfield Works coke plant with RS2 #1504 about to cross the Birmingham Southern's Birminghamport main line.

***Thank you, Bill, for the great shots and wonderful memories from Birmingham's "last golden era."***



# Golden Era Classic

