



September 2019

# THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



Entering a New Decade of Service

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

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**City of Leeds**

**Saturday, September 21**

**10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

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**Historic Leeds Depot**

**Saturday, October 12**

**2:00 pm**

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# JOHN HENRY CELEBRATION & LEEDS FALL FESTIVAL

The Mid-South Chapter is NOT meeting in September due to the "John Henry Celebration and Leeds Fall Festival" that will be held in downtown Leeds (including the Depot) on September 21. The Chapter will have its exhibit rooms open that day during the celebration so the public can view those rooms and the materials we have in them. We encourage you to support this railroad-related effort of the Leeds community by attending the festivities and chatting with people about your interest in historic railroading. Most of all, come to Leeds on September 21, and enjoy the day!

SEPTEMBER  
**21** 2019  
**10a-4p**  
Historic Downtown  
On the Parkway  
Leeds, Alabama

Free Live Play Performances of  
"Listen to that Cold Steel Ring"  
John Henry Short Film



Professional Storyteller  
Gospel Choirs Featuring  
Birmingham Youth Fellowship Choir  
& Much, Much More!



Roaming Street Musicians  
Arts, Craft & Street Vendors  
Historical Stagecoach Display



Vintage Car Show  
Food Trucks  
Sponsors &  
Vendors Welcome!

Alabama 200 Historic Speaker  
Live Stage Entertainment

Plenty of Kid's  
Activities & Fun



Info: [LeedsJohnHenryCelebration.org](http://LeedsJohnHenryCelebration.org)



# OCTOBER PROGRAM

## SEABOARD AIR LINE PASSENGER SERVICE

### Larry Goolsby

For the chapter's October 12 program, Larry Goolsby will present slides and commentary on the Seaboard Air Line (SAL) passenger service to Birmingham. While Seaboard was normally thought of as a north-south carrier, it also had important east-west lines. The railroad reached Birmingham from Atlanta in 1905, more than 20 years before it built into Miami. Seaboard passenger service to Birmingham continued through the railroad's merger with Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) in 1967, then for 18 additional months under Seaboard Coast Line. Trains included both local and through runs east to Atlanta and then north to Richmond and New York.

The program will cover SAL's early history and completion to Birmingham; passenger service during the steam era; the transition to diesels and streamliners; how Birmingham fit into other Seaboard passenger services and connections; trains and equipment during the 1950s and 1960s; and the decline and discontinuance of passenger service in the late 1960s.

The most famous Seaboard train to Birmingham in the postwar era was the streamlined *Silver Comet*, which was inaugurated in 1947 and featured through coaches, sleepers, and dining service from New York. Many other classic Seaboard flyers served Birmingham as well, including the *Cotton States Special* and *Robert E. Lee* (renamed the *Cotton Blossom* in 1947). Only the *Comet* and a single local served Birmingham in later years, with the *Comet* offering first-class passenger accommodations and the local carrying significant amounts of mail and express.

Much of the program will be based on Goolsby's research and materials for his 2011 book, *Seaboard Air Line Passenger Service* (TLC Publishing), copies of which will be for sale.

Larry Goolsby has had a lifelong interest in the railroads of the South. He is a native of Woodland, Georgia, and grew up watching trains there on ACL's busy line from Manchester to Waycross, which included traffic from both Atlanta and Birmingham. His interests expanded to include the Seaboard when the SAL and ACL began to plan their merger. He was a charter member of the ACL & SAL Railroads Historical Society, has been a board member since the Society incorporated in 1993, and is editor of its quarterly magazine *Lines South*.

He has written three books, including ones on ACL passenger service, Seaboard passenger service, and the Atlanta, Birmingham & Coast, which was the ACL predecessor line through his hometown. His writing has also included contributor, consultant, and editor for other books and magazines.

Larry lives with his family in Kensington, Maryland, and is retired from a career in public human services. He is also active in his church, does a bit of human services consulting, and enjoys his grandchildren.



# STREAMLINER

BETWEEN

## NEW YORK - WASHINGTON

AND

## ATLANTA - BIRMINGHAM

*Embodying all the luxury and the wide range of accommodations usually associated with resort and vacation travel, the SILVER COMET is designed to give a one-night-out service to the predominantly commercial travel between New York-Washington-Richmond-Raleigh and Atlanta-Birmingham, with connections to and from Norfolk-Portsmouth . . . Observation, dining and sleeping cars, along with luxurious reserved-in-advance-seat coaches, powered by the latest type Diesel-electric locomotives, will make up the train . . . Individual car attendants, registered nurse and passenger service agent will cater to your every wish.*

### CONVENIENT SCHEDULE

12:45 pm Lv. New York	PRR	Ar.	2:50 pm
2:30 pm Lv. Philadelphia	"	Ar.	1:06 pm
4:03 pm Lv. Baltimore	"	Ar.	11:30 am
5:10 pm Lv. Washington	RF&P	Ar.	10:20 am
7:58 pm Lv. Richmond	SAL	Ar.	7:24 am
3:55 pm Lv. Norfolk	Ferry	Ar.	10:30 am
4:15 pm Lv. Portsmouth	SAL	Ar.	10:15 am
10:40 pm Ar. Raleigh	"	Lv.	4:40 am
7:40 am Ar. Atlanta	"	Lv.	7:55 pm
10:45 am Ar. Birmingham (CT)	"	Lv.	2:45 pm



Seaboard Air Line  
Office Car, Birmingham

(Photo by Jim Thorington,  
Clemons Collection)

# CHAPTER NEWS

## SCHEDULE UPDATES FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

Mark your calendar and plan to attend and participate!

**September 14** — *No Chapter meeting.* Instead of having a Chapter meeting on this day as previously announced, the Chapter will be supporting, and helping with, the John Henry Celebration the NEXT Saturday — See following item.

**September 21** — 10:00 am to 4:00 pm — John Henry Celebration at the Historic Leeds Depot and at other locations in downtown Leeds. Plan to attend, bring your family, enjoy the day, be part of your Chapter's support for this public event.

**October 12** — 2:00 pm at Historic Leeds Depot — NEW Chapter Meeting Date — ADD to your calendar. TOPIC: "Seaboard Air Line Passenger Service" by Chapter member Larry Goolsby.

**November 15** — 10:00 am to 11:30 am — NEW Event at Vulcan Park and Museum -- ADD to your calendar. This event during the day on Friday is part of the Terminal Station exhibit at Vulcan Park and Museum.

TOPIC: "Let's Talk Trains" — An in-depth conversation with train and rail experts.

LOCATION: Vulcan Park and Museum. Fee will be waived or paid by the Chapter for Mid-South Chapter members.

### Member Moment

The Member Moment in this issue of the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* features Eddie Cook. If you would like to be featured and tell your story, please contact Warren Jones.

### Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum

Beginning with this issue, the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* will include information about the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum. Information about other area railroad museums and historic sites may be added in future issues.

### MID-SOUTH FLYER

The *MID-SOUTH FLYER* is published bi-monthly 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 annually and include subscriptions to the Society's twice-yearly magazine *Railroad History*, quarterly newsletter, and the chapter's e-newsletter, the *MID-SOUTH FLYER*. Contributions, article ideas and reader comments are welcome.

*Ken Boyd, Editor*  
[kenboydphotography@yahoo.com](mailto:kenboydphotography@yahoo.com)



# HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

OFFICIAL RAILROAD MUSEUM FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA

[www.hodrrm.org](http://www.hodrrm.org)

Welcome to the first installment of museum news from the HOD. The museum features a historic operating standard-gauge passenger train with equipment dating from 1910 to the 1960s. Museum grounds include two restored depots, an indoor collection of railroad artifacts and memorabilia, an outdoor collection of railroad cars, locomotives, and cabooses, and a functional signal garden. The museum is dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and operation of historically significant railway equipment. The exhibits, operating railroad, educational programs, and specialty gift shop function as both a unique means of tourism and recreation and also a way to preserve the rich history of Alabama and the nation. The museum is located at 1919 9th Street in Calera, Alabama, just off I-65 Exit 228 between Birmingham and Montgomery.



## Current Restoration Projects

- ◆ 1926 L&N RR Tavern/Lounge Car "Alabama Club"
- ◆ 1959 Alabama Power GE Center Cab Diesel Locomotive No. 107
- ◆ Former Birmingham Zoo Crown Narrow-Gauge Steam Locomotive Park train
- ◆ Acquisition of 1952 CB&Q RR dining car "Silver Cuisine" from Amtrak

## Volunteers Needed

As with all non-profits, the museum relies heavily upon volunteers for train operations, restoration, ticket sales, and upkeep of equipment and track. If what the HOD is doing interests you, please consider becoming a member and joining the team.

## Upcoming Train Ride Events

### Saturday Train Rides

Saturdays Through September 28th

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 11:00 am and 2:00 pm

Except during special events

### Super Hero Express

Saturday, September 21, 2019

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 10:00 am, 1:00 & 3:00 pm

### Pumpkin Patch Express

Saturdays in October

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 10:00 am, 1:00 & 3:00 pm

Sundays in October

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 1:00 & 3:00 pm

### North Pole Express

Fridays, November. 15, 22, 29 and December 6, 13

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 5:00 pm, 6:30 pm & 8:00 pm

Saturdays, November 16, 23, 30 December 7, 14

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 5:00 pm, 6:30 pm & 8:00 pm

Sundays, November 17 and 24 December 1

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 5:00 pm, 6:30 pm & 8:00 pm

Sunday, December 8

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 5:00 pm & 8:00 pm

### Santa Special

Saturdays, November 30 and December 7, 14

- ◆ *Departure Times:* 11:00 am, 2:00 pm

## MEMBER MOMENT

*Eddie Cook*

I had a dream during my late teen years and early twenties. It was a short one, recurring occasionally, about uncertain, dire circumstances. A feeling that I was trapped with no way to escape, always awakening in a fright, but then just shrugging it off.

I was hired by the Seaboard Airline (SAL) Railroad in 1961 as a mainline fireman (with the requirement that a minor's release be signed by my parents), and I worked in this role for several years between Birmingham and Atlanta on the Georgia Division of the SAL. In 1963, an emergency arbitration board issued the 282 Award, which eliminated most firemen jobs on American railroads, and I was hired as a mainline trainman.

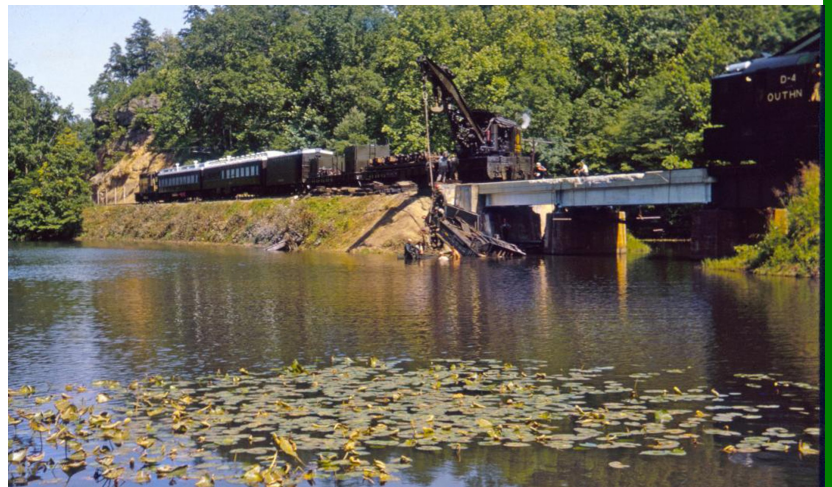
One of my first assignments on the new job was to a roadway work train crew. On July 1, 1964 or 1965, my crew had been assigned to replace some steel girder-type bridges with two-piece steel/concrete spans. We were sent to man a Hamlet 250-ton Bucyrus-Erie steam-powered wrecking crane (No. 71979), its complement of tool storage cars and a diner, sleeping car and necessary supplies. We used the Roper, Alabama, siding (SG723) as a base to install spans into the bridge over Queenstown Lake, a short distance west of the Roper siding. The first and longer span was replaced without incident by two new spans.

Afterward, we cleared at Roper Siding for the #33, The *Silver Comet*, around 11:00 am, while the track forces restored track to the new spans. After #33 passed and with no other trains due until the Eastbound *Silver Comet*, #34, that afternoon, the movement was shoved out of the Roper siding westward to the bridge site with the wrecking crane on point in a backing position (boom leading) followed by a Gondola car containing the next two half-spans to be installed and the remainder of the consist.

Upon arriving at the bridge site, a series of moves began with the removal and set-aside of the existing span and removal from the Gondola car of the next new half-span and its set-aside. Each time this was done, the wrecker was repositioned so the boom with a load on it would not be at an excessive angle that could adversely affect balance. After these maneuvers were completed, the new half-span was hoisted, swung slightly parallel with the track and carefully shoved ahead, under my direction, and carefully lowered into place. At this point, the foreman of the wrecker (with no load) boomed around 180 degrees to the other half of the just-placed span that was in the Gondola car. At this point, I anticipated a repeat of previous maneuvers. Instead, he decided, without hesitation, to boom around 180 degrees with that half-span and install it. This was a very bad decision! My dream was about to come true!

He boomed the wrecker around with the half span and its outward boom angle approached about 90 degrees, or about half way to the installation point. The track, which was new un-ballasted crossties, shifted, and the wrecker began losing balance. At first, the wrecker was turning over to the north but then rocked back south, as the engineer attempted to drop the span. The wrecker then rocked back northward and turned over into Queenstown Lake!

As the wrecker was turning over, the empty Gondola car coupled to it appeared to be turning over also. As I stood next to the Gondola car on the northeast abutment of the bridge, it turned up to such an angle that I could see the interior floor and knew I needed to vacate the area, if possible, so I jumped into the lake. My worst fear was that it would turn over on me, but, at some point, the couplers disengaged and it fell back. The wrecker engineer and I got a good soaking but were not seriously injured. The wrecker fireman who bailed out the back door was not as lucky; his jump did not clear the bridge and he was very seriously injured.

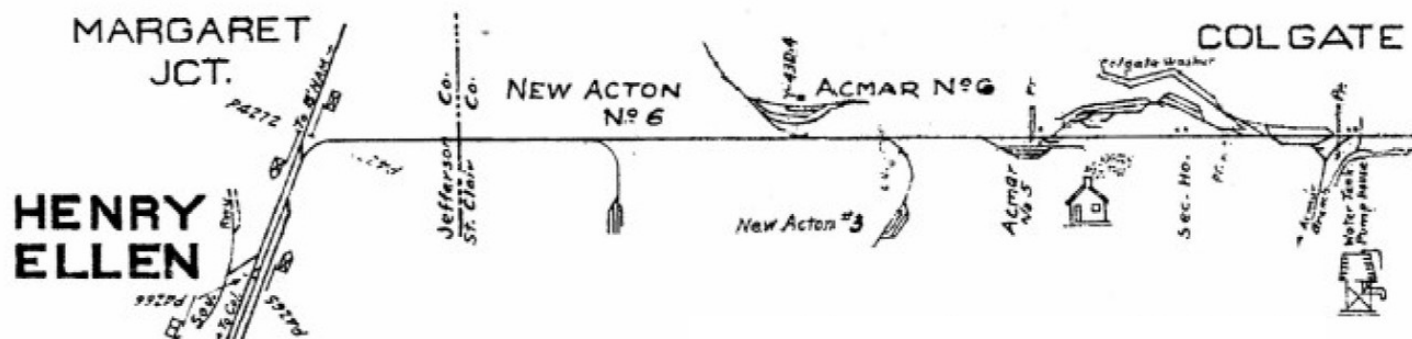


The crew was sent to Howells, Georgia, to get the Atlanta wrecker (a 150-ton brown hoist) and return to remove the previously set half-span and replace it with the original steel girder to get the main line open. The *Silver Comet* and several trains were detoured that day, and there was quite an aftermath with a formal investigation. The removal of the wrecker took months involving sectioning the wrecker into several pieces and driving pilings adjacent to the bridge for wrecker outriggers. Perhaps a story for another day.

So that is one of my "Member Moments," and, oh, that dream I mentioned earlier? Never had it again!







The schematic layout across these two pages is taken from an article in the CoG Magazine provided by Marvin Clemons. The schematic is from about 1940 and does not show all the mines developed by AF&ICo, although it does reflect the mines active about 1940. In any event, this schematic helps locate various operations of AF&ICo. At this time, Margaret Slope No 6 was located about 1.5 miles beyond No 3.

Co (TCCo). The AF&ICo records at the Hoole Library in Tuscaloosa include at least one annual report (1916) prepared as one of the terms of the agreement between TCCo and AF&ICo.

The CoG/TCCo's lands included 4,160 acres of mineral rights and 5,440 acres owned in fee simple, according to the 1916 annual report. The land contained the Harkness or Margaret coal seam. By 1916, this was accessed by a spur track with a number of spurs, sidings and small yards serving the various parts of the overall AF&ICo operations.

Additional lands were leased from TCI, the Alabama State Land Company, Brown-Fowlkes Coal Co., and other entities. Each year, the annual report of the company included a summary page of land leases and holdings. Although AF&ICo owned and purchased various tracts over its existence, the bulk of the coal mines were on leased lands for which a royalty was paid. This was true at Acton, Overton and at the Henry Ellen properties.

The AF&ICo records in the Hoole Library at UA do not include years prior to 1916. Fortunately, there is information in the State Mine Inspectors reports. In **1906**, it is reported that there were two slopes at Margaret, St. Clair Co., in the "Hackner" [Harkness] seam of 4.5-foot thickness. These mines employed 100 miners, plus 35 other workers. The mines were ventilated with fans (explosive gases were recorded), and combined production at Margaret was 60,000 tons, working 180 days, or half the year. It was also noted that TCI was operating one mine slope at Henry Ellen, nearby in Jefferson County.

The report for **1907** contains similar information with an increase in the labor force to 215 total and a production of 138,000 tons, assumed to be for the full year. TCI's Henry Ellen mine was noted as having a production of 38,000 tons, being served by the Southern.

For **1908**, data on Margaret 1 and 2 is similar. Although No 1 was noted as having explosive gas present while No 2 was not. Margaret No 1 was shown with a production of 111,000 tons while No 2 only had 11,000 tons. Both mines were shown as working only 216 days, a little less than nine months total. TCI's Henry Ellen property showed 35,000 tons production for the year.

No report for **1909** has been located, but the report for **1910** indicated that a slope had been opened at Acmar, as well as the two slopes at Margaret. Acmar was noted as working the Henry Ellen [Mammoth] seam, with a thickness of 11.5 feet. Only 18 workers

were shown at Acmar, likely a development team. The workforce for Margaret was listed at 350 men for both slopes combined. Production for Acmar was listed at 3,000 tons over 90 days, while Margaret No 1 produced 220,000 tons and No 2 produced 167,000 tons for a full year. TCI's Henry Ellen was still listed with production down to 29,000 tons working about half the year.

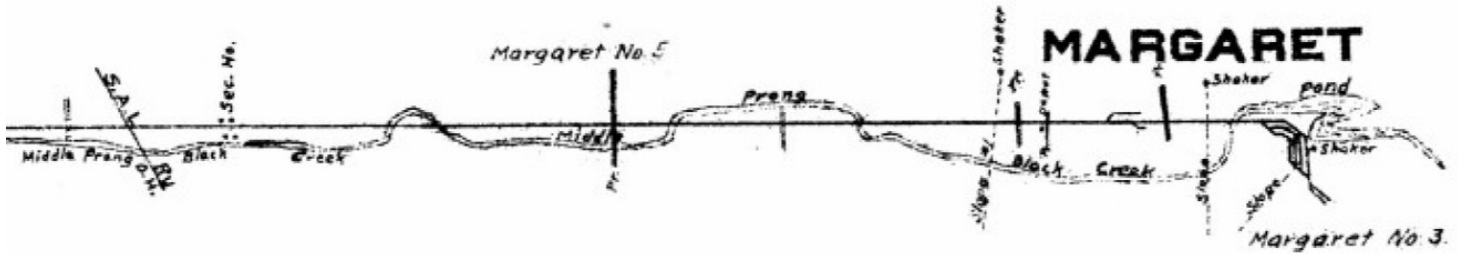
The Mine Statistics Report for **1911** (author's collection) lists Acmar and Margaret 1 & 2. Acmar employed 156 men while Margaret had a total force of 387. Production was shown as 80,000 for Acmar working only 108 days. Margaret showed 204,000 tons and 212,000 tons for No 1 & No 2 mines, working full time. TCI's Henry Ellen was shown with only 4,000 tons working only 30 days.

For **1912**, it was reported that a No 3 slope was being developed at Margaret. Acmar had apparently added drift mining to the existing slope and the workforce had increased to 200 men. Workforce at Margaret totaled about 360 men. Production at Acmar is 354,000 tons while Margaret reported 181,000 for No 1 and 226,000 for No 2. There was no listing for TCI's Henry Ellen mine.

The State Inspection report for **1913** listed three slopes at Margaret and one at Acmar. All these mines were using pick and shovel methods, and steam was used for hoisting, although electricity was used for the ventilation fans. Production at Margaret totaled 444,000 tons working a six-foot seam and at Acmar 435,000 working the 12-foot Henry Ellen or Mammoth seam. These mines employed 650 men working between 10 months and full time.

We have no data for 1914, but in the **1915** report, it appeared that Margaret No 2 had been idled and that Acmar No 3 had opened. No mention was made of Acmar No 2. In addition, the first New Acton mine had opened, accessing the Helena Seam. Overall employment had increased to about 700 men. Production figures at Acmar were 316,000 tons, working about 9 months, at Margaret 318,000 working about 10 months, and New Acton 60,000 for about 10 months.

The Hoole Library at UA holds the AF&ICo corporate records, which begin in **1916**. Overall production increased compared to 1915, and business conditions improved in the summer of 1916, although labor conditions were noted as "very unsatisfactory," mines in Kentucky and West Virginia, having pulled labor north when business in the south was slack. But even when business improved, there was



No 8, aka Brookston, was located about 1.4 miles beyond No 6 but was served by the Seaboard RR (SAL). Keep in mind that the mines were numbered in chronological order of development and may not be located in order along the Margaret Branch line.

Also note that the Margaret Branch of the CoG passed under the SAL mainline (above). Although the SAL line and the Margaret Branch were developed in the same time period, the SAL was in place first, forcing the CoG branch to construct a short concrete tunnel which is still in place. This may have been the source of "Tunnel Coal Company" name, although this is by no means certain.

a general shortage of railroad cars. Thus, even though demand peaked and prices increased, AF&ICo found itself limited in its ability to ship more coal. In addition, labor costs increased in an effort to entice more labor.

Margaret mines produced 384,000 tons and No 3 slope was re-opened, having been idled for two years due to low demand.



Wooden frame stretcher designed to be placed on a mine car to remove an injured man. Safety was a never-ending effort for the company, as mining is a dangerous occupation. Other features are checking with Fire Boss for gas. (Coal Age 1914, courtesy of Thomas Denny)

During slack times, the other two Margaret slopes had been extended, so that new workings could be started as needed. That is, the "narrow work" or entries were extended, although no headings were cut to the sides. This helped keep miners working and prepared for higher demand when business improved. Ventilation improvements were made with installation of a new Jeffrey fan at No 2, with the older fan moved to No 3.

Acmar produced 312,000 tons from Slopes 1 & 3 and New Acton produced 75,000 tons. It was noted that New Acton was named so that the market recognition of Acton coal would be maintained.

Colgate served as a central washer location for the overall operations in the Henry Ellen basin, as well as the location of a central

power plant. This was very important as all coal had to be washed before sale and the CoG depended on AF&ICo as its primary source of coal. Colgate was named for James Colby Colgate, of toothpaste fame. He and V. Everit Macy (distant cousin of the retail Macy) were key financiers in the 1908 reorganization of AF&ICo.

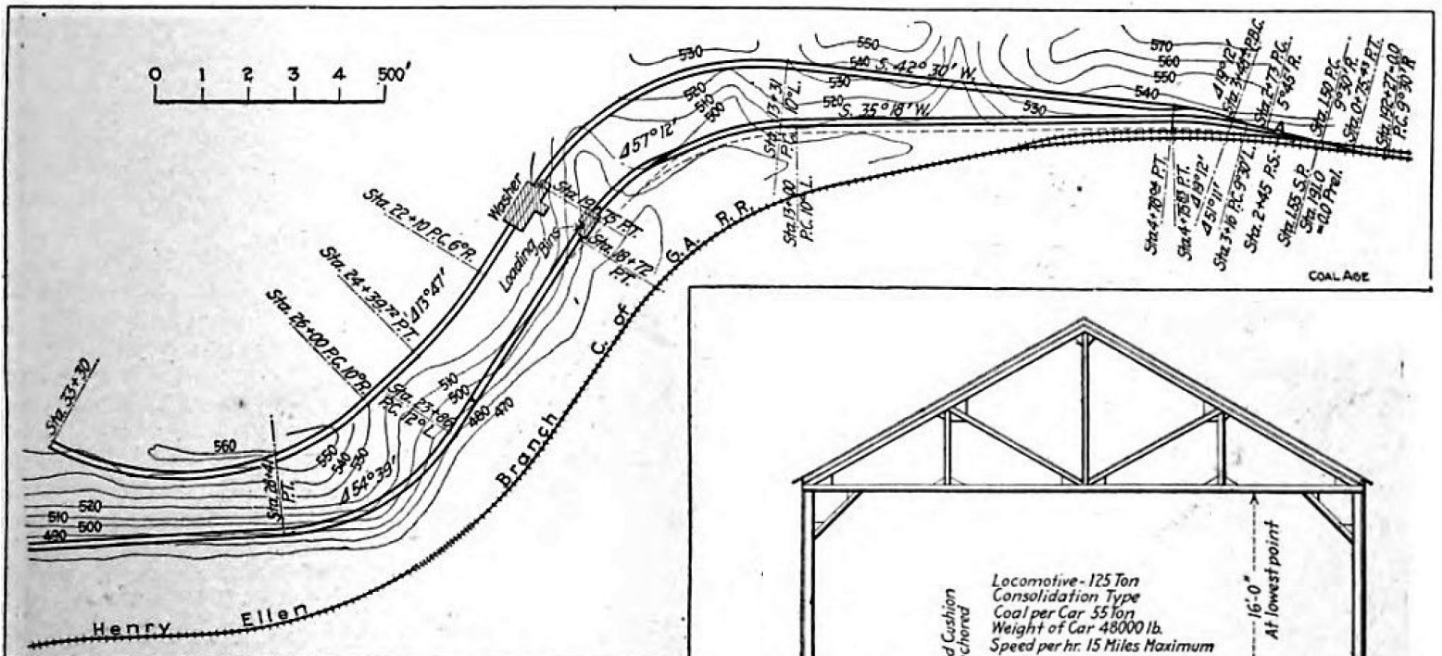
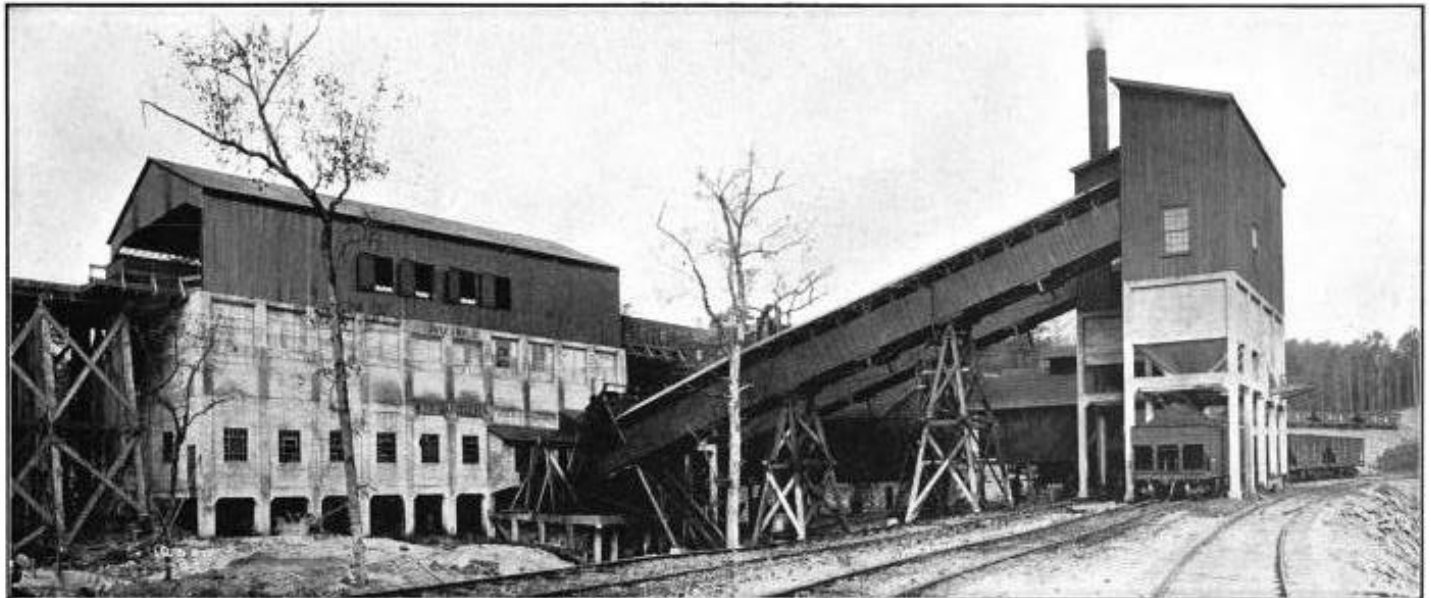
The corporate report for 1917 addressed issues related to U.S. entry into WW I, as well as labor and regulatory issues; these were covered in previous articles. Acmar and New Acton operated full time, producing 378,000 tons and 63,000 tons respectively before washing. A new mine was developed at No. 2 Acmar mine on the "Big Seam" [Mammoth]. In order to respond to this, and new housing had to be constructed for additional workers.

A new lease was being negotiated with TCI for 1,000 acres adjacent to the Acmar property. It was stated that, if successful, AF&ICo would control all the "workable coal lands adjacent to the CoG railway." It was noted that New Acton was lower in production and actually less desirable since it was not in the [Mammoth] seam, like Acmar mines. Generally speaking, New Acton would never produce at the same level as Acmar.

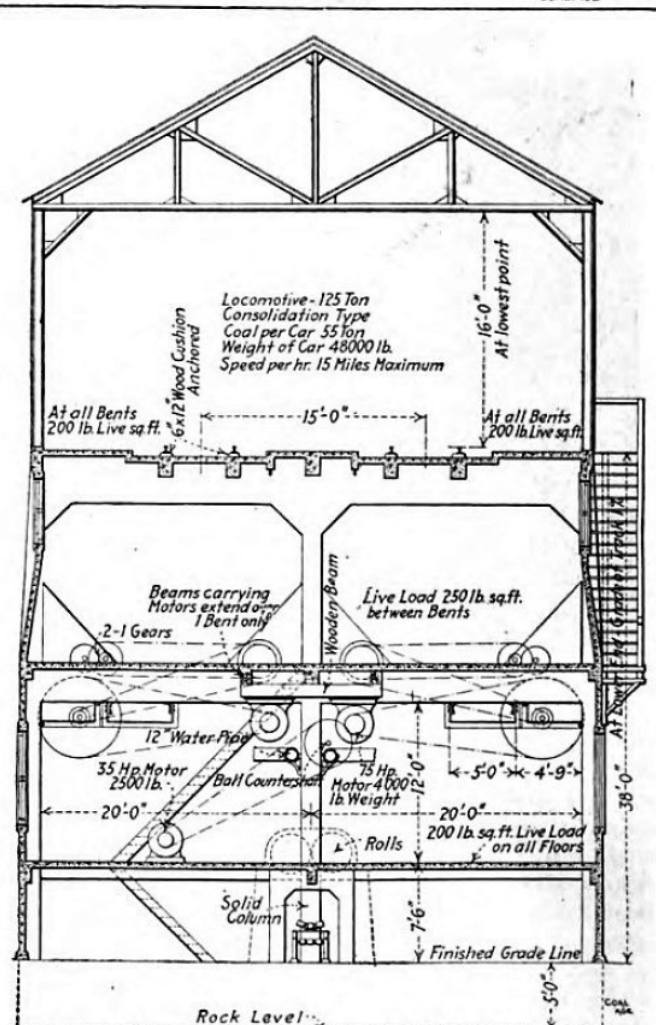
Margaret operated full time and produced 417,000 tons before washer loss, which was high at 12 percent, likely due to inexperienced labor.



Margaret Branch tunnel under the SAL mainline (Clemons)



These images are from a 1913 article in Coal Age magazine and from the University of Montevallo, courtesy of Thomas Denney. They show the washer complex at Colgate as well as the track arrangement. The washer was arranged with two dump tracks on top, one for Margaret and one for Acmar. This was done to maintain separate records of coal tonnage for the purpose of paying royalties to CoG for Margaret and TCI for Acmar. Four cars could be unloaded on each side, each car having a separate bin depending on coal size. As the coal was dumped and processed, it went down through the plant to the conveyor bins at the bottom. In the picture, at the top, the washer is at the left, the conveyors are in the middle, and the loading bins are at right. The power plant is behind the loading bins. The repair and machine shop would be to the left, out of the picture. Once cars were dumped, they rolled by gravity to the right of the track diagram and then by gravity to the loading bin ready for market. The three-story concrete base of the washer plant is still standing in the middle of a pond, visible on Google Earth. The side of the washer has the date "1911" and "H. F. DeBardeleben" cast into the concrete. Colgate is named for toothpaste magnate Colgate, who helped finance the 1908 reorganization.





View from the dump track at the Colgate washer plant showing cars on the dump and cars waiting to roll into the dump. (Clemons, CoG photo).

A new slope, Margaret No 4, was driven from the right-hand headings of No 1, working up from the mine to the surface. This enabled better ventilation and also decreased the haul distance from the large mine. This was similar to the No 3 slope being driven from No 2 mine. Fifteen new four-room houses were added, as well as a new commissary building. The old commissary became an auditorium for movies and meetings.

The power plant at Colgate was improved due to increased demand; a new pump and water line were installed for steam generation. Old pumps were moved to mine use. The washer plant was noted as being in first class condition.

The company report for **1918** again noted regulatory and labor issues and this had been reported previously. Margaret operated mines 1, 2 & 3, and records at the washer aggregate the production. Mines worked full time and produced 288,000 tons; washer loss was considered high at 8 percent. All mines were worked with electricity except two steam hoisting engines. It was noted that all DC motors were replaced with AC units. The power plant produced AC and it had to be converted for the older units, and the transmission lines had to be larger for DC. Additional housing was added with 21 new four-room houses. Labor was noted as being a problem at Margaret due to the higher amount of dirt in the coal [Harkness seam] and the longer distances to the work in the older mines. This would make the work harder and less efficient, impacting the earnings of the miners at Margaret. Narrow work continued to be pushed ahead of production areas to be ready for future demand.

Acmar operated full time, producing 366,000 tons with washer loss at 3 percent, better than other areas. Hoisting machinery was moved from the No 1 slope to the No 2 slope. A new slope was driven up from the workings to provide the equivalent of a new mine. Forty-two new four-room houses were added. The movie house at Margaret caused "rivalry and jealousy" at Acmar, so the company had to build a new one -- considered "a good investment"... with a "good dividend" in satisfied labor.

The washer plant was overhauled to upgrade the jigs and add con-

crete tanks for the larger jigs. Minor improvements were made at the power plant in order to assure dependable power as the overall mine operation continued to grow and tax the plant.

As noted previously, **1919** brought many labor, regulatory and demand issues to the business community, and these will not be addressed here. The issues of the November 1919 miners strike have been addressed previously, and was settled in 1920 with impacts to wages.

Margaret mines operated full time although production was down to 253,000 tons and washer loss was up to 15 percent. It was noted that the haulage distance in these older mines drove lower efficiency as well as maintenance costs for the haulways.

Acmar and New Acton operated full time, producing 354,000 tons with washer loss at 7 percent, and 44,000 tons with washer loss of 8 percent, respectively.

The plant at Colgate, as expected, required expansion with two new boilers, which were ordered and to be installed in 1920.

In **1920**, Margaret operated full time, producing 226,000 tons with washer loss of 18 percent. A new No 5 mine was developed, noted as "about a mile and a half from old No 1." This was found to have better coal and was closer to the washer plant at Colgate. The CoG installed the sidings to serve this mine. Equipment was transferred from other mine sites. An arrangement was to be developed with the railroad to transport miners from their houses to the new mine. Margaret No 4 slope was noted as being put into operation, a part of old No 1, but not active due to labor shortage. The coal from No 4 was handled by a "dinkey" narrow-gauge train to be dumped at the No 1 tipple.

Acmar operated full time and produced 377,000 tons with a washer loss of 8 percent. New Acton also was full time and produced 46,000 tons with a washer loss of 7 percent.

The installation of two new boilers at Colgate was completed, along with new equipment to haul ashes to rail cars. It was noted that electrical demand continued to increase and the plant had no redundancy remaining; a new generator was recommended for the next year.

The report for **1921** started by noting that the year was bad for all businesses, and that very few coal operators would make any money; labor issues were discussed in previous articles.

The No 5 slope at Margaret was brought into production, noting that the mine was "well located... well equipped... with better coal than the other Margaret openings." AF&ICo purchased a standard-gauge locomotive and five boxcars with seats which would be operated by the railroad in the morning and afternoon to bring miners from Margaret camp to the new No 5 slope, three miles away. Equipment for the No 5 mine was moved from the now abandoned No 1 mine. The No 1 mine tipple was still used to dump coal from No 4, hauled by a narrow-gauge dinkey moved from the company's brown ore operation at Russellville, Alabama.

The only note for Acmar was that the No 2 workings encountered a fault which required expensive "driving through" to gain access to



The year **1927** was bad for business in general and mining as well. Nevertheless, production was 1,144,722 tons. A new rail customer, Alabama Birmingham & Coast was added, which pretty well covered all the railroads east of Birmingham. It was noted that the New Acton coal was primarily a "domestic" coal, for home and business heating, and that it was doing well in the market.



Loaded cars at tippel, likely Margaret No 3 c 1921 (Clemons, CoG Magazine). Coal was sorted by size at the tippel with shaker screens, larger sizes being picked at the tippel, ready to ship, and smaller sizes sent to the washer.

The company felt the need to negotiate with Alabama Power Company to purchase peak-load power when needed, having used up the redundancy gained as more electrical equipment was added. This required paying a minimum \$400 per month charge, based on regular rates.

The company purchased 720 acres of land west of Acmar, which contained the Margaret, Acmar and New Acton seams. Other negotiations with TCI led to the leasing of all the other land adjacent to this purchase west to Henry Ellen. This completed the goal of controlling all the mining adjacent to the tracks of the CoG railroad. It was estimated that this land held a potential of 33,000,000 tons of coal to be mined.

For the year **1928**, the records hold the more detailed reports from the General Manager, F. R. Bell. Acmar was noted as operating about 8 months, producing 356,000 tons. The No 2 mine was closed due to market conditions but pumping was maintained. No 1 and related No 4 Acmar slopes were noted as been nearly exhausted, although it was expected that other mines on the same seam would be developed. Likewise, No 3 mine was "being exhausted very rapidly," but was expected to last another three years. The No 5 mine encountered a fault but development was being extended. A No 6 mine opened at the former Mammoth Coal Company slope had been idled while rail spurs were extended. The company paid for grading and CoG assumed the rest of the cost. Plans called for a temporary tippel to get up and running as soon as possible, the future depending on market conditions.

New Acton operated about nine months, producing 94,000 tons. Due to poor coal encountered, No 2 and No 1 were closed at the end of August, until market conditions improved. No 3 slope was not satisfactory due to coal quality encountered, and a new slope was being sunk half a mile to the south, to be called New Acton No 4.

Margaret also operated at about nine months, producing 326,000 tons overall. No 3 mine production included the No 6 mine, the total running at 700 tons per day [210,000 tons per year]. No 4 mine was noted as having a life of not more than two years, at a current rate of 200 tons per day. No 5 mine was producing at 500 tons per day based on pillar robbing. No 7 slope, adjacent to No 5 had been idled, but were being started again as No 5 wound down.

Both washer and power plants at Colgate were noted as being in excellent shape. Consideration was being given to recovering coal from the wash refuse with a possible "re-wash plant." If feasible, this would be used as boiler fuel for cost savings. An electrical and machine shop was operated here to keep repairs timely and in house.

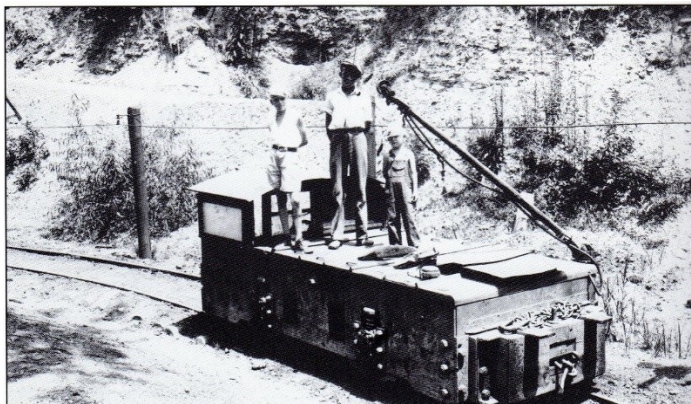
Total shipments for the year were down to 1,068,496 as prices fell and the company did not reduce its contract sales price. Consequently, two railroads' business was lost, the Seaboard and Atlantic Coast Line. It was noted that a new VP for sales and traffic had been hired, H. M. Brooks.

**1929** was a bad year for the coal companies due to the overall reduction in business leading to the Great Depression. This led to over production of coal and falling prices. Strong sales efforts and focused production on the most efficient mines helped maintain income as well as an increase in the domestic coal price based on quality. Total shipments were 991,000 tons for 1929, with Acmar at 368,000 tons and Margaret at 300,000 tons. No 6 Acmar and No 2 New Acton were idled. Ventilation and drainage were maintained till better business conditions.

At Acmar, No 1 and 4 mines were abandoned in May, with equipment moved to locations where needed. No 2 Acmar was restarted at this time, producing at 550 tons per day, and developing new territory for the future. No 3 Acmar was being exhausted, with a life expectancy of two years for robbing the pillars. No 5 Acmar was producing 700 tons per day and was being developed for future years with a life expectancy of 10 years. No 6 Acmar was idled as noted above, but rail spurs were in place and a new fan was moved into place for future use. Since the mine was new and relatively shallow, it was allowed to fill with water.

At New Acton, the No 3 mine was producing 325 tons per day, although most of the coal was coming from the newer No 4 adjacent slope. This No 4 slope was being developed "on a system of semi-longwall work." The coal from No 4 was hauled to No 3 by an eight-ton GE motor moved from Margaret. The generator for this also came from Margaret and was repaired and rebuilt at the in-house repair shop. At the end of the year, New Acton No 2 and adjacent new No 1 slope were restarted, based on demand for this domestic coal, the mines having been maintained dry.

Margaret No 3 was producing about 700 tons per day, including the coal from No 6 slope, which was dumped over the No 3 tippel. No 4 mine was producing 250 tons per day, and was expected to be exhausted in a year. It was noted that a pump station would have to be maintained in No 4 since it received drainage from No 3 mine. No 5 mine was producing 500 tons per day, including 350 tons from the



An electric locomotive ["motor"] used to haul coal from one slope to a tipple. (from *Rails Remembered*, by Louis Newton)

new No 7 slope. Pillars were being robbed in retreating fashion in the No 5 mine. When No 5 was exhausted, the pumping equipment would be moved to No 7.

Colgate's plants were in good shape, and the investigation of recovering coal from washings indicated as much as 50 tons per day might be recovered. The arrangement for peak power use with Alabama Power was being utilized when needed [heavy rains, for example] and was judged as being a good decision compared to delays in pumping. The machine and electrical shop continued to prove a good investment in timely and cost saving repairs. It was reported that the decision to provide electric lighting in homes and for the streets was being well received and was considered a good investment. A similar note was made about company-installed landscaping.

The report for **1930** included discussions of the overall impact of the Depression which were included in previous articles. Overall production decreased about 10 percent from 1929 to 900,000 tons. The company had arranged to market coal from Markeeta mine adjacent to the New Acton operations but owned by Charles DeBardeleben, Jr., the president's son who had left AF&ICo to seek his own fortune.

The company continued its policy of prudent capital investment when and where needed, spending \$210,000 in 1930 for a variety of items. The largest of these included a new electrical plant related to Acmar, coal-handing equipment at Acmar, including a new tipple and revolving car dump, land acquisition of 920 acres of land from Alabama State Land Company, previously leased, including the Colgate plant site and other coal acreage, and 40 acres of land adjacent to Margaret owned by the L&N Railroad. All of these items and others were carefully justified and showed the careful long-term management view of the company.

The mines operated this year were Margaret 3, 4 and 5, Acmar 2 and 5, and New Acton 2 and 3 (plus Overton 1). Acmar No 6 was idle. Long-view exploration with diamond drilling identified two high-quality seams of coal on the Acmar property leased from Brown-Fowlkes Coal Co and the DeBardeleben estate. These seams were 30 and 40 inches thick.

Acmar No 2 was producing 700 tons per day and was robbing on retreat but expected to go for three or four more years. Pit car loaders were purchased for this mine as well as a mining machine moved from Overton for improved mining and loading of coal underground. No 3 Acmar was expected to be exhausted in March 1931, with current mining at the outcrop.

Acmar No 5 was producing 1200 tons per day, and was expected to have "a good many years" remaining, although currently a fault was being addressed. Eight pit car loaders and two Jeffrey coal cutting machines were purchased and proving justified in cost. Also added were new pumps and 140 new 2.5-ton mine cars, equipped with Timken roller bearings. This expense enabled the reduction in labor of five men on the tipple, and improved production from 800 to 1200 tons per day.

New Acton No 2 was noted as producing about 150 tons per day, from the new slope at the No 1 mine. The No 2 slope had been closed, so that shorter haulage and cheaper mining could be used via the new No 1 slope. No 3 slope was producing about 275 tons per day, and was experiencing a series of faults lowering production in the newer No 4 slope. This mine had been equipped with electric lamps due to gas coming down through cracks in the roof.

Margaret No 3 mine was producing about 750 tons per day, mostly from the No 6 slope where good new territory was being developed. Two Jeffrey coal-cutting machines had been installed, reducing cost and improving quality. No 3 was robbing on retreat, but was expected to continue for some time. No 4 mine was producing 250 tons per day and was expected to be exhausted in the coming year. No 5 was producing 500 tons per day with the coal actually coming from the No 7 slope; No 5 was all robbing work. There were some problems being encountered with coal quality in lower No 7 but focus was on extending the upper workings.

The plants at Colgate continued to operate in excellent condition for washing and power generation. The CoG inspected the washer regularly and found it to be excellent. The power plant had a new 3500-kW generator replacing two 500-kW units. This was expected to preclude buying peak power from Alabama Power and the new unit was saving fuel costs.

The report for **1931** included impacts of the Depression as reported previously. This year showed a decrease in tonnage from 901,000 to 853,000 tons. On a unit ton basis, Acmar was far less profitable than New Acton and Margaret, yet Acmar produced more tonnage than the other two combined. But the overall operation was profitable.

At Acmar, the No 2 mine was very deep and was experiencing a "squeeze" due to the weight of the overburden. This caused roof falls and crushed pillars, causing operation to be "problematical;" remaining life was estimated to be two more years. No 3 mine was abandoned in March 1931, and all equipment was being relocated. No 5 mine was producing 1400 tons per day, after much of the year being in faulty conditions raising the cost and lowering the production, a problem which it believed is over. These conditions precluded the use of the more efficient coal cutting machines put in place, and it was only in the last part of the year that these machines could be used again.

This mine still used steam hoists which required expensive repairs during the year. No 6 mine was only producing 200 tons per day, but was not being developed aggressively for output, rather development was being extended for future mining while labor was cheap and readily available. A new steel tippie and rotary dump with concrete bin had been installed for the future, reducing labor costs at the tippie.

New Acton No 2 was only producing 150 tons per day, and was expected to last only two more years. No 3 was up to 350 tons per day, due to new territory with good coal being developed beyond faulty territory.

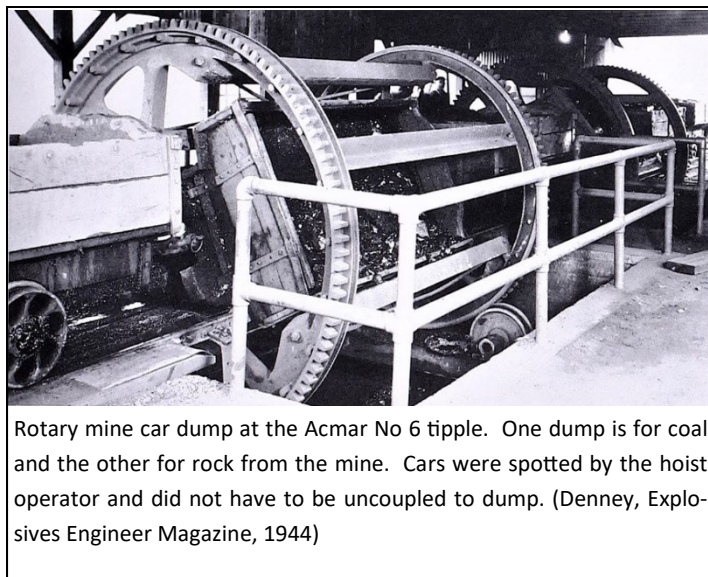
At Margaret, No 3 mine was producing 200 tons per day and handling 900 tons per day from No 6 slope. Forty pit-car loaders were purchased for this mine in conjunction with coal-cutting machines, thus reducing cost and improving production. The electric haulage from No 6 slope to No 3 tippie was rebuilt upgrading the rail to 60# [from Russellville brown ore mine], and adding a used 10-ton GE motor refurbished by the company's shop. No 6 workings were encountering good coal with a seven- to eight-year life expectancy, while No 3 was expected to last only a couple of years. No 4 mine was abandoned in April 1931, only maintaining pumping from No 3 drainage as planned. No 5 was producing 100 tons per day with an additional 300 tons coming from No 7 slope which was part of the same mine, and using the No 5 tippie. The overall operation at No 5 was expected to last two more years. The steam hoist at this location was replaced with an existing 75-horsepower electric hoist improving cost and labor.

The Colgate plants continued in excellent condition as also did the operations as well as the machine and electrical repair shops equipped to do acetylene and electrical welding.

Production for **1932** was 632,000 tons, the lowest since 1910. But AF&ICo was actually producing a larger percentage of the state's output at eight percent than in 1929 at five percent. Business conditions have been discussed previously. Since average working time was about one-third normal, the company required ["forced"] the employees to engage in farming with support from the company using company land. The company continued to make capital improvements and selected landscaping.

No 2 Acmar was producing 400 tons per day based entirely on robbing pillars on retreat. As noted, the depth of the mine was causing overburden to "squeeze" pillars -- life expectancy of No 2 was about 2 years. No 5 Acmar produced 1400 tons per day, with some faulty territory, which was expected to require a new slope to develop the left headings of this mine. Coal cutting machines and mechanical loaders were being used routinely by this time, which was stated to save cost. No 6 Acmar produced 250 tons per day from extending slope, headings and airways, anticipating future production for this "very modern mine."

The New Acton No 3 and then No 2 were closed due to market conditions. The decision was made to withdraw from the market for domestic coal and to let the Markeeta Coal Co handle that market; AF&ICo had been selling Markeeta coal on a commission basis.



Rotary mine car dump at the Acmar No 6 tippie. One dump is for coal and the other for rock from the mine. Cars were spotted by the hoist operator and did not have to be uncoupled to dump. (Denney, Explosives Engineer Magazine, 1944)

Margaret No 3 tippie handled 1300 tons per day, with 200 tons from No 3 proper, based on robbing and 1100 tons from the No 6 slope. Ten additional pit-car loaders were added during the year so that the No 6 mine was almost 100-percent mechanical for cutting and loading coal. Due to the length of the No 6 workings, a new 60,000-ft<sup>3</sup> capacity fan was added for ventilation. The slope of No 6 was being turned at an angle judged to better follow the "trough" of the seam. No 5 mine was handling 350 tons per day with most of this coming from the No 7 slope; coal from No 5 was mostly robbing of pillars. It was noted that No 7 had encountered faulty territory and life of this operation was shorter than previously predicted.

In **1933** the company did not pay a dividend. Business conditions and worker issues have been discussed in previous articles. Efforts by workers with the mandatory farming and canning program continued with a great deal of food produced.

The sales department "was able, after long effort to convince SAL to support development of a coal mine on their line." SAL passed on the south side of the northeast extent of the basin after passing through the basin. Thus this new mine would have to be at the far eastern end of the Margaret group. As the land was owned by the CoG, their approval was required, and an additional royalty of two cents per ton would negotiated above that already paid for CoG Margaret coal. Development of this mine began in 1933, on a one-mile SAL spur and the mine was named Brookston, for H. M. Brooks, VP of Sales and Traffic; it was also be called Margaret No 8. Development utilized much existing equipment moved to the new site, and spur costs were shared, with SAL RR paying about one third. This mine was connected underground to the Margaret No 6 mine. It had a new wooden tippie as well as its own washer prior to loading on SAL cars.

In April 1933, AF&ICo purchased the Markeeta Coal Company, located in the New Acton area from Charles DeBardleben, Jr., for \$35,000. Although the mine was idle, the acreage was valuable and it was expected the mine would be productive in future years becoming New Acton No 5. Also, the company purchased 75 acres of land where the No 6 Acmar mine was developed, also a way to remove an annoying neighbor.



Production for 1933 was 621,222 tons, slightly less than in 1932. Acmar No 2 was robbing pillars and expected to be worked out during the coming year. No 5 was producing 1400 tons per day, and the problems with the faulty area were past. Mechanical cutters and pit car loaders continued in use, and more cutting machines were put to use in older areas of the mine that had not been practical with hand methods. Four drag conveyors were purchased, each one moving 100 tons per day.

New Acton No 2 was producing 175 tons per day, and was expected to last another year. No 3 was producing at 300 tons per day of domestic coal.

Margaret No 3 tippie was handling 1200 tons per day, with over 1100 tons of that coming from No 6 slope. Coal-cutting machines continued in use here with pit car loaders. An eight-ton electric locomotive had been installed for haulage in the 6th North heading in order to enable new development and reduce haulage costs. Mule haulage was limited in distance. No 3 was robbing pillars and expected to last two more years.

It was noted that there were plans to connect Margaret No 6 underground to the new Brookston slope [aka, Margaret No 8]. A new 1,000-foot slope had been driven to make this connection. This would avoid a surface haulage and enable coal from No 8 to go to SAL at No 8 tippie or to CoG at No 3 tippie. It was noted that this survey for 1,000-foot underground required three miles of surface survey, yet connected within six inches.

The general issues of 1934 relating to labor and regulation have been reported previously. AF&ICo was able to continue operations when most major operators were under strike shutdowns. The Overton mines were closed August 11, 1934, when the miners there joined the union. Production for the year ended up at 688,000 tons overall. It was noted that AF&ICo and nearby Red Diamond Coal Company were the only commercial coal companies in the state that were not union.

At Acmar, the No 2 mine was closed and equipment was moved to other locations. No 5 Acmar was producing 1300 tons per day and was expected to continue at this rate. The issues with overburden "squeeze" continued, and caused the return to pick and shovel mining rather than machine cutters. A new bathhouse was built for 350 men, per employee request, requiring a charge of 75 cents per month. A new ventilation fan was installed at No 5, to double the capacity, the fan having been at Overton previously. It was noted that some white employees had been agitating for the union and were replaced with "negro" employees.

The New Acton No 2 slope was down to 170 tons per day and was expected to close within months. No 3 mine was producing 450 tons per day, with attention to producing domestic sizes which "bring fancy prices." The No 4 slope, which was an extension of No 3, had a new steel hoist house added with a 150-horsepower Ottumwa hoisting engine, from Margaret No 5.

Margaret No 3 was handling 1200 tons per day, with 1,100 of that coming from No 6 slope. No 3 production was from robbing. Me-

chanical mining continued at No 6, producing a high-grade steam as well as domestic coal. A new 75-horsepower auxiliary hoist was being used to transfer coal from No 8 to No 6 slope, or reverse, as needed. There was reference to No 8 being referred to as New No 6 slope. It was stated that this slope had been driven 1,000 feet in 1934 with four entries turned from the slope, and good coal found. The No 3 slope was expected to be exhausted in the coming year, but this tippie served No 6 and No 8 and needed to be rebuilt.

The No 8 Slope (Brookston) was up to 450 tons per day, with only the SAL contract amounts being brought to that tippie and the rest going to No 3 tippie on CoG rails via No 6 slope. The washer at No 8 was producing excellent steam coal as well as nut, stoker, egg and lump sizes.

Colgate plants and shops continued to perform well with the only major maintenance being rebuilding the washer jigs to maintain quality.

In 1935, state coal production continued in decline, although AF&ICo increased production to 840,000 tons, increasing its share of state commercial production to 16 percent--the largest non-captive producer and the only large non-union coal company. Part of this was due to a coal miners strike. Overall, New Acton was most profitable and Acmar the least. Rail business generally increased. When the governor settled the strike, AF&ICo was compelled to grant increases in wages, including salaried employees. Housing at Overton was being used for Henry Ellen workers, with the company providing transportation by truck. In addition, the company provided transportation by rail for some Margaret miners. All mines and downtown office were connected by telephone.

The company's schools, welfare, safety, and farming programs continued. A Quarter Century Club was started for employees of 20 (sic) years or more, getting a \$5 monthly "gift" and a gold badge. [Rent was about \$6 per month.] Christmas gifts were given to all employees' children.

Acmar No 5 was producing 900 tons per day. A fire of "incendiary origin" [arson] burned the tippie, which was rebuilt over a month's time. This shutdown required the restart of No 6 Acmar which had been idle for 2 years. No 6 required rebuilding of mine tracks and mine cars but was brought up to 100 tons per day production. The hoist motor was replaced with a larger motor from Overton which enabled an increase in haulage and production.

New Acton No 2 was abandoned in May, having been worked out. No 3 was producing 375 tons per day, with half of the coal sold for domestic market. No 5 mine produced 350 tons per day, being reopened after two years to replace No 2 mine. A 25-foot loading boom was installed at these two tipples to enable lump coal to be loaded with less breakage.

Margaret No 3 mine pillars were being robbed, producing 50 tons per day, and handling 1100 tons from No 6 and No 8 mines through interconnection. No 6 slope installed a 300-horsepower hoist from Overton which enabled increased haulage "in spite of the increase in distance to haul the coal." No 6 continued under-

Margaret Mine Run, from *Rails Remembered* V. 1, Lewis Newton:

"Five or six mornings a week, the shrill sound of a backup whistle on the rear of a caboose announced the arrival of the Central's mine switcher as it backed its train up the branch into Margaret, powered by a 600-series Class MK Mikado. Usually its first stop was at the commissary siding where it would set off a load of groceries or, especially in the summertime, an insulated car loaded with block ice, which was split up and sold to the local residents. From there it continued its trip a mile or so up the branch to the tipple of No 6 mine, where it delivered its empty hopper cars. It then gathered up the loads of coal, about 25 or 30 a day as I recall, and headed down the branch toward Acmar and Henry Ellen. Most of the hoppers in the trains were stenciled "WASHER & COLGATE ONLY." Dad pointed out to me that they were equipped with antiquated archbar trucks, but the cars were still sufficiently serviceable to handle raw coal from Margaret to AF&ICo's preparation plant, or washer, at Colgate near Acmar. While seemingly rather routine, the operation was vitally important to the economy of Margaret." (Images below and right from book)



CoG RR Margaret Mine Run (Clemons, CoG photo)



Cars waiting to be loaded at Margaret in the late 1930s.



Central of Georgia No. 605 Mikado in June 1940, handling the Margaret mine run, at the Commissary.

ground development with good results. A new steel tipple was being built with a rotary dump and 150-foot conveyor. No 8 (Brookston) was producing 350 to 700 tons per day as needed, with excess coal continuing to be dumped over No 3 tipple.

At Colgate, the wooden washer jigs were rebuilt and improved. The power plant had a new water supply line rebuilt from wooden pipe to cast iron, the pipe coming from Russellville brown ore mine. The old wooden machine shop burned and was rebuilt with steel construction, being dedicated to J. M. Overton, former President of the company.

**Editor's Note:** This concludes Part 4 on AF&ICo. Part 5 will cover the period 1936 to 1953.

# THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



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