



January 2020

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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2:00 pm

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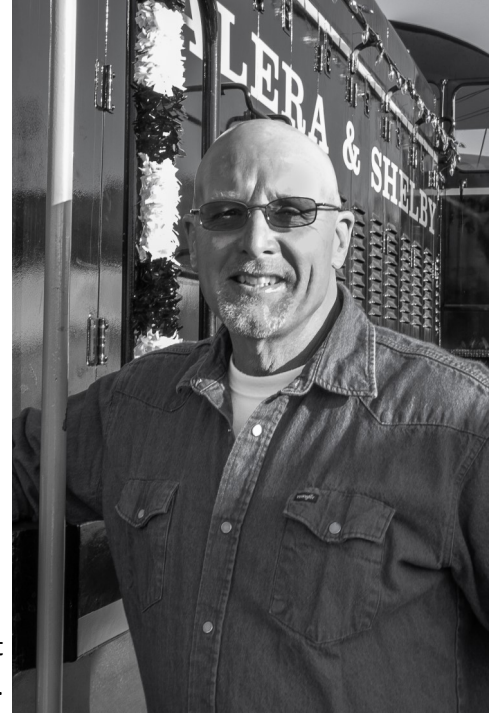
THE HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

David Brewer, New Executive Director

David Brewer is the new Executive Director at the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum in Calera. Previously, David served for 20 years as the Executive Director at Rickwood Field in Birmingham. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in History, and he and his family live in Oneonta. (See the historic Oneonta locomotive image on page 15.) David's industrial history work includes a thesis on brown iron ore mining, as well as a focus on Alabama charcoal blast furnaces. Other related projects include roles as historian and archaeologist on a range of topics and sites related to the Birmingham Industrial District.

At the Mid-South Chapter meeting on January 18, David will introduce himself to the Chapter, discuss his interesting background in industrial history, and talk about his previous tenure with the Friends of Rickwood Field. He also plans to provide an update on ongoing activities and projects at HOD as well as some thoughts on plans going forward including ideas on the mutually beneficial relationship between the Museum and the Mid-South Chapter. The program will involve a combination of informal conversation and a PowerPoint presentation.

This is an important meeting for the Chapter and the Museum. For anyone who has not visited the Museum recently or is not a member, this is an exciting time at the Museum. The HOD is moving rapidly to become one of the finest railroad museums in the country, and David is an important part of that strategy. Please plan to attend this program.



David Brewer



Photo by Ken Boyd

The North Pole Express Arrives at Calera with Santa in December.

CHAPTER NEWS

REMINDERS FOR THE NEW YEAR

- ◆ RENEW your membership in the Mid-South Chapter and in the national Railway & Locomotive Historical Society.
- ◆ If you are not already a member, JOIN the Mid-South Chapter.
- ◆ ATTEND the Annual Convention of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society May 28-31 in central Texas.
- ◆ DONATE to the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project.
- ◆ VOLUNTEER to serve on the Mid-South Chapter Board of Directors.
- ◆ ATTEND as many of the Mid-South Chapter program meetings as possible.
- ◆ INVITE others to attend the Mid-South Chapter program meetings or to join the Chapter.
- ◆ LOCATE photographs (hard copy, slides, digital, etc.) that you have taken through the years of trains and railroads in Alabama, and loan or donate them to the Alabama Railroad Archives for scanning and making available through the online archives.
- ◆ WRITE an article for the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* Chapter newsletter.

2020 CHAPTER PROGRAM MEETINGS 2:00 PM AT HISTORIC LEEDS DEPOT

January 18 -- Presentation about the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum by David Brewer, Executive Director

March 21 -- Rail Passengers Association by Robert Stewart, Past President

May 9

July 25 -- PICNIC

September 19 (Possible John Henry Festival)

November 7

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

Member Moment

The Member Moment this month features John Troulias. If you would like to be featured and tell your story, please contact Warren Jones.

The story should total 400 words or less and ideally include a photo or drawing.



ANNUAL REPORT

James Lowery, President

**As we look forward to the new year,
it is good to reflect on the Chapter's work and accomplishments during 2019.**

National Involvement

As you are aware, the Chapter is part of the national Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, and, in 2019, the Chapter's involvement extended beyond just being a chapter of the national organization to providing organizational support in the form of setting up a procedure for staggering the terms of national Board members and being available to assist with organizational matters.

Your Chapter President is a member of the national Board of Directors, and represents the Chapter at those Board meetings. The Chapter's Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project is being supported by donations from individuals all over the United States, many of whom are members of the national organization.

The Chapter sent a letter expressing its support of the Golden Spike Chapter's on-going restoration of the D&RGW locomotive No. 223 and the plan to return it to active service.

Outreach to the Railroad History Community

A major focus of the Chapter continues to be one of providing information and resources to people interested in historic railroads.

Throughout the year, presentations at the Chapter meetings have focused on historic railroads and various aspects of historic railroading.

Members of the Chapter continue to author articles that are published in national railroad magazines and journals, as well as local historic publications. In addition, many of the articles in the Chapter's newsletter are authored by Chapter members and contain significant historic information that would not get published except for in the Chapter newsletter.

Collaboration between the Chapter and the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum has been initiated and already has resulted in the Chapter's newsletter including a page devoted to news and activities of the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum. Further collaborative efforts will be explored as representatives of the two groups continue to meet to discuss ways that we can work together and share information.

The Center for Alabama Railroad History and Archives along with its digital Alabama Railroad Archives component is well underway and is based at the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum. That museum is the primary supporter of that Center, and the

Mid-South Chapter has been heavily involved in the creation of, and ongoing plans for, the Center and its digital archives. Scanning of already-acquired images by Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum volunteers is continuing, and the Center welcomes additional photographs for loan or donation to the Archives.

The Chapter continues to publish an excellent newsletter edited by Board member Ken Boyd that not only contains information for members but also articles about many aspects of railroad history. (As mentioned previously, many of the articles are authored by Chapter members.) A very successful feature of the newsletter is the "Member Moment" page initiated, and managed, by Membership Chairman Warren Jones. Also, the Chapter's website is excellent and provides Chapter members with up-to-date information.

Members of the Chapter have been involved in local railroad history research and the sharing of that information. Among those members are John Troulias, Tom Denney, Marvin Clemons, Tom Badham, Larry Goolsby, Ken Boyd, Warren Jones, David Coombs, Eddie Cook and James Lowery. I am sure that other members and chapter associates also have been involved in such research and sharing of information, and we appreciate all of those efforts because they benefit the Chapter, the local historic community, and anyone interested in railroad history. Thank you to all of you who respond to railroad history questions and share your knowledge with others.

The Chapter's support of the Historic Leeds Depot continues, most recently with the installation of John Henry images and information on the walls of the Depot foyer so that the general public using the Depot for meetings and events will be able to learn about this local event and the Leeds legend.

John Henry Celebration and Fall Festival

The City of Leeds held its very successful John Henry Celebration and Fall Festival in September, and the Mid-South Chapter was part of that event. In addition to featuring John Henry information on the foyer walls of the Leeds Depot, the Chapter also opened to Festival attendees its rooms at the Depot that contain artifacts and railroad history information. Thanks to members Ken Boyd, Tim Smith, and John Troulias for staffing those rooms and for talking to the visitors about the Depot and local railroad history.

Outreach to the Broader Community

The Mid-South Chapter is involved in several efforts that focus on providing historic railroad information to the general public and to the broader (often non-railroad-related) community.

Chapter members continue to make presentations on a variety of railroad history topics to historical and civic groups. Some of those presentations include book signings by Chapter members who have authored wonderful railroad history books. Many of the presentations this year have been by Chapter member Marvin Clemons who has been giving a lot of presentations throughout central Alabama as part of promoting and selling his excellent book about the Birmingham Terminal Station. Board member Ken Boyd also has been promoting his excellent new book entitled "Historic North American Locomotives: An Illustrated Journey."

As indicated above, Chapter members continue to be a resource for questions by the general public about railroad history in the local and regional areas. Some of that requires additional research, and a lot of it adds to the corpus of railroad history for this area.

Chapter members have been leaders and resource persons for interpretive hikes along the Kiwanis Vulcan Trail as part of the Chapter's outreach to the general public. The hikes provide interpretive information about the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad roadbed on which the trail is built, as well as information about the mines and mining and railroad structures along the trail. As part of those tours, Chapter members provided information and images for an interpretive brochure used during the hikes.

In part because many of the historic railroads in central and north Alabama were inextricably intertwined with the mining and iron production activities in the late 1800s and early 1900s, throughout the year Chapter members have been involved in interpreting mining and iron production activities as relates to the railroads. Examples of that interpretation for groups and the general public are as follows: Kiwanis Vulcan Trail Hiking Tours (as explained above), a driving tour of the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad in Irondale, and an Irondale Furnace Interpretive Hiking Tour. The Chapter also provided artifacts for the Birmingham Terminal Station exhibit at Vulcan Park and Museum, assisted with soon-to-be-installed Irondale public interpretive signs, provided items for a display at the Trussville Historic Museum, and had a table display at the Clay, Alabama, 200th Anniversary event.

Since the exhibit opened in May, the Chapter has had programs related to the Birmingham Terminal Station exhibit at Vulcan Park and Museum and has publicized that exhibit to the Chapter members and friends. Chapter members Marvin Clemons and Gene Clements were the key Chapter members who worked to create that exhibit. Thank you both for all your efforts and for providing such an outstanding and well-received exhibit!

A major project of the Mid-South Chapter continues to be the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project which is designed to educate the general public about locations through-

out six counties in central Alabama where the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad (BMRR) ran. The project has been doing this by installing signs at historic railroad roadbed locations; providing a website containing historic maps, photographs, and information; making PowerPoint presentations to school and civic groups as well as to historic societies; providing tours of historic railroad sites to individuals and groups when requested; providing resource information to local historians researching historic mining and its connection to the railroads; and raising money from people interested in seeing this part of our area's local history featured. To date, a total of 145 BMRR signs have been installed in all six counties in central Alabama that were served by the Birmingham Mineral Railroad. Additional signs will be installed as additional donations are received for this important project.

Thank You to All the Mid-South Chapter Board Members

As President of the Board of Directors, I would like to personally thank all of the Board members for their service on the Board of Directors during 2019. Join me in thanking the following members of the Board of Directors, and let them know how much you appreciate their service:

Ken Boyd
John Browning
Bob Greene
Warren Jones
James Lowery
Peggy Lowery
Dr. Carl Marbury
Tim Smith
John Troulias
Brad Watson

Others who continually assist the Board in its work:

Marvin Clemons
Eddie Cook
Lamont Downs
Pat Honsa



HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

OFFICIAL RAILROAD MUSEUM FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Welcome aboard with our first installment for the new 2020 year. For HoD, 2019 was a year of change and new direction. Our fall season was very busy, with many of our train rides at or near capacity. With 2019 now behind us, we focus our attention to the upcoming 2020 operating season. Currently our trains are not operating but that does not mean we have shut down. Numerous member meetings, crew training sessions, and restoration projects will continue to take place. Looking ahead to our upcoming spring season, we will see the return of the Cottontail Express and Thomas the Tank Engine events, both in April. Tickets are already on sale for Thomas the Tank. Then for all us steam fans, we will have Jeddo Coal No. 85 for two weekends in June. This 0-4-OT locomotive will provide the motive power for our passenger consist; working on at the throttle times.



Restoration Project - Closeup

Our 1926 Pullman heavyweight / L&N RR Tavern/ Lounge Car "Alabama Club" made great progress in 2019. Interior walls primed, new ceiling hatches installed, new windows, and generator mounted underneath car (see photo). In 2020 we look to: purchase & install new HVAC system; purchase & install restroom amenities; construct fuel tank & wire in new generator; & paint interior of car. Some funding is already in place but we are reviewing grant options for additional funding.

Historic Tidbit

One of the historic passenger stops along our line was called Springs Jct. This was the stop for L&N passengers wishing to vacation at Shelby Springs and soak in mineral spring water.

Upcoming HoD Member Dates:

Member Gatherings:

Saturday, Jan 25, **Annual Members Meeting**

- ◆ Calera Public Library, 11am—3pm

Sunday, Feb 15, **Members Banquet**

- ◆ Timberline Golf Banquet Hall, 5pm—8pm

Train & Depot Crew Training Sessions:

Saturday, Feb 22—**Car Host Training**

- ◆ HoD Classroom, 9am—12pm

Saturday, Feb 29—**Engineer Training**

- ◆ HoD Classroom, 9am—12pm

Saturday, March 7—**Brakeman Training**

- ◆ HoD Classroom, 9am—12pm

Sunday, March 8—**Ticket Agent Training**

- ◆ HoD Depot, 2pm—4pm

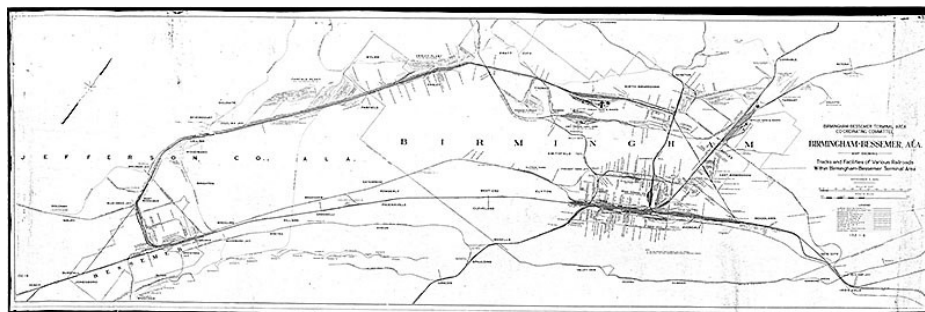
Saturday, March 14—**Conductor Training**

- ◆ HoD Classroom, 9am—12pm

Consider Joining?

This is an excellent time to join, especially if you have a desire to serve on one of our Calera & Shelby RR train crews. Class schedules are listed above for new members wishing to serve as brakeman, car host, or ticket agent. Help with restoration projects also needed!

DURING 2020, PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO THE HISTORIC BIRMINGHAM MINERAL RAILROAD SIGNS PROJECT



Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project
c/o James Lowery, 3402 Altamont Road South
Birmingham, AL 35205
JLowery2@gmail.com
Home (205) 252-5337
Cell (205) 908-0179
Bham-MRR.com

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project through the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society as indicated below. The Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project and the Mid-South Chapter thank you for your support.

Donation Level:

____ \$ 10 Sidings and Spurs Level
 ____ \$ 15 Limestone Quarry Level
 ____ \$ 25 Coal Mine Level
 ____ \$ 50 Iron Ore Mine Level
 ____ \$ 75 Blast Furnace Pig Iron Level
 ____ \$100 or \$ _____ **Sign Sponsorship** of \$100 or more is listed on the Bham-MRR.com website.

Make Check Payable to: Mid-South Chapter of the R&LHS

Designate on check that it is for: "BMRR Signs Project"

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Mail donation and form to: Mid-South Chapter of the R&LHS
 c/o James Lowery, Treasurer
 3402 Altamont Road South
 Birmingham, AL 35205

MEMBER MOMENT

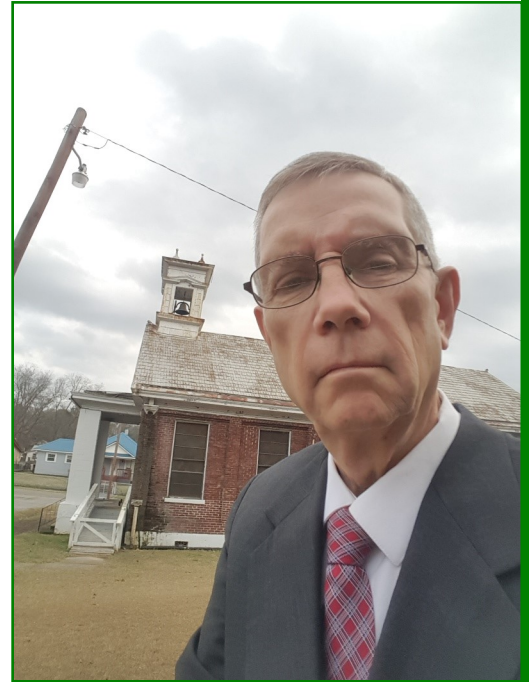
John Troulias

Most of my younger years were in North Birmingham where my father was born. North Birmingham was a city of heavy industry. Things were going so well there was talk of North Birmingham annexing Birmingham but the reverse happened.

Several railroads had tracks surrounding North Birmingham. We climbed on rail cars in a siding instead of playing in the park. From our house, it was less than three-quarters of a mile to Sayreton Mines and half a mile equidistant between two pipe plants. During World War II, my mother and my aunt worked as “Rosies” in one of the plants making artillery shells instead of pipe.

My father worked for the L&N Railroad and then the Frisco. I was about 10 when he took me down to Terminal Station where he worked as a switchman. The engineer let me sit in his seat and switch an unoccupied passenger car to another track! I did the throttle and he did the braking. We received a family pass for a train trip, so my mother took me and my siblings on a train to North Carolina for a visit with relatives.

I have a habit of taking backroads. In recent years, I have passed the Docena sign post many times. I turned in there one day and saw what looked a lot like it did when founded. The Spanish language sign over the commissary entrance got my attention. I stopped at a church and talked to a member doing yard work, quizzed the postal clerk, and spoke with some walkers. I did not believe I was Amerigo Vespucci with respect to the community but felt there was a story here. That is how the following feature article in this issue of the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* came about. I hope you will visit Docena yourself; it is a jewel from the past.



John Troulias at Docena

Editor's Note: John Troulias is a dynamic member of the R&LHS Mid-South Chapter where he serves on the Board as Chapter Secretary. He is actively involved in the chapter's historic railroad research.

DOCENA MINING CAMP – A CENTURY AHEAD OF TIME, YET TOO LATE

John Troulias

Nine miles northwest of Birmingham, mining began at Docena (Spanish for “twelfth”) in 1905. It was the twelfth mine opened in the Pratt coal seam of the Warrior Coal Field. The mining camp name was designed with a Spanish accent. Precast into the concrete over the main entrance to the commissary is “MERCADO” (Spanish for “market”). The commissary would not look out of place if in Madrid or Guadalajara. The park was named Docena PRADO (Spanish for “meadow”).

The proposed mine site was owned by the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) church which planned to build a college and a community named “Booker” in honor of Booker T. Washington. Tennessee Coal Iron & Railroad Company (TCI) did a land swap with the church which received the property now home to Miles College in Fairfield. The name “Booker” continues but the community is a few miles away from Docena as the neighborhood of Booker Heights.

The Birmingham Southern Railroad for most of its life was a wholly owned subsidiary of U.S. Steel (TCI) but under a separate president. The Birmingham Southern ran a 3.9-mile line from its main in Ensley to the mine. In his research for the book *Birmingham Southern Railroad: The First Century*, Ronald Mele explained that the federal government nationalized common carrier railroads during WWI

in 1917. TCI took possession of branch lines to Docena and other raw material locales to ensure continuity of operation at its steel plants. TCI retained operation of the Docena branch until the mine closed. The rails were removed save for the bridge over Second Creek, a Village Creek tributary.

Docena was one of the last three coal mining towns built by TCI (along with Bayview and Edgewater). Per records of the U.S. Bureau of Mines, coal production was over 4,100 tons/day when employment peaked at 1,250 workers during WWII.

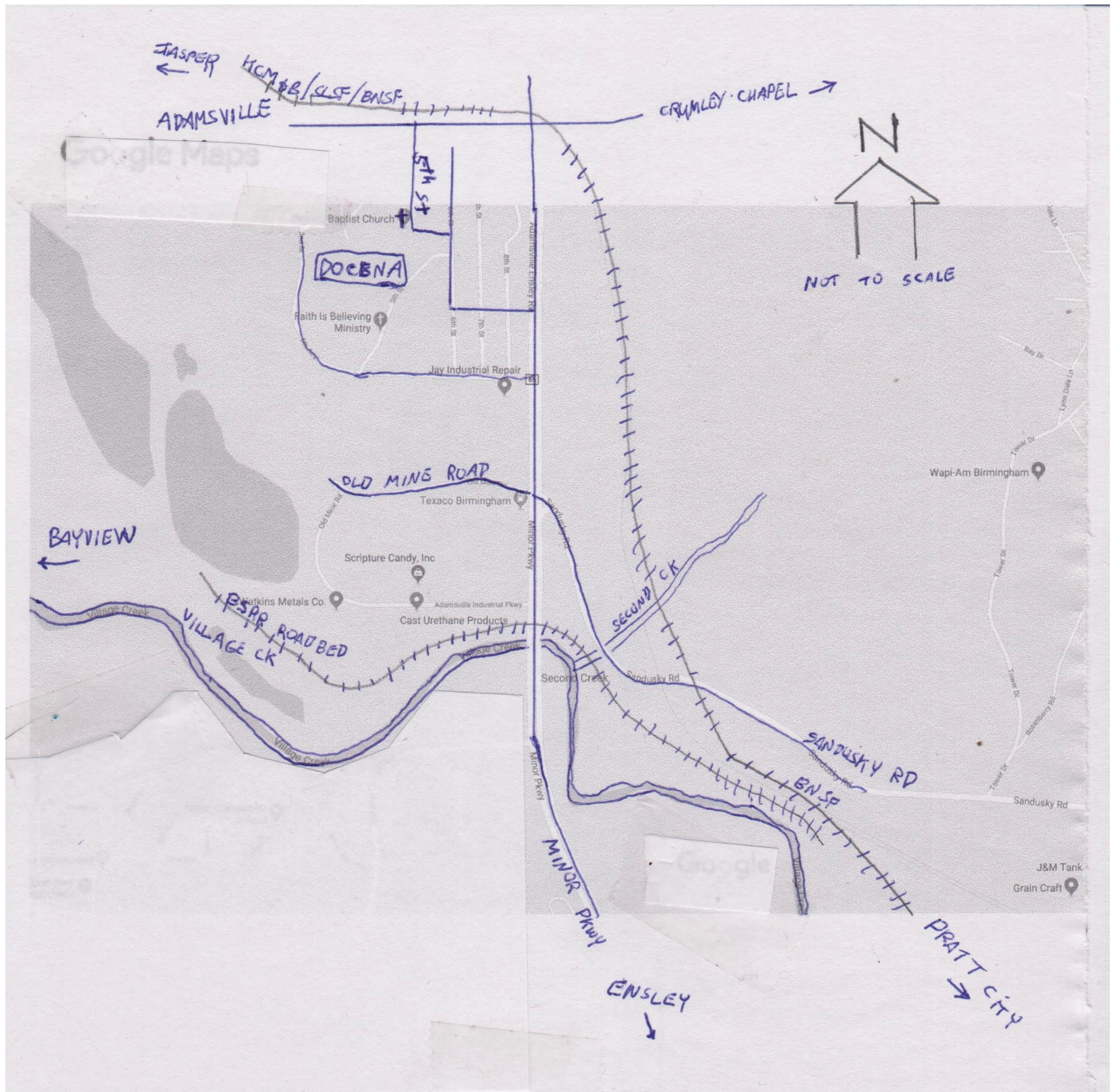
There were schools and a full-time physician at Docena. There were no microwave ovens or pizza delivery, so I do not see how there was time for social functions, art, or sports, but there was a clubhouse, social worker, and even baseball leagues with uniforms organized among the mining camps! As in a few other camps, TCI built a secular guild hall which was used on alternate Sundays by Baptists and Methodists and for occasional plays. The Docena Baptist Church celebrated its 100th year in the building during 2018.

Two of the most dangerous occupations in the country reached confluence in Jefferson County – underground mining and railroading. A miner had to be concerned with the dangers inherent in mining but also



Note the Spanish “Mercado” (“Market”) Precast into Concrete over the Main Entrance to the Commissary

The Commissary Burned in April 2019.



Map of Docena Camp

train traffic both aboveground and underground. My childhood neighbor, Mr. McDonald, lived his final 50 years crippled due to being crushed by a loose mine car. Even “modern” Docena was subject to tragedy: In 1941, five miners received fatal injuries from an explosion apparently caused by a non-approved electric tool. Safety procedures saved the other 432 miners on duty that day. This was a much better record than other area mines such as Virginia Mines near Hueytown where my grandfather’s brother was one of 112 miners killed in an explosion.

TCI president Crawford traveled to the Canal Zone where he recruited Dr. Lloyd Noland, who was working at the time with Alabamian William C. Gorgas, to come to Birmingham and address the mining communities’ health. In 1913, Dr. Noland accepted the challenge and made dramatic improvements in workers’ health and camp sanitation.

In a *Birmingham News* article, TCI stated: “...the money invested in establishing these facilities (the new camps) has been most profitably spent, because of the fact that the workers and their families are 100 percent more contented with their surroundings than was the case prior to the adoption of the modern plan of development.”

The houses for the miners were the standard mine house: four rooms with one center common fireplace (one to two families per house) and laid out in a mostly grid pattern. Every house was fully wired (one corded light bulb hanging from the center of each room ceiling). Management houses were also located in the camp but were larger. There was no indoor plumbing with TCI “honey wagons” traveling down the small alleys to empty the “privies”. Eventually the privies were replaced by sanitary sewers and indoor plumbing arrived. Coal was delivered to the bin next to each privy. Children toted the coal in a scuttle to the house. Flower gardens were placed in common areas and community vegetable gardens established. A huge outdoor tree was decorated at Christmas.

Colored and white housing were on the same block but separated by an alley. Segregation ended when miners boarded the tram to enter the mine. Cars held 16 men and up to 4 connected cars could enter or exit the mine. As in most mines, miners worked together without regard to color and always looked out for each other’s safety.

Although in many mining communities the chimney has been removed and the houses significantly modified,



**Birmingham Southern Bridge over Second Creek,
Docena Branch in 2017**

most of the Docena houses still have the central fireplace and a metal roof. TCI’s Ensley and Fairfield plants produced many finished metal products, so metal roofs were the logical choice for Docena. The most-often addition is an enclosure of the porch. Docena has not been “preserved” but instead just has not changed. With the exception of automobiles at most houses, time has stood still.

Many of the streets have recently been repaved by Jefferson County but not widened so it is a little crowded at times with all of the personal vehicles. Docena still does not have a neighboring community. The post office is the only business remaining. Docena may qualify by some government standards as a “food desert.” The only shopping area, a gas station/convenience store with an adjacent Mexican restaurant, is almost a mile away.

The Frisco Railway main line ran immediately northwest of Docena. Although it did not have an assigned station for Docena, a train did stop one day as described below:

Until 1912, a stockade for convicts who worked at the No. 12 Pratt mine was located on what is Second Street today. TCI and other mining companies leased prisoners from state and local authorities. Old-timers recalled seeing the convicts march to the Frisco Railroad and board trains for another area mine (per the “Browns of Docena” family website). This was 1912, when TCI discontinued the practice of convict leasing. Convict leasing for mines stopped nationwide by 1915. A few convict miners who were never able to work themselves out of debt to society are buried in the TCI Pratt Convict Cemetery which is located in a wooded area in Pratt City at the end of Fifth Street adjacent to the former Birmingham Southern RR and near the present BNSF tracks. Most graves are not marked.

After the Docena mine and commissary closed, Andrew and Greta Tortorici operated the Docena Lucky Store in the former commissary building. Their store was the outlet for town talk and tall tales. Mr. and Mrs. Tortorici kept the store from 1961 until 1998. Both died within the last year after a 68-year marriage.

A church used the commissary after the store closed, but the building has been vacant for several years. It appears in good structural shape except for a small roof leak. There are no utilities, and the main entrance doors have been left ajar. Apparently when the mine closed, some mine rails were relocated to above ground where they were placed vertically as barrier posts to stop vehicles from taking short cuts from the commissary road across the well-maintained church grounds. The rails are still doing their job. Although the population is less now than when it was a mining camp, instead of one shared church building there are now four churches with their own buildings.

A family friend's father, Hiram "Humpty" Hutto, grew up in Docena. Any boy worth a tow sack of coal was assigned a nickname by the oldest boys in the camp. Humpty recalled being awoken one morning by a cold foot. With three older brothers, someone often shared the bed with him. When daylight came Humpty discovered a grown man sleeping with him. The stranger probably had a little to drink, came in late and quietly went to bed. The house was in the proper position on the street, the bedroom was laid out correctly, but the man had turned up the wrong street.

Co-worker Phillip said at least by the 1940s there was a private bus that made a route through many of the



Mine Rails for Barrier Fence Post at Mercado

mining camps in northwestern Jefferson County. Most passengers would exit in downtown Ensley. On Saturday evening, he and his buddies would catch the bus to Ensley, window shop for a while, and then "hang out" around the Ensley Theatre. Several times the manager, seeing the boys, created a "job" for them and let them see the movie for free.

Martha was three in Docena when her father got an aboveground supervisor job at another TCI mine but she remembered a chicken. Martha watched from her step as her neighbor's chicken crossed the alley into her yard for a little privacy. After laying an egg, the chicken returned to her own side of the alley at which time Martha ran to retrieve the egg to show it to her mother. One Sunday, Martha told her mother that she had a new daddy – she did not recognize him because she had only been seeing him returning from the mine covered in coal dust!

My wife, as a child, drew a house and showed it to her farm-raised mother who remarked "That's good, but



Docena Guild Hall

houses do not have chimneys in the middle.” A few days later, the family passed by a camp house and she happily exclaimed “Look, mother, houses DO have chimneys in the middle!”

Both of my grandfathers, two great grandfathers, and one step great grandfather were local coal miners. When a new mine opened, it had to pay five cents/hour or so premium to attract skilled miners. With exception of the one set of twins, most of the 13 children of my paternal grandfather were born in a different house and usually in a different camp. Grandfather never drove, even after leaving the mines for a permanent job in a mill. He always lived within a mile of work and walked every day.

A CENTURY AHEAD (The Hispanic Accent)

In Thomas Hagood’s 1960 thesis for Birmingham Southern College, Hagood reported he had learned that the suggestion for a camp with Hispanic flavor was credited to Ed F. *Stallingworth* who had done some railroad work in Mexico. Being a retired railroader, I wanted to find him. In U.S. census and local records, I found Edward F. *Stollenwerck* was the Trainmaster for the Birmingham Mineral Railroad and later the L&N Railroad Train Dispatcher for the Birmingham area. In these positions he would have had contact with TCI management regarding movement of trains traveling through TCI’s area. This may have given him the opportunity to make the recommendation for the camp. Mr. Stollenwerck’s final position was Superintendent of the Atlanta Terminal Company (including Terminal Station), and he was buried with other notable Birminghamians in historic Oak Hill Cemetery which overlooks the former site of the Ninth Avenue rail yard of the Kansas City, Memphis, & Birmingham Railroad.



In April of 2019, the Docena Commissary building burned.

Four miles from Docena is Pratt City, site of one of the earliest mines to open in the area. Initially, half of its miners were European with the largest groups being Irish, French, and Italian. Docena began significantly later, and was populated by first generation Americans and mostly Alabamians. Most of its residents were born in the U.S. and consisted about equally of African Americans and whites. A review of the 1930 Census of “Docena Camp” revealed approximately 90-percent Alabama natives, a few from England and Scotland, one from Poland, and a teacher born in Sweden. There are a few new residents whose native language was Spanish. None of them were there when the Mercado was open and may have never seen any of the Spanish accents in Docena.

Similar cultural practices were also applied to some previously established mining communities. TCI’s social science director Marion Whidden drew from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*, as follows: “Fossil became Wenonah; Eureka became Ishkooda; Smith’s Mining camp became Muscoda.” These American Indian words were not local to Alabama but have outlived the mines.

In April of 2019, the Docena Commissary building burned. In comparing the before and after photos, note that even an out-of-control fire did not bring down the main walls. Neither utilities nor lightning were to blame, so it was most likely mischief. The building has not been razed as of this printing. Although much smaller than Birmingham’s Terminal Station, it is just a reminder that another historic building has slipped away.

Sources:

Anita Smith Research on Lloyd Noland, M.D.

The Birmingham News, 10-26-1921.

Historic American Engineering Record, 1991, file AL-80-C

Editor’s Note: A version of this article first appeared in *The Jefferson Journal*.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ADVANCED TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEMS (ATCS)

An **Advanced Train Control System (ATCS)** is a system of railroad equipment designed to ensure track safety by monitoring locomotive and train locations, providing analysis and reporting, and automating track warrants and similar orders. ATCS specifications are published by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and are designed to document the stated requirements of railroad operational and technical professionals concerning ATCS hardware and software.

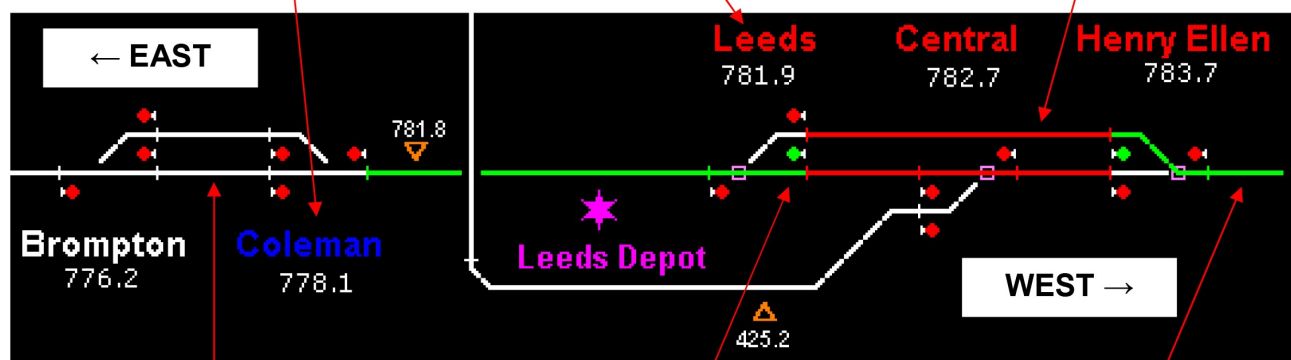
The diagram below explains how to read the ATCS display at the Leeds Depot.

How to Read the ATCS Display

A Station Name in blue indicates that a command has been sent by the dispatcher.

A Station Name in red indicates that information has been received from that station. A station name in white indicates no data received.

A red line indicates track occupancy, usually by a train or maintenance of way vehicle.



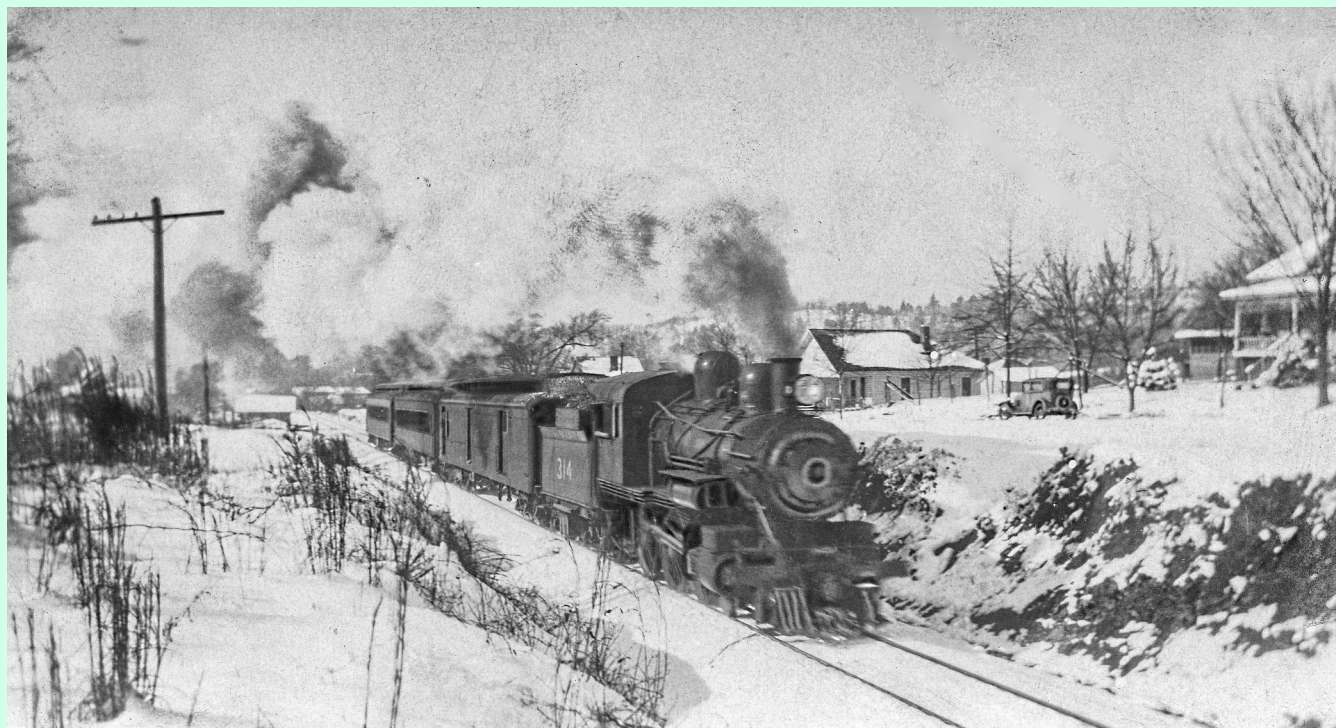
White track segments indicate that the track is unoccupied.

Signals show the direction the train will be traveling. Green means clear, red means stop.

A green line indicates that the track is clear for the train to proceed.

In this example, an east-bound train is lined up to move east on the main line at the Leeds control point. A west-bound train is lined to leave the siding and proceed west at the Henry Ellen control point. The orange triangles with milepost values are the location of equipment defect detectors (EDDs).

THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



“One cold wintry morning in February 1937, Oneonta resident Jack Findley decided it was a perfect day to photograph a train in the snow. Jack’s father, John Findley, was the local telegraph operator at the L&N’s Birmingham Mineral Railroad Oneonta Depot, and Jack knew the train schedules well. Living close by the railroad track, when time for the train approached, Jack walked the short distance to a good vantage point to await the passing of the northbound L&N passenger train as it arrived in Oneonta from Birmingham. It was not long before the little local with its three-car train pulled by 4-6-0 No. 314 came blasting around the curve on the upgrade into town. The shutter clicked and the result was this nostalgic Depression-era photograph of winter railroading in rural Alabama. Jack went on to become a legendary local historian and served a long tenure as Oneonta Mayor. Thanks to Patrick Findley, Jack’s grandson, for sharing this wonderful image from the family album.