



May 2021

# 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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# PICNIC AT KYMULGA GRIST MILL WITH ADJACENT HISTORIC NORFOLK SOUTHERN MAINLINE AND OPTIONAL VISIT ON YOUR OWN TO SYLACAUGA MARBLE QUARRY OVERLOOK

**May 22, 2021**

**NOON CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME**

***Meet at the Mill in Childersburg***

***Bring Your Own Food for Your Picnic Lunch.***

With continuing COVID concerns about meeting indoors, the Mid-South Chapter has planned a picnic in the Childersburg area for May 22. The picnic will begin at noon near Childersburg on the grounds of the historic Kymulga Grist Mill. Following lunch, the miller has agreed to host a tour of the mill, the adjacent covered bridge and the grounds at the mill. On your own before the picnic or after the picnic, you may want to visit the Sylacauga Marble Quarry overlook farther down Highway 280 near Sylacauga.

Kymulga Grist Mill began operations in the 1860s about four miles east of downtown Childersburg. The history of the watermill and the railroad were closely intertwined for many years. Trains transported raw materials to this large commercial watermill and delivered products from the mill to market. One of the oldest mainlines in Alabama is still active only a short distance from the mill. Inside, this is a large mill that could process a million bushels of grain in a year. The original water-powered machinery was beautifully finished and is still in place today. A tour of the interior with an explanation of mill operations is planned as part of the picnic. In addition, the grounds include an authentic covered bridge and other historic displays.

Family and friends are invited and encouraged to participate in the picnic. Plan to bring a picnic lunch and join us for an in-person visit. Directions are provided below.

Farther down Highway 280 in Sylacauga, there is an observation overlook at the marble quarry, and **the overlook is open to the public until about 4:00 pm**. If you have never seen that quarry, its interpretive signage or the beautiful marble boulders at the parking area, you might want to stop by there. Discovered in 1814, Sylacauga marble is generally considered to be some of the finest in the world. It has been used for more than 160 years to produce some of the most iconic sculptures, buildings and projects in the United States and around the globe. Sylacauga marble is fine-grained and nearly pure calcite with deposits up to 600-feet deep.

## ***Kymulga Grist Mill***

***7346 Grist Mill Rd, Childersburg, AL 35044***

## ***Imery–Gantt’s Marble Quarry***

***Entrance is west of Highway 280, just past the following street address:  
241 Sylacauga Fayetteville Highway (County Road 34)  
Sylacauga, AL 35151***



**Kymulga Grist Mill and Norfolk Southern Mainline.**



**Sylacauga Marble Quarry.**



## CHAPTER NEWS



## MEMBER MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

Andrew "Andy" Zerbe, Jr.



Andy was born on November 1, 1943, in Selma, Alabama. After World War II, his dad was assigned to the Occupation in Europe, and Andy grew up as a military kid living in Germany, France, California, Kansas, Virginia, Montgomery, and finally Birmingham Alabama.

In 1961, he began a career with Winn Dixie. Working in various Winn Dixie stores during his 30 plus years of service, Andy retired in Birmingham.

Andy was a railfan who was also very active as a cyclist and a cave explorer. He held an FCC license as an amateur radio operator, and he was also a licensed commercial vehicle driver. At the time of his death, he had almost completed a book documenting the history of fire towers in Alabama.

He underwent surgery for esophageal cancer, which appeared to be very successful but a complication developed. Graveside services were held at historic Greenwood Cemetery in Montgomery on March 30, 2021.

## Member Moment

The Member Moment this month features Gregg and April Danielson.

If you would like to be featured and tell your story, please contact Warren Jones ([wjones1302@gmail.com](mailto:wjones1302@gmail.com)). The story should total 400 words or less and ideally include a photo or drawing.

## WELCOME NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

We extend a hearty welcome to the following new Chapter members:

- Gregg Danielson, Birmingham, Alabama
- Karen Utz, Birmingham, Alabama

## OTHER CHAPTER UPDATES

**Grant Request APPROVED!** — As was reported in the last Chapter Update, the Mid-South Chapter provided information to the Vulcan Park and Museum for submitting a grant request to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to fund planning and installation of the Birmingham Terminal Station Exhibit in the Exhibits Room at the Leeds Depot. That grant request has now been approved, and the Chapter is moving ahead with firming up plans for the layout and installation of the exhibit.

**Mid-Atlantic Railroad Park** — Photographs by Mid-South Chapter Board member and *MID-SOUTH FLYER* editor, Ken Boyd, will be permanently featured in a new walking tour museum in Ashland, Virginia. The museum is scheduled to open in December 2021. Boyd's work will be credited in a plaque as a major supporter of the museum.

## 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 and the *MID-SOUTH FLYER*. Contributions, article ideas and reader comments are welcome.

Ken Boyd, Editor

[kenboydphotography@yahoo.com](mailto:kenboydphotography@yahoo.com)



## CHAPTER UPDATE

*James Lowery, President*

Even though the Mid-South Chapter has not been able to meet this year, the chapter officers have been active, and the chapter is still very healthy. The Board of Directors is anxiously awaiting being able to have our regular, in-person Chapter Meetings. As I was creating this Chapter Update, the state health officials were reporting an increase in COVID-19 cases in Alabama due to several possible factors, so I suspect that it will be several more months before the Board of Directors feels comfortable with the Chapter having in-person, indoor meetings that will bring people (some not vaccinated and some vaccinated) in close contact with each other.

A summary of things the various Board members have been doing recently as part of the Chapter are as follows:

- John Troulias has continued to find outstanding resources online and to do excellent research about various aspects of railroad and mining history in this area. He and other Board members have kept a keen eye out for online resources and links that can be provided to the membership via the Chapter's e-Newsletters.
- Always on the lookout for a good train photography opportunity in the local area, Tim Smith was able to take the best photograph I have seen of the image of the Birmingham Terminal Station across the street from the front of the Birmingham Amtrak Station. He posted it on Facebook April 14th for all to enjoy. That is a very hard photograph to take because the image towers several stories above sidewalk level, but there is no way to back off directly across from it far enough to capture the full image straight on. During the recent restoration of the oldest parking deck in Birmingham (and still in use), the depiction was created by punching holes in the metal façade. Tim rightfully called it a "ghost image"!
- Ken Boyd has continued to produce excellent issues of the *MID-SOUTH FLYER* newsletter.
- Warren Jones has continued to welcome new members that we have been getting nearly every month. Warren also has been interfacing with members who have provided a "Member Moment" for the *MID-SOUTH FLYER*.
- We have stayed in touch with our entire mailing list through the e-Newsletters that have been published about every other week.
- Meeting-wise, we have had a Chapter outdoor tour at Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark and an excellent Zoom-based presentation by Ken Boyd.
- There have been meetings with the graphic designer who laid out and installed the Birmingham Terminal Station exhibit at Vulcan Park and Museum and who will be helping do the same thing in one of our rooms at the Leeds Depot.

### Grant Request Approved

As was reported in the last Chapter Update, the Mid-South Chapter provided information to the Vulcan Park and Museum for submitting a grant request to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to fund planning and installation of the Birmingham Terminal Station Exhibit in the Exhibits Room at the Leeds Depot. That grant request has now been approved, and the Chapter is moving ahead with firming up plans for the layout and installation of the exhibit.

## Recent Installations of Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs

The Mid-South Chapter continues to install historic railroad location signs as part of the Chapter's Historic Birmingham Mineral Railroad Signs Project. We thought you might like to see the list of locations where the most recent installations have been done. In addition to the recent locations listed below, descriptions of all the sign locations are at the following website address: <https://bham-mrr.com/sign/installed-signs-by-location/>

**168. Sign Location:** Helena — Old Town Helena (Kenneth R. Penhale City of Helena Museum, 5260 Helena Road, Helena, Alabama 35080) The history museum is within sight of the active train tracks that still use the former BMRR roadbed. A restored mining tram car is on display in the museum parking lot, and many mining and railroad artifacts are on display inside the museum. **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 17 41 W 86 50 36 **BMRR Branch:** Helena and Blocton Branch

**169. Sign Location:** Red Mountain Park directional sign on Lakeshore Parkway west of Franklin Drive intersection. Franklin Drive leads to the main entrance of the walking trails in Red Mountain Park. **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 26 16.5 W 86 52 10 **BMRR Branch:** South Branch

**170. Sign Location:** Red Mountain Park directional sign on Lakeshore Parkway east of Franklin Drive intersection. Franklin Drive leads to the main entrance of the walking trails in Red Mountain Park. **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 26 21 W 86 51 51.4 **BMRR Branch:** South Branch

**171. Sign Location:** Fultondale — The Mayor of Fultondale is gathering historical material and artifacts in a room in the Mayor's Office for possible future display in a Fultondale history museum. A BMRR sign has been provided for display in that room. There are several locations in Fultondale where the BMRR ran, and BMRR signs have been installed at many of those locations. **Address:** 1210 Old Walker Chapel Road, Fultondale, Alabama. **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 36 33.76 W 86 47 55.5

**172 (see also sign 173) (Two-sided). Sign Location:** Pinson Valley — Cleage Drive at the Royal Cup Coffee and Tea Company headquarters and facility (Sign is located at the current active CSX railroad spur. These active tracks are on the original BMRR roadbed of that spur.) **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 37 33 W 86 44 26 **BMRR Branch:** Huntsville Branch No. 2

**173 (see also sign 172) (Two-sided). Sign Location:** Pinson Valley — Cleage Drive at the Royal Cup Coffee and Tea Company headquarters and facility (Sign is located at the current active CSX railroad spur. These active tracks are on the original BMRR roadbed of that spur.) **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 37 33 W 86 44 26 **BMRR Branch:** Huntsville Branch No. 2

**174. Sign Location:** Ensley — 20th Street (at Avenue C and active railroad tracks). **Latitude/Longitude:** N 33 30 48 W 86 53 59 **BMRR Branch:** Huntsville Branch No. 1



# ONE NEVER KNOWS WHERE A WALK WILL LEAD

Gregg Danielson

My name is Gregg Danielson, and I recently joined the Mid-South Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. I have lived in the Birmingham area since 1973 but have only recently developed a special interest in the deep railroad roots of our area. You see, my family and I moved to Hoover from the Midwest with little understanding about the history of the area.

Now, with a family of my own, we moved to a new construction community located at the end of Stadium Trace Parkway. On Thanksgiving 2018, we got out to stretch our legs and walked

down what first appeared to be an old logging road but turned out to be an old railroad bed, still littered with old railroad spikes. As we continued towards the Cahaba River, we came across a 36-foot pass cut through solid rock, then railbed fills that were easily 40-feet high with functioning box culverts. Finally, I found myself staring at these huge, rock-hewn old railroad abutments that were once used by the South & North Alabama Railroad to cross the Cahaba.

It was my “Titanic Moment” – the you know, from the movie, *Titanic*, where the submersible camera from that research ship suddenly finds the bow of the Titanic, and the scene morphs from the ocean bottom to the same bow in April 1918. Dramatic, I know, but that’s kind of how I felt. I was staring at these massive foundations supporting a rail line long since gone. I could not help but imagine what it must have looked like in its glory days; carrying goods, passengers and dreams to and fro.

There are tremendous historic sites all lying within a stone’s throw of our home. Some are well known, like Ross Bridge, but many others lay there quietly, virtually unknown to the numerous passersby. A few are hidden, requiring some effort to unveil their significance. Fortunately, resources are becoming accessible to those of us wanting to know more about the history of our surroundings. For example, The National Park Service has a division solely committed to studying historical structures. As the crow flies, there are three reports written about sites located within one mile of our neighborhood - the Billy Gould Coal Mines & Coke Ovens, HAER No. AL-16; the 1908 L&N RR Cahaba Bridge - torn down & replaced in 2018, HAER No. AL-63; and Ross Creek Culvert, HAER No. AL-214.



Gregg and April Danielson in Helena with the current CSX (Former S&NA and L&N) Buck Creek Bridge behind.



# HEART OF DIXIE RAILROAD MUSEUM

OFFICIAL RAILROAD MUSEUM FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA

On March 25, a tornado tracked across South Calera and other parts of Central Alabama. The storm crossed HoD tracks near Glidewell Lake and Springs Junction. Some 35+ trees fell across the line. Volunteers worked all day that Friday to reopen much of the line for Saturday runs. The photo below from the 1pm Saturday run shows open tracks but trees still near the line.

HoD continues to operate at reduced COVID safety capacities. The only April event, *Easter Eggspress* saw all three trains sell-out. Other regular-run Saturdays have seen good-to-moderate numbers, as weather cooperates. We regret that the annual *Thomas the Tank* engine event had to be cancelled for a second year in a row. Many families were disappointed.

## Current Restoration Projects

- ◆ 1926 L&N RR Tavern/Lounge Car "Alabama Club" grant funding obtained for interior painting of car.
- ◆ 1952 CB&Q RR dining car "Silver Cuisine" roof repairs & cleaning continue.
- ◆ 1959 GE center cab locomotive, former Alabama Power #107 being evaluated for future operation.
- ◆ 1951 MOW Flat Car (former DODX) work has started on installing new wood decking.
- ◆ 1948 MoPac Dome Car HVAC system being inspected.



## Upcoming 2021 Train Rides:

### Operating Every Saturday

Now through December 18:

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am and 1:00 pm
- ◆ Regular Ticket Price \$13 for adult or child
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes
- ◆ S&S ticket price \$3.50; or all day pass \$10
- ◆ Special events may alter price and times

### Mother's Day Special & Vendor Festival

May 8

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am and 1:00 pm
- ◆ C&S Ticket Price \$13 adult or child; **moms free**
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes
- ◆ Food and craft vendors on grounds

### Father's Day Special

May 19

- ◆ C&S Departure Times: 10:00 am & 1:00 pm
- ◆ C&S Ticket Price \$13 adult or child; **dads free**
- ◆ S&S Train departs every 20 minutes

Visit [www.hodrrm.org](http://www.hodrrm.org) to learn more about our events.

## Alabama Club Car Update

The John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust recently awarded a \$12,000 grant for the interior painting of the car. This is our third consecutive year to receive support from the Emery Trust, as they assisted with the generator and HVAC system the past two years. HoD is very thankful to the Emery Trust. Work should start soon on interior painting. Once completed, our volunteers can begin the process of installing all of the interior fixtures back to the car. Other major hurdles still to undertake will be operating restrooms, exterior painting of the car and truck/wheel/brake work.



# THE OLD DEPOT AT SELMA, ALABAMA

## A REGIONAL DAY TRIP ON YOUR OWN

Ken Boyd



**The Old Depot at Selma, Alabama.  
(Photo by Ken Boyd.)**

The railroad passenger depot at Selma, Alabama, has been designated by *Southern Living* magazine as one of the most architecturally and historically important depots in the Southeast. The bright red two-story brick structure stands prominently across the east end of the broad Water Avenue Historic District boulevard in Selma. It is located about five blocks from the Edmund Pettus Bridge and a short walk from the Alabama River and Riverfront Park. The depot was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and it is cosmetically and structurally well maintained.

The depot was constructed in 1891 by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad (L&N) on a site that had been part of Selma Ordnance and Naval Foundry until it was destroyed in 1865 near the end of the American Civil War. It was built in the Romanesque Revival style with wings on each side of the main structure, and it features a hipped roof and a white-washed stone foundation. L&N used the depot for passenger service until 1971 when the railroad became part of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad and service was discontinued. Southern Railway also served the depot for a number of years.

In 1981, the site began a new life as the Old Depot Museum, and it has officially become the Selma / Dallas County Museum of History and Archives. The extensive educational exhibits in the museum are said to span thousands of years of area history, including early Native American artifacts, pre-Alabama history displays,



industrial items, Civil War-era memorabilia, important documents, and exhibits of the county's African American community.

The museum has been temporarily closed during the pandemic but the fenced grounds have remained open on weekdays with no charge to visit the outside exhibits. The area directly behind the depot features a caboose, a boxcar and items that would have been used to operate a railroad depot. The grounds also feature a Victorian-era fire house with Selma's first fire bell, a horse-drawn steam-powered fire pump and historic American LaFrance and Seagrave fire trucks.

A large industrial-scale lathe that was manufactured in Selma is displayed in front of the museum. Lathes of this type were used to make cannons and similar items.

Tracks to the depot have been removed, but the Meridian & Bigbee Railroad Bridge crosses



**Southern Railway arrival and departure board at the depot.  
(Photo by Ken Boyd.)**



**Landscaped grounds behind the depot are open during the pandemic.  
(Photo by Ken Boyd.)**



the Alabama River just to the east. Today, Norfolk Southern (NS) and Meridian & Bigbee Railroad serve Selma.

While in the Selma area, you also can visit Maplesville. The Maplesville Alabama Railroad Historic District is located north of Selma along Highway 22 and about half way to Clanton. The passenger station in Maplesville was built by Southern Railway. It is beautifully restored and is used today as a local museum and a senior center. A busy NS mainline runs adjacent to the station.

A short distance to the east of the Maplesville station is another active rail line owned by NS and operated under a long-term contract by the Autauga Northern Railroad (AUT), a 43.6-mile short line that provides six-day-per-week service between Maplesville and Prattville. This is a Watco Transportation Services, L.L.C., subsidiary that primarily serves International Paper near Prattville. Watco has worked with International Paper for more than 20 years. As with other Watco operations and as shown below, AUT operates a fleet of interesting locomotives.



**Vintage fire truck at the depot.  
(Photo by Ken Boyd.)**

#### **SOURCES:**

<https://selmamuseum.org/>

<https://alabama.travel/places-to-go/old-depot-museum>

<http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-4178>

<https://www.ruralswalabama.org/attraction/old-depot-museum/>

<http://www.trainweb.org/rosters/PSRR.html>

[https://www.gwrr.com/railroads/north\\_america/meridian\\_bigbee\\_railroad#m\\_tab-one-panel](https://www.gwrr.com/railroads/north_america/meridian_bigbee_railroad#m_tab-one-panel)



**Autauga Northern Railroad No. 3513, EMD GP-38L, and No. 4047, EMD GP-40-3, locomotives at Maplesville, still in Watco Pacific Sun Railroad paint and logos. (In late 2020, Pacific Sun ceased operations in California, and some equipment was transferred to other Watco operations.)**

**(Photo by Ken Boyd.)**

# TRAIN TRAVEL, TRIAL, THEN TRIUMPH

## Did This 19th Century Train Trip Become the Catalyst for the Building of a Football Powerhouse?

*John Troulias*

Even if you do not live in the South, you know the Southeastern Athletic Conference (SEC) is among the most successful sports groups in the U.S. I did not know that a train trip helped lay the foundation. I was listening to an Arkansas football game when the announcer referenced their long losing streak to fellow conference members.

However, the record for continuous losses was set many years ago by another member. If you guessed comparatively small Vanderbilt you were in the right area but wrong school. One hundred miles to the southeast, as the rail lies, is The University of the South. "Sewanee," as it is commonly called, sits atop the Cumberland Plateau and was a founding school of the SEC.

In the late 1930s, it lost 37 consecutive conference games before bowing out. Sewanee's opponents were increasing in enrollment and in sports emphasis. A different streak occurred in the 1890s when its archrival, Vanderbilt, cancelled the 1899 game with Sewanee due to a disagreement about how the gate receipts would be divided up. (I surmise that Sewanee won handily the previous year before a large crowd and thusly sought a percentage increase.) Texas agreed to a game, but the travel costs had to be justified, so Luke Lea, a graduate student working as the team manager, began looking for other schools so the team would survive the trip or at least not return with a financial loss.

The March 3, 2021, Orlando Sentinel said Lea concocted the hardest road trip since the invention of gravel. He later became a U.S. Senator representing Tennessee. At end of his term, he joined the Army in which he commanded a decorated regiment as its colonel.

The 1899 Sewanee team had the best season in college football history, winning all 12 of its games, 11 by



**The 1899 Undefeated Sewanee Championship Football Team.**  
(Photo: Tennessee State Archives.)

shutout, and outscoring opponents 322-10. Five of those wins, all shutouts, came in a six-day period while on a 2,500-mile trip by train. (See attached schedule of train routing and game locations.) Ten of the 12 opponents remain college football powers to this day.

To endure a tough schedule against big teams, they had to be in exceptional physical shape. For a small school, being "first string" meant you played the entire contest. This reminds me of a locomotive, many of which commonly work round-the-clock for 30 days or more before being shut down for a required inspection. Nowadays, schools have up to 80 players with specialists at every position, including four quarterbacks. Note that Sarah Fuller, a kicker for Vanderbilt, scored twice December 13, 2020 to be the first female to score for a major college.

SEC schools have been declared national champions in football over 40 times in the previous 120 years. There was no official trophy in 1899; however, in 2012, the College Football Hall of Fame reported a vote for the greatest team of all time. The 1961 Alabama



Crimson Tide came in second to the 1899 Sewanee team.

### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OR “WHEN THE STARS WERE IN ALIGNMENT”

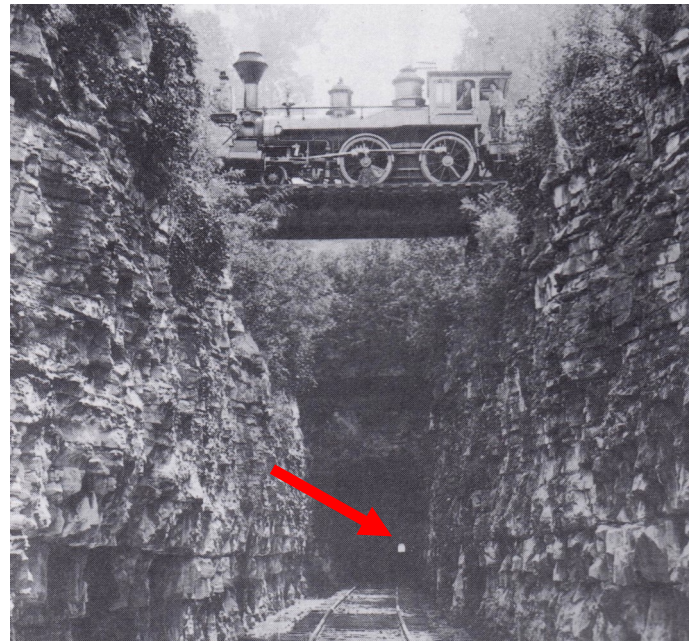
1. *Epidemic* -- Mariola Espinosa points out in her *Epidemic Invasions* that in the early fall of 1897, yellow fever ... caused tens of thousands of people living in the southern United States to ... flee for their lives. The author suggests that the fever motivated the U.S. to declare war against Spain. Ships originating in Cuba brought the disease to American ports. Espinosa infers the fight against the disease was not just for citizens' health but served political goals.

2.. *Location* -- Where better to send your son to college with an epidemic in the daily news but to the fresh air forests of the Tennessee mountain tops with one of the largest campuses in the U.S. (13,000 acres)? To avoid winter weather conditions, the Sewanee school year ran from March through November, which unintentionally gave the team an advance in training.

3. *Education* -- The team consisted mainly of law, medical, or theological students. Maybe their “smarts” helped win the games, though outmanned by better equipped opponents. Twenty-six Rhodes Scholars (more than most large universities) have been Sewanee grads. The previous year, Sewanee had a shortened schedule in which it was also undefeated. It completely went under the national sports scene radar. Usually, organizations would declare Princeton or Yale as champion but no official trophy was awarded.

4. *The Railroad and Mines* – Sewanee Mining identified sites in the Sewanee and Tracy City areas in 1852 and completed its “Mountain Goat” railroad in 1858 as a spur off the first railroad in Tennessee, 19 miles to the top at a cost of \$1.5 million. The company became Tennessee Coal and Railroad Company in 1866 and later Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (TCI), which pulled up stakes. It found greener pastures which were black and red (coal and iron ore) in Alabama and relocated to Ensley in an area adjacent to Birmingham.

Some records list The Mountain Goat Line (aka “The Goat Road,” later the L&N’s “Tracy City Branch”) as the steepest adhesion track anywhere at the time. It had a continuous climb of 100 feet per mile (2%+) to the point now called Sewanee. (For comparison: Later the grade to Soldier Summit near Helper, Utah



The Mountain Goat Railroad and the 1852 Cumberland Mountain Tunnel. In the Upper Image the train heads up the mountain. The light seen in the tunnel is 2228 feet from this north entrance. The 1858 wooden trestle above the north end of the tunnel was replaced with the extant stone arch (Lower Image) in 1900. Per *The Nashville Banner*, February 1852, daylight was first seen on February 22, 1852, followed by 700 ladies and gentlemen who made a celebratory procession through the tunnel with their candles. The train is headed down the mountain in the Lower Image.

(Photos from Sewanee Archives.)

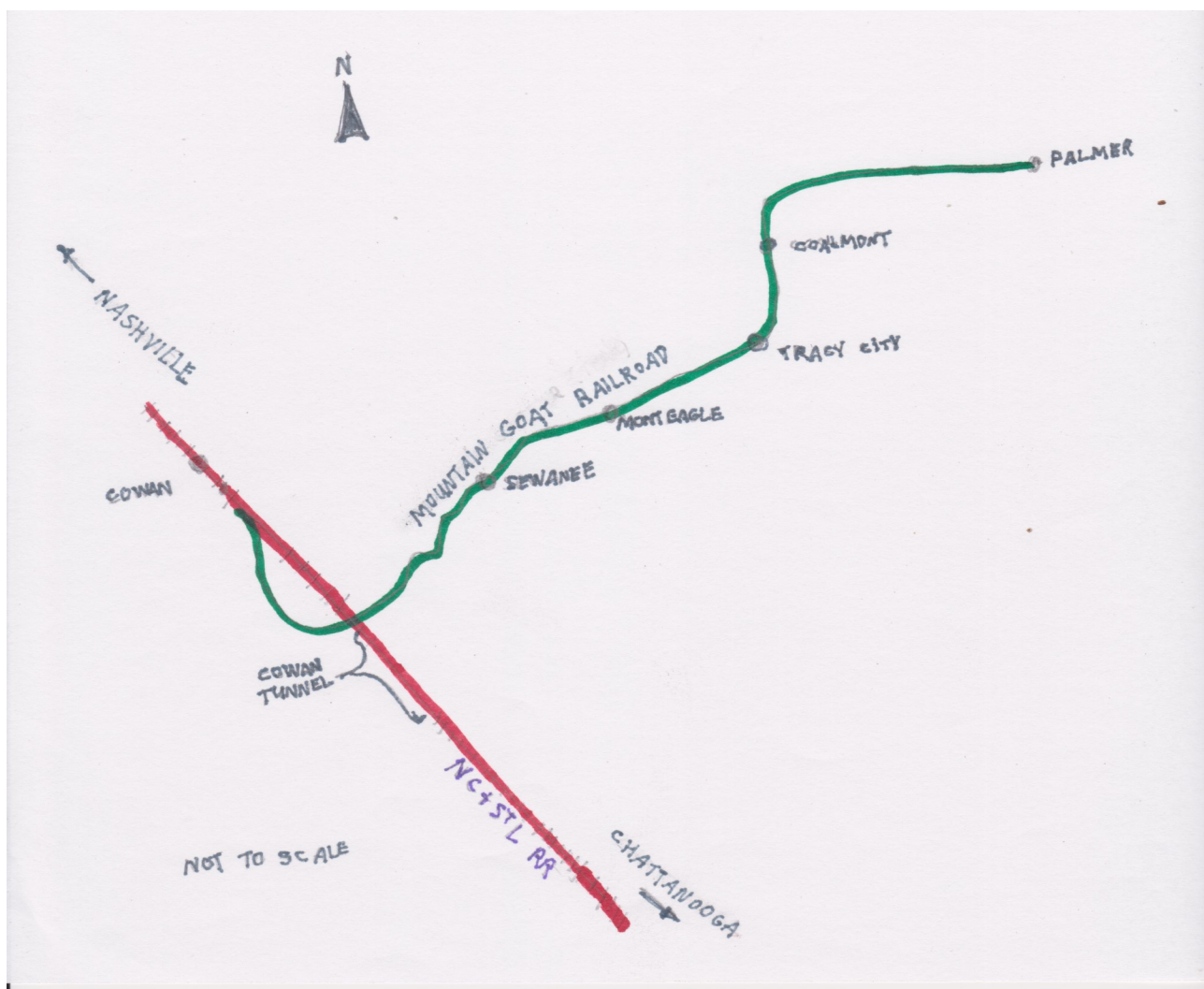
opened at 4% but was finally improved to 2.2% by using a horseshoe curve.) The Mountain Goat Railroad did not need helper locomotives because the rail cars were empty going up the mountain; therefore, a longer route of a lesser grade was not required. Before the trains descended the steep grade, crews manually activated retainers on each car which enabled the train to remain under braking conditions while the brake line continuously recharged to operating air pressure. Later, when industries began appearing on the Plateau, helpers were used to get loaded cars up the grade.

5. *The School* – Sewanee Mining donated the first 5,000 acres for an Episcopal school site. Donations from others increased the site to 13,000 acres. The Railroad was instrumental in getting the facilities built.

6. *The Trainer* – Cal Burrows, an African-American, traveled with the team. Apparently, he was naturally

gifted and ensured the boys stayed in shape. This is an innovation accepted by all schools now. Little is known about him.

7. *The Journey* -- Per Wendell Givens in his *Ninety-Nine Iron*, the 1899 Sewanee team played Texas at Austin on November 9, beating them 12-0. The next day their train chugged on to Houston, where they beat Texas A&M 10-0. Sunday became a day of rest but Monday, November 11, saw the boys defeating Tulane in New Orleans 23-0. On November 13, they were in Baton Rouge where they knocked off Louisiana State 34-0. The next day, they defeated Ole Miss in Memphis 12-0 in their ninth game of the season. Eventually, Sewanee went 12-0-0. Only one team scored against its 322 points but came up short 11-10 in Montgomery. The losing coach, John Heisman (yes, The Heisman), thought Auburn had been robbed by the officiating.



Mountain Goat Railroad with Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway Interchange.

Mainline completed 1859; Mountain Goat line dates to 1855.



## SEWANEE TIGERS FOOTBALL TRIP TO AUSTIN, NOVEMBER 7-15, 1899

DATE	FROM	TO	RAILROAD	via		GAME at	SCHOOL	SEWANEE	OPPONENT
7	COWAN	MEMPHIS	NC & StL RR	Nashville	13 hr				
7	MEMPHIS	TEXARKANA	StL & Iron Mtn RR		7 hr				
8	TEXARKANA	AUSTIN, TN	Intl & Great Northern RR		11 hr				
9						Austin	Texas	12	0
10						Houston	Texas A&M	10	0
10-11	AUSTIN	NEW ORLEANS	Sou. Pacific RR	Houston	18 hr	New Orleans	Tulane	23	0
12			(Sunday - rest day)						
13	NEW ORLEANS	BATON ROUGE				Baton Rouge	LSU	34	0
14	NEW ORLEANS	MEMPHIS	Yazoo & Miss Valley RR	Baton Rouge	15 hr				
14						Memphis	Ole Miss	12	0
15	MEMPHIS	COWAN	NC & StL RR	Nashville	13 hr				
15	COWAN	SEWANEE	Mountain Goat RR		1 hr				

2307 rail miles min. 2500 total miles traveled.

Trip travel time and the mileage traveled were researched by Charles B. Castner, President Emeritus of the L&N RR Society. Does not include delays, interchange, or schedule waits. He added mileage to travel from the RR stops to the playing fields. The Texas game and the Texas A&M game were both completed in less than 24 hours total.

8. *The Pullman Car* -- The identity of the chartered Pullman used by the 1899 team for the Texas trip is unknown. The late Lyle Key was a Mid-South Chapter member, a Sewanee grad, and corporate attorney for the L&N / Seaboard. In *The Dixie Line* of June 2001, he wrote that the Pullman Company named two of its cars *Sewanee* in honor of the team.

9. *The Water* -- Two barrels of water from the campus spring went with the team. Maybe it helped to keep them healthy!

## LAST DAYS FOR THE MOUNTAIN GOAT RAILROAD



The Original Mountain Goat

(SOURCE: <https://www.mountaingoattrail.org/history/>.)

One big day for passenger cars was in 1961 when The Mountain Goat Special ran a roundtrip with over 800 railfans from Chattanooga. All passenger service on the Mountain Goat/Tracy City Branch ended in 1971 with the creation of Amtrak, although freight service continued until 1985. Lyle Key rode the last train up the Mountain Goat.

## CONCLUSION

"No other team...in the history of football...has played five games in six days, much less with only zeros on the right side of the equation. Today, as it always will be, teams for decades have usually played once per week." (Givens)

Star halfback Henry Goldwaithe "Diddy" Seibels received recognition for the road-trip feat with his 1973 induction into the National College Foot-





The Victors return home to a celebration, November 15, 1899.



The 1904 Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway's Cowan Depot is now the Cowan Railroad Museum.

(Photo: Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.)

ball Hall of Fame. He humbly said teamwork was the key. Seibels became a corporate executive and successful entrepreneur in Birmingham.

What began seven days earlier as an uphill battle against larger schools, ended with an uphill victory ride as the team

was allowed to take the Pullman off the main line and up the Mountain Goat Railroad to a victorious celebration at Sewanee. Welcoming them was the entire student body (300+) and the small community. One engine pulled the car with a pusher behind. 21 players, Coach Suter, the manager, and the trainer made the entire trip. Some say it was arguably the greatest road trip in college football history. What's to "argue?"

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# THE MID-SOUTH FLYER



Historic Childersburg Crossing Along Highway 76 (Desoto Caverns Parkway) in Downtown Childersburg.  
(Photo by Ken Boyd.)