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LINES ***SOUTH***

In This Issue:

- The 1968 Collision of the *Silver Meteors*
- Riding the Rails to Florida in the 1950s and 1960s
- Atlanta's Rail Passenger Terminals, 1971: A Wistful Last Look



LINES

SOUTH

Volume 29, No. 1, 1st Quarter 2012

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The society was formed in July 1983 as the Southeastern Railroad Technical Society, and in 1993 was formally organized as the ACL & SAL Railroads Historical Society to better reflect the railroads covered. The Society is incorporated in Florida as a nonprofit corporation and is recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c) (3) educational group. The Society's mission is to preserve and disseminate the history of the Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line, and Seaboard Coast Line railroads and their subsidiaries, affiliates, and predecessors (including the Georgia Railroad, Atlanta & West Point Rail Road, Western Railway of Alabama, and Clinchfield). We welcome memberships and donations; see the enclosed "Lines for Members" insert or our web site for more details, or contact us by mail.

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LINES... FROM THE EDITOR

Like several other issues we've had in the past, this edition is all about passenger trains. Passenger trains are natural "crowd-pleasers"; it's a rare railroad enthusiast who doesn't have a strong attraction to them, often because we've ridden trains ourselves. Even if we haven't, many of us just really like these faster, sleeker, more visible, and more impressive examples of railroading. All this is particularly true for the privately owned, pre-Amtrak passenger service that most of this magazine's readers grew up with. The Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line were among the leading private passenger train operators from those days of the 1960s and before, and it's no surprise that we often receive high-quality articles and illustrations about the two railroads' famous passenger train fleets.

The material we present in this issue begins with an example of misfortune that struck even the greatest passenger trains — a serious wreck, in this instance a 1968 head-on collision between the north- and southbound SCL *Silver Meteors*. Then as now, accidents attracted attention far out of proportion to the routine, everyday safe operation that is particularly true of passenger trains. Fair or not, wrecks generated the reports, photos, and long-lasting memories that now let us look back on them in detail and understand why they occurred — at least in most cases. As John Roberts relates in his thorough article beginning on page 4, the immediate causes of this 1968 wreck are clear even though the underlying explanations could not be completely determined. Together with photos from the collection of Joe Oates and Stan Jackowski, we believe this is as detailed a chronicle as we are likely to have of this mishap.

We move next to a far more pleasant recollection, Steve Gould's story of trips he took to Florida in the late 1950s and early 1960s. His photos and notes allow us to ride along with him as he took the ACL, Seaboard, and Florida East Coast to both east coast and west coast destinations when the Florida fleet was still little changed from its postwar peak. We close out the issue with a tribute by Phillip Bullard to Atlanta's two great passenger stations. Phillip enjoyed the many trains that served these stations in his youth, and like many of us, gave

Continued on page 31

LINES SOUTH EDITORIAL AND SUBMISSIONS POLICIES

LINES SOUTH makes every reasonable effort to check the accuracy of articles that appear in the magazine. We welcome corrections and additions to published content. Opinions and conclusions expressed in articles are those of the author and not necessarily of the *LINES SOUTH* staff or of the ACL & SAL Historical Society.

We welcome submissions of articles and photographs for publication. Our preferred formats are Word documents and "raw" tiff scans of photographs and illustrations. Please contact the editor for details and for other methods of submitting photos. If you do send any items of value to us, particularly original photos or other historic items, please always use a securely packaged, insured method with delivery tracking; *LINES SOUTH* cannot assume any responsibility for loss or damage to materials sent to us. Please submit materials and inquiries to the editor:

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Front cover: SCL's *Silver Meteors* collided head-on near Winter Haven, Florida, on August 5, 1968, with this destructive result. The full story of the accident begins on page 4.
—*Robert E. Taff photo*



Rear cover: Former Columbia, Newberry & Laurens employees gathered for a reunion at Newberry, South Carolina, this past January; details of the event are on page 31.
—*John D. Jones photo*

The Orange Groves of Eloise: The 1968 Collision of the *Silver Meteors*

by John Roberts



In the 1920s the Seaboard Air Line Railway launched an aggressive expansion in Florida. Until then the Florida East Coast Railway, and to a lesser extent the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad through agreements with the FEC, held the exclusive market of rail commerce on Florida's east coast. A real-estate boom erupted in Florida in the 1920s, creating

what Seaboard saw as a business opportunity to expand its operations and boost returns. Not surprisingly, a principal part of the Seaboard's plan was the construction of a new mainline to Palm Beach and Miami.

Construction of the new mainline began in spring 1924, branching off from the existing west-coast mainline at Coleman, 127 miles south of Jacksonville. From Coleman the

These pages: SCL E6 507, a former ACL unit, lies with its nose crumpled against an embankment. No. 58's other units were E7s 571, 564, and 529. —Joseph L. Oates photo



Inset above: Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac 10-6 sleeper *Essex*, a 1949 Pullman-Standard product built for Seaboard's Florida trains, was among the passenger cars violently thrown off the track during the collision. ACL dining car *Orlando* is at the right. —Joseph L. Oates photo

mainline proceeded south-southeasterly down the peninsula's interior, cutting long, straight and flat sections through orange groves and sparsely populated land. The mainline turned more easterly at Sebring, skirted the top of Lake Okeechobee, and joined the Atlantic seaboard at West Palm Beach. Crews working from both ends completed the construction of the 204-mile section in only nine months. The remaining 70 miles from West Palm to Miami was completed between February and December 1926, and the new *Orange Blossom Special* began regular sleeping-car service between New York and Miami in January 1927.

Unfortunately, this and the Seaboard's other Florida expansion projects were ill-timed. The real-estate boom collapsed in late 1926 just as the Miami expansion was completed, and the Great Depression

added further financial strain in 1929. Indebtedness from these expansions led to the Seaboard's receivership in December 1930, after which it operated as a ward of the U.S. District Court of Norfolk, Virginia. The receivers began to improve the railroad's infrastructure, and during the latter half of the 1930s the Seaboard began to dieselize its locomotive fleet and purchase air-conditioned passenger equipment for its New York-Florida passenger service.

The *Silver Meteor* was an offspring of this 1930s recapitalization period. It was modeled after the Santa Fe's 1938 all-coach streamliner, *El Capitan*. The *Meteor* debuted in February 1939 as the first streamliner between New York and Florida. It consisted of a single EMC E4 diesel and seven Budd-built cars: a baggage-dormitory, three full coaches, a coach-tavern, a diner and a coach-

observation car. Its modern, new equipment and 27-hour New York-Miami schedule drew tourist and business travelers like a magnet. The *Meteor* quickly established a reputation for reliable, on-time operation and exceptional passenger service. Service expanded from twice weekly to daily within six months as additional equipment became available. The Seaboard's passenger service revenue rose by 27 percent in 1939, with further increases of 19 and 41 percent in 1940 and 1941, respectively. The *Silver Meteor's* 1944 revenue of \$8 million exceeded the railroad's total losses in 1933. Heavyweight sleepers were added in the early 1940s, and were replaced by streamlined Pullmans soon after Seaboard emerged from receivership in August 1946. The *Silver Meteor* maintained its high reputation beyond the Seaboard's merger with the ACL in July 1967. Few other



railroads could boast of passenger service better than the *Meteor*'s.

August 1968

Lyndon Johnson was in the final months of his presidency; Naval Aviator John McCain was in the first of six years as a prisoner of war; Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin would not walk on the moon for nearly another year. The Seaboard Coast Line was just over a year old; Amtrak was

These pages: These scenes of wrecked E units give further evidence of the accident's powerful forces and severe damage. SCL 507, 527, 564 and 571 were destroyed in the wreck and officially removed from the roster by the end of 1968. —*Joseph L. Oates photos*

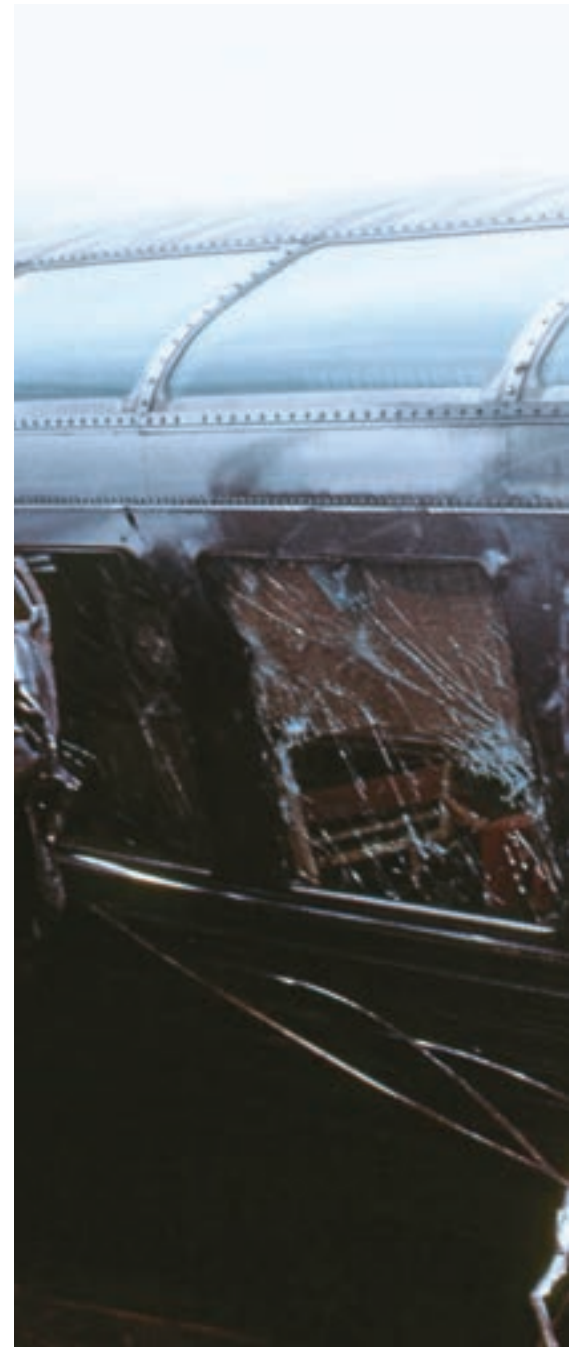




Workers check the cab of SCL E6 507, the lead unit on northbound No. 58. This closeup dramatically illustrates the degree of impact and damage the head-on collision inflicted on the trains' motive power, and is one of several scenes showing how amazing it was that all crew members survived the wreck.
—Joseph L. Oates photo



Ex-ACL E7 528, the trailing unit on southbound No. 57, and a Seaboard baggage-dormitory car are visible in this photo. The four-wheel freight truck in front of No. 528 came off a Seaboard box express car, which was immediately behind the 528. The train's other two locomotives were E7 527 and E7B 668B.
—Joseph L. Oates photo



Above: SCL Sun Lounge *Sun Ray*, formerly SAL *Hollywood Beach*, suffered major damage and was sent to the Pullman-Standard shops in Calumet, Illinois, for repairs. The car was not released for service again until March 1969, and was one of the last repair jobs that shop performed before it was closed. The wreck's only fatality also occurred in this car. Two other damaged ex-SAL sleepers also went to Calumet, *Fort Lauderdale* (released in February 1969) and *Ocala* (released in November 1968).
—Joseph L. Oates photo



almost three years in the future. The *Silver Meteor*, Nos. 57 and 58 at the time, no longer served Florida's west coast; its west coast service was discontinued the previous April because of other SCL service to Tampa and St. Petersburg. A typical *Meteor* consist was three E-units and 16 cars: one baggage-dormitory car, five sleepers including a Sun Lounge, two diners, seven coaches, and a tavern/observation car on the rear. In all, the train was over a quarter of a mile long.

The mainline from Coleman to Miami was single-track CTC territory controlled by a train dispatcher in Jacksonville. There were now more and larger communities sprinkled

between Coleman and West Palm than when the mainline was built, but otherwise most of it was still surrounded by orange groves and livestock ranches. The passenger train speed limit was 79 mph over the majority of the route. Automatic Train Stop equipment was not in use on the SCL's Florida divisions.

The scheduled meeting point for the north and southbound *Meteors* was a controlled siding about 60 miles south of Coleman in the midst of an orange grove at Eloise, a location immediately south of Winter Haven's passenger station and labeled Winter Haven in SCL's employee timetables. Common practice was for No. 57 to take the

siding in accordance with No. 58's superior northbound direction. Being CTC territory, the train dispatcher orchestrated the meeting by routing No. 57 into the siding and lining the mainline for No. 58's passage.

In the late evening of July 31, a Jacksonville train dispatcher reported a problem with the CTC system in the Winter Haven area. By 4:00AM the following morning a signal maintainer had found and corrected the problem by laying roughly one-half mile of temporary CTC cable on the surface alongside the track. There were no further problems with this section of the CTC system until August 5.

The Collision

August 5, 1968, was a clear summer day with unrestricted visibility. No. 58 left Miami on time at 9:00AM with four E-units pulling 18 cars. No. 57 left Wildwood (five miles north of Coleman) essentially on time at 11:37AM with 17 cars behind three Es. It was a routine day on SCL's Miami Subdivision until the noon hour.

At 12:25PM, as No. 57 passed Noxon (11 miles north of Winter Haven), the Jacksonville dispatcher lost control of the Winter Haven section of CTC, including the siding at Eloise. Per the CTC system's design following loss of dispatcher control, the system allowed both trains to proceed to the meeting point. Since the siding had not been lined for No. 57 when the loss occurred, the CTC system would automatically display Stop aspects to both trains, indicating manual switch alignments were required.

Onboard No. 58, an overheat alarm sounded in the lead locomotive at 12:40PM, shortly after passing the controlled siding at West Lake Wales. The fireman left the cab to investigate. Six and one-half miles of straight, level track now separated the two trains. The CTC malfunction was 15 minutes old, yet neither train crew had been advised of the outage.

No. 57 arrived at the meeting point at 12:41PM. Upon finding the north siding switch lined for the mainline, it proceeded down the main track and complied with a Stop signal (R-110) 500 feet short of the siding's south switch. The engine crew observed that switch to also be lined for the main, so the engineer kept his train's headlight illuminated brightly to indicate his train was not clear for No. 58's passage. The baggage master detrained and contacted the dispatcher by wayside phone, only then learning of the CTC problem. At that time, both men anticipated the signal governing No. 58's approach to the south siding switch (L-110) would display a Stop aspect, and one of that train's crew members would then manually line the switch for entry of his train to the siding. The dispatcher and baggage master made no arrangements for No. 57's crew to align this switch for No. 58.

No. 58's engineer was still alone in his cab as his train passed signal X-8298, less than two miles from No. 57. Apparently from force of habit, he misinterpreted this signal's Approach aspect as Approach Medium, still assuming a typical meet with No. 57 where his train would hold

the mainline. An Approach aspect meant to reduce speed immediately to 40 mph and be prepared to stop at the next signal (L-110, located at the siding's entrance); Approach Medium meant approach the next signal not exceeding 30 mph, and was the signal aspect the engineer was accustomed to seeing during a typical meet. No. 58 continued on with no noticeable speed reduction, past a defect detector six-tenths of a mile north of X-8298. The flagman estimated the train's speed to be 79 mph as he radioed a no-defect indication from the rear of the train. The two trains were now about a mile apart.

Another one-half minute passed. No. 58 was now approximately 1,500 to 2,000 feet from the siding and still closing at 70 to 79 mph. At this point the engineer evidently realized the signal governing the siding (L-

110) was displaying a Stop aspect and the train ahead was occupying the main track. He applied his train brakes in emergency and retreated to the relative safety of the engine room. His fireman was still in the engine room investigating the overheat alarm.

No. 57's engine crew had been watching No. 58's approach for a distance of three to four miles. At some point they realized a collision was imminent, hastily detrained, and fled for safety. No. 58 collided with the stopped No. 57 at a speed estimated to be between 45 and 55 mph. The time was 12:47PM, 22 minutes after the beginning of the CTC outage.

Injuries and Damage

Southbound No. 57's locomotives were pushed back 95 feet by the collision. All

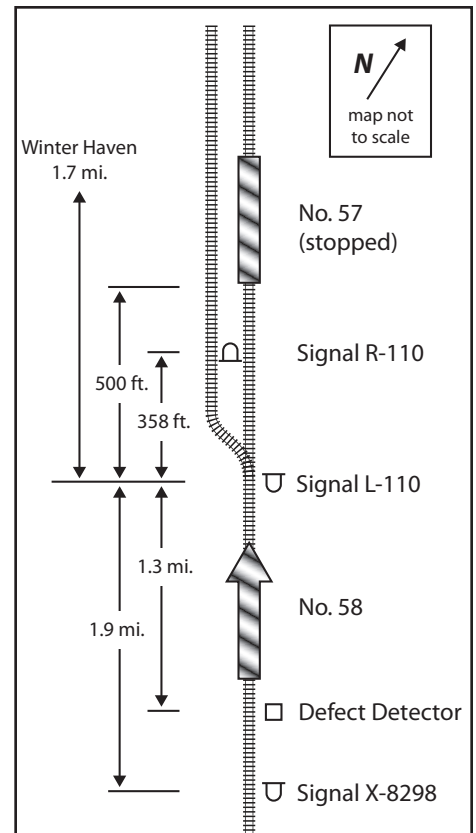




The Seaboard's Mainline to Miami

Facing page above: This later view of the south end of the Winter Haven siding (looking north, with signal L110 at the right) shows the trackage after it had been restored to service. The "orange groves of Eloise" line both sides of the main. —Robert E. Taff photo

Facing page below: This companion view looks south, with signal R110 at the right. Note the dwarf signal, which governs movements out of the siding, and the "doll arm" with its blue light indicating that the main signal governs movements one track over. —Robert E. Taff photo



The Meeting Point at Eloise (Winter Haven siding)

	Typical Meet	Aug. 5, 1968
to No. 57		
Signal R-110	● ● Stop	● ● Stop
to No. 58		
Signal L-110	● ● Approach	● ● Stop
Signal X-8298	● ● Approach Medium	● ● Approach

Approach (Rule 512): Proceed preparing to stop at next signal. Train exceeding 40 miles per hour must at once reduce to that speed, until it can be plainly seen that indication of next signal allows train to proceed.

Approach Medium (Rule 508): Proceed approaching next signal at medium speed. [Medium Speed - a speed not exceeding 30 miles per hour]

Signal Aspects at Eloise

—Diagrams drawn by John Roberts

three were derailed, as were the first three cars. The first diesel unit and express car were destroyed. Injuries aboard No. 57 were numerous, including 16 dining car employees, the stewardess/nurse, and 134 passengers, although no one required hospitalization.

Northbound No. 58 fared far worse. All four locomotives and the first 11 cars derailed; the first two locomotives were destroyed; the next two locomotives and first five cars were heavily damaged. The first engine came to rest 180 feet past the point of impact. A passenger seated in a lounge car was fatally injured as a result of being thrown forward into a table. The last seven cars remained upright and on the rails. Injuries included 202 passengers and 28 employees, and 29 persons were hospitalized including the engineer, fireman, a dining-car steward, and a waiter. The fatality likely occurred in the Sun Lounge based on photographs of its forward location in the train (third car behind the locomotives) and on its condition after the collision.

Approximately two hours after the accident a signal maintainer found that the temporary cable laid five days earlier near Auburndale, about halfway between Noxon and Winter Haven, had been cut, apparently as a result of being maliciously laid on the track and run over by No. 57.

Missed Opportunities

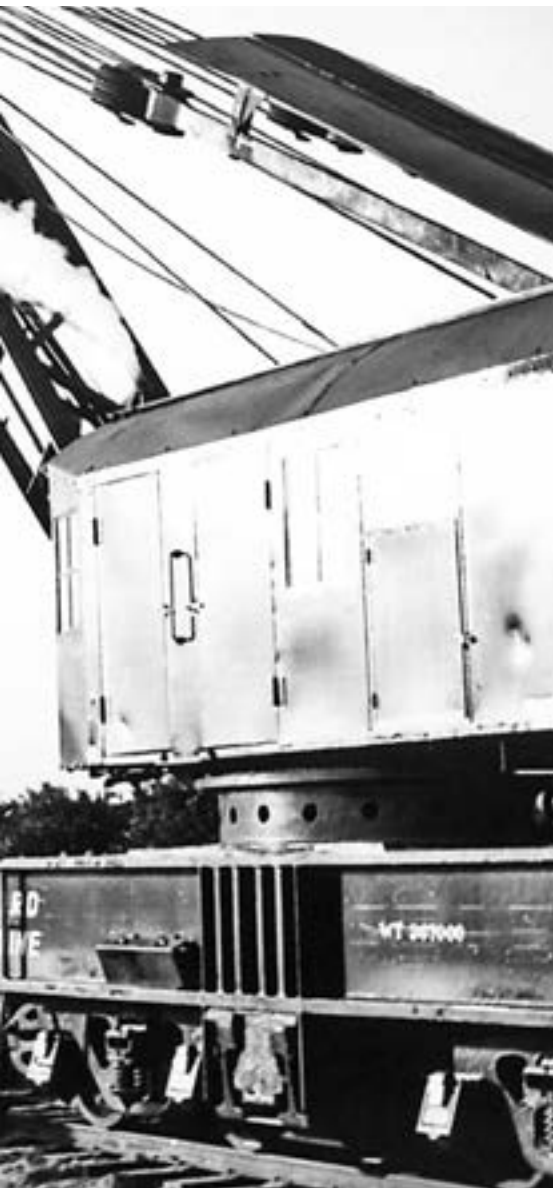
It has often been said that the Rule Book is written in blood. The initial causal factor of the collision was clearly the malicious tampering with the CTC cable at Noxon, and the change in routine that resulted. However, several SCL rules — each intended to prevent just such a collision — failed to do so.

First, No. 58's engine-overheat alarm left its engineer alone in the cab as his train approached Eloise. The fireman's duty, when not engaged in more urgent matters, would have been to observe and agree with the engineer on the aspects of signals X-8298 and L-110. SCL rules governing such a situation included:

34. All members of train and engine crews must, when practicable, communicate to each other by its name the indication of the next signal ahead affecting the movement of their train as soon as such indication becomes clearly visible and again just before passing that signal...

987. Firemen must keep a constant lookout ahead when not engaged in more





Above and facing page: SCL E7 529, the rear unit on northbound No. 58, gets a lift back onto the rails. The ex-ACL unit was one of three (out of seven) locomotives that was repaired and returned to service. —*Stan Jackowski photos*



At right: These scenes look south and southeast and show the most heavily damaged cars and locomotives. Note the Seaboard 6050-series baggage-dormitory car and SAL box express car 742, the first two cars on the southbound train. The baggage-dorm suffered only light damage but No. 742 was a total loss. —*Stan Jackowski photos*





Above: Steam-powered crane SCL 765150 and its boom flatcar, ACL 65220, were among the wrecking equipment brought in to quickly clear the mainline. The 150-ton-capacity 765150 was assigned to Lakeland, Florida, and was formerly ACL 65229, a 1919 product from Bucyrus-Erie. —Joseph L. Oates photo



Left: SCL 771254 was another wrecking crane quickly dispatched to the accident scene. This steam-powered machine, which could lift 250 tons, was formerly Seaboard 71980 and built by Bucyrus in 1945. It was assigned to Hialeah, Florida. —Stan Jackowski photo



urgent duties and give notice to engineman of any condition affecting the movement of the train or engine. ...

The Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Safety Board did not find fault with the absence of No. 58's fireman from the cab. It is noteworthy that subsequent RSB examinations and tests revealed no condition that could have caused signals X-8298 and L-110 to display other than Approach and Stop aspects, respectively, for No. 58 as that train approached these signals.

Secondly, No. 58's approach to the meeting point was over straight, flat topography in clear weather conditions. No. 57's engine crew watched No. 58 approach for three to four miles, so it is logical to assume their train's headlight was also visible from No. 58's cab for several minutes. Its engineer saw the headlight, yet continued to assume his train would hold the mainline until the final moments. His fireman's absence was again a factor.

17. The headlight will be displayed on the front of every train by day and by night, except it must be extinguished ... when standing on main track at end of siding ... waiting to meet a train and the route has been lined for opposing trains.

Third, and most significant, was the failure of the dispatcher to contact the crews of Nos. 57 and 58 to inform them the CTC system was malfunctioning and how their meet would be affected. Almost certainly, that advance awareness would have set the appropriate expectations, and No. 58's engineer would have correctly interpreted the signal aspects at Eloise.

789. [Dispatchers] will promptly take action to afford protection against any known condition which may affect safe operation of trains and engines.

The RSB found No. 58's engineer was ultimately responsible for the collision: "The accident was caused by failure of the engineer to control the speed of No. 58 as required by an Approach signal aspect, and to stop his train short of a Stop signal." The SCL Rule Book was clear that engineers held the final responsibility for safe train operation regardless of all else:

964. [Enginemen] will, at all times, be responsible for the safe condition and operation of the engines entrusted to their care.

The Railroad Safety Board's final report contains a single recommendation: "It is recommended that the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, and any other railroad not having already done so, prescribe and/or enforce rules or regulations requiring ... train crew members be informed of any unusual condition that might affect the movement of their train, whenever communication facilities are available to so inform the train crew."

Epilogue

Over 40 years have passed since the *Meteor* collision. The SCL's Coleman-Miami mainline remains in service as a principal CSX artery. The *Silver Meteor* continues to provide daily service between New York and Miami as Amtrak Trains 97 and 98. It continues to pass through Eloise and stop at Winter Haven, but now follows the former-ACL mainline from Auburndale to Jacksonville. The pass track at Eloise remains in use, paralleling County Road 655, although houses and businesses have replaced much of the orange groves. Very likely some of the local residents who offered aid to the *Silver Meteors'* passengers that summer afternoon are still living there and remember that infamous day among the orange groves of Eloise.



Right: SCL 771256, a year-old diesel-powered crane that was ex-SAL 71982, was one of two such 250-ton cranes Seaboard purchased just before the merger from American Hoist & Derrick. No. 771256 was assigned to Wildwood, Florida. —*Stan Jackowski photo*



Author's note: In my article "My First Engine Ride," published in the Fourth Quarter 2009 issue of *LINES SOUTH*, I recounted my father's recollection that the engineer named in that article (Arthur Moran) was later one of the engineers involved in this collision. In researching the RSB report I found some of the description I gave in that article was inaccurate. The facts are that No. 58 collided with a stopped No. 57; the track was straight, not curved; and the only fatality was a passenger on No. 58. Given these facts, Mr. Moran would have been southbound No. 57's engineer at Eloise.

The article above is based on the findings of the Department of Transportation Railroad Safety Board investigation. The author omitted or condensed some details for brevity.

Editor's note: Thanks to Warren Calloway, Mike Savchak, and El Simon for additional information used in this article. 🙏

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Above and below: With enough equipment moved out of the way to restore the mainline, trains began gingerly moving through the accident scene. This appears to be the northbound *Silver Star*, with ex-SAL E7 558 on the point and two cars leased from B&O on the rear, a "bird" series Slumbercoach and a dome sleeper. —Stan Jackowski photos



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First Experiences with First Class Travel: Riding the Rails to Florida in the 1950s and 1960s

by Steve Gould • Photos by the author

I grew up on the eastern end of Long Island, New York, where the railroad of choice — in fact, the only choice — was the Long Island Rail Road. My dad would take me down to the East Hampton station to watch the *Cannonball* arrive, usually with a leased Pennsylvania Railroad K4 Pacific steam locomotive on the point. Our house was near the family dairy farm, and one of the boundaries of the pasture out back was the LIRR Montauk Branch tracks. So if I didn't make it to the station with my dad, I could see trains from the back yard. The standard power as I was growing up was the venerable K4 on passenger trains and an H10 Consolidation on the freights. Did I take photos then? Of course not, and steam out our way on the Island was gone in 1950.

When I left home in 1957 to attend American University in Washington, D.C., I soon found out that Tuscan Red wasn't the only color railroads used. I befriended another railfan, Bob Kessler, and we were able to get up close and personal at Union Station with not only the PRR but the Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake & Ohio, Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac, the Southern, and of course Washington Terminal and its stable of Alco RS1s (a locomotive I became familiar with on the LIRR). As an aside, Bob, Paul Waugaman (another AU classmate) and I continue to "chase trains" today. Pardon the pun, but the railroad was the "tie" that binds, I guess!

Starting in 1958, my parents would vacation in Florida for several weeks or a month, and they were usually there during mid-semester break in January. So my plan was to visit them in Lakeland, Florida, where they had rented a house, which would be my first visit to the Sunshine State. What better way to travel for a railfan than by train? I checked out the most recent Atlantic Coast Line timetable I had picked up on one of my visits to Union Station and saw that the *West Coast Champion* would be the train of choice.

I headed down to K Street on January 23 to the ACL ticket office. I was looking at another first for this trip — my first time in a sleeping compartment. With check in hand (remember, no credit card to whip out), I plunked down \$17.65 for a roomette plus the rail fare of \$41.95 and, of course, the tax, and was booked on the *West Coast Champion* in Roomette 6, Car R505, leaving Washington at 8:10PM on January 26. It was only three days away!

You know that the three days between January 23 and 26 were the longest days on record! As most of the students had headed for home, Hamilton House, my dormitory, was empty. When the 26 rolled around finally, I contacted Diamond Cab for a pickup at the dorm. Reality hit me when the cab pulled up to Union Station and I was actually going to catch a train here, not just look at them. I felt almost like Farley Granger or Robert Walker in "Strangers on a Train" as they were dropped off and walked to the train gate!

Sleeping car passengers were called first to board. Hey, that's me. I found Car R505, a PRR 10 roomette-5 double bedroom Pullman named *Cascade Bend*, and my Roomette 6 with ease. Departure from Union Station was on time. The train rolled through the tunnel under Union Station, emerged under New Jersey Avenue, and passed Virginia Tower where the PRR freight line joined. It was dark this winter day but the monuments of DC were well lit for viewing — the Capitol dome, the Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, and Lincoln Memorial.

After crossing the Potomac River and leaving Alexandria, Virginia, there wasn't much to see until we slowed for Richmond. I had dinner in the diner prior to Richmond; I do not remember what I had but I have an ACL flyer that said "American Plan Dinners" included three choices (chicken, ham or perch) and cost \$2.25 for the complete meal. It wasn't long after dinner

when I saw the huge RF&P Acca Yard, and I remember a forest of radio and TV antennas with their aircraft warning lights blinking in unison. My roomette was on the east side of the car so I could also see the flashing neon "FFV" sign, for Famous Foods of Virginia. The Richmond station for the *Champion* was Broad Street, and I learned about the "circle trip" we would take to enter and depart the station. We pulled in around 10:15PM and departed on time at 10:30. The train, as we left, looped around so we were heading north with the dome of the station rotunda in my view. Then we curved west and south, completing the loop, to cross the James River Bridge. Of course, we now had ACL power up front, exchanged for RF&P units at the station, and soon, right in the middle of the bridge, we would be on ACL tracks.

I decided it was time to get ready for bed so, after using the sink and toilet, I pulled down the bed and remember seeing the beige Pullman blanket, as tight as a drum. I put my shoes in the cubicle where the porter would collect them, polish them, and replace them. In between nodding off, I would lift the shade ever so slightly to see what was going on, especially when we slowed for Rocky Mount, North Carolina, around 12:30AM or so. I could see we were passing down the middle of the main drag to get to the station. It appeared to me that the sidewalks had been pulled up many hours before we showed up.

My next memory was the car being bumped around. I looked out the window and assumed it was Jacksonville. I checked my watch and the timetable to confirm indeed it was J-ville; this was around 9:45AM. I quickly got dressed because I didn't want to miss any action. Cars were being shifted as my sleeper was being moved about the station. I stood at the Dutch door to catch a glimpse of Florida East Coast E units. At one point, I was able to get down to the platform to watch Jacksonville Terminal



On the author's first trip south, he was able to detrain at Jacksonville long enough to see Jacksonville Terminal switcher No. 34 pull past with a cut of passenger cars. At the right, workers service purple-accented ACL dining car *Birmingham*. The date was January 27, 1958.



The old downtown Lakeland station, built in 1919, was still in use in 1958; ACL replaced it with a modern building about a mile east in 1960. Amtrak then returned to downtown with another new station in 1998.

EMD switcher No. 34 pass by with a sleeper. I also could see the massive station building and my first glimpse of palm trees! We spent 40 minutes in Jacksonville to accomplish all the switching moves, finally departing at 10:20AM.

At Orlando, the stop was long enough for me to get off and grab a shot of my sleeper. My camera equipment was very rudimentary back then. I had a Kodak Brownie box camera for black-and-white stills and a Bell & Howell 8mm movie camera. My still shot was partially sun-streaked but I could still make out the name, *Cascade Bend*.

Soon, it was time to get off at Lakeland where my parents were waiting for me and, yes, we arrived on time shortly after 2:30PM. My first class rail adventure was over. I did do some railfanning at the Lakeland station later, where I got a shot of ACL FP7 857 and a combine waiting for cars off the *West Coast Champion* for the Naples connection. And I caught an 8mm sequence of the northbound *Champion* departing Lakeland just west of



the station at a multi-track grade crossing. I can remember a Chrysler sedan stopping in front of me, then deciding to drive over all the tracks to beat the train to the crossing. The Operation Lifesaver folks, had they been around at the time, would have had a fit! I stayed a week and then flew back to DC from Tampa on Eastern Air Lines.

My parents were home for mid-semester break in 1959 so there was no Florida trip. But in 1960, they were back but not in Lakeland; this time they rented an apartment in North Miami Beach. This meant a new train to take. On January 19, 1960, I was back at the ACL ticket office to buy a ticket on the *Florida Special*. The roomette cost had gone up to \$22.17 in two years. I was booked in Roomette 1, Car R503, which turned out to be Florida East Coast 10 roomette-6 double bedroom Pullman *Oriente*.

Departure for the *Florida Special* was scheduled out of Washington at 2:50PM on January 27, with a scheduled arrival at North Miami at 11:14AM the next day. I had my trusty Brownie box camera and got off at West Palm Beach to grab a shot of the *Oriente*.

Arriving at his destination of Lakeland, Florida, Steve found FP7 857 waiting at the station with the winter-season-only Naples *Champion* connection.



The author's second trip was via the *Florida Special* to Miami. At West Palm Beach on January 28, 1960, he jumped off to take this shot of his sleeper, Florida East Coast 10-6 *Oriente*. White-jacketed porters attend the *Oriente* and an adjacent Union Pacific sleeper; the *Florida Special* frequently had foreign-line cars in the late 1950s and early 1960s.



Left: Another trip, this time for spring break in late March and early April 1961, was aboard Seaboard's *Silver Meteor* to Hollywood, Florida. The author grabbed this shot from the dutch door of his sleeper as the train left Jacksonville Terminal on March 25, 1961, behind three E units.

While in Florida, I visited the new FEC North Miami station to grab shots and movies of the parade of winter trains, including the Vista Dome *City of Miami* with its complete set of Illinois Central equipment. An ancient FEC E6, No. 1005, was on the head end.

I decided I wanted to go back to DC by train but would try coach. I departed on February 6 on the *Florida Special*, which by now was a combination sleeper and coach train, in reserved seat 15 in Car M-21. The coach ticket cost \$25.27! When I got off in Washington at 2:15PM the next day, I was very tired because I had not slept much in my reserved seat. I dreaded getting back to campus because I had a meeting with the current fraternity treasurer to go over the requirements of the job; I was soon to take over the position. I managed to stay awake during the entire orientation.

The year 1961 was a banner year for train riding to Florida. I not only went down by train for mid-semester break in January of that year, but did so again in March for spring vacation. On January 17, 1961, I was again at the K Street ACL ticket office to purchase another ticket on the *Florida Special*, and secured Roomette 5 in Car R-503, scheduled to leave Washington on January 29.

My sleeper was the last car on the train, so I did lots of riding in the vestibule looking out the back. I grabbed a shot on the RF&P somewhere south of Fredericksburg, Virginia, of the train whipping up snow. It was left over from the huge snowstorm that struck the area a few days before the inauguration of John F. Kennedy. I had a night class downtown at the F Street campus and parking was a challenge. The District was trying to figure out what to do with all the abandoned cars on Pennsylvania Avenue, which had to be towed to clear a route for the inauguration parade the following day.

Upon arrival in North Miami, I took a shot of my 10-6 ACL sleeper but, alas, the angle of the shot was such that I can't read



This photo of the famous Sun Lounge car amply illustrates its bright interior.



ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY

W. THOMAS RICE
PRESIDENT

WILMINGTON, N. C. February 22, 1960.

Mr. Stephen Gould,
c/o American University,
Box 157,
Washington 16, D. C.

Dear Mr. Gould:

Through the courtesy of Mr. Edward Ball, Chief Executive Officer, Florida East Coast Railway Company, I have been favored with copy of letter which you addressed to that Company at St. Augustine, Fla., on February 13, also copy of Mr. Ball's acknowledgment of February 16.

It is certainly pleasing to learn that you had such a pleasant trip recently on the FLORIDA SPECIAL, and am glad to know that the food and service in the dining car and lounge car were to your liking. I shall be glad to see that your kind expressions are brought to the attention of the crews on the FLORIDA SPECIAL.

I hope that your future trips over the Atlantic Coast Line and connecting railroads will be equally pleasant and comfortable.

With all good wishes,

Cordially,



FLORIDA EAST COAST RAILWAY COMPANY

J. TURNER BUTLER AND WILLIAM A. HALLOWED, TRUSTEES

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.

February 16, 1960

File 710 P-6

Mr. Stephen Gould,
American University,
Box 157,
Washington 16, D. C.

Dear Mr. Gould:

It was good of you to take the time to write your letter of February 13th, for the purpose of expressing satisfaction for the services you encountered as a passenger on our FLORIDA SPECIAL.

The operation of this train is a joint venture on the part of several companies. While on the rails between Miami and Jacksonville, it is the responsibility of the Florida East Coast Railway; between Jacksonville and Richmond, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad has jurisdiction; between Richmond and Washington, it is under control of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad; and from Washington to New York, the Pennsylvania Railroad. The services on the lounge cars and in sleepers are under control of The Pullman Company; and the dining car is under jurisdiction of the Atlantic Coast Line.

It is the purpose of each carrier to provide the very best service to their patrons; and it is pleasing when one will recognize the efforts that are being made.

Inasmuch as you comment particularly on the meals prepared in the dining car, and the service in the lounge car, I am sending copy of your letter to the Presidents of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and The Pullman Company.

Yours very truly,

Chief Executive Officer
for Trustees.

EB:r

Copies to:

Mr. W. T. Rice, President
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company
Wilmington, N. C.

Mr. G. W. Bohannon, President
The Pullman Company
165 N. Canal Street
Chicago 6, Illinois

Above and right: The author was impressed enough with his 1960 *Florida Special* trip to write a note of thanks to both ACL and FEC. ACL president Tom Rice and FEC CEO Ed Ball responded with personal letters.

the name. The car ahead of mine was an ancient — even for 1961 — heavyweight Pullman sleeper.

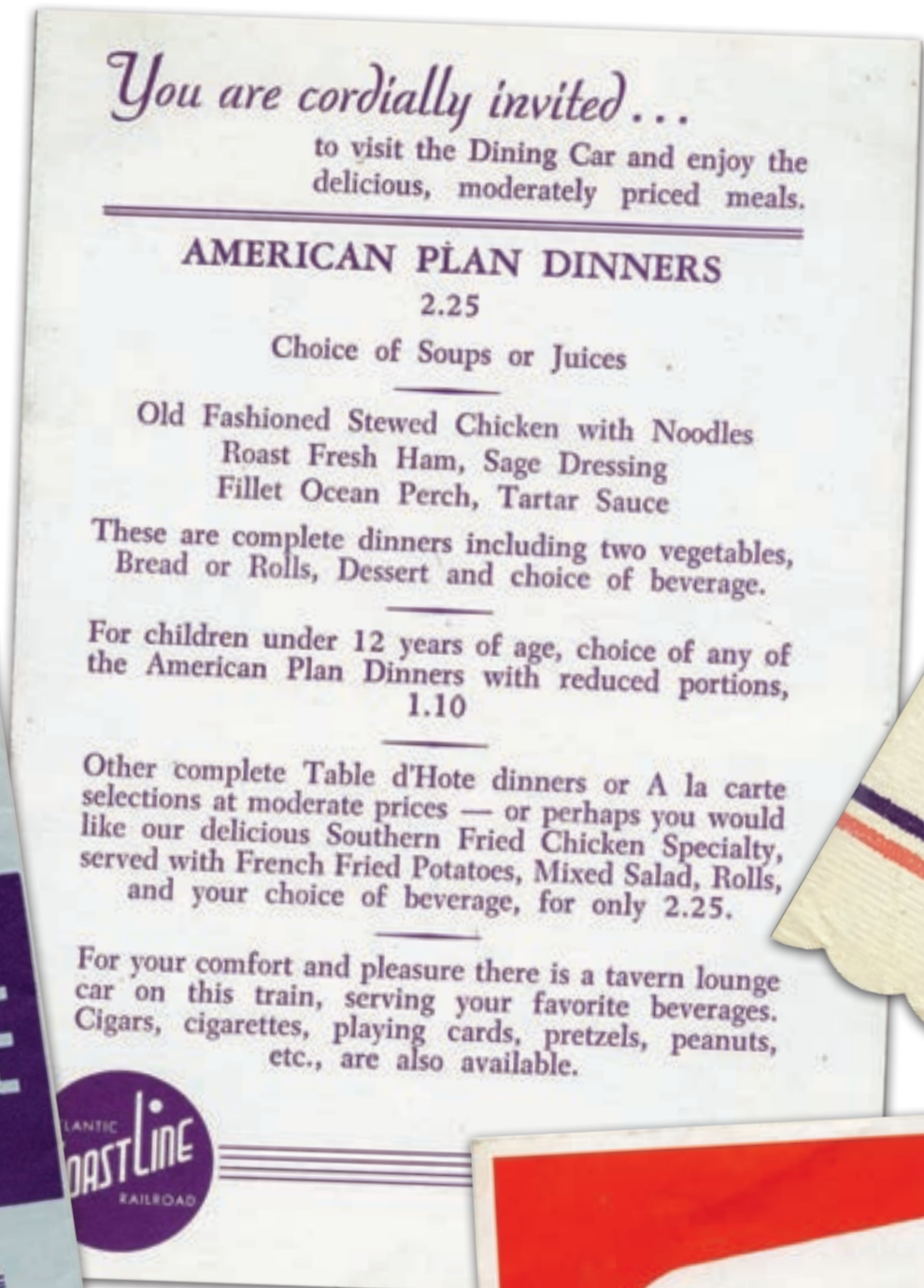
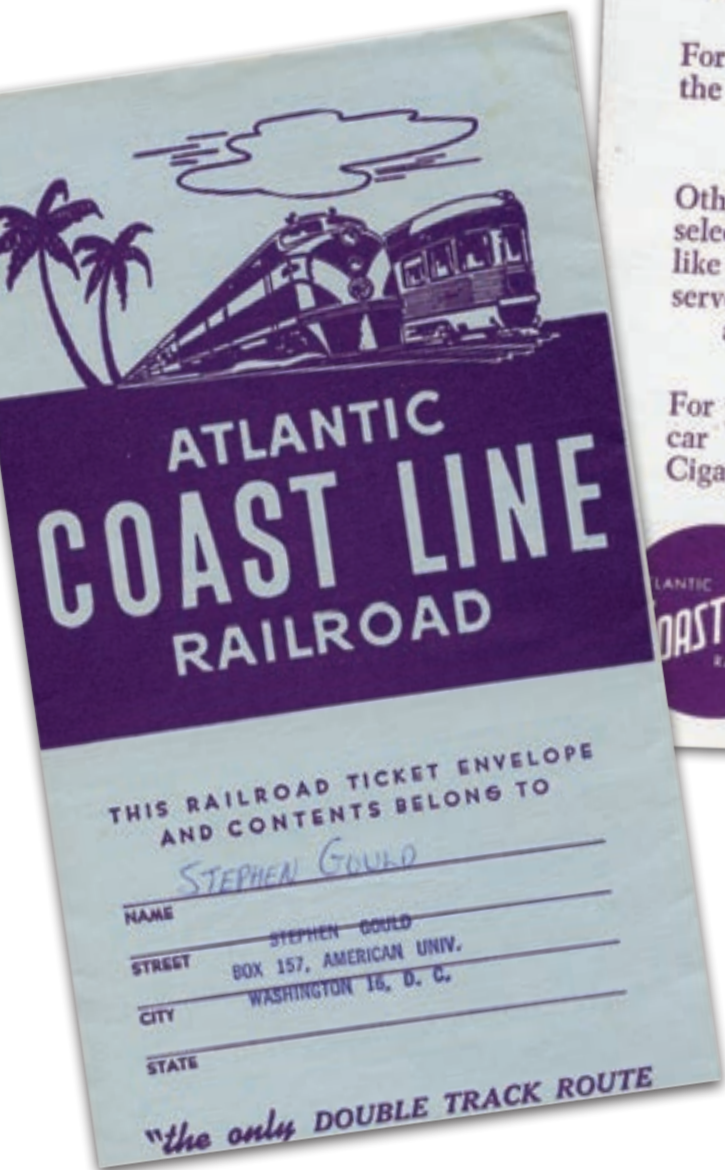
For my second trip to Florida by train, I decided to take the ACL's competitor for the Florida market, the Seaboard Air Line's *Silver Meteor*. I visited the Seaboard's ticket office, also on K Street, and bought my ticket for \$75.49 including tax. I had Roomette 3 in car R-356, departing Washington for Hollywood, Florida, on March 24 at 7:05PM.

The day before, my roommate Bob Eggenschiller and I drove up to Mattawan, New Jersey, to attend the wedding of one of our fraternity brothers. Following the reception, we drove further north to Hawthorne, New Jersey, where I stayed overnight at his parent's house. The next morning on the 24th, after breakfast, I was on the road back to the campus and my empty dorm. Thank goodness the weather was clear and sunny; my only worry was hoping the 1954 Dodge would not fail me on the way south.



While at Seaboard's North Miami Beach station, SAL RS3 1644 rolled by with this rusty hopper car; note the standard SAL "nomad symbol" repack data stencil.

Among the author's trip mementoes are these ACL, SAL and FEC ticket envelopes; an ACL American Plan dinner menu and cocktail napkin; and a Pullman drink menu from the Pullman lounge car.



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You arrive right where you want to be . . . right in the heart of things.

SEABOARD
RAILROAD





While visiting in Florida, the author caught some FEC action including this view of the *East Coast Champion* at the North Miami station. FEC E7 1011 headed up the long train; its original paint shows the wear of many seasons, while its two mates have received FEC's new solid blue scheme. Note the two heavyweight express cars right behind the locomotives, which will probably come off at Jacksonville.

At 6:00PM, Diamond Cab once again picked me up at the dorm to take me to Union Station. Alas, once again, I don't have a record of which car I was in. I remember taking photos from a Dutch door in the vestibule of my car to watch three SAL E7s ferry the *Meteor* out of Jacksonville Union Station. After leaving Jacksonville, I wandered to the Sun Lounge car to watch the passing scenery from those huge windows. On-time arrival was at 4:00PM in Hollywood.



Another FEC catch was E6 1005 pulling a local at Hollywood; this unit is also due a paint job. The conductor and engineer confer as a Railway Express Agency van works the train's open express car.

I did quite a bit of railfanning during this stay with my folks, getting over to the North Miami and Hollywood FEC stations and grabbing as many shots as I could. At Hollywood, I caught FEC E6 No. 1005 again, this time on a mail train (probably the "Local Express"). At North Miami, it was shots of the *East Coast Champion* plus an FEC Geep hauling a tank car and a wooden, side-door caboose.

That was my final trip to Florida by train until I took Auto-Train (the private company) from Sanford to Lorton in 1977 and 1978, followed by 14 trips to or from Sanford on Amtrak's *Auto Train* from 1989 to 2009. But those trips to Florida back in the 1950s and 1960s were very special because they were my introduction to long-distance first class travel. And those trips were the reason why I joined the ACL & SAL Historical Society: to reinforce my memory each quarter with *LINES SOUTH* of those early trips on those famous railroads. 🍷

Atlanta's Rail Passenger Terminals, 1971

A Wistful Last Look

Article and photos
by Phillip Bullard



This June 1971 view of Terminal Station, looking west from the Spring Street viaduct, shows the empty terminal building still intact even though demolition has begun in the concourse area. Southern Railway and Central of Georgia, the station's last tenants, had moved out a year before in June 1970. The last Seaboard/SCL train to use the station was the *Silver Comet*, which was discontinued on October 15, 1969.

Having completed a three-year Army enlistment in May 1971, one of the discoveries I made upon my return home was that the downtown Atlanta passenger station complex was targeted for demolition. In the days before jet aircraft and interstate highway travel absorbed nearly all the nation's passenger traffic, these elegant old structures had heard countless greetings and farewells exchanged as rail travelers hurried through them. With my own collection of fond memories of these places, I could not let their demise go unrecorded; so one hazy June afternoon I grabbed the camera and drove downtown to capture a last look. Having been involved

intensely with completing college and military service, little did I know that the rail passenger service we had known, loved and valued for so many years had quietly died on April 30, only a few weeks previously. On May 1 Amtrak took over most intercity runs that remained under the greatly reduced national passenger train network.

In the mid-1950s a youngster such as I, exercising a little caution, could still safely ride a bicycle to downtown Atlanta and watch the trains from the vantage point I was revisiting 15 years later. What an experience it had been to look down on the sleek diesel E-units decked out in the green and white Southern livery or Central of Georgia's

gray and blue heading up streamliners and heavyweight trains, as some hurtled past slowly and others moved gingerly in and out of the sheds to take on and discharge passengers. Diesel smoke and fumes permeated the air, and in the background loomed a huge tank in front of Kennesaw Mountain visible on the horizon. Residual soot from the days of steam still coated many of the concrete posts supporting the terminal complex and the adjacent street viaducts. Noxious and grimy though the scene may have been, here was excitement. People were actually going places — for some it may have been home wherever at last, but one could imagine others heading to



The station's grand front façade prominently displayed "Atlanta Terminal Station" and the building's Italian Renaissance features, but "Closed" was Terminal's reality — as bluntly stated by the sign behind the Oldsmobile at left.

exotic places like Miami, New York or New Orleans. Now all the hustle and bustle was history, save the passing of an occasional freight train.

The view westward from the Spring Street viaduct over the remaining tracks of a once-bustling terminal area encompassed one of the prime pieces of Atlanta real estate Union General W.T. Sherman sought to render useless in 1864. His army may have succeeded in burning the buildings and tearing up the tracks of this new and thriving railhead, but the companies held on to their rights-of-way over the state-owned land and launched what was to become a veritable anthill of rail passenger activity well into the next century.

The Atlanta Terminal Station posed a dominating presence on the south side of this multi-tracked complex near the 1837 southern terminus of the Western & Atlantic Railroad. Its Italian Renaissance revival architecture reflecting one of the many Beaux Arts stylistic manifestations proliferating in the Gilded Age, the Terminal

opened May 13, 1905, to thousands of visitors complete with a concert by the Army's Sixteenth Regimental Band led impromptu by Civil War veteran Captain James W. English, president of the Atlanta Terminal Company. This organization, created in 1903, was a collective effort of the Southern, the Central of Georgia, and the Atlanta & West Point railroad companies. Designed by architect P. Thornton Marye of Washington, D.C., the new structure served not only the owner lines but also hosted traffic from the Seaboard Air Line and the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad (later the Atlanta, Birmingham & Coast).

Despite the presence for many years of a large billboard to the right of the front parking lot advertising the Central of Georgia's Nancy Hanks to Savannah, the Southern always appeared to be the most prominent force on the Terminal scene. In one of his many plays of exchanging money for power, J. Pierpont Morgan of the Drexel Morgan banking firm created the Southern Railway Company in 1894 out of

the troubled Richmond & Danville Railroad Company and the assumed leases of several other rail lines serving Atlanta, who like many lines of the 1890s were in receivership due to excessive debt and/or overbuilding. Southern Railway remained a front-runner operation at Terminal until the end, and of the lines once present is the only one still maintaining a visible presence: an old office building above and on the west side of the railroad gulch. Southern's regional office facilities have followed the trend of many Atlanta businesses in recent years to move out of downtown northward to Midtown and fashionable Buckhead.

Looking southwest from the Spring Street viaduct over the rails, one sees the roofline of a now-demolished baggage and express shed in bas relief on the concrete parking lot wall in the foreground. Behind that the aged Terminal building stands intact but with track sheds at the rear and adjacent tracks already taken up. The flat, cornice-topped towers on either side of the façade were originally nearly one-third more than their



“Not an unpleasant habitat for the ghosts of travelers past” was the author’s description of the abandoned waiting room.

present height and ponderously ornamented in lavish stonework, but were shortened in 1947 due to recurrent lightning strikes. The front parking lot full of cars suggests intense activity inside the building, but such was not the case. The head house is empty and silent as a tomb, and the cars outside are likely owned by shoppers and nearby office workers taking advantage of the temporarily free parking.

Approaching the three sets of rectangular double doors of the main entrance, one can enjoy the play of light and shadow on the Romanesque colonnade in front and on either side. Above is a second-story portico decorated with carved, stone ornamentation showing “Atlanta Terminal Station” across the front. In the middle stands a carved stone crest flanked by a pair of fluted columns on either side and backed by a shorter balustrade. A friend once quipped that in another time one could likely see the Doge of Venice blessing the fleet from such a position.

Inside the two-story main waiting room,

all is quiet. Paper and trash are scattered about the floor and on the empty, wood benches. Dark gray pilasters adorn the grimy beige walls while overhead, yellow stained-glass skylights trimmed in light green and framing clear glass medallions add a warm glow to the hazy summer sunlight filtering down to the floor — not an unpleasant habitat for the ghosts of travelers past.

Across the waiting room, the Art Deco newsstand has sold out, with no more magazines, newspapers, candy, gum or souvenirs to offer. Likewise, the nearby lunchroom has served its last meal. The walk down the concourse toward the now-demolished boarding tracks reveals demolition relics and scattered red baggage tickets as well as a large empty chalkboard that once announced arrivals and departures of the trains.

The surrounding street viaducts provided the opportunity to view and photograph the once-proud Terminal from all sides, but the condition of the Atlanta Union Station three blocks further east on Forsyth Street waited



The station’s Art Deco newsstand has made its last sale.



Just a few blocks east stood Atlanta's Union Station. Union had stayed open longer than Terminal — it served the Louisville & Nashville's *Georgian* until May 1, 1971 — but now also faced demolition. The ACL-SCL *Dixie Flyer* had called at Union Station until January 8, 1969.



This photo of Terminal Station's rear shows the concourse has already been demolished; the remainder of the building would soon follow. Removal of the station's platforms and trackage had begun in mid-1970.

to be addressed. Having recently closed with Amtrak's debut on May 1, 1971, the building was padlocked. With interior access barred, exterior viewing was equally problematic with the building being closely wedged between other structures. The full front parking lot suggested business as usual, but again the patrons were more likely shoppers at the huge Rich's department store across the street.

Union Station, Atlanta's second downtown station, dated from April 18, 1930, when it opened to replace an earlier incarnation three blocks further east toward Five Points, built in 1869. There were no public festivities, but the event was celebrated privately by local and railroad dignitaries. The architects and engineers of the local firm of McDonald and Co. designed the narrow, gray, restrained classic edifice. Built of marble and cut limestone with a tile roof, it featured the latest amenities and stood on state-owned land over tracks connecting with Terminal's. The facility originally served a mix of rail lines including the state-owned Western & Atlantic (over which ran trains of the Louisville & Nashville and the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis), the Georgia Railroad, and later the Atlanta, Birmingham

& Coast and its successor Atlantic Coast Line.

Having viewed the remains of traditional rail passenger service in Atlanta, it is reasonable to ask what's left. Numerous typical small-town depots of wood, brick or stone once stood in the suburban communities around Atlanta, but if still standing, nearly all have been converted to other uses. Among them, nevertheless, is a small architectural jewel that stepped in when Amtrak took over to fill the void created by the demolition of the Terminal complex. Brookwood Station, known originally as Peachtree Station, was built in 1917 by Southern Railway to blend in with and serve the affluent northern suburban communities of Brookwood and Buckhead that developed nearby after World War I. Given the differences in size and details, one might easily miss the ideological kinship in architecture between this building and the famous but now demolished Pennsylvania Station in New York designed by McKim, Mead, & White. Peachtree Station, however, was a design by Neel Reid of Hentz, Reid, & Adler. Hal Hentz and Neel Reid, as well as Philip Shutze of the same firm, had all studied under Charles McKim at Columbia University and at the McKim-sponsored American Academy in Rome. Hentz and Reid also studied at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Atlanta was fortunate to have in this local architectural firm the same caliber of talent which gave it, like the larger cities, the classic monumental public buildings and stately homes typical of the Beaux Arts style. Peachtree Station's low-pitched roof and limestone entablature and frames suggest a small, classic Italian casino. Daniel



The ex-Southern Railway suburban Brookwood Station, shown here in March 2009, is the only surviving active passenger station in Atlanta. It is served by Amtrak's New York–New Orleans *Crescent*.

C. French's sculpture of a seated Samuel Spencer, the first president of Southern Railway, once sat outside the station in a small garden as a relic of Terminal Station, in front of which it was originally mounted. Now the statue has returned to a downtown park near its former home.

With the closure of the Terminal, Southern Railway continued to operate its famous *Southern Crescent* and *Piedmont* trains from Brookwood until Amtrak's takeover of its passenger operations in 1979. Passenger service by Atlanta's other non-Amtrak line, the Georgia Railroad, gradually dwindled

away as a mixed operation, ending in 1983. Today, Brookwood Station, with its two daily Amtrak arrivals (as opposed to the more than 140 daily trains Atlanta once hosted), reigns as Atlanta's only non-rapid transit system rail facility. In hope of a brighter future, the building ironically overlooks a major transportation artery, as did its downtown predecessors. In their case the view was over the rail traffic that nurtured them; in Brookwood Station's it is over the junction of I-85 and I-75, whose traffic lanes contributed to the present leaner and meaner times for rail travelers. 🚂

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Frank E. Ardrey, Jr.



Frank E. Ardrey Jr. speaks to the joint membership meeting of the ACL & SAL HS and the Central of Georgia Railway Historical Society in Birmingham, Alabama, in June 1999.

Longtime railroad historian and photographer Frank E. Ardrey, Jr. passed away in Birmingham, Alabama, on November 29, 2011. He is survived by his son Carl and family. He was an authority on railroads in the Southeast and in particular on the history and motive power of the Southern Railway, his employer of many years. He was honored by that company, which named a siding for him, Ardrey, Alabama. Among his other many accomplishments, he was awarded the Railway and Locomotive Society's Lifetime Achievement Award. His photographs, which he generously shared, adorned the pages of *Locomotive Quarterly*, *Trains*, and numerous books and other publications.

Mr. Ardrey was from that old school of railroad photographers who seemed to always have their subjects perfectly spotted and lighted. For many years Frank Ardrey, Forrest Beckum and Hugh Comer would meet at the annual Atlanta Railroad Show in Atlanta for lunch. It was indeed a great honor to be invited to be with the "Big Three" of southeastern railroading as they reminisced. Their knowledge was immense and all were always willing to help the younger generation of railfans. Between them, they knew the answers to every query on railroads in the Southeast, however insignificant the question might be.

Certainly the railfan community has lost a historian and photographer of note with Mr. Ardrey's passing. Carl, his son, has lost a father, and this writer has lost a dear friend. —*Al Langley*

I opened up the Fourth Quarter *LINES SOUTH* and read it with pleasure and without stopping from start to finish. I expect readers' like or dislike of articles depends somewhat upon their respective interest in the various topics of railroading. In this issue, I found that every one of the stories, including "Tales of the Rails," was personally appealing and delightful to me. (Well, the guy who wrote the tale at the top of page 28 could have improved on that story... in fact, I was pleasantly surprised to see it, having forgotten all about writing it earlier in the year.)

Each article was special to me, from Bernie Feltman's heartwarming story of Santa's train and Bill Cogswell's nostalgia of Seaboard's secondary passenger trains to Part 2 of Ken Murdock's and Warren McFarland's story of the Ocala District. Keep up the good work; I still say that *LINES SOUTH* is the premier railroad historical publication. —*Russell Tedder*

I've just read Bernie Feltman's well-written article on the Santa Train. He really captured the human element of railroading that a younger generation of railfans will never know. How fortunate we were to grow up in the company of men who loved their work and gladly shared it with the kids hanging out at the depot. I especially enjoyed the sidebar regarding the story of his grandfather's kindness to a needy boy at Christmas. That was the best Christmas story I've read in a long time. —*Marv Clemons*

The latest issue of *LINES SOUTH* is one of the best I have ever read. I found the Savannah article to be most interesting; I was in the Army about the same time as the writer, and his comments about that issue were interesting to read, especially his train trips to and from the various camps and his unanticipated delay in getting a discharge — which was par for the course. His comments on the Savannah Union Station operation were good, including the accurate description of the back-up movements from the point near Central Junction. And the two fine photos of SUS were also interesting and were appropriately highlighted in the layout of the article.

The brief article on the Tavares steam start-up is wonderful. I had the opportunity to ride the earlier Orlando-Mt. Dora steam

operation in its brief resurrection and I thought its demise was the end of steam in the area — so the Tavares run will be a great replacement.

Thanks for your great efforts. I take several other rail publications, some very good, but *LINES SOUTH* can hold its own with any of them. —*Bob Eden*

A correction to the feature on C&WC business car *Sunbeam* (page 30, Fourth Quarter issue): the car was not in the consist of FDR's funeral train. The consist of that train is well documented and is listed, for example, in the recent book *FDR's Funeral Train*. I doubt the railroads would ever have accepted this car in the train anyway because it was a wooden car (albeit with a steel underframe), and they certainly would have been leery of having it ahead of the *Magellan* and the *Conneaut*, especially with the *Magellan's* 185-ton weight. —*Bob Hanson*

I wanted to tell you what an awesome article Bernie Feltman wrote about the Santa Train in the Fourth Quarter issue. The rural south has been left out of books and magazines for many years, and many thanks to people like Bernie who take the time share photographs and stories about how railroads operated in this region and how they touched the communities they served. —*Billy Thomason*

The Third Quarter 2011 *LINES SOUTH* covered Seaboard's Carrabelle line, which was a long-time mystery for me. When I was in 8th grade in Florida, one of the required courses was Florida history, which I loved, and one of the projects for Florida history was to draw the (surviving) railroads in the state. Thanks to my stepfather's old Rand McNally atlas from the 1950s, the assignment was no problem. It was printed in the days before the interstates and showed the railroads. That atlas was a work of art, with lovely plates of states and countries and a handsome leather cover.

But the atlas raised a mystery. It was normal for the plate of a state or country to show spillover railroad lines from neighboring areas. The plates for Georgia showed a line in the Florida Panhandle labeled "USG" — a United States government-operated railroad. But that line was not shown on the Florida map.

Quite mystifying, but I didn't lose any

sleep over it. I perceived that it was a printer's error, something added erroneously or something removed from the Florida plates but not the Georgia ones. In the 1990s I decided to see if anyone in that area knew anything about this, and I started contacting various chapters of the National Railway Historical Society.

No one really knew, although there were several ideas. One person stayed in touch with me and cracked the case when he sent me a newspaper clipping about a railroad line at an Army base during WW II. As soon as I read it, I knew that was the mysterious "USG" rail line, and a book on the Seaboard that I later acquired filled me in on the rest of the story. So reading about the Carrabelle line was particularly enjoyable for me.

—Walt Aardsma

LINES... FROM THE EDITOR

Continued from page 3

little thought to the possibility that the trains — and buildings — might not always be there. He came home from military service just in time to record both stations in their final days.

We are planning more passenger coverage for future issues, although we will not slight the freight trains that not only paid the bills in past decades but whose progeny today polish the rails with fresh vitality and profitability. We always want to hear what coverage you'd prefer to see — and if you have your own memories, passenger or freight, please share them. —Larry Goolsby

Culmination of research on a new book about the Columbia, Newberry & Laurens Railroad is partially responsible for a recent reunion of some of the line's former employees. The idea came about when Fred Cumalander, a retired CSX and former CN&L engineer, mentioned it to Zane Lindler. Mr. Lindler, a retired CSX trainmaster, hired out as a clerk on the CN&L, and eventually held the positions of chief dispatcher and trainmaster while there.

With knowledge about the upcoming book on the company in mind, they thought it would be a neat idea to get the remaining CN&L people together. After a few phone calls, the date was set for January 7, 2012. Newberry, South Carolina, was chosen as the location — it is near milepost 43, approximately halfway on the route between Columbia and Laurens. As it turned out, a better day could not have been asked for, with mild temperatures and sunny skies.

They gathered near the site of the old freight station, since replaced by a newer CSX structure. Old friendships and acquaintances were immediately renewed, which of course included great stories about the way the railroad used to be run. While many of them keep in touch on a regular basis, a number of them had not seen each other in close to 30 years. A total of 27

showed up, with only three surviving retirees missing (see back cover; those not pictured include Frank M. "Blue" Boland, retired clerk; William S. Cannon, relief clerk; and Tim Rutherford, maintenance of way). It should also be noted that three of the former CN&L men are not retired yet and still work for CSX: Hal Cromer and Randy Suber, both conductors, and Joe Riddle, engineer.

A number of "unofficial" members of the club were in attendance as well. They included friends and relatives, as well as other retired railroad employees from elsewhere on the system. Will Martin, author of the upcoming book on the CN&L, was also there.

John Jones and Earl Collins, also retired CSX employees, made the suggestion that each CN&L man or woman write their years of service down. That turned out to be an interesting figure, and the total came to 692 combined years. Not bad for a railroad that was 75 miles long and that disappeared as an entity almost 28 years ago.

The ACL acquired control of the CN&L in 1926 but operated it as a subsidiary road. The line remained quasi-independent through the SCL years and was not officially merged until April 30, 1984, by CSX predecessor Seaboard System Railroad. The route exists today as CSX Transportation's CN&L Subdivision. —Will Martin

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In this photo by John Jones, former Columbia, Newberry & Laurens employees are gathered at Newberry, South Carolina, on January 7, 2012. Those pictured are:

Back row, left to right: Leland Teal (clerk), Joe Riddle (engineer), Carroll Fulmer (trainman), Bobby Meetze (trainman), Jesse Lindler (trainman), Carol Wessinger (maintenance of way), Bobby Metts (dispatcher), Euston Mayer (roadmaster), Israel Mayer, Jr. (trainman), Wendell Cook (dispatcher), Glenn Bickley (trainman), Wayne Quattlebaum (engineer), Edward Baker, Jr. (trainman), Luther Rutherford (maintenance of way), and Luther Bowers (maintenance of way).

Front row, left to right: Hal Cromer (trainman), Randy Suber (trainman), Howard McCartha (engineer), Lamar Rister (trainman), Ernestine Teal (agent), James Dixon (locomotive electrician), Furman Younginer (secretary-treasurer), Jennings McCartha (trainman), Eddie Rutherford (maintenance of way), Zane Lindler (trainmaster), Fred Cumalander (engineer), and R.S. McCaw (engineer).