



Working Trackside

### What are Your Interests in the N&W Historical Society?

Any successful organization must meet the needs of its customers. A volunteer

organization such as the NWHS, in order to attract and grow its membership (especially for a railroad that ceased to exist over 30 years ago), must ask itself if it is meeting the needs of its membership. A second part of that question is what do we need to do to attract more members. Recognizing that we are a diverse group that includes former N&W employees, N&W railfans, current railroad employees, people interested in railroad history, people who grew up along the railroad right-of-way and many other people with different interests, a first step in this process is asking our members, "What are you interested in?" Another way to think of this question is to ask, "Why do you belong to the NWHS?" Perhaps it is something as simple as you like the 10 percent member discount from the commissary, or maybe it as complex as learning how the N&W treated water for its steam locomotives. Whatever it is, take the time to tell us.

In order to stimulate your thinking, we are launching a survey with the print version of TAF. The Board of Directors asks that you fill out the survey and return it to the NWHS. You can also go online to <http://nwhs.org/Survey2013> and fill out the survey electronically. You will also find a link to the survey at [www.nwhs.org](http://www.nwhs.org). Please submit your survey by October 31, 2013.

We have designed the survey to cover a broad array of interests, and we have left space for you to fill in your own ideas in case we did not think of them. You will notice that we are trying to find specific information in some questions, but it is information you can provide by checking a box.

We intend to use the survey to assess how we are meeting the needs of our members and to identify areas where we need to do more. We can only do this if you provide your input.

We will share the survey results with you. We will tell you what the survey told us and what we are doing to respond to the survey results.

*NWHS Officers and Board of Directors*

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### Board Of Directors Summer Meeting

The Board of Directors Summer Meeting was held on June 13, prior to the start of the 2013 NWHS Convention. The NWHS membership voted Frank Bongiovanni, Joe Shaw and Larry Hill onto the Board for three-year terms.

Two directors, Cal Reynolds and Ed Painter, chose to resign from the Board for health and personal reasons. Fortunately we had five persons running for three positions in the BoD election. BoD candidates Hunter Atkinson and Ben Shanks were invited to join the BoD to fulfill the remaining one-year terms vacated by Cal and Ed.

The BoD elected the following officers for one terms - President - Ron Davis; Vice-President - Roger Link; Secretary - David Lugar; and Treasurer - Jim Flynn. Alex Schust was elected Chairman of the Board.

### NWHS/SRHA Mini-Convention

Forsyth County Agriculture Center  
1450 Fairchild Road  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

October 5, 2014 - Doors open at 9 a.m.

The Norfolk & Western Historical Society and Southern Railroad Historical Association have teamed together to provide a one day mini-convention for its members and friends. Join us for a day of clinics on railroading in the Winston-Salem area, railroad modeling, and railroad history.

Plans are still under way, so look for additional information at:

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

## NWHS News of Interest

### NWHS Convention - June 12-16, 2013

Our 2013 NWHS convention, held at West Virginia's Twin Falls State Resort, attracted 51 registrants who brought along 18 guests. Twin Falls is located near Mullens, the heart of the Virginian's operations in the West Virginia coal fields, and not too far from Beckley. The convention showcased the Virginian Railway this year as our tours explored the Virginian's west end from Maben to Page, visiting coal towns and trestles along the way. The tour included a stop at the Whipple Company Store for lunch. As an added highlight we took a small detour to Thurmond on the C&O to visit this historic railroad town.

Other highlights of the tours were a visit to the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and a tour of the Virginian lines in and around Mullens, WV. Since we were not having a convention banquet, most of the conventioners signed up for the Mullens Opportunity Center fundraising dinner on Saturday night. We were treated to a fine dinner of ham, pinto beans, fried potatoes, cornbread and dessert.

We ran a separate tour to Tamarack, located at Beckley. Tamarack is the showcase for West Virginia's artisans. It includes hand-made crafts, books by West Virginia authors, arts and cuisine. The Tamarack restaurant is run by West Virginia's world famous Greenbrier Resort.

**NWHS 2014 Convention will be held at the Hotel Roanoke June 26 -29, 2014. Details will be sent with the January 2014 Arrow.**

### Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual NWHS Membership Meeting was held on June 16 in conjunction with the Annual Convention. NWHS President Ron Davis discussed the status of the NWHS and the society's objectives for the upcoming year. Members can expect to read more about the objectives of the Society in upcoming issues of the TAF as well as our progress in meeting them.

A highlight of the Annual Meeting was the announcement of the 2013 NWHS Award winners. The BoD voted to make the following awards:

Precision Transportation - Louis Newton  
Brakeman - Dave Stephenson  
Golden Arrow - Daniel Fisher  
H. Reid - Aubrey Wiley

### Virginian Depot Restoration

The Virginian Depot restoration is awaiting VDOT approval of the engineering and architecture firm

(Spectrum), and then bids for Phase II construction at the VGN Station will be advertised. The station security and lighting system is in place and armed.

### Archive Donations during March - May

London Gregory donated two years of Railroad Modeler magazine. This was a new title for the library. Previously, we had only two issues of this magazine and they were not included in the main part of the archives collection.

Larry Evans donated an NS Signal manual and scanned several volumes of photos during his recovery from knee surgery.



Pictured above is a table that was used in the Ladies Lounge at the Petersburg Station. The table was donated to the NWHS Archives by the Estate of Ursula Gibbs. Mrs. Gibbs' husband was the last agent for the Petersburg station.

The table, which was picked up by Roger Link in April, is an example of the many items that are donated to the NWHS through estate planning. Please consider donating N&W and VGN items from your personal collection to the NWHS when you are doing your estate planning.

### Planting Fields Foundation

Planting Fields Foundation announced its new spring exhibition, *All Aboard! A Railway Fortune at Planting Fields*. This exhibition is about one of the last great chapters in the history of America's love affair with railroads. It is the story of the Virginian Railway,



built between 1907 and 1909 by H. H. Rogers, father of Planting Field's co-owner Mai Rogers Coe with husband William R. Coe.

April 6 – Sept 2, Open daily 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Free Admission with \$8 parking fee  
Manor House at Planting Fields  
1395 Planting Fields Road  
Oyster Bay, NY 11771  
<http://www.plantingfields.org/>

## Harry's Mangle

After being featured in the April issue of eTAF, the mangle at the Salem Avenue Archives that was used by Harry Bundy and Landon Gregory to flatten drawings, just rolled over and died.

Fortunately, on his way back home from the NWHS Board meeting/2013 convention, David Lugar stopped at Cline's Antique flea market and discovered the flea market had three IRONRITE Model 85 rotary steam presses or mangles for sale. David negotiated the purchase of all three for the NWHS.

David reports that one is complete, with working heater and drive, although the knee controls don't work. The second unit has a bad cord, but worked fine (except for knee controls) when he hooked up a temporary cord. The third one is missing the motor and the thermostat handle is broken off, but can provide parts for the other two.

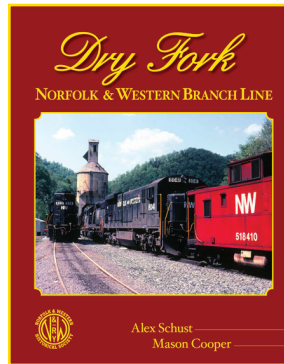


### COMMISSARY NOTICE

The NWHS Commissary is open between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Thursday and Friday of the archives work session. With prior arrangements orders may also be picked up Saturday between the same hours. You may place your order by calling 540-342-0575 or on the NWHS website. Please note your choice of day for pick up. No shipping charges apply when you pick up your order at the Archives.

See the NWHS Commissary webpage for information on all products. Remember only Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

## Book Summary



### Dry Fork Norfolk & Western Branch Line

Continuing their chronicle of the coal-producing lines of the N&W in Southern West Virginia and Southwestern Virginia, Alex Schust and Mason Cooper have once more collaborated, this time to produce a

detailed description of the Dry Fork Branch.

How a three-foot narrow gauge lumber-hauling railroad called the "Iaeger and Southern" metamorphosed into the heavy-duty coal-hauling Dry Fork Branch of the Norfolk & Western is a story of the intersection of geology, geography, economics, and good business sense - not to mention a healthy dose of vision. Alex and Mason have told that story in the same detailed style they've used in their earlier books. By the time you've gone cover to cover (definitely the recommended way to absorb the vast amount of information!) you'll come away with a firm grasp of why the N&W bought the Iaeger and Southern, why it was expanded deeper into the mountain valleys, and how the route we know today was chosen from among a fascinating variety of alternatives.

In addition to the "railroad" details of grades, curves, sidings, facilities, and the various trains that served the branch (including passenger and general freight trains in addition to the obvious coal haulage), the authors give you a very complete recitation of the coal mined at the various locations over the years, as well as the source of the coal (the name of the seam and its thickness at that mine). This detail gives a comprehensive picture of the history of this important branch, from its genesis through the working-out of marginal mines to the ones still significant producers even today.

In addition to the significant amount of information available in the NWHS Archives, the authors have also taken advantage of such other sources as the Eastern Regional Coal Archives at the Craft Memorial Library in Bluefield, West Virginia. As a result of this extensive research, we come away with a "you are there" feeling, watching the branch built and the coal hauled out of the hills.

Whether you're interested in history or railroad operations, track plans or modeling inspiration, the many photographs, drawings, diagrams and statistics Alex and Mason have provided will give you plenty of cause to add this book to your collection.

Available in the Commissary now. SKU 139.16.

*Dave Phelps*

# Archives Report

## March - April - May Work Sessions

We had 16 attendees at the work session in March, 16 in April and 19 in May.

Altogether we had 25 different volunteers attending our March, April and May work sessions. Jim Blackstock, Harry Bundy, Ron Davis, Landon Gregory, Larry Hill, Chris & Harold Hunley, Roger Link, Louis Newton, Skip Salmon, Charlie Schlotthober, Ben Shank, Joe Shaw, and Dave Stephenson attended all of the work sessions. Hunter Atkinson, Bob Cohen, Larry Evans, Curry Fisher, Dick Fisher, Rob Fisher, Gordon Hamilton, Dick Kimball, Jimmy Lisle, Ben Shank, and Brent Stevens attended one or two of the work sessions.

All NWS members are welcome to attend the Archives work sessions, which are held on the second weekend of each month. Session hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday.

### Some Specific Research Requests

We get multiple research requests every month. During the March-April-May work sessions Jim Blackstock, Harry Bundy, Ron Davis, Roger Link, Charlie Schlotthober, and Dave Stephenson completed 44 specific research requests.

Research requests covered a wide range of subjects: an N&W inspection locomotive of the late 1890's, a bus accident near Farmville, stenciling diagrams, background information on the 755th battalion during World War II, the N&W RPO car at VMT which will be undergoing restoration. and Class J counterbalance details. We had requests from as far away as Italy and Thailand.

### General Archives Activities

Archive volunteers take on multiple tasks during Archive work sessions such as researching requests for help, escorting visitors, maintaining the premises, etc. Many volunteers also do scanning, data base



Dick Kimball generally spends his time at the archives filing slide information. *Skip Salmon photo*

development and other activities off-site. Some of the continuing projects over the last three archives sessions include the following:

Hunter Atkinson worked on sorting bills and other paperwork from predecessor railroads. He separated two cartons of N&W advertisements (1940's through 1970's) into three categories: passenger, industrial development, and general newspaper/magazine usage.

Ben Shank worked on several very different items. He added new DVD's to our collection. He also completed design of a VGN herald which will be used as a pattern for a conference table inlay at the restored Virginian station in Roanoke. This involved scanning a sketch from H. Reid's Virginian book, converting the scan to CAD compatible format and finding a font that matched the letters in the scan. The size of the herald was increased from about two (2) inches in diameter in the book to 24 inches in diameter for the pattern. Ben also continued replacing lighting fixtures in the warehouse, and he completed removal of the old sink in the women's restroom. The sink and counter top were replaced along with the interesting but outdated solenoid controlled mixing valves for hot and cold water. Water lines were completed and hardware installed.

Skip Salmon and Jim Blackstock entered over 150 VGN standard drawings into the database. These included track and turnout material, stations, houses, fencing, and miscellaneous structures. Jim also processed a large group of Mechanical Department prints that were found at GOB East, and Skip also researched VGN items for members.

Harry Bundy and Landon Gregory processed rolled drawings for inclusion in the HS-series. Harry and Landon moved the Mangle press from GOB East to Salem Ave until we can get a part to repair the heating element of the press normally used at Salem Ave or find a new mangle.

Ron Davis entered more HS-series C and G-size drawings into the data base. One of these drawings was a map of the Virginia Anthracite Coal & Railway Company, later known as the Blacksburg branch of the N&W Railway. Another showed the layout of the tracks at the Norfolk Union Station.

Dave Stephenson accessioned a new donation from SRHA. He entered new books into the library inventory and corrected the shelf locator numbers for New York Central and Nickel Plate. He checked all railroads through Northern Pacific against the database for shelf order as finalized by John Swann. He revised the library back-up inventory to include new input and book shelf order.

Ron Davis, Bob Bowers, Roger Link, Charlie Schlotthober and Dave Stephenson worked on solving problems with the current order processing setup. There have been issues with getting orders for drawings properly filled. An in/out box for holding pending and completed orders was added to improve coordination between the



Commissary and the Archives production team.

Dick Fisher worked on identifying N&W/VGN-specific information in Railfan & Railroad magazine.

Dick Kimball entered data for 86 additional slides.

Charlie Schlotthober and Larry Hill worked on scanning mechanical drawings. This included processing a large M-Class drawing order for Strasburg Rail Road (yes, Strasburg uses two words!). Our large-format printer has been down for a while and we are developing plans to purchase a new printer and scanner. Until these are finalized, we are using an outside printing source.

Joe Shaw and Rob Fisher worked on organizing freight car builder data. All of the box cars and flat cars, which is approximately 45 percent of the total, have been completed. Joe worked on selecting stenciling drawings for inclusion in the HS-series. This will enable these drawings to be scanned and included in our on-line collection. Joe also entered P2 passenger car drawings into the database.

### GOB East Activities

There were GOB East work sessions on February 23, March 23, April 27 and May 28 with turnout varying between five and seven volunteers. Harry Bundy, Ron Davis, Landon Gregory, Gordon Hamilton, Roger Link, Ben Shank, Joe Shaw and Brent Stevens attended one or more of the work sessions.

Most of the GOB EAST effort in February and March was to create additional space for Norfolk Southern storage requirements. We freed up space by re-palletizing boxes of material, shelving many books and drawings

from the Roanoke Chapter Collection, and straightened up boxes of rolled drawings from the Virginia Tech Collection. Most of the material that we moved is Wabash and Nickel Plate engineering material from the Roanoke Material Yard that was donated in 1999 by Norfolk Southern. Material that was stored with other historical material belonging to Norfolk Southern was separated, moved to another area and marked. We rearranged the cabinets and pallets to take up less space and make it easier to access the material. Boxes of engineering drawings from the collection that had been at Virginia Tech were moved out of their storage room so that Norfolk Southern can erect shelves there.

In April and May we returned to flattening, filing and cataloging drawings as we sorted through 21 boxes of drawings. A number of “gems” were discovered during the session: (1) a chart showing the location by milepost of stations, sidings, tanks and bridges on the Potts Valley Branch; (2) a map showing the Bristol enginehouse and surrounding trackage; (3) track charts of from the Shenandoah Division; (4) a number of N&W Railroad drawings dating to the 1880's; (5) drawings of the Low Grade line between Forest and Concord; (6) bridge and tunnel drawings from construction of the Clinch Valley line; and multiple Virginian maps. Many of the Virginian maps date to the original construction of the Deepwater and Tidewater Railways. Some of the maps show alternate routes that were considered but never built.

Time was also spent on separating rolled original linen drawings from rolled blueprints and other paper copies as we moved the drawings from boxes to shelves.



Ben Shanks, Brent Stevens and Harry Bundy spent part of their time at the GOB-East work sessions consolidating pallets of archive materials to provide more space. Ron Davis photo

# Musing at the Archives

## A First Visit to the Archives

I am what you call a regular irregular attendee at archive sessions. That is, I try to make work sessions about four times a year, but on no set schedule. There are many other archive work session attendees like me. They go when they can. You can compare our attendance to the 16 or so individuals who show up at nearly every work session. I refer to those members as regular attendees. You can read about all of us in the Archives Report.

When I go to the archives, I go with a detailed list of items I am researching as I go about developing a book for the NWHs. I normally go for two days and spend a good portion of my time making sure I cover the items on my list. I also spend time looking through uncataloged items in the archives. I will take a few minutes here and there to see what other people are working on, but mostly I work on my list of research items. The regular attendees spend most of their time cataloging, flattening drawings, performing research requests and many other activities.

Most of the regular archive attendees will stop by when they see me, say hello, and then go on to what ever task they may be working on. At lunch time, I, and everyone else is invited to join the group for lunch. Because of my limited time I normally work through lunch. The point is: archive work sessions are just that - work sessions.

I remember my first trip to the archives in 2006. I called ahead to let Jim Gillum know I was coming and generally what I was looking for. Someone met me when I came through the door in the early afternoon and took me to Jim. Jim showed me around, introduced me to the filing system, explained how the drawings were filed and then left me to my research. While I had a list of things to do, I was fascinated by all of the other things I found at the archives. Jim checked on me once in awhile, but he generally went about his own self-assigned tasks. When I had a question, Jim or someone else working at the archives would take the time to help me, but then would go back to what they were working on. At the close of the Thursday archive work session, I was invited to watch railroad movies and have pizza with the regular archive workers. On Friday I was invited to go to lunch with everyone.

I bring this up because a former NWHs member posted a message as to how, when he went to the archives, he felt like he was interrupting a club. I thought it was an interesting comment, but I wondered what the member's expectations were when he went to the archives. Did he have a particular purpose or was he just going to see what was going on? Most regular workers would probably say hello and go back to what they were doing. If there was a confab about something (and there are usually some) the member (or any visitor) could join it or ignore it and no one would be concerned one way or the other. If the member had a particular question, someone would probably try to help him answer it. If the member (or any visitor) walked in and stood around, people working at the archives would probably just continue working on whatever they are working on.

Archives work sessions are advertised as "work sessions," and they are. Most archive volunteers go to the archives to work on specific tasks rather than entertain visitors. On the other hand, we have members at the archive work sessions who volunteer for the specific task of showing visitors and members around the archives.

On your first visit to the archives, whether scheduled or unannounced, someone will greet you and introduce you to a NWHs member who will show you around the archives and explain what we do and how we do it. You will not necessarily be introduced to everyone who is working there. Some workers may choose to introduce themselves. After your tour of the archives, you may be left alone to explore the archives on your own. If you are at the archives for a specific research reason, someone will help you with your research. If you volunteer to help out, someone will put you to work. If there is a gab session going on you can participate or ignore it. If you are there at lunch time, you will be invited to lunch with the group. It is up to the individual, whether they are a member or a visitor, as to how they participate at the archives.

What I find at the archive work sessions is a cordial working environment. Everyone is welcome, but you can only get out of it what you choose to put into it. We look forward to seeing you at the archives.

*Alex Schust*



Dick Fisher is seated at the large research table in the archives front room as he quietly goes tagging N&W/VGN related information in Railfan & Railroad magazine. *Alex Schust photo*



## Places Along the N&W in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



The community of Bishop is located partially in West Virginia and partially in Virginia. The Pocahontas Fuel Company started constructing the community and mining operation in 1930. The coal tippie, located in West Virginia on the Jacobs Fork Branch of the Dry Fork Branch, shipped its first coal on May 29, 1931.

The community and the mining operation were written about in *Dry Fork - Norfolk & Western Branch Line*.

The mining operation at Bishop was operated by the Pocahontas Fuel Company, Consolidation Coal Company and Bishop Coal Company from 1931 until 1984 and produced over 59 million tons of coal. Consolidation Coal Company started surface mining the area in 1977. Once the Bishop Coal Company closed its operations, smaller coal operators leased the coal land and kept up underground operations. Other coal operators have continuously operated the surface mines near Bishop. By 2002 the coal preparation plant had been removed with the

exception of two coal storage silos. The coal storage silos were removed by 2008.

The lack of facilities did not stop the coal loading on the Jacobs Fork Branch. The coal was hauled from the mining operations and stored on the ground. Every few days the Norfolk Southern delivers 60 to 70 coal cars to the site. The coal operator uses its own GP-20 to move the coal cars into loading position where they are loaded with a front loader. When the cars are loaded the Norfolk Southern hauls them away.

After years of minimal coal loading facilities, the coal operator has built a new coal preparation plant over the last few months near the site of the old coal preparation plant. The new plant, which was still under construction in March 2013, will have the capability to process over 10,000 tons of coal daily.

Because the Jacobs Fork Branch now ends at State Highway 16, rather than extending into Virginia, the coal loader has been constructed nearly a mile north of the coal preparation plant.

*Alex Schust*



The top photograph from Grubb Photograph Service shows the Bishop operation in 1962. The middle photograph, taken by Alex Schust on October 25, 2012, shows the new plant under construction. The bottom two photographs were taken by Jeff Hawkins on December 30, 1912.





The photographs of the new Bishop coal preparation plant below were taken by Alex Schust on March 15, 2013. The first photograph in the sequence, left-to-right, top-to-bottom shows the preparation plant, settling pond and conveyor from the underground mine entering the prep plant. The second photograph shows the underground conveyor coming to the surface and the coal refuse conveyor crossing the track and transferring the refuse to an overflow bin. The third and fourth photographs show a conveyor from the refuse bin going to an overflow bin. The fifth photograph shows the clean coal conveyor coming out of the ground to a transfer tower. The coal drops through the transfer tower to a conveyor that carries the coal for nearly a mile to the flood loader shown in the sixth photograph. (Note: An assumption was made as to which belt was the refuse belt and which was the clean coal belt.)





## Tracking Heritage Units on the Old N&W



Pennsylvania No. 8102 was leading N&W No. 8103 on October 1, 2012, when Gerry Fitzgerald photographed the pair from the Jefferson Street overpass in Roanoke, Virginia.



Heritage Unit N&W No. 8103 was leading NS SD-60M No. 6781 and a loaded coal train loads out of Auville Yard on March 15, 2013, when Ed Painter photographed the action.