

The ET TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ET&WNC RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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29th Convention Celebrates Three Centenarians

Sixty-two members attended the 29th annual ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society convention held in Johnson City, TN June 2-4, 2017 marking the 100th birthdays of locomotive #12, the Linville Depot and combine car 15.

At the Friday evening business meeting Vice-President Jerry Turbyfill and Treasurer Patricia Jennings were re-elected by acclamation. Jerry put forth a suggestion for a possible right-of-way hike in early March, before spring vegetation growth and when more terrain features would be visible than during summer. Introduced to the group was a new member, Randy Johnson, a long time trail master on Grandfather Mountain, who just completed a comprehen-

sive history of said mountain. Guest Speaker Sharon Waite, widow of Society founder John Waite, gave a poignant, humorous and touching talk about her meeting and marrying a dedicated and very interesting character who always wanted to know more and, even though a native Coloradan, found his passion in a narrow gauge shortline in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Sharon also showed her more devious side earlier in the afternoon. Member Dean Smith, who is spending this year hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, was plucked off the trail in Southwest Virginia to attend the convention. Sharon "had something special" for Dean - a reunion with his wife Sandy,

A Word from the President

Hey y'all! Welcome to the first issue of us getting back on track with the newsletters! We promised years ago to have 4 newsletters per year, and you, the members, have needed to get those in a timely manner. Unfortunately we just weren't able to deliver on that promise...until now. Long-time member Curtis Brookshire has graciously volunteered to be our newsletter editor to get us out of our slump and back on course to get those issues that you need and deserve. This will go a long way to keeping the Society informed about anything and everything ET&WNC Railroad related.

Members...thank you for being so patient, and Curtis...thank you for your volunteer service on this project. It is greatly appreciated by all!

CFORD

Time To Pay Your Dues!

who she brought from Central Missouri. Dean hadn't seen her since leaving for the AT in April. Nice work Sharon! Dean is back on the trail and as of this writing is probably either in Northern Virginia, Maryland or South Central Pennsylvania.

Saturday brought a train show at the ETSU Mini-Dome, plus a chance to see the ongoing progress at the George L. Carter Museum. Fred Alsop will tell us more about that shortly. But the morning started with an informative talk by Gil Williams on the one centenarian not present this year – combine 15. Gil leads the carbody restoration project and made some interesting discoveries during the stripping down of the car. Gil showed us the work completed so far and we're glad to see he's "doin' it right" so the combine will be around for many more years.

At 2 pm the group gathered in Newland in Avery County for the commemoration of the Linville Depot's 100th birthday. Jerry Turbyfill and Sharon Waite unveiled a commemorative brick next to the depot honoring John Waite. Appropriately, his brick is adjacent to that of legendary ET&WNC engineer Sherman Pippin.

Then it was off to Tweetsie Railroad to honor the most celebrated centenarian of the group, locomotive #12. Unfortunately 12 had the steam locomotive equivalent of a bad head cold – a stopped up check valve – and was

unable to star in the evening train ride. (A check valve admits water from the tender to the locomotive boiler. The engine's injectors pump water from the tender to the check valve. With the left side check valve clogged, only one injector was operable and both are needed for safe operation on Tweetsie's steep grades.) Johnny Graybeal led a talk and Q&A about #12 and its history. Then it was time to board the train for the traditional photo run and twice non-stop trip around the mountain, with former White Pass 2-8-2 #190 doing the honors, followed by dinner at the palace catered by the fine folks at the Dan'l Boone Inn. Our thanks to Tweetsie and the train crew for another fine trip.

Sunday brought another train trip tradition – through the Doe River Gorge, courtesy of the crew at the Doe River Gorge Christian Camp. Always a fine ride and the weather held. For a right-of-way tour this year, a short hike on the Tweetsie Trail in Elizabethton introduced some new historic markers that dot the trail. The 9 1/2 mile trail begins just east of the engine house in Johnson City and runs through Milligan College and Elizabethton to just short of where the coal chute stood and tracks ended after 1950. Next year will be the 30th convention and time to look back on 30 years of society history since John sent out the first dot-matrix printed and stapled issue of *The Blue Ridge Stemwinder*. 🚂



In front of the newly unveiled commemorative bricks and caboose 505 at the Linville Depot are Jerry Turbyfill, Sharon Waite, Chris Ford and Dean Smith. Photo courtesy Curtis Brookshire.



Commemorative brick donated by the Historical Society honoring its founder John R. Waite. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

Editor's note: I'm honored to be asked to edit the ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society newsletter. My plan is to keep the group up-to-date with news from all areas of ET&WNC preservation and the latest from the modeling community. This is of course YOUR newsletter. As society members, I welcome your input on new topics that may be of interest to the group, and corrections to any booboos I make. I can be reached at – curtis.brookshire@verizon.net.



Society convention attendees and train crew, awaiting their annual Saturday evening train ride and fried chicken, gather for a group photo in front of 100-year-old ET&WNC Railroad engine #12 at the Tweetsie Railroad shop. The weekend's beautiful weather was a bonus for all the organization's outdoor activities. Photo courtesy of Benjamin Burton.

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

The Linville Depot/Caboose 505

Sitting adjacent to the Avery County Museum in Newland, NC are two ET&WNC survivors that, by all odds, really shouldn't be there or exist at all anymore. But thanks to the efforts of some really dedicated folks (and a bit of secrecy that would make the NSA proud), both the former Linville Depot and ET&WNC caboose 505 celebrate the heritage of a railroad that is all but erased in modern times.

After the 1940 flood ended service on the Linville River Railway, the Linville Depot was sold and converted to a store at its original location next to the highway. The owner later remodeled the store to be his home, no longer bearing any resemblance to its former appearance. Around 1970, with a widening of the highway imminent, the owner elected to save his home from demolition and move it a few miles into Linville. In 2007, thanks to the efforts of Joel Shipley, Mike and Susan Brown, Neil and Sharon Stewart, the late Jim Bower, Jerry Turbyfill, Johnny Graybeal and others, the depot was not only saved again from demolition, it was moved to Newland and restored to its former Linville River Ry appearance to become a feature of the Avery County Museum.

Caboose 505 had a different history. After being sold to Cy Crumley for a fishing cabin, 505 was sequestered in an undisclosed location for nearly 60 years. Those who had the honor to visit the site were sworn to secrecy and to date none have revealed the secret. The caboose sits now alongside the Linville Depot in Newland on a short piece of 3-foot-gauge track.

Society Vice-President Jerry Turbyfill sends us the latest news from Newland:

The museum is always trying to improve the Linville Depot to showcase the ET&WNC historical beauty. We have some issues with upkeep but we will take care of that.

The next step for the 505 caboose is to do the cupola siding. The reason I did the siding on the bottom first was because the roof laps over the siding. I left the siding covering the windows to protect the inside from the weather until I can get new window frames and glass built and ready to go back in. Then we will start on a new roof. We will work as funds will allow. With a little or a lot of work, a little facelift and some paint, the old girl will be beautiful again. 🚩



Caboose 505 at the Linville Depot in Newland shortly after "delivery" in 2013. Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.

SE Narrow Gauge Museum

The Southeast Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum is one of the best kept secrets that needs to be shared. The museum is located in Newton, NC not far from the restored Newton Depot. You can visit their website at – newtondepot.com.

Thanks to Matt Bumgarner and Johnny Graybeal, here's what they have and are working on:

Equipment on display

ET&WNC boxcar #434 – built c. 1916 in Johnson City, one of two existing complete ET freight cars. ET&WNC motorcar #2 – built c. 1928 in Johnson City shops. C&NW boxcar #401 – 32 foot narrow-gauge boxcar built c. 1877 for Chester & Lenoir Narrow Gauge. Log Car – unmarked former West Side Lumber Company narrow-gauge car to be lettered as Hutton-Bourbonnais #1925. Southern Ry caboose #X2715 – newly acquired, one of three known existing wooden Southern cupola cabooses. Virginia-Carolina 2-6-0 Mogul #50 – standard gauge steam locomotive built by ALCO in 1924.

In shop undergoing restoration

West Virginia Midland narrow-gauge baggage car #1 – the only narrow-gauge baggage car in existence with a southern heritage. Lawndale Railway narrow-gauge boxcar #311 – built by the Lawndale Railway and Industrial Company c. 1901. ET&WNC motorcar #1 – twin to motorcar #2, in process of being returned to original narrow-gauge.

Awaiting a shop slot

West Virginia Midland office car "Holly" – narrow-gauge office car. Norfolk Southern #375 – original Norfolk Southern cupola caboose. Union Tank Company – c. 1891 tank car, number unknown.

Additional displays: ET&WNC artifacts including lanterns, locks, keys, whistle used on 4-6-0 #9, photos of #12 undergoing restoration at Carolina & North-Western shops.

Combine 15 at Spencer Shops

Combine 15 is undergoing restoration at the North Carolina Transportation Museum at Historic Spencer Shops in Spencer, NC. It currently resides in the paint shop and is not available for public visitation. Gil Williams is heading the restoration of the car body. The restoration has uncovered some interesting puzzles to be solved as the car is stripped down. There are places in the roof where smoke jacks were and holes in the floor indicating where toilets were. The interior siding shows signs of where seats were once located and altered during the life of the car. The ceiling shows where vents were located for lamp fixtures and gold leaf trim. Interestingly, it would appear that the car exterior was stripped to bare wood when it was reconditioned for Tweetsie Railroad at the Carolina and Northwestern Shops in Hickory, NC between May 1956 and May 1957. The trim shows only one coat of paint beneath the red that was applied circa 1960 for a movie shot at Tweetsie.

Volunteers are welcome to help at Spencer. Upcoming work-dates will be published via the Yahoo! Tweetsie Group as soon as announced. Wear work clothes as this a dirty job. Come help bring this important piece of American history back to life. 🚩

News From Around the ET&WNC Preservation Community

George L. Carter Railroad Museum

Fred J. Alsop III, Director of the museum, sends us this:

Cranberry Mine Model Closer to Completion

The George L. Carter Railroad Museum is into its 5th year of work on its HO_n3 scale layout of the ET&WNC railroad in its 1,300 sq ft Ken Marsh Gallery. Many of our ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society members have viewed its progress from the beginning. The museum's recent focus has been on the Cranberry Mine section of the layout with the principal efforts placed on the creation of the mine buildings as they were in the mid-1920s. Research has been based on the limited photos of the mine as published in John R. Waite's *The Blue Ridge Stemwinder*, from the Society's publications, and photos from Johnny Graybeal, Chris Ford, ETSU's Archives of Appalachia and others. Of all the buildings in the sprawling complex, the separator building has been the most difficult to understand architecturally and to try to simulate as we only had two existing photos that showed the north and south sides with much of the building's details masked by other structures or hidden in the shadows. It was the final major building added to the mine on the layout.

With a lot of creative work, and some guessing, the mine complex is coming back to life as a model after the prototype ceased to exist many decades ago. Seeing the model in three dimensions, rather than as we have seen it in photos, is a most interesting experience that allows one to move around it and view it from many different angles and positions. There is still a lot of landscaping and detail work to be done to fill out the model to make it look more like a hard-working mine of the late 19th and early 20th century, but that will soon occur now that the major work has been achieved. White River Productions is planning to publish an article in the 2017 HO_n3 Annual on our Cranberry Mine model, the 4th consecutive year our ET&WNC Railroad layout has been published in this narrow-gauge international publication...an achievement that we are quite proud of.

Plan to visit the Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN any Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm and tour the ET&WNC Railroad in miniature for yourself. The little narrow gauge trains are running Every Time With No Complaint. 🚂



The HO_n3 model of the Cranberry Mine complex nears completion on the ET&WNC Railroad layout in the George L. Carter Museum at ETSU. Photo courtesy of Fred Alsop.

The Carnegie (Cranberry) Furnace Returns to Johnson City, TN

John R. Waite had a professionally built model of the Cranberry Furnace constructed for his Sn₃ scale layout of the ET&WNC Railroad. It is a detailed model representing the iron furnace that the Cranberry Iron & Coal Company had in blast in the Carnegie section of east Johnson City from 1902-1929. It was one of the principal features of his railroad in the basement of his Jefferson City, MO home. His wife, Sharon, made a gift of the large 11'6" x 4'6" model to the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University. Paul Haynes, Gary Emmert and I traveled to her home in early April to remove it from the layout and bring it to Johnson City. Chris Ford and Ann and Michael Paschall met us at the Waite's home and provided a lot of much needed assistance extracting it and getting it berthed in our trailer.

Sharon met me in the Carter Railroad Museum to see the furnace's new home, added details and painted backdrop on June 1st after making a visit to ETSU's Archives of Appalachia where she donated many of John's collected ET&WNC Railroad photos, maps and papers to the John R. Waite Collection for future researchers of the little railroad to use. Sharon has made two major donations – the model and the research collection – to ETSU and the people of the region where the "Tweetsie" was born and to the memory of the generations it served.

So, the "Cranberry Furnace" has returned to Johnson City and now proudly resides in our museum's ET&WNC Railroad gallery located only a few miles west of where the prototype stood a hundred years ago. The new furnace model is already a big attraction and many of our Society's members saw it for the first time during the 29th Annual Convention here in early June. The next time you visit Johnson City please come by and see the furnace and our big model layout of the "Little Railroad with a Heart" that served it. 🚂



Fred Alsop and Sharon Waite next to John Waite's Sn₃ furnace model that was recently donated to the museum. Photo courtesy of ETSU.

Tweetsie Railroad Happenings

It's been 60 years since Grover C. Robbins' dream came true on July 4, 1957 when Frank Coffey fired up #12 and retired engineer Sherman Pippin ran her the first mile up the line to a picnic area. He then backed down the mountain, as the loop was not yet complete. Many, many things have happened over the years: the addition of Yukon Queen #190 to the roster; home-built passenger cars; the retirement of combine 15 and former ET excursion car 11; TV cowboy Fred Kirby; Indian attacks; the shows at the Tweetsie Palace; chair-lift rides on top of the mountain; the Ferris wheel where you felt you were being launched into space when it came over the top and you saw nothing but sky; those cool gas-powered cars you can still drive featuring 1959 body styles with big fins; the Mouse Mine; many, many special visitors and attractions; double-headers; I Remember Tweetsie; Old-Timers Days; hosting early

ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society conventions; #12 turning 75 and being placed on the National Register of Historic Places AND lettered ET&WNC for two seasons; two disastrous fires; the best darn narrow gauge locomotive shop in the country; shop tours; the Ghost Train; Railfan Weekends; Thomas; and plenty of summer jobs for local folks and ASU students. Tweetsie Railroad celebrated in a big way with a massive fireworks demonstration echoing off the mountainsides.

The annual railfan weekend is August 26 and 27. This is one of the only times former East Broad Top coach #5 makes an appearance. It's also the only time of the year when two trains run (provided both the 100-year-old #12 and the 74-year-old #190 are fully operational). Chris Robbins reminds us that you can find information on all of Tweetsie Railroad's upcoming special events at – tweetsie.com/special-events. New

this year will be a Tweetsie Christmas scheduled for late fall. More about that in the October newsletter.

A question often asked is "When can I see #12 running?" As we have experienced, Tweetsie Railroad normally runs #12 in the early part of the season and during Ghost Train, when the spookily decorated #190 only comes out at night. October is a great time to photograph #12 on the trestle surrounded by fall colors. The cab in #190 is better ventilated so is less hot on the crew during the warmest summer days. Remember, of course, steam locomotives are living, breathing machines with strong personalities. Being machines, they're also subject to mechanical difficulties. While the shop is on top of things, sometimes when you visit, one of the engines may be down for maintenance. It can be a minor problem or a complete rebuild as we have seen over the years. So pack your patience along with your camera. 📷



Former ET&WNC Railroad engine number 12 sits in front of the Tweetsie Railroad shop building. The occasion was her 100th birthday celebration by the ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society during their annual convention. The visit included a historical lecture and question and answer session by Johnny Graybeal about the famous engine. A bad check valve kept her from getting to run that weekend. *Photo courtesy of Benjamin Burton.*

News from the Historical Society Modeling Committee

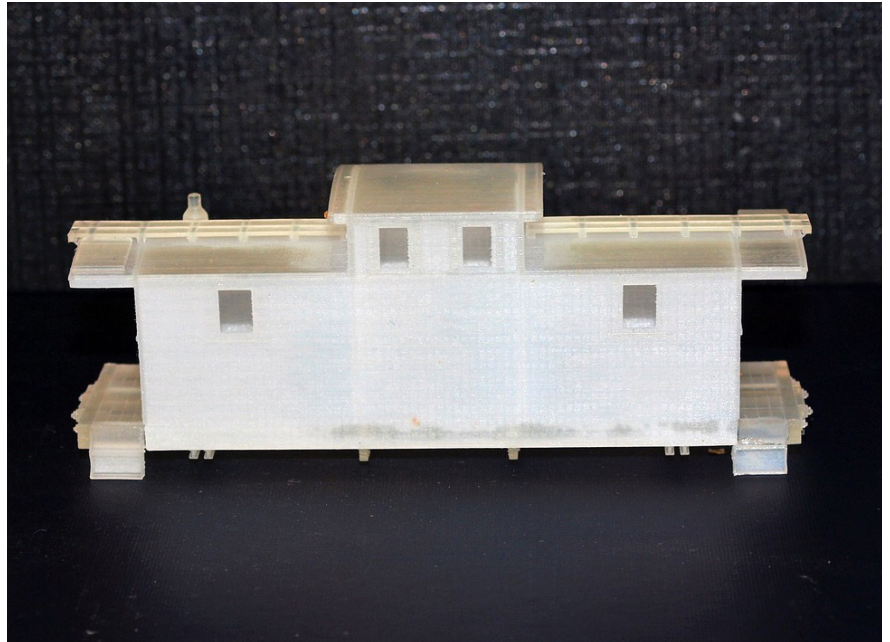
3D printing has come to ET&WNC modelers. As this goes to press two 3D printed models are available from Shapeways at – shapeways.com/shops/wr?li=pb. Both the 37 foot gondola and caboose kits will be available in O, S and HO scales. Currently the 505 caboose body and frame are both available, with the frame for the 506 version being worked out for later release. Note: When you order a caboose, you must order a body plus order a separate underframe for the number version you want. The caboose body will suffice for both the 505 and 506. The modeler must add brake gear and grab irons. Photos are the two cars in HO scale courtesy of Bill Miller.

Johnny Graybeal has the Mount Blue Model Company ET&WNC long gondola kits (two cars per kit) available for \$35 per kit, plus \$5 one-time shipping. HO scale decals and O scale freight car decals are available for \$10 per set plus \$2 shipping if ordered alone.

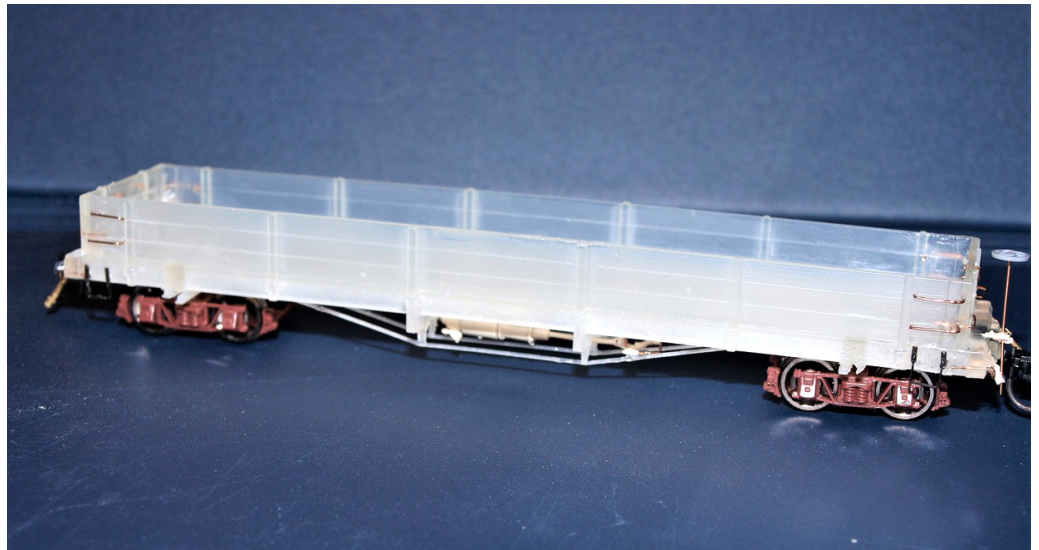
Make checks payable to:

Johnny Graybeal
3978 Callie Court
Lenoir, NC 28645

Or email him at –
johnnyg@boone.net



Shapeways HO3 ET&WNC Caboose 505 kit. *Courtesy of Bill Miller.*



Shapeways HO3 ET&WNC 37 foot gondola kit. *Courtesy of Bill Miller.*

Doe River Gorge

News from the Doe River Gorge Ministries is courtesy of Mark Milbourne:

Our public days run every Saturday from June 17 thru September 9 except for July 8 and August 5. The complete schedule and details are posted at – doerivergorge.com/dayquest.php. Look for upcoming news about our Fall Color Day in October. We are currently in our nine weeks of summer camps and the RR is also busy transporting campers to three different activities in the gorge.

The steam locomotive project moves forward as funding and labor are available. Boiler inspection was accomplished last fall and a shelter was erected this spring. Jerry Turbyfill has much work done on the new cab. We are currently waiting for ad-

ditional funding to sandblast and paint the tender (including the inside of the water tank).

Car #28 (the front car) had heavy maintenance over the winter due to finding rot in the main left side beam. Replacing the beam required removing benches, sides and floor. Don Ramey and Phil Raynes both contributed much labor to that project.

Routine track maintenance is ongoing. Phil Raynes assisted with blowing leaves off the right-of-way in the late fall, which prolongs crosstie life. He also assisted with spring inspection and repairs. Phil and Patricia Jennings also cleared ditches and then cut back a lot of vegetation in the upper gorge to prep for the convention trip. A large rock also had to be removed that would have blocked the larger motorcar trailer. 🚧

Ken's Corner

Ken Riddle is what I call the Bard of the ET&WNC. He's one of the last living connections to those who ran the narrow gauge, having gotten to know them in his youth (as well as being related to some of them). His stories are informative and always entertaining. In honor of Tweetsie Railroad's 60th birthday as well as the fact that John Waite's commemorative brick is adjacent to that of Sherman Pippin, I asked him to connect Sherman, Grover Robbins and Tweetsie Railroad...

Sherman Pippin was the regular engineer on the Boone to Johnson City passenger train for many years. Cy Crumley was his conductor. Sherman and Cy were both "people persons" and their positions fit their personalities quite well. Common to both men was a love of children. The oldest of the "railroad kids" was Mildred Crumley, Cy's girl. I think she was born in 1913. Her name might have been Mildred but everybody called her "Toots," a nickname Sherm gave her when she was little. Every time Sherm saw Toots he gave her a dollar. Even when they would meet at the Tweetsie Railroad reunions in the summer, Sherm had a silver dollar for Toots. Sherm caught the westbound in 1976 and was way up in his 90s, and his little buddy Toots followed him the next year at her home in Jacksonville Florida, where she had been a nurse.

There was another little boy who was a rail fan that took many a free ride from Shulls Mills to the Laurel water tank or

occasionally up to Foscoe. His name was Grover Robbins. Yep, same one.

The original name for Shulls Mills was "Robbins Hole." And the family owned a hotel there. The "Blue Goose." As you all know from your studies Grover grew up to open Tweetsie Railroad. Before the park was open Grover purchased an old park steam train in 15 inch gauge and ran it around the lake in Blowing Rock for a couple years in the early 50s. He called it Tweetsie Junior and it was quite popular and provided the spark that built the big park at Tweetsie. Sherman was the engineer on the little train and Grover got Frank Coffey to keep her up and running.

When Tweetsie came back to North Carolina Sherman was in her cab with Gov. Hodges and he was her first engineer, working for several years at the park. Grover also wanted Mr. Crumley to be the conductor but he was still working until 1960. After he retired Cy cared for his wife Edith until she died. He never worked for Grover but was always treated like a king when he came to the park. Mr. Crumley died in 1978 at 93. ■



That's Ken Riddle in October of 2013 on Fall Color Day, weaving another tale in the Doe River Gorge. *Photo courtesy of Curtis Brookshire.*



Sherman Pippin running "Tweetsie Junior." *Photo courtesy of Ken Riddle.*



Sherman Pippin and Governor Hodges share the cab of #12 when "Tweetsie" came back to Hickory. *Photo courtesy of Ken Riddle.*



Sherman Pippin and Miss Julie ("Toots") at Tweetsie Railroad. *Photo courtesy of Ken Riddle.*

Photos from the ET&WNC Railroad Historical Society Convention

Photos this page courtesy of Benjamin Burton.

