

SOUTHEAST LIMITED

The Railway
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Southeast



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Chapter

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Talleyrand Terminal Railroad, or “In the Shade of the Crane”

By Jim Smith

The Talleyrand Terminal Railroad in Jacksonville, Fla., serves a small number of customers and two trunk line carriers. It is one of 22 Rail Link short lines that generally switch a specific customer or group of customers. Rail Link operates under the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad's corporate umbrella, which also includes the Buffalo & Pittsburgh RR, Carolina Coastal Rwy, Illinois & Midland RR, Louisiana & Delta RR, Pittsburg & Shawmut RR, Portland & Western RR, Rochester & Southern RR, Savannah Port Terminal RR, and the Willamette & Pacific RR.

The history of the TTR begins with the Fernandina & Jacksonville Railroad, which was built in 1880 from Jacksonville to a junction with the Atlantic, Gulf & West India Transit Railroad (operating between Fernandina and Cedar Key) at Hart's Road (now Yulee). The purpose was to reduce the round-about rail route between the two cities via Baldwin and Callahan. The new direct F&J line cut 32.5 miles and considerable travel time. The railroad was built to five foot gauge and consisted of 21.5 miles of main line laid with 52-lb. steel rail. It was completed on April 6, 1881, when passenger trains began making the run between Fernandina and Jacksonville in one hour and forty-five minutes. Soon after opening, the F&J was leased to the Florida Transit & Peninsular Railroad Company, which operated the line until it was merged with the Florida Railway & Navigation Company in 1884. The FR&NC merged with the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad, who in turn merged with the Seaboard Air Line, the Seaboard Coast Line and finally, CSX.

The F&J's station was on the east side of Jacksonville on Bay Street, while the station for the FR&N was on the west side of town at the foot of Hogan Street. Consequently, in 1886 the FR&N built a cut-off known as the Jacksonville Belt Line so trains to/from Fernandina could operate into the FR&N's Hogan Street depot. The junction of the belt line and the F&J Railroad was located near 18th and Evergreen in northeast Jacksonville, next to the present F&J Yard of the TTR.

In 1899 the Atlantic, Valdosta & Western built a line from Valdosta to a terminus alongside the old F&J on east Bay Street. The AV&W sold its holdings to the Southern Railway who in turn transferred them to the St. Johns River Terminal Company. After the merger of the Southern and Norfolk & Western, the SJRTC is now operated by the Norfolk Southern (NS). Today, the CSX and the NS still cross each other at grade at F&J.

Around 1915, the city of Jacksonville arranged for the St. Johns River to be dredged to a depth that allowed banana boats to be unloaded at a series of finger piers in the Talleyrand area of town. The city then built the Municipal Dock & Terminal Railway to connect the Talleyrand Docks with the Seaboard (CSX) and Southern (NS) rail lines. The MDT built a yard next to F&J Junction which is now called F&J Yard by the TTR. The MDT also built Duffer Yard just west of the dock area.

When the old banana docks were rebuilt into the modern Talleyrand Marine Terminal (TMT)

COVER: TTR #339 pulling out of Toyota past the entrance sign to the Talleyrand Marine Terminal.

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by the Jacksonville Port Authority, the JPA handled cars between the TMT and the CSX and NS interchanges with a number of second hand locomotives. Actual switching within the TMT was performed by the JPA until the line was sold to TTR in the 1990's. For a while, CSX had an agreement to bring their cars to Duffer Yard (along with NS traffic which was always interchanged at F&J/MDT Yard). The TTR continued to provide on-dock rail service for the TMT's owner, the JPA. This arrangement was changed with the creation of Rail Link's expanded Talleyrand Terminal Railroad, which combined the MDT and TMT on-dock rail service.

The current operation sees the NS interchanging cars at the north end of F&J and CSX at the south end (Milepost 632), with the TTR the only operator between F&J and the TMT docks. The TTR also has trackage rights to the NS's "C Yard" (about a half-mile north of F&J) and CSX's Export Yard (about a mile south of F&J). The modern TMT is located on the St. Johns River about two miles north of the Jaguar's Alltel football stadium. The TMT's 173 acre site has 4,800 feet of ship berthing space and offers a water depth of 36 feet.

In 1999, TMT handled 2.2 million tons of import/export cargo involving a number of customers that are also rail served by the TTR. Approximately one year ago, the JPA modified the TMT by adding a container terminal, consisting of four rail spurs totaling 4,800 feet, and acquiring two 50 ton capacity SISU rubber-tired gantry cranes (RTG) from Finland. Each RTG is equipped with a twin spreader bar for handling either two 20 foot containers at the same time, or one 40-foot container. The new cranes and rail spurs increased the TMT's rail-handling capacity by 50%.

The primary container customer is German based Hamburg Sud which offers service to the east coast of South America and Venezuela. Hamburg Sud recently purchased a major operating arm of one of Jacksonville's largest shipping lines - Crowley American Transport, which sends ships to the East Coast of South America, Venezuela, Columbia, and the Caribbean.

In addition to the container traffic, other commodities handled by the TTR are: automobiles to Toyota, which can amount to switching 15 in-



The TTR interchange with CSX at their milepost 632.

bound loaded auto rack cars four times a day; liquid bulk commodities for Westway; chilled goods for Jacksonville Cold Storage; and break-bulk commodities, such as lumber, steel wire, poultry and other goods. In addition, Berman Brothers Scrap yard receives rail cars to be cut up and ships out the scrap steel.

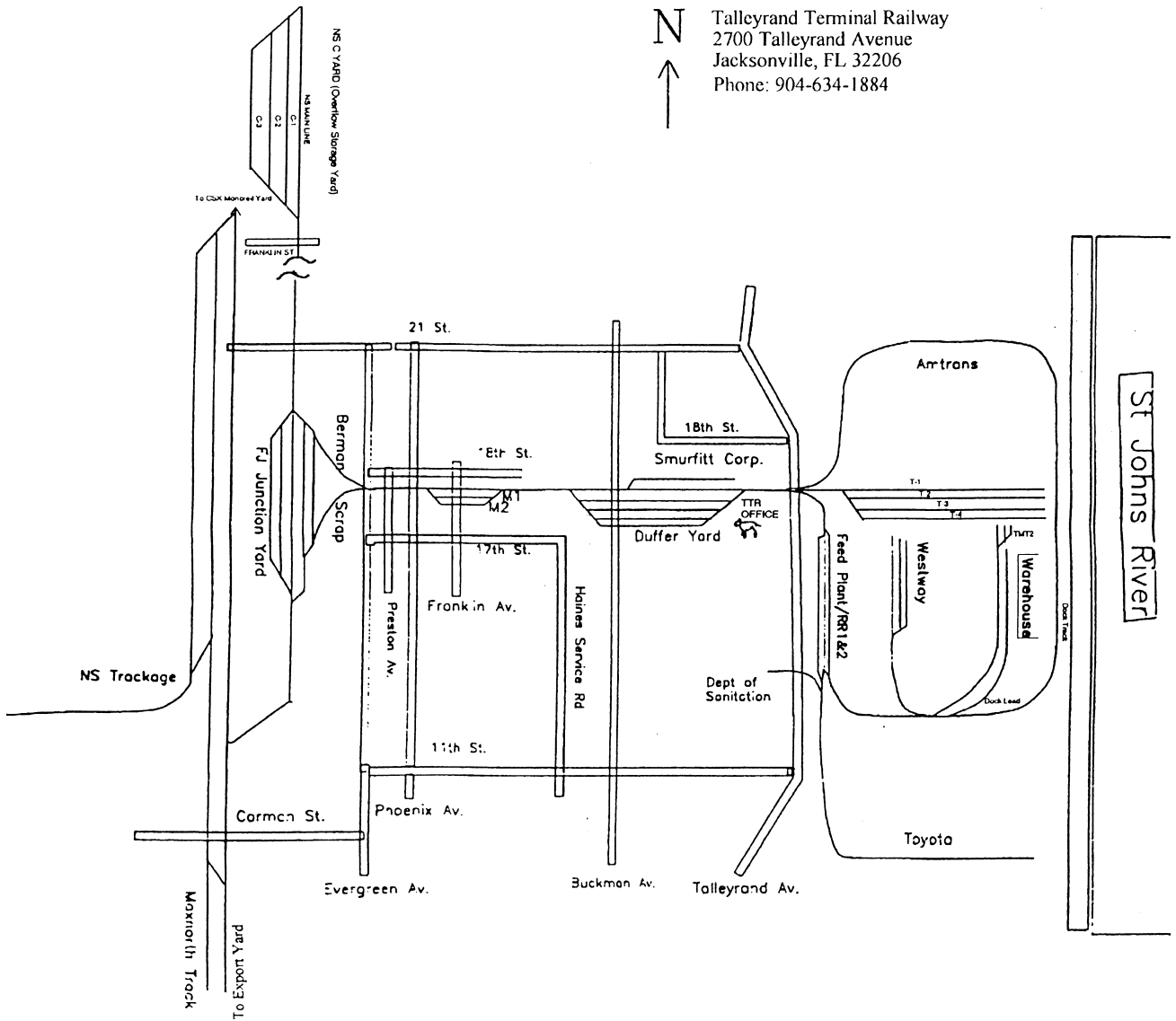
Trackage: Total rail trackage amounts to 11 miles, including all sidings and yards. There is no "mainline" on the TTR, just an "industrial lead" that runs about one mile from F&J Yard to the TTR office on Talleyrand Avenue. Most of the TTR trackage is actually yards, including:

- 4 track "T Yard" - a container terminal inside the TMT with space for about 70 stack cars,
- 4 track Duffer Yard - used to store Toyota, containers, and other TMT customer cars,
- 2 track Middle, or M Yard - used for switching and storage,
- 5 track F&J Yard - used to interchange cars to both NS and CSXT.

Ironically, three of these yards (T, Duffer & M) have grade crossings cutting the yard into two segments! There are no automatic switches, or signals, and only one road crossing has gates. The track was rebuilt by CSX not long ago, using mostly concrete ties. The speed limit for the line is 10 mph, which is not surprising considering the number of long cars (auto-racks, stack cars and pig flats) that run over the line.

Train Operation: The TTR regularly operates two first-shift switch jobs six days a week. Each consists of an engineer, conductor and one or two trainmen. Having two and sometimes three men "on the ground" is necessary since a lot of

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Special Notice — January Annual Chapter Banquet

Our January 11th meeting will be at the Orange Park Station, on Kingsley Ave (at the CSX crossing) in Orange Park aboard the private cars **Jacksonville** and **Georgia**. Wives and girl friends are welcome. A per person fee of \$12.00 will be charged to pay for the food, etc. Due to the unique location, we expect a large turnout, so seating will be limited to the first 30 who sign-up! Some of our local Jacksonville members have already responded to this invitation, but all Southeast Chapter members are welcome. This will be a unique setting for our annual banquet. Please contact Chairman, Jim Smith, at (904) 276-2972, or e-mail annwoore@fair.net to confirm your attendance.



ABOVE: TTR #ls 339 and 392, SW 1500's, at the office tracks near Talleyrand Avenue.



ABOVE: TTR #278 is an SW 1200 built in 1962.



ABOVE: A typical TTR train, #392 shoving Toyota autoracks to the TMT going by Westway tanks stored in M Yard.

switching is performed. Trains are “made up” in the TMT or at Duffer Yard and move to F&J for interchange. When your train consists of 17 auto racks and 45 container cars, it stretches all the way from Duffer to F&J! Engines always operate on the west end of a train, and although there is no caboose, trainmen always ride the rear end of trains. Eastbound operation is the same, with the engine pushing the train while the trainmen flag the crossings. Being a trainman requires the ability to hang on the side of a railcar for a mile or

more at 10 mph which explains why their arms frequently reach to their ankles!

The TTR currently operates three locomotives and has two other engines stored on site awaiting sale or relocation to another Rail Link property. The operating locomotives were repainted a few months ago in the Genesee & Wyoming orange, black and yellow paint scheme, while the two stored engines still carry the former red/gray Rail Link colors. Statistics for the active and stored engines are shown below:

Number	Model	Prior Owners	Built	Status
278	SW 1200	Vulcan Mtls. #378-2, BN #258, FW&D #609	1962	Active
339	SW 1500	Conrail #9530, PC #9539	1972	Active
392	SW 1500	Conrail #9592, Reading #2753	1973	Active
266	SW 10	UP #1266, MP #1242, MP #9180	1981	Stored Serv.
154	GP 7	ATSF #2655, ATSF #2114	?	Stored



ABOVE: Unloading a double stack. The horizontal crane framework provides most of the shade!

UPPER RIGHT: Loading a double stack.

LOWER RIGHT: A loaded double stack.



Employees: Running the TTR requires approximately 20 employees, split into four groups: train, crane, track and office manager. Since the TTR is non-union there is a lot of cross-over work between jobs; however, only FRA licensed engineers can run the locomotives. There is a high mix of family members, with four sets of brothers or father/son teams working as engineer/trainmen. These family tag-teams usually occurred after one member became employed and then suggested their brother/son/father when additional help was needed. This situation makes for a close team of reliable workers. The only problem occurs when a “family team” wants to take time off.

Crane Operation: After a significant change in the author’s railroad career, I found myself working for the TTR. As a former CSX employee, life down on the docks versus working in the “ivory tower” is very, very different. These folks are working on the river with teamsters and long-shoremen, so the overall environment includes a lot saltier language. They also have the muscle power to back up their @\$! language with more than words. But the TTR team is supportive and ready to help one another, whether moving to a new home, or defending one of them in the local biker bar. And yes, eating lunch in the local Talleyrand Avenue biker bar is VERY different than eating in the CSX cafeteria! But I digress: suffice it to say that the author now works as a flagman within the TTR crane crew.



This four man crew consists of two crane operators and a truck flagman and one or two rail flagmen. The RTG crane operators must have good depth perception so they know when to stop lowering the container box - before it hits the truck or rail car at full speed! Since he is sitting 60 feet above everybody it is a little like a baseball pitcher being able to **stop** his pitch right at home plate. The operators work with a spreader bar that attaches to the top corner holes of the box. The bar allows the box to twist should a truck not pull up parallel to the rail car. This is a very necessary feature when we are working the curve at the top of the T Yard. The bar can also tilt the container, which is done to ease spotting the box on both the trucks and rail cars.

The truck flagman is primarily responsible for stopping the truck in the right spot for loading and unloading. This is important since it is a more time consuming task to move the RTG than the trucks. The rail flagmen guide the operator in spotting containers inside double-stack cars, which took a lot like a gondola with no floor. They also place or remove the inter-box connectors (more commonly called locking pins) that connect the top and bottom container boxes. Locking pins weigh around 16 pounds, and having to place/remove these pins, along with climbing on/off countless rail cars, soon builds up your arm muscles. One flagman even does 90 push-ups a day on the job to further fine-tune his steel-pipe arms! You tend to come home tired, especially after walking up and down the length of the T yard a number of times during the day.

The two RTG cranes were built by SISU and they straddle four tracks of T Yard and a truck roadway. The RTG is powered by a large diesel engine sitting on the frame on one side of the crane. The other side of the crane, where the truck roadway is located, is where the flagmen tend to hang out. You need to be there to spot the trucks and it is much quieter away from the engine. The flagmen tend to stand under the crane's frame in the shade of the crane. When the sun is hot and burning - you stand in the shade of the crane. When it is raining, you stand under the protection of the crane's frame. As you work, you walk up and down the length of T Yard in the shade of the crane. We even sit in the shade of the crane on fold-up chairs while waiting (sometimes as long

as 20 minutes) for the trucks to return from the inspection/weighing station and stacking area. So EVERYTHING is done "in the shade of the crane."

Since there is frequently time to contemplate life while waiting on a truck, I usually read. Paperbacks are nice, especially ones I don't want to keep. These allow me to read a few pages and throw them away, placing what's left in my back pocket while working as either the truck or rail flagman. Another option is to study the graffiti on the cars, which is sometimes quite good. One Southern Pacific five pack stack car was decorated with a perfect replica of the "one-wing" Southern Pacific herald with the words "Daylight Dreaming" inside the oval. Unfortunately, most of graffiti is quite crass. Finally, as a modeler, I use the waiting time to study the rail cars (particularly DTTX 25000s) to determine how I'll weather my Walthers three-section doublestack that I am now building. I even have Crowley - Hamburg Sud containers to load on the car when it is completed.

Speaking of container cars, as flagman, we prefer working with double stack cars versus "spine" cars. We can load/unload two boxes on double stack cars quicker than spine cars since the crane does not have to move while spotting the boxes. Also, spine cars have a very limited loading "target" where the corner of the container box locks onto the car's docking pin. This makes it harder on the crane operator to land the box on the spine cars versus dropping the box into a double stack and spotting the second box on top. We can actually load two boxes in one double stack car in about the same as we can load just one box on a spine car!

There is a lot to see and do on the busy TTR. Should you like to view the operation, there are many grade crossings and parallel roads that allow public access for picture taking. From Talleyrand Avenue you can view the crane operation and see the "engine terminal" where the locomotives are parked next to the TTR office building. The TTR packs a lot of railroading in a small space with plenty of switching, so check it out when you come to Jacksonville.



Minutes of the Southeast Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society

The November 9th meeting of the Southeast Chapter, R&LHS, was held at 6:00 PM in the CSX General Office Building in Jacksonville, Florida. There were no Secretary or Treasurer reports.

Old Business:

2001 R&LHS Annual Convention in Jacksonville: Jim Smith provided an update on efforts being made to prepare for the June Convention.

Second Chapter Book: Committee Chairman Ed Mueller presented a few photos for review and advised that he and some committee members will go to Tallahassee for further photo study.

Scranton Rail Camp: Project on hold due to a number of factors involving finance and Chapter efforts to prepare for the Annual Convention.

Nominations for 2001: The nominating committee presented the following officer slate for 2001:

Chairman	Jim Smith
Vice Chairman	Bill Howes
Secretary	Mark Bennett
Treasurer	Jim Wilk

New Business:

After discussion, it was agreed that our Chapter would not renew our membership in the Jacksonville Maritime Museum.

Committee Reports:

Trip Committee: Paul Newton advised that the proposed Station Trip in Central Florida., Would be postponed till Spring, 2001.

R&LHS National Items: Bill Howes asked members to consider a R&LHS gift membership as a present for Christmas.

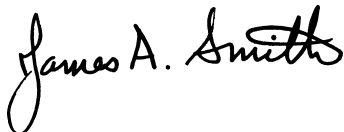
Announcements:

The Jacksonville train show will be held on February 17, 2001.

Program:

Chairman Jim Smith presented a program on the Talleyrand Terminal Railroad.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Smith
Acting Secretary

Happy Holidays

The officers and staff of the Southeast Chapter want to wish a very Merry Christmas to all members and we hope you will all have a very Happy New Year! While you are pondering what to give to railfan friends and relatives, please consider giving a GIFT MEMBERSHIP in the R&LHS. Your gift might just get someone started on a lifetime hobby. We hope that 2001 will be an especially good year for you and yours. Again, *Happy Holidays!*



Jim Smith standing in front of a double stack illustrating how high the walkway is that you must use to place or remove a locking pin.
