



Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.

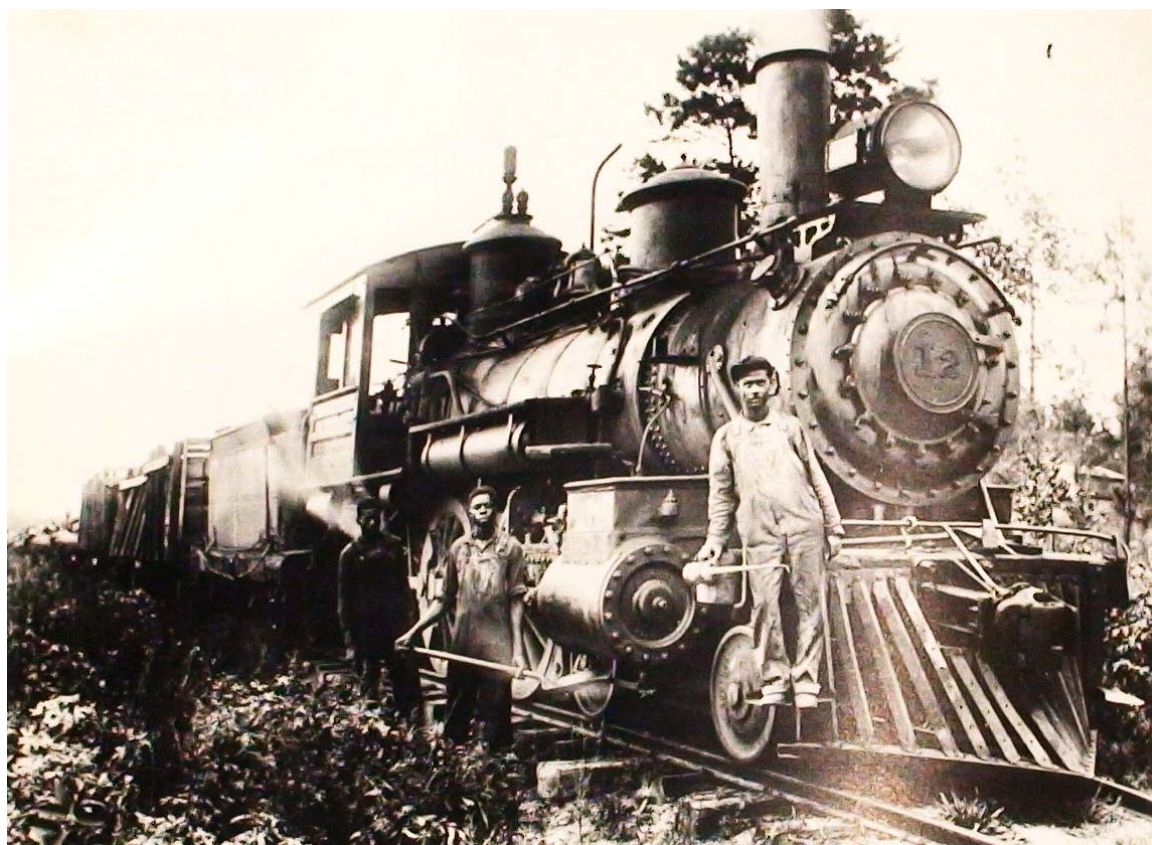
Southeast Chapter

Newsletter No. 123 – February 2011

The Railroad in Alcolu, South Carolina

On a trip to North Carolina and back to Florida in 2007, I happened to stop in a quaint town along I-95 named Alcolu. There are tracks running under the Interstate, and I decided to take a break from driving and poke around a bit. What I found was a quite interesting little bit of South Carolina history. I am indebted to Mr. Russell Harrelson, who took the time to share this information about his town. Where is Alcolu, what does the name stand for, and what is its significance?

Alcolu is a small community in southeastern South Carolina, located at the junction of I-95 and US Hwy 521, Exit 122 as of December 2007. Alcolu was established between 1885 and 1890 by D. W. Alderman and Sons as a mill town for their lumber company. The name Alcolu is derived from "Al" as in Alderman, "Co" as in Coldwell (a friend), and "Lu" as in Lula, the only daughter of the Alderman's at that time. During this time the D.W. Alderman and Sons Company of Alcolu built a railroad through the area and began buying much of the timber. In addition to the freight cars on this line, passenger service was also added.



Alcolu Railroad Company #12 a 4-4-0, of the D. W. Alderman & Sons Company
Photo by Bennett Berry from the collection of Dr. Al B. Harley Jr.

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The Railroad in Alcolu, South Carolina – continued:

Mr. Alderman started a "ground" circular saw mill on the Juneburn Road, taking advantage, as was also the case in many other southern states, of the abundant timber resources in the area. In a year or two the town of ALCOLU was started. It is five miles northwest of Manning on the road to Sumter. He was the founder and president of D. W. Alderman & Sons Company, the large lumber corporation in Alcolu, South Carolina and was also president of Alcolu Railroad and the Alderman Department Store in Manning, South Carolina. When it was built, Alcolu was a company town where everybody worked at the lumber mill and were paid in "babbit", metal coins stamped with an "A". At the Company Store they could buy groceries, see the doctor, or watch a show in the 200 seat theater upstairs. The building still looks very much as it did in the early 1900's and is now used as an antique showroom. There is a granite marker placed in honor and memory of the family near the old general store in Alcolu. The marker has the story of how the name was derived and has a beautiful depiction of the mill, a locomotive and a church. It is shown below in this photograph I took.



Announcements:

Our regular meetings are the 2nd Thursday of the month @ 6:30 PM, in the CSX Bldg., 500 Water St. Jacksonville, FL. { We are now meeting in the Acosta – C room on the 2nd floor at the CSX General Office Building. }

March 19/20th – Group trip to Tampa on Amtrak and World's Greatest Hobby event at Tampa Conv. Center

June 2-5, 2011 - R&LHS Annual Convention, Elkins, WV (Cass, Durbin Rocket)

SOUTHEAST CHAPTER OFFICERS

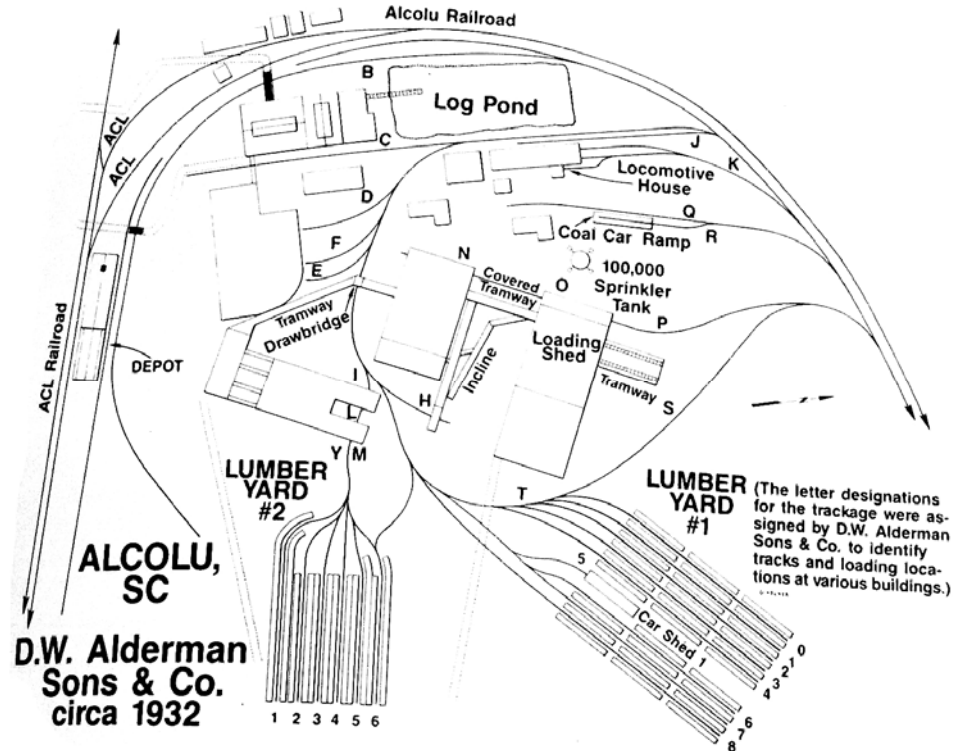
John A. Leynes	Chairman	904-287-1044
Paul Newton	Vice-Chairman	904-296-7340
Bill Howes	Secretary	
Robert Van Nest	Treasurer	

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The Railroad in Alcolu, South Carolina – continued 2:

These next few photo's are taken from Russell's copy of the book titled "A little history of the community of Alcolu S. C.", written by Robert Lewis Alderman, a descendant of D. W. Alderman. The picture below is of the general layout of the lumber mill circa 1932. Both images below are aligned the same with north to the right.

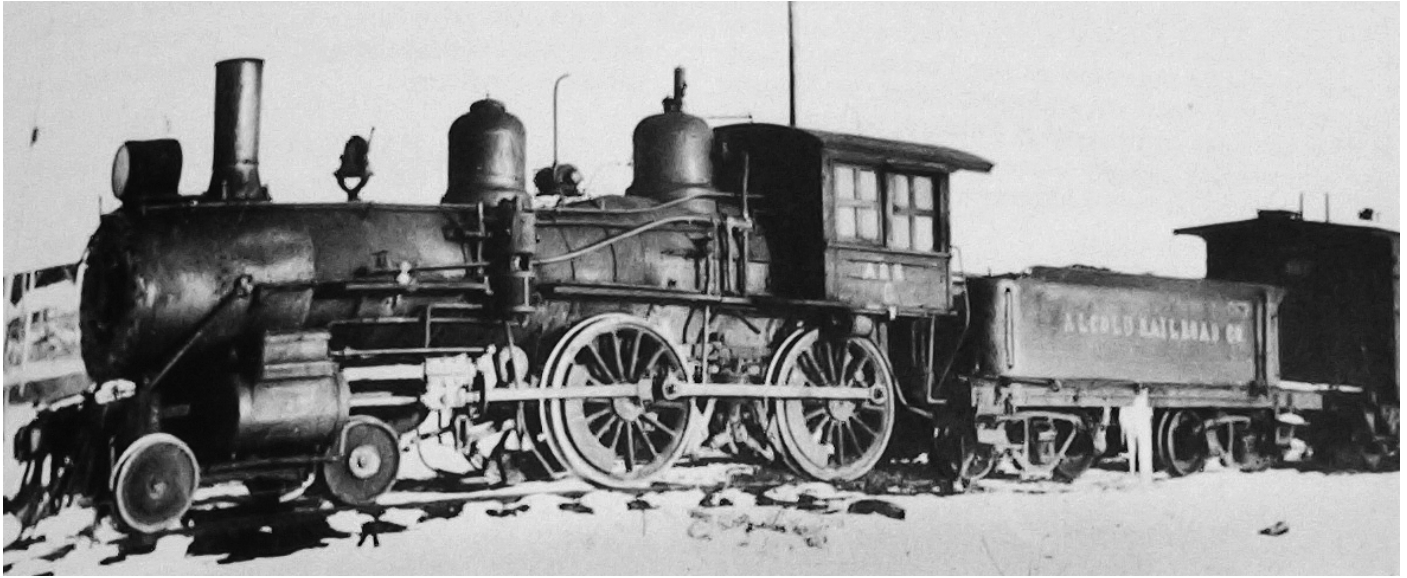


In addition to the Alcolu railroad, the area was served by the Atlantic Coast Line railroad. The line through Alcolu today, is CSX.



This image from Google Earth, with June 2006 imagery, still clearly shows where lumber yard #2 was, and hints of yard #1 in the map above.

The Railroad in Alcolu, South Carolina – continued 3:



The caption of the photo above reads "Alcolu Railroad's #6 sits frozen in the snow on January 31, 1936, at the Alcolu South Carolina Mill. This 4-4-0 American was used to haul the passenger train over the line. Photo by Robert M. Hanft, Collection of Tom Wicker."

This locomotive appears to be the one depicted on the granite marker described above.

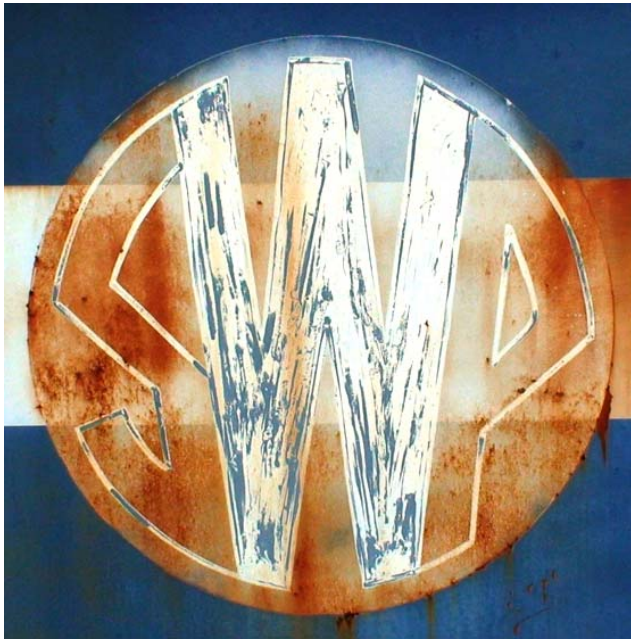
The other reason for stopping at Alcolu, was to try to investigate this small locomotive.

I spotted it on the way up to North Carolina, and it was located on the east side of Interstate 95, about 2 or 3 miles north of the Alcolu exit, sitting in a field.

Have any of you seen it and do you know what company manufactured it?

We'll give you the full details in the April newsletter.





At left is the logo for the road or company that operated this locomotive. The letters are "S W P". Here is a hint, it was last in service in Augusta, Georgia, and the company site is now an EPA superfund site.



A Dog Named Sherman and the Seaboard Railroad– Lindon Lindsey of Cedar Key

The recent story about a dog named Owney that appeared in the Winter Quarterly Newsletter reminded me of another story involving a dog and a railroad. Many of you know that my family has roots in Cedar Key, in Levy County, Florida. Also that I research the old Florida Railroad, that was Florida's first major railroad. It ran between Fernandina, north of Jacksonville, on the Atlantic, across the state southwest to Cedar Key on the Gulf of Mexico. In 2009, I produced a DVD video of an interview with a life long resident of Levy County, Mr. Lindon Lindsey, who was born and raised in Cedar Key. Lindon is widely know as the most authoritative historian of Levy County. In the interview, he recounted a couple of train stories, one of which is related here. This story took place on the Archer to Cedar Key Branch of the Seaboard Air Line Railway around 1920, and prior to the abandonment of the branch, and removal of the tracks, in 1932.

Lindon recalled "We had a big dog named Sherman, a German Shepherd, when we lived in Cedar Key. I had an Uncle Jim and Aunt Ella who lived up in Otter Creek, about twenty miles from Cedar Key, he worked at the big sawmill there. They had a nephew Ben that lived with them because Ben's father Mr. Waltower, was a rambler. He was a locomotive engineer for sawmills and logging railroads and he traveled everywhere, so his son Ben lived with Uncle Jim. One time when they were visiting us in Cedar Key, Uncle Jim convinced my daddy to let them have that dog, and so they carried Sherman up to Otter Creek on the train because that's they only way they had to get back and forth back then. They turned the dog loose at their home, and he disappeared, and turned up shortly back in Cedar Key, but no one could figure out how he got back there so fast. So Uncle Jim went back to Cedar Key on the train again and brought him back to Otter Creek. A couple of day later, the dog is gone again and is back in Cedar Key. So they went back to Cedar Key one more time and got him but this time they tied him to the porch so he couldn't get away, and kept him tied for some time. They turned him loose again and this time they watched him because they wondered how he could get back to Cedar Key so fast. Well that dog would hear the train whistle, and run down to the little wooden depot, and get on the train and go back to Cedar Key! He would get off the train in Cedar Key and come back to our house for a while. He got to where he would regularly take the train back and forth between our house and Uncle Jim's. The train folks didn't seem to mind him getting on the trains, as they figured he was a pretty smart dog to be able to figure all that out."

Meeting of February 10, 2011

The meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society was called to order at 7:03 PM by chairman John Leynes. There were 10 members present. This was the Chapter's first meeting in the Acosta Conference Center on the second floor of the CSX headquarters at 500 Water Street, Jacksonville, replacing the B&O conference room venue on the third floor in the same building.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the January 15, 2011 meeting were distributed and approved by the members present.

Treasurer's Report: Robert Van Nest reported that the savings account balance on February 10, 2011 was \$4193.38. There was \$500 in the checking account. In addition, the chapter has two certificates of deposit. The treasurer's report was read and approved.

Committee Reports:

- Southeast Limited Newsletter: John Leynes and Jim Smith will soon start assembling material and are seeking additional items.
- Trip Committee: Paul Newtonson reported on plans for the March 19-20 trip to Tampa going on Amtrak Train #91 and returning on #92. Bill Howes will be driving to Tampa earlier and will be staying later in order to handle the R&LHS table at the World's Greatest Hobby show at the Convention Center.
- Website Online: No report.

Old Business:

- ACL 1504: A new (2011) financial grant application was submitted to the State of Florida in December. Awaiting scheduling of a "working party" to help promote the project. There have been no committee meetings in 2011 to date.
- Railroad Music DVD: Chairman Leynes expects completion in late 2011. He will contact Ed Mellon regarding his offer to assist.
- Plant DVD - Chairman Leynes will explore the feasibility of placing an ad in the R&LHS *Quarterly*.

New Business:

There was a discussion on the 2011 "Priorities" outlined by chairman Leynes at the January 15 meeting. There will be new initiatives to (1) reach out to chapter members who are not attending the monthly meetings (both those living within and outside the Jacksonville area), (2) become better informed about and seek opportunities to work with other organizations promoting railroad history and preservation, (3) expand the format and content of the chapter's monthly programs. Jim Smith will explore opportunities for speaker exchanges and joint meetings with the railroad group in Palatka. Chairman Leynes suggested the chapter build on the work of Larry Brennan and others to document the expansion of railroad lines in Florida.

Chairman Leynes reported on the "Railroad Days" celebrations being organized along the route of the Florida Railroad.

Announcements:

- February 26: Chapter members will assist at a Larry Shughart home event.
- April 2: "Rail Watch" at Folkston, GA.
- May 7: "National Train Day" celebrating Amtrak's 40th Anniversary.

Next Southeast Chapter Meeting: March 10

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM. Program: Model Display and "Garage Sale"

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Howes