



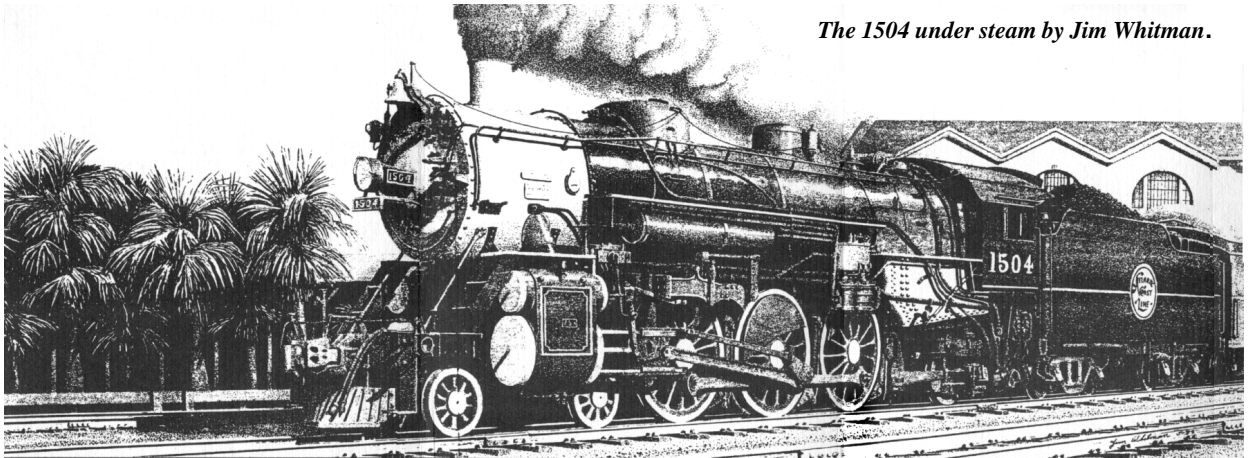
# Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc.

## Southeast Chapter

### Newsletter No. 140 – December 2013

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

#### Destined for glory, the 1504, Jacksonville's Landmark Locomotive



*The 1504 under steam by Jim Whitman.*

Engine 1504 was destined for glory. Built by the American Locomotive Company for the United States Railway Administration (USRA) to haul troops, ordinance and military supplies during World War I, the 1504 was not completed until August of 1919, after the war had ended. Instead of hauling troop trains, the 1504 became one of the flagship engines of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL), hauling premier passenger trains in and out of Florida. And when the workhorse was retired, it was brought to the ACL's new Jacksonville headquarters to be displayed as a proud symbol and memorial of its kind — one of the last of a vanishing breed.

But the engine's crowning glory was made manifest in 1989, when the American Society of Mechanical Engineers designated the 1504 as a National Landmark. The 1504 had been selected because it was such a well-preserved example of one of the most popular steam locomotives ever built.

One of a popular class of locomotives known as "Pacifics", which were first built in 1886, the 1504 was a P-5-A model, designed for multipurpose operations requiring speed and stamina.

Considered ideal for working Florida's flat terrain, many of the popular USRA Pacifics (and nearly 7,000 were built), were acquired by Southern railroads for first-class passenger service because they gave such a smooth and easy ride. During its heyday, operating over the ACL's Florida-focused 5,100 mile system, the 1504 hauled many of the railroad's premier passenger trains — trains that were known far and wide for their speed and luxurious accommodations — trains with proud names like the "Southwind", the "Miamian", the "Dixie Flyer", the Florida Special" and the "Southland".

The 1504 could haul 10 or 12 passenger cars easily at 100 miles-per-hour, but that took some doing before the advent of automatic coal stokers which fed the engine's fires mechanically. One old railroader recalled that "running at high speed with the engine swinging wildly, with nothing to hold on to, the firemen would have to stand on deck and shovel 16 tons of coal into the firebox every five hours to keep up steam.

When steam power gave way to diesel, all the P-5-As, including the 1504, were converted from passenger to freight service. But even then, they were outstanding performers and could haul 50 to 60 freight cars at maximum allowable speeds.

*Southeast Limited*

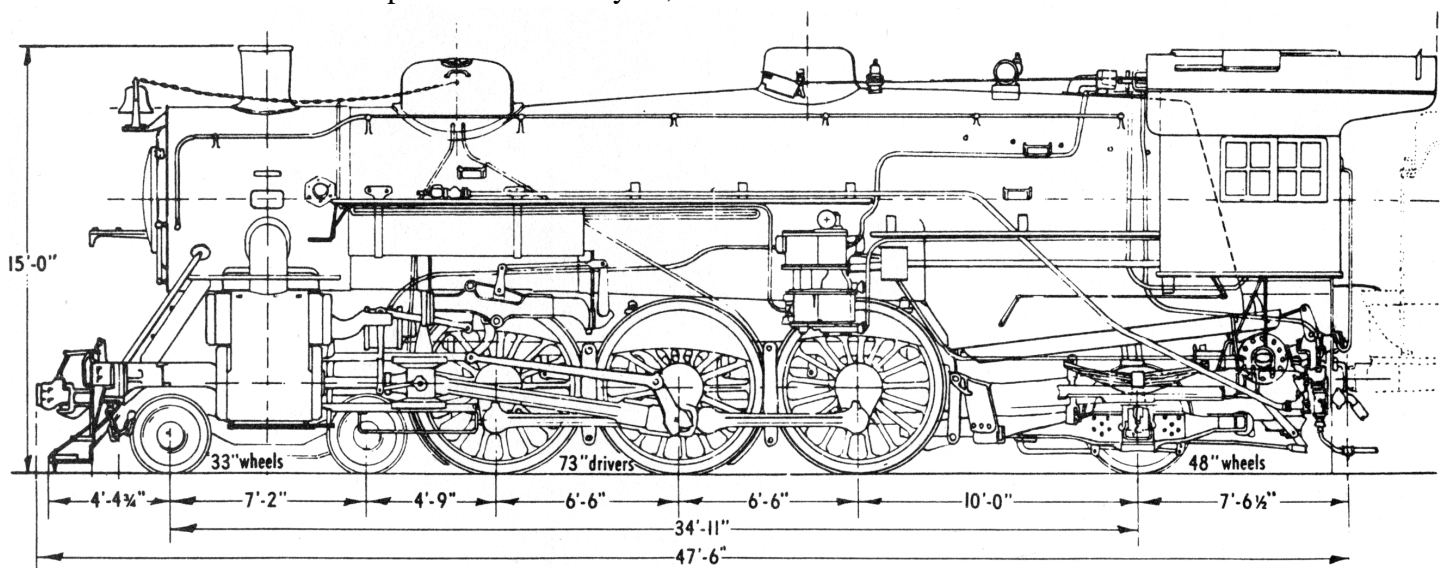
In the early 1950s, when the last steam engines were giving way to the new diesels, ACL President C. (Champ) Davis called John W. Hawthorne, head of the railroad's mechanical department, into his office. It was time, Davis said, to begin preparing for the day when the last of the railroad's old steam engines would be useful only as museum pieces. Davis ordered Hawthorne to prepare for that eventuality by earmarking the most suitable steam engines remaining and preserving them for posterity. Among those selected by Hawthorne was the 1504.

In its last years of service the 1504 had hauled freight in the Tampa area, and it was there that Hawthorne found the old workhorse, shortly after its retirement on December 31, 1952. "The engine had gone the classic route," Hawthorne recalled, "from passenger to mainline freight service, and then to local freight service and oblivion."

Hawthorne rescued the 1504 from the scrap pile and gave it a complete overhaul, using "some of the last men we had on the road who were familiar with steam engines". Then, as Hawthorne remembered it, the 1504 was towed on track from Tampa to Jacksonville, and in June of 1960 came to what was thought would be its last resting place — on a pedestal in front of the ACL (now CSX) Building. There it remained until 1986 when the Jacksonville Terminal was restored and reopened as part of the city's Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, named after a former chairman of CSX Corporation and Seaboard Coast Line Industries, whose civic leadership had helped make the new facility possible.

At that time CSX Rail Transport President John W. Snow announced that both the railroad and city leaders agreed that the 1504 would be an "ideal symbol for the Osborn Convention Center". On the weekend of September 27-28,

1986, the engine was moved to the Convention Center grounds — a job that took a small army of CSX and City specialists, armed with an assortment of heavy equipment — some of it especially designed for the job. Two years later, in 1989, the 1504 was given a complete refurbishment by the City of Jacksonville, just in time for its 70th anniversary, a milestone shared by the restored Jacksonville Terminal. For, by poetic coincidence, both the engine and the great train station were completed in the same year, 1919.



Erecting drawing for the P5A Pacific locomotives

This full article © Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center

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Clifford J. Vander Yacht                      **Webmaster**

The *Southeast Limited* Newsletter is edited by James A. Smith, and composited by Clifford J. Vander Yacht.



# No. 1504 steams toward restoration after \$20,000 in grants

By Dan Scanlan, © Florida Times-Union, Sun, Oct 27, 2013.



**The Atlantic Coast Line locomotive is on display outside the Prime Osborn Convention Center.**

Once it was a steel-rail thoroughbred, speeding people between Richmond and Jacksonville under a plume of coal-fired steam. Now rust streaks No. 1504's huge boiler as holes pit the 94-year-old Atlantic Coast Line locomotive's tender, parked for 24 years outside the Prime Osborn Convention Center. But the historic locomotive's future is brighter after TRAINS Magazine awarded a \$10,000 preservation grant to the North Florida Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, and CSX matched it.

The locomotive just topped the national railway society's Endangered U.S. Railroad Landmarks list. So funds to clean and repaint No. 1504 have local supporters ecstatic, said John Holmgren, president of the society's North Florida chapter.

The group joined the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Historical Society, North Florida Railroad Museum and the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society's Southeast Chapter to file for the magazine grant. "The initial plan is to paint — copious amounts of paint. There is also going to be work to the cab to secure windows and keep the wind and rain out of its interior," Holmgren said. "There are also plans to do some exterior lighting, including hopefully illuminating the headlight and running lights."

The 73-year-old magazine funds railroad restoration projects as part of its philanthropy program, and No. 1504 was picked from 50 applications this year, Editor Jim Wrinn said. "It is a landmark locomotive, has a national appeal and is very prominent, and there is a considerable urgency to doing something about it," Wrinn said. "It is in a tough climate to preserve a large piece of metal. ... This is hopefully the beginning. It needs a cover, and it needs a fund endowment to keep restoration and maintenance going."

The build plate on the engine says American Locomotive Co. in Richmond made it in August 1919. The 471,000-pound engine and tender is 80 feet long and carried 10,000 gallons of water and 16 tons of coal to turn its 73-inch-tall drive wheels. In its prime, the locomotive coincidentally pulled passengers into where it stands now — the Prime Osborn, when it was a railroad station. Moved in 1960 to Atlantic Coast Line (now CSX) on Water Street, it went to the convention center in 1989. It got \$75,000 in renovation, then another \$10,000 in work in 1998.

When its looks faded, the railway society's chapter filed for grants to restore it, but didn't get any. A new "Project Return to Glory" restoration plan began after a July inspection showed it in basically very good shape, but with rust streaks on the faded black boiler and crusty rust holes in the tender. Holmgren said the rust and paint will be addressed while he and Wrinn hope for a full restoration including a new roof over it that can be funded in the future.

**Happy Holidays: The chapter officers and staff of the *Southeast Limited* wish you all a joyous holiday season.  
Merry Christmas to all and have a Happy New Year!**

## R&LHS Southeast Chapter Annual Banquet

Our Annual Banquet will be held on our regular meeting night on January 9, 2014. Larry Shughart has agreed to host the banquet at his home: 5216 Lourcey Road , Jacksonville. It begins at 5 PM, with dinner at 7 PM. Larry will provide the meat and beverage, so bring a covered dish, salad, dessert, bread, etc. ALSO — everyone please bring an unwrapped train gift. We'll be playing a little Bingo!

### Southeast Chapter 2014 Elections:

The election of officers for next year was discussed at our October meeting. If YOU are interested in becoming an officer of the R&LHS Southeast Chapter, or if you have the name of someone you'd like to suggest for one of the four positions (Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer), please contact Bill Howes, at our regular mailing address: SE Chapter R&LHS at P. O. Box 600544 , Jacksonville , FL , 32260-0544. Your response must be sent to Bill no later than December 5th.

### Our next projects

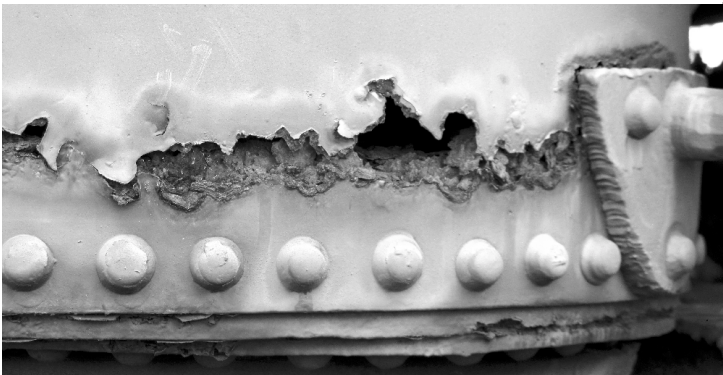


Photos by Robert Van Nest  
April 14, 2012



ACL 1504 engine

Orange Blossom passenger car



## **Railroad Stations and watches...Unknown author.**

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line.

Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way that they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years.

This was all arranged by "Richard," who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them. So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit.

That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. And the rest is history as they say. The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods. Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago — and it's still there. YES, IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT that for a while in the 1880s, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator: Richard Sears and his partner Alvah Roebuck!

Wikipedia: Richard Warren Sears was a railroad station agent in North Redwood, Minnesota, when he received an impressive shipment of watches from a Chicago jeweler which were unwanted by a local jeweler. Sears purchased them, then sold the watches for a considerable profit to other station agents, then ordered more for resale. Soon he started a business selling watches through mail order catalogs. The next year, he moved to Chicago, Illinois where he met Alvah C. Roebuck, who joined him in the business. In 1893, the corporate name became Sears, Roebuck & Co. The first Sears catalog was published in 1888. By 1894, the Sears catalog had grown to 322 pages, featuring sewing machines, bicycles, sporting goods, automobiles, houses and a host of other new items.

### **Announcements:**

December. 21st & 22nd, Golden Spike Model Train & Railroadiana Show: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, FL

January 9th, Southeast Chapter Annual Banquet at Larry Shughart's home.

January 18th, Golden Spike Model Train & Railroadiana Show: Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland, FL

February 13th, regular Southeast Chapter meeting date.

February 22nd, Golden Spike Model Train & Railroadiana Show: Prime Osborn Center, Jacksonville, FL

March 13th, regular Southeast Chapter meeting date.

April 10th, regular Southeast Chapter Meeting date.

April 12th, Golden Spike Model Train & Railroadiana Show: Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland, FL

May 8th, regular Southeast Chapter Meeting date.

June 5th-8th, R&LHS Convention Ely, Nevada, home of the Nevada Northern Railway.



# SILVER STATE RAILS 2014 R&LHS CONVENTION

Ely, Nevada June 5-8, 2014

The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society and  
the Nevada Northern Railway, National Historic Landmark  
Present the 2014 R&LHS Convention in the Silver State.

## Exploring 147 years of Nevada Rail History

Thursday, June 5: Assemble in Las Vegas. R&LHS board meeting and possible side trip.

Friday, June 6: Travel by luxury motor coach to Ely. Along the way learn about Great Railroad Race and the visit the ghost towns of Rhyolite, Goldfield, and Tonopah.

Saturday, June 7: Explore, ride and watch demonstrations of the Nevada Northern Railway. Tour the Nevada Northern shops, watch a steam crane demonstration, mail being canceled in the RPO and then take the Steptoe Valley Flyer pulled by Nevada's Official State Locomotive #40. Witness an ore train once again heading up the hill. Conclude the day with dinner and the R&LHS annual meeting.

Sunday, June 8: After breakfast, return to Las Vegas, returning in time for afternoon flights. Stay tuned for further developments on this exciting event.

Contact John Atherton, e-mail [JJAAMAPOU@aol.com](mailto:JJAAMAPOU@aol.com) or phone (845) 471-8152 for further details or if you have any questions. Registration begins in December, 2013.



NEVADA NORTHERN RAILWAY

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

