

Carolina Conductor



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Monthly Newsletter of the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association, Inc.

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Preserving the Past Active in the Present Planning for the Future

Web Site: hubcityrrmuseum.org

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Hub City Railroad Museum and SOU Rwy Caboose #X3115:

Spartanburg Amtrak Station

298 Magnolia Street

Spartanburg, SC 29301-2330

Wednesday 10-2 & Saturday 10-2

Meeting Site:

Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church

307 North Main Street

Fountain Inn, SC 29644

Third Friday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

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Articles can be submitted anytime.

Civil War in Atlanta

Part One

The city of Atlanta, Georgia, in Fulton County, was an important rail and commercial center during the American Civil War. Although relatively small in population, the city became a critical point of contention during the Atlanta Campaign in 1864 when a powerful Union Army approached from Union held Tennessee. The fall of Atlanta was a critical point in the Civil War, giving the North more confidence, and leading to the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln and the eventual dissolution of the Confederacy. The capture of the "Gate City of the South" was especially important for Lincoln as he was in a contentious election campaign against the Democratic opponent George B. McClellan.

The city that would become Atlanta began as the endpoint of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, aptly named Terminus, in 1837. Atlanta grew quickly with the completion of the Georgia Railway in 1845 and the Macon & Western in 1846. The city was in-

corporated in 1847 and extended 1 mile in all directions from the zero-mile post. In 1860, Atlanta was a relatively small city ranking 99th in the United States in size with a population of 9,554 according to the 1860 U.S. Census. However, it was the 13th largest city in what became the Confederate States of America. A large number of machine shops, foundries and



The original Georgia Railroad Freight Depot is the building with the roofline overhanging its porch in the center-right of this photo. Every building seen in the photo was either destroyed or burned by Federal soldiers between November 7 & 15, 1864. The large building to the left was named the "Car Shed," where passengers traveling on any of the four railroads coming into Atlanta could change to another train heading out of the city.

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their industrial concerns were soon established in Atlanta. The population swelled to nearly 22,000 as workers arrived for these new factories and warehouses.



The Western & Atlantic depot in Atlanta.

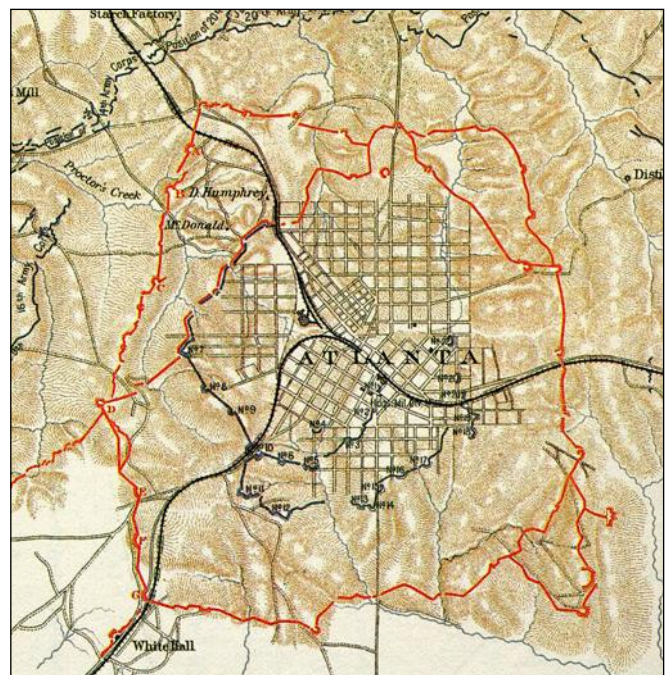
The city was a vital transportation and logistics center, with several major railroads in the area. The Western & Atlantic Railroad connected the city with Chattanooga, Tennessee, 138 miles to the north. The Georgia Railway connected the city with Augusta to the east and the Confederate powder works on the Savannah River. The Macon & Western connected Atlanta to Macon and Savannah to its south. The fourth line, Atlanta and West Point Railroad, completed in 1854, connected Atlanta with West Point, Georgia. At West Point the line linked up with the Western Railway of Alabama, thus connecting Atlanta with Montgomery to its west. A series of roads radiated out from the city in all directions, connecting Atlanta with neighboring towns and states.

Thought to be relatively safe from Union forces early in the war, Atlanta rapidly became a concentration point for the Confederate quartermasters and logistics experts; warehouses were filled with food, forage, supplies, ammunition, clothing and other materiel critical to the Confederate States of America armies operating in the Western Theater.

Concerned after the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, that Atlanta would be a logical target for future Union Army attacks, Jeremy F. Gilmer, Chief of the Confederate Engineer Bureau, contacted Cap-

tain Lemuel P. Grant, Chief Engineer of the Department of Georgia, and asked him to survey possible enemy crossings of the Chattahoochee River, a broad waterway that offered some protection from a northern approach. Grant complied, and after a thorough investigation and survey, explained that the fortification of Atlanta would involve "an expenditure second only to the defense of Richmond". Captain Grant planned "a cordon of enclosed works, within supporting distance of each other", with twelve to fifteen strong forts sited specially for artillery and connected by infantry entrenchments in a perimeter "between 10 and 12 miles in extent". Gilmer gave Grant the approval to develop a plan to ring Atlanta with forts and earthworks along the key approaches to the city. Gilmer advised that the earthen forts should be connected by a line of rifle pits, with ditches, felled timbers or other obstruction to impede an infantry charge. Gilmer also suggested that the perimeter should be "far enough from the town to prevent the enemy coming within bombarding distance."

Captain Grant planned a series of 17 redoubts forming a 10-mile circle over a mile out from the center of town. These would be interlinked with a series of earthworks and trenches, along with rows of abatis and other impediments to enemy troops. Construction on the extensive defensive works began in



Grant's circle around Atlanta during the battle.

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August 1863. They were bounded on the north by high ground (the present location of the Fox Theatre), the west by Ashby Street, the south by McDonough Drive and the east by what is today known as Grant Park. Gilmer inspected the completed work in December 1863 and gave his approval. Because of how the subsequent campaign unfolded, most of these fortifications were never really put to the test.

By late October Captain Grant had nearly completed his encirclement of Atlanta and the number of forts had risen to seventeen. Of the seventeen planned forts, thirteen had been completed. Due to topographical features of the land and the manning requirements for the fortifications, Grant's design had, by necessity, left Atlanta within artillery range. The section of the line protecting the north west approach to Atlanta was inside the city limits. To help protect this area, an additional string of forts was constructed further out from the city. A report from Captain Grant to Gen. Wright places the length of the fortifications at 10 ½ miles and requiring about 55,000 troops to fully man the line.

In addition to the fortifications surrounding Atlanta, the local militia was reorganized by Brig. Gen. M. J. Wright during March 1864. The militia was "composed exclusively of detailed soldiers and exempts, all those liable to conscription". The total strength was 534 men.

In 1864, as feared by Jeremy F. Gilmer, Atlanta did indeed become the target of a major Union invasion. The area now covered by metropolitan Atlanta was the scene of several fiercely contested battles, including the Battle of Peachtree Creek, the Battle of Atlanta, Battle of Ezra Church and the Battle of Jonesboro.



Scene of a battle for the capture of Atlanta.

On September 1, 1864, Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood evacuated Atlanta, after a five-week siege mounted by Union Gen. William Sherman, and ordered all public buildings and possible Confederate assets destroyed.

Siege of Atlanta July–August 1864

In the spring of 1864, the Confederate Army of Tennessee, commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston, was entrenched near the city of Dalton, Georgia. In early May, 1864, Union forces under the command of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman began the Atlanta Campaign. By early July, the Confederate forces had been forced back to the outskirts of Atlanta. Both the Union and Confederate forces used the Western & Atlantic Railroad to supply their troops.



Battle scene at the Cyclorama in Atlanta.

The last remaining natural obstacle separating the Union forces from Atlanta was the Chattahoochee River. By July 9, the Federal forces had secured three good crossings over the Chattahoochee: one at Powers' Ferry, a second at the mouth of Soap Creek and a third at the shallow ford near Roswell, Georgia. The federal forces rested and moved troops around to prepare for their advance on the city of Atlanta beginning on July 16.

On July 10, Maj. Gen. Sherman sent orders via telegraph to Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau then stationed at Decatur, Alabama, with a force of 2,500 cavalry to cut the rail line linking Atlanta with Montgomery, Alabama. On July 16, Gen. Rousseau's men cut about 25 miles of the rail line, west of Opelika, Alabama, as well as three miles of the branch toward Columbus, Georgia, and two miles towards West Point, Georgia. Gen.

Rousseau's cavalry force then joined General Sherman in Marietta, Georgia, on July 22.

Union cavalry forces under the command of Brig. Gen. Kenner Garrard supported by a brigade of infantry cut the Georgia Railroad that connected Atlanta with Augusta, Georgia, near the town of Stone Mountain, GA, on July 18, 1864.



Civil War commemoration carved into Stone Mountain.

On July 18, 1864, General Joseph E. Johnston was relieved of command of the Confederate forces. General John Bell Hood was given command of the Army of Tennessee.

**Fall of Atlanta
September 1–2, 1864**

With all his supply lines cut, General Hood abandoned Atlanta. On the night of September 1, his troops marched out of the city to Lovejoy, Georgia. General Hood ordered that the 81 rail cars filled with ammunition and other military supplies be destroyed. The resulting fire and explosions were heard for miles. Destruction of Military Assets (November 7–16, 1864)

Gen. Sherman realized that the occupation of Atlanta would tie up substantial manpower resources, so he devised a plan to abandon Atlanta. The plan called for the destruction of all military assets within the city, the reorganization of the forces under his command and for reinforcing Gen. George Thomas in Tennessee. Once these preparations were completed, he and his troops would set out on a campaign designed to destroy the state of Georgia's war-making capabilities and the will of its population to continue the war.

On October 19, 1864, General Sherman notified Maj. Gen. H. W. Halleck that he "now consider myself authorized to execute my plan to destroy the railroad from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city (modified by General Grant from Dalton, & c.), strike out into the heart of Georgia, and make for Charleston, Savannah, or the mouth of the Apalachicola".



Union forces occupy Atlanta.

[79] On that same day, he notified Col. Amos Beckwith in Atlanta that "Hood will escape me. I want to prepare for my big raid. On the 1st of November I want nothing but what is necessary to war. Send all trash to the rear at once and have on hand thirty days food and but little forage. I propose to abandon Atlanta and the railroad back to Chattanooga and sally forth to ruin Georgia and bring up on the seashore. Make all dispositions accordingly. I will go down the Coosa until sure that Hood has gone to Blue Mountain." Additionally, he notified Col. L. C. Easton in Chattanooga, "Go in person to superintend the repairs of the railroad and make all orders in my name that will expedite its completion. I want it finished to bring back to Chattanooga the sick, wounded, and surplus trash. On the 1st of November I want nothing in front of Chattanooga save what we can use as food and clothing and haul in our wagons. There is plenty of corn in the country, and we only want forage for the posts. I allow ten days to do all this, by which time I expect to be near Atlanta."

On October 20, 1864, General Sherman informed Major-General Thomas of his planned March to the Sea. Part of his plan was to ensure that Gen. Thomas had sufficient strength to hold Tennessee, or if Hood followed Sherman into Georgia, Gen. Thomas was instructed to move south as far as Columbus, Miss., and Selma. General Stanley, with the IV Corps, was assigned to Gen. Thomas.

The article will continue next month. Ed.

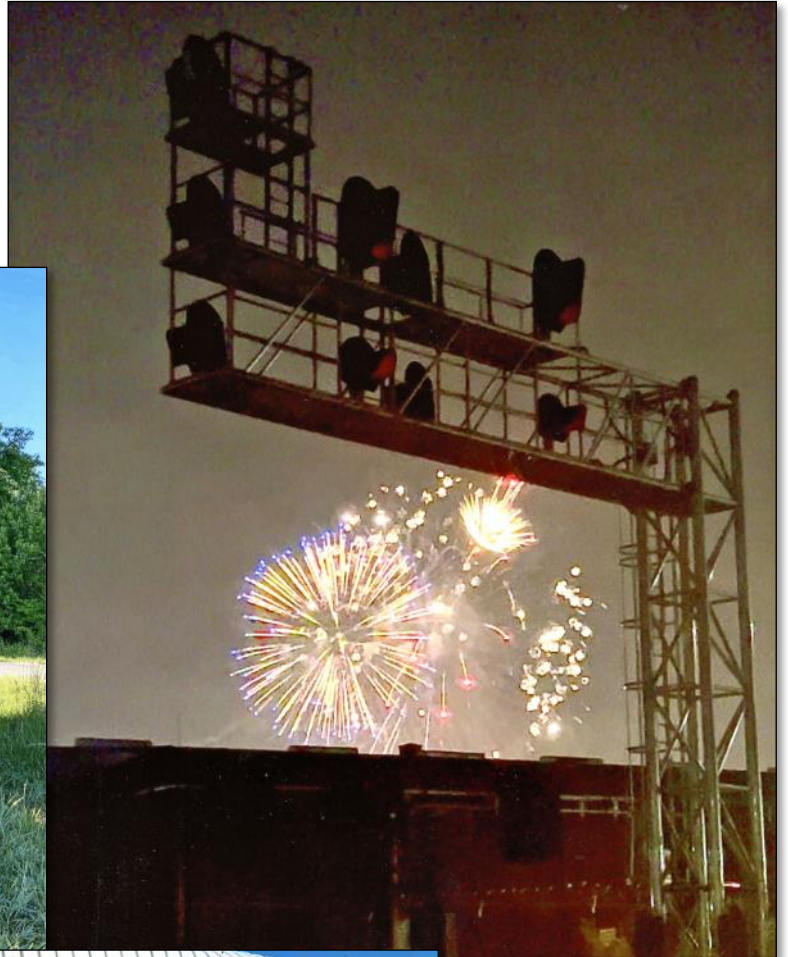
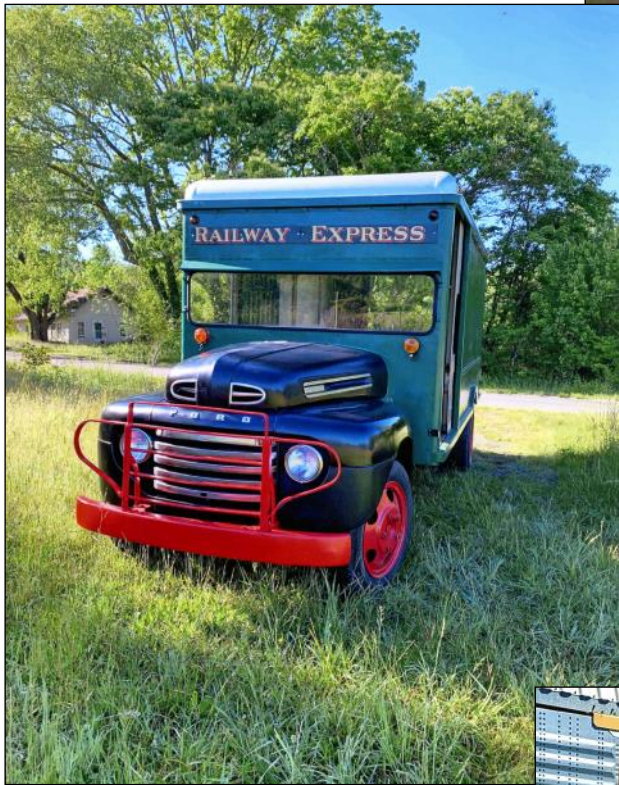
7th Annual Jim Sheppard Photo Contest



Best of Show and 1st Place Steam by Danny Higgins entitled "Smoking!".

Other Category

1st Place
by Brynda Brown
"Waiting in the Rain".



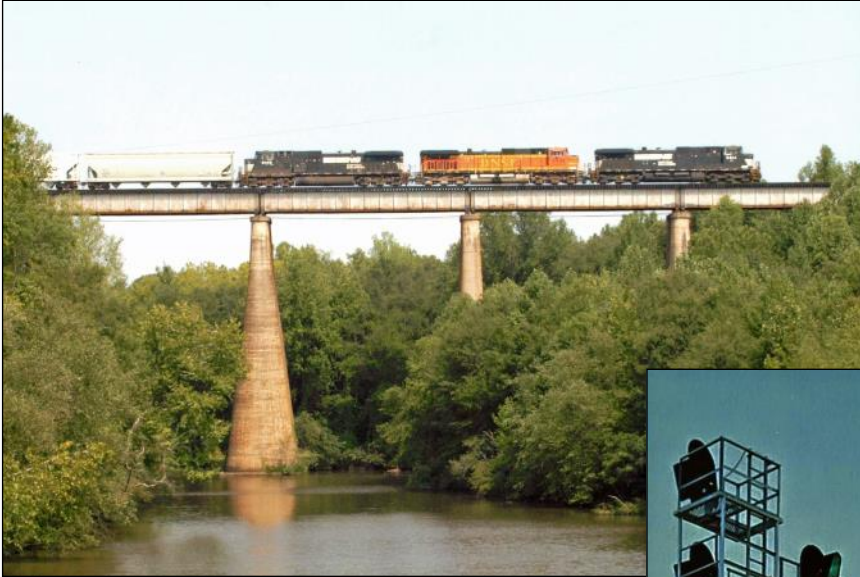
2nd Place
by Aaron Winans
"1948 Lookin' Good".



3rd Place
by Bob Klempner
"Holy Graffiti".

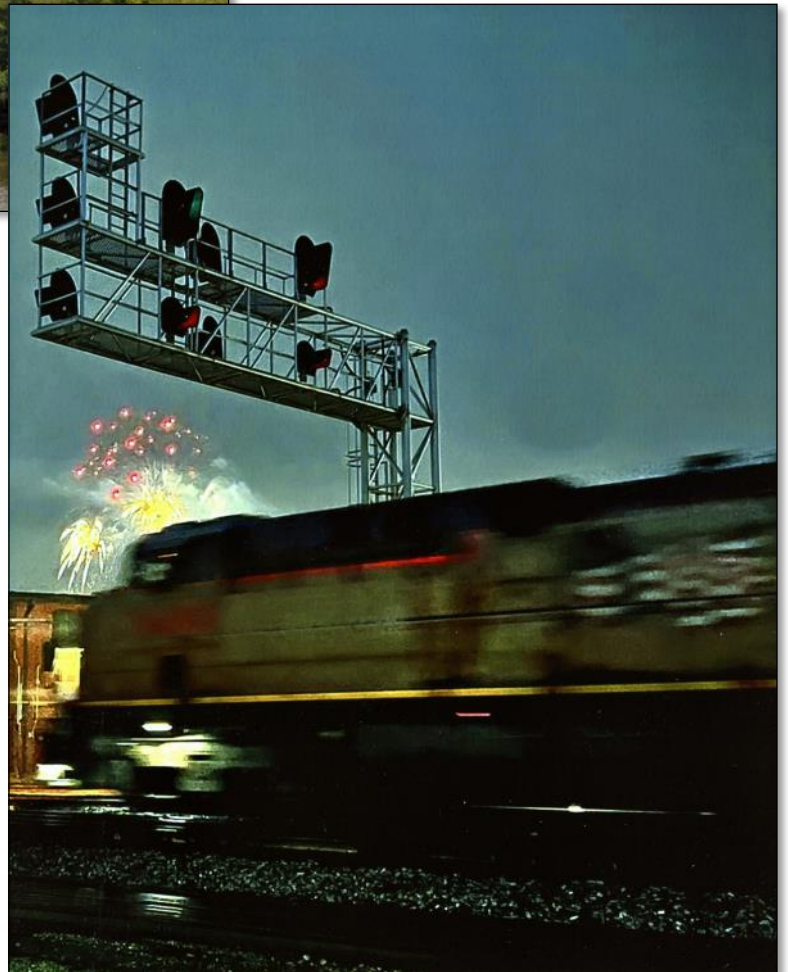
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Diesel Category



1st Place
by Bo Brown
"Let Freedom Ring".

2nd Place
by Steve Baker
"NS Northbound".



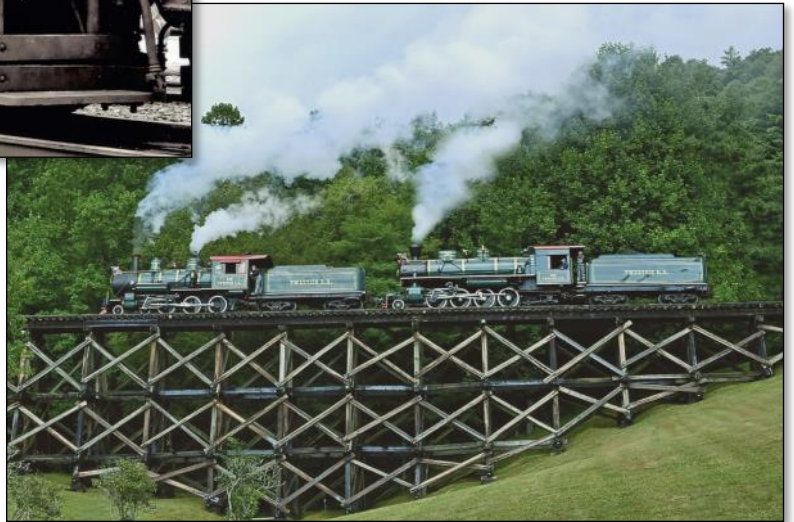
3rd Place
by Brynda Brown
"The Good Old Days".

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Steam Catagory



2nd Place
by Danny Higgins
"Cass #6".



3rd Place
by Bo Brown
"Double Trouble".



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