

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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Spartanburg Amtrak Station

298 Magnolia Street

Spartanburg, SC 29301-2330

Wednesday 10-2 & Saturday 10-2

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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.

Motorcar Saga

GREENVILLE CHAPTER NRHS

FAIRMONT MOTOR CAR #M561

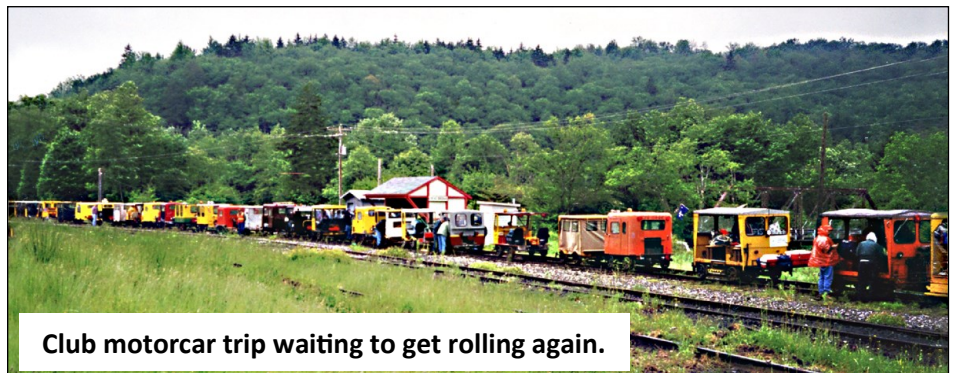
by Mac McMillin

In June 2000, President Dennis Lockwood and member Mac McMillin, of our NRHS chapter, rode the Great Smoky Mountain Railway excursion which our chapter sponsored. At the first photo run by in Whittier, NC, there were numerous motor cars on a siding patiently waiting for our photo run by to be over so they could continue their excursion, which was in the opposite direction of ours.

Later that day when we were on the bus for our return to Dillsboro from Andrews, we encountered the motor cars again as they were returning to their starting point. I casually remarked to Dennis that our chapter should get a motor car.

It would breathe new life into the chapter and open up another dimension of the railfan hobby to our members and potential members. Finding a track to operate on would be an obstacle, but not an insurmountable one. At the time I didn't know what position Dennis would take, but I, as owner of two motor cars, hoped he would take action.

Dennis took a proposal to the chapter, and it was voted to begin the search for a motor car. I volunteered to serve as a consultant and advisor, based on my motor car experience. I put together a short paper explaining the different manufacturers and types of cars available and my opinions of each. Then the search began. What became apparent early was that suitable cars were not easy to find and when found, they



Continued on Page 3 - Motorcar

Museum Happenings



Martin family enjoys lunch on our new picnic table.



Ethan kept us awake for the whole event with his diesel horns. ↑



New photo background for family portraits.



Our musical entertainment for the day. ↑
The food truck offered great lowcal stuff. →



Wanted—Articles for the Carolina Conductor

Submit an article of 200 words or more with some photos and captions and see them in print. Every one of us has some unique railroad experience that would make interesting reading for our membership. Your editor always needs more contributions of railway history and news.

were not cheap. Dennis, Marv, and others chased down some leads, but nothing panned out.

I moved to Seneca in 1996 after 21 years in Columbia. While in Columbia I had been a member of the Central SC Chapter of the NRHS and the South Carolina Railroad Museum, serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for several 3-year terms. When I moved, I transferred my NRHS membership to the Greenville chapter. I resigned from the SCRM Board but retained my membership. I was aware that friend and fellow SCRM member Harold Berzley of Winnsboro, SC, had bought and sold several motor cars over the years. He let the museum use them on their 11.5-mile Rockton, Rion, and Western Railroad.

In the fall of 2000, during one of my Saturday visits to the SCRM, I asked Harold if he knew of any motor cars for sale. He responded that yes, he was considering selling his own Fairmont A4. I reported this back to Dennis, and the rest, as they say, is history. The car our chapter owns was purchased, along with a highway trailer, early in 2001 from Mr. Berzley.

This car is a model A4D1 gang car, manufactured by Fairmont Railway Motors in Fairmont, MN. The date of manufacture is presently unknown, but is estimated to be in the mid-to-late 1960's. The car appears to have been owned by the Duluth, Missabe, and Iron Range Railway in Minnesota, as there is a brass plate affixed to the car stamped with "DM&IR Rwy CO," "MOTOR CARS," "NO. M561," and "DO NOT REMOVE." I also recall seeing a first aid kit mounted on the car with the DM&IR logo stenciled on it. This railroad was owned by one of the large steel corporations and moved vast quantities of iron ore taconite, primarily from the mines to marine freighters for transport on the Great Lakes. Now, for the rest of the story as Paul Harvey would say.

I purchased my first motor car, a Fairmont M19G, in 1991 from an acquaintance in Columbia and thought that it would be the only one I would own. This was not to be.

A church friend's mother had died in Georgia. This friend was also the church pianist and organist. Our pastor decided to drive the church van to the funeral in Winder, GA. and other church members went on the van. The pastor grew up in North Augusta, SC. As we were returning from Winder to I-20, the pastor asked if we minded if he reminisced some about the days of his youth. He said that if we didn't mind,

we would stop in Madison, GA, for lunch at one of our favorite restaurants. We agreed and after lunch, we were traveling down US 278 where we would eventually get back on I-20 to come home. Shortly before entering Greensboro, GA, we passed by what seemed to be a junkyard on the right. I saw, sitting in the weeds, what appeared to be a motor car, or several motor cars. I took a mental note of it and thought no more of it...for a while.

Several weeks later, my wife and I were travelling on I-20 to Atlanta. I remembered the motor cars and asked my wife if she minded if we took a little detour. She said fine and I stopped at the junkyard. There was a building, but no one was around. Sure enough, sitting in the weeds were four, what-appeared-to-be-identical, motor cars. I also found four motor car trailers or push cars. I had no idea what kind of equipment this was, but I knew one thing—I was definitely interested in finding out more about these items. We traveled on to Atlanta and I thought no more of it...for a while.

Several weeks later, in May, 1992, I needed to travel on my employer's business to Chattanooga, TN. I decided to drive. I left real early in the morning with the idea to stop on the way and look at the motor cars again. I arrived at the operation (not junkyard) about 8 AM. I was in luck! Someone was there! I talked to the owner of the operation and found out that this gentleman built logging equipment mostly out of retired other equipment.

I inquired about the motor cars and if they were for sale. The owner told me he had purchased them at an auction in Dublin, GA some time back. He was intending to scrap them out and use the Ford 4-cylinder engines in some logging equipment he was planning to build, but that he had just not gotten around to it.

The owner had already removed the military style towing pintles from the motor cars and push cars. A previous owner had modified the motor cars and push-carts by adding the towing pintles. However, people began stopping to inquire about the motor cars and he began to rethink his intentions. Possibly the motor cars were worth more to him monetarily as they were, rather than partially transformed into logging equipment. He had delayed scrapping them out.

In looking over the cars, I noticed that they were all in pretty rough shape. It was apparent they had been sitting outside in the weather for quite a long time. I never asked the owner when he obtained them,

something I wish now I had asked. A previous owner had welded this hideous lifting means to each car. It consisted of welded pipe with a large plate metal lifting eye welded at the top. Evidently the previous owner used a crane to set the roughly one-ton cars on and off the track. Each car had plenty of dents, rust, and rotted wood. The push cars were in about the same shape. One was missing two wheels, but the axle was there.

Even as I was looking at these pieces of "junk" I envisioned diamonds in the rough. The owner quoted me individual prices for the motor cars and push cars and indicated that he would like to sell the entire lot of eight pieces. He also indicated that he had to be rid of the pieces in about 30 days as they were in the way of something else that was coming in. I knew I had to act and with haste. I got his name and phone number and told him I would call him, and would he please not get rid of anything until he heard from me.

I decided I wanted one motor car and one push car. The problem: I had no idea of the internal condition of the motors, transmissions, and other concealed components. From Chattanooga I called him and told him what I wanted and that I would come soon to examine all the pieces and pick out the two pieces for purchase. He said OK, but that I had better hurry. He was serious about the 30-day situation.

The pressure was on! How could I ever decide which pieces to buy? I surmised that trying to crank up the cars for evaluation was out of the question. The owner had never had the cars running even though he was told they had run shortly before he bought them at the auction. How long ago was that? I can't believe that I never asked him that question.

On that Chattanooga trip I had an epiphany. I would purchase the entire lot if I could negotiate a price I could afford. Then I could take all four motor cars apart with the hope of getting enough good parts to build one good car. There was one more selling job —my wife. I knew she wouldn't take too kindly to me bringing home eight more pieces of junk. She had already made comments about my first motor car, "that piece of junk in the garage" since my wife had never been able to park her car in the garage because of my junk.

Idea! Ask the SCRM Board informally if I could bring the pieces to the museum at Rockton for storage and evaluation. They agreed. Then I thought, what if I can get all the cars running? I won't need but one, so I'll ask around to see if any other SCRM members want a car. Also, I don't want to keep but one push car. No problem - I had three of the push cars sold before I even bought them. Also, I had commitments from

three individuals to buy one car each contingent on my findings. One of the people who wanted one of the motor cars was Harold Berzley.

About a week after returning from Chattanooga, I gave the owner a call. I asked how much would I have to pay him for me to get all eight pieces out of his way by his 30-day deadline? He thought for a moment and quoted me a very attractive price. I said, "Sold!" and that my check would be in the mail. I had saved the motor cars from being scrapped. It felt good.

The problem: How do you load and transport about 10,000 pounds of what appears to be steel scrap, a distance of about 170 miles? I had no idea how to do this within a budget I could afford. Friend and fellow SCRM member Charles Weber volunteered to help me figure out how to move some of this stuff as he wanted to purchase one of the push cars.

One Saturday, Charles and I loaded up my pickup with tools, chains, and a come-along and lit out for Greensboro, GA. I wanted to at least prepare the motor cars for movement by removing their running boards. Also I noticed earlier that people had already pilfered some of the headlights, windshield wipers, grab irons, and other items so I thought that I would remove these remaining items. While we were there, I decided to rent a U-haul trailer and at least move some of the stuff. Charles and I succeeded, with assistance from the owner's son, to load motor car M559 and two push cars on this U-haul trailer. One push car was turned upside down on top of the other one.

This was an adventure. After stopping at a hardware store to buy more chain to improve the tie-down of the pieces, we finally arrived at Rockton about 3:30 PM that Saturday. As soon as we pulled in we were greeted by curious members of the SCRM. We quickly unloaded the two push cars and then unloaded the motor car onto the ground.

Someone said, "Let's get it running!" Another said "I've got a battery you can borrow." Yet another said, "I've got some gasoline we can put in the tank." The points and oil were checked, water was added to the radiator and we tried to crank it up. After a few tries, the engine sputtered to life. I cautiously put the car in gear. It moved forward! I put it in reverse. It backed up! I tried the brakes. They worked!

Then someone said, "Let's put it on the rails!" That's all it took for me to use the come-along to load the car back on the trailer. I left the motor running as I didn't know if we would be able to re-crank it if I shut it down. We drove the truck about two miles over to Estes crossing where we off-loaded the car onto the rails for the first time in who knows how long. I then drove the

car on the railroad the two miles back to Rockton. It ran like a champ. No problems at all. And talk about the acceleration. It had plenty of power. I was ecstatic!

I couldn't wait to go back to Greensboro and bring the rest of my treasure home. Several weeks later Harold Berzley borrowed a tilt-back wrecker from his neighbor Mr. Weed, and Harold's son Bill borrowed a tandem axle trailer from someone and off we three went to Greensboro on a Saturday. We, with assistance from the owner's power line truck, loaded two motor cars and a push car on the tilt-back and one motor car and a push car on the trailer and headed for Rockton.

We were on SC34 at Lebanon about 8 miles from Winnsboro when BANG! A rear tire on the tilt-back blew out. Bill was able to limp into the parking lot of a church. We unhooked the trailer from the tilt back and hooked it to my pickup and took off in search of another tire. We found one fairly easily, dropped off the trailer at Rockton, and headed back out to Lebanon to reclaim the tilt-back and its precious cargo. Harold and Bill unloaded the three motor cars and two push cars and returned the tilt-back and trailer. At last everything was "home."

During the next few Saturdays, I got the other three motor cars running. I decided to keep the first car we moved, the M559. Harold Berzley bought the M561, Joe Palma bought the M557, and Jim Butler bought the M562. I kept the push car with only two wheels as it had originally been equipped with brakes which I wanted to restore.

Howard Shepherd bought the two all-steel push cars and Charles Weber bought the remaining push car. The prices I charged for all the items I sold were simply my costs which included the purchase costs and the transportation costs. I passed over the opportunity to make money on them as I have been repaid many times over by observing the pleasure these items brought to their new owners. Harold Berzley decided to restore his car and paint it blue as the SCRM's colors are blue and white, the same as our state flag.

Joe Palma replaced the rotted wood on his car (he's a good wood worker) but did not repaint it. Jim Butler decided to donate his car to the SCRM. Harold Berzley agreed to restore it. At my request he painted it yellow and silver and affixed two Southern

Railway logos which I supplied. This car honors Jim Butler who retired from Norfolk Southern in the 1980s after a career on the Southern which began in 1946. (Jim passed away in late 2003 at the age of 82.) My car, the M559 is still in pieces where I am in the process of doing a ground-up restoration on it.

So, at one time, three of the four A4 motor cars were parked on the SCRM's rails for use by the museum as they saw fit. Harold Berzley has taken hundreds of members and visitors to ride on the SCRM track over the years using one of these cars. At times all three cars would be coupled together into a train. Only one had to be cranked up as there was enough power to pull or push the other two cars. Howard Shepherd already owned a large 1942 Kalamazoo former US Army car which SCRM uses. He has loaned his two steel push cars to SCRM for their use. Charles Weber donated his push car to the SCRM where it is used as a weed sprayer.

When we got all the motor cars to Rockton, we found in the cars what appeared to be left over pieces of orange plastic pipe of the type which is buried and then houses fiber optic cable. We also found numerous aluminum signs warning people of a buried fiber optic cable and to not dig in the area until they had called an 800 number. Joe Palma's car had a sticker on the windshield that said "Coastal Plains Inc."

Could these cars and push cars have been used by a contractor in Georgia by this name to lay fiber optic cable along railroad tracks? Did Coastal Plains add the hideous lifting means and the towing pintles? Did Coastal Plains purchase the cars direct from the DM&IR when they decided to retire them? Did the gentleman in Greensboro, GA, purchase these cars at auction from Coastal Plains when they had completed the contract? We may never know the answers to these questions.

One thing we do know is that ex-DM&IR Fairmont A4D1 Motor Car No. M561 is now in Greenville, SC, by way of Dublin and Greensboro, GA, and Rockton and Winnsboro, SC. May this motor car once again roam the tracks, this time in the Greenville area.

Now you know the REST of the story!

Mac McMillin

June 15, 2001 Revised February 3, 2004 

Continued on Page 6 - *Motorcar*

Motorcar Specs

FAIRMONT MOTOR CAR # MC 7401 CD (ex 3448)

Former Owners: Joe N. Stribling, Walter Ockoskis, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Southern Railway System
Date built: Estimated to be 1950's
Built by: Fairmont Railway Motors, Inc., Fairmont, Minnesota
Model: M9G Inspection Car. The nameplate is missing but the car is believed to be a model G.
Engine: Single cylinder two-cycle type R-OC. Gasoline and oil must be mixed, ³/₄ pint of SAE 30 oil per gallon of gasoline. 5 to 9 horsepower.
Drive: Direct belt from engine pulley to pulley on rear axle. Clutch is third idler pulley on lever.
Speed: At least 25 MPH with relative ease, possibly higher. Is called a "Track Speeder."
Electrical system: 12-volt battery and alternator with built-in voltage regulator.
Ignition: Spark produced by "buzz-box" coil similar to Ford Model T.

Reversing: Engine runs equally well in either direction. Crank engine with crank, or by pushing car, in the direction desired after resetting timing lever

Controls: Throttle, ignition switch, ignition timing, choke, fuel mixture, belt (clutch), brakes, windshield wipers, headlight and tail lights, strobe light, warning bell. All controls are hand operated.

Engine cooling: Water hopper with condenser. Cooled by convection; no water pump.

Suspension system: Small coil springs between frame and axle bearing boxes.

Capacity: 1 or 2 persons, in folding-back chairs.

Used for: Inspection of track, signals, and other right-of-way structures.

Weight: Approximately 750 pounds.

Handling: Extension lift handles allow car to be set on and off track by two persons. Factory options: roof, windshield and wipers, headlight and tail lights, alternator. Railroad added items: amber strobe light, folding-back chairs, radio and antenna.

NARCOA (North American Rail Car Operators Association) added items: electric

bell, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, front and rear hitches, tow bar. Current Owner: Greenville Chapter, NRHS. Donated 2004 by Lyn Stribling, widow of Joe N. Stribling of Seneca, SC. Joe purchased motor car from Walter Ockoskis in Columbia, SC, in 1990's who purchased it in 1980's from Southern Roadway Shop in Charlotte, NC. ✓

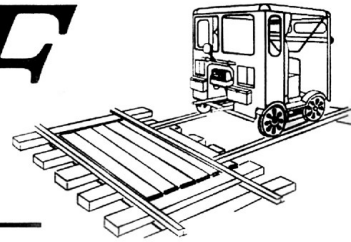


Jim Hopkins at the controls of the club's crew car on the Hartwell Railroad.

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The **SETOFF**

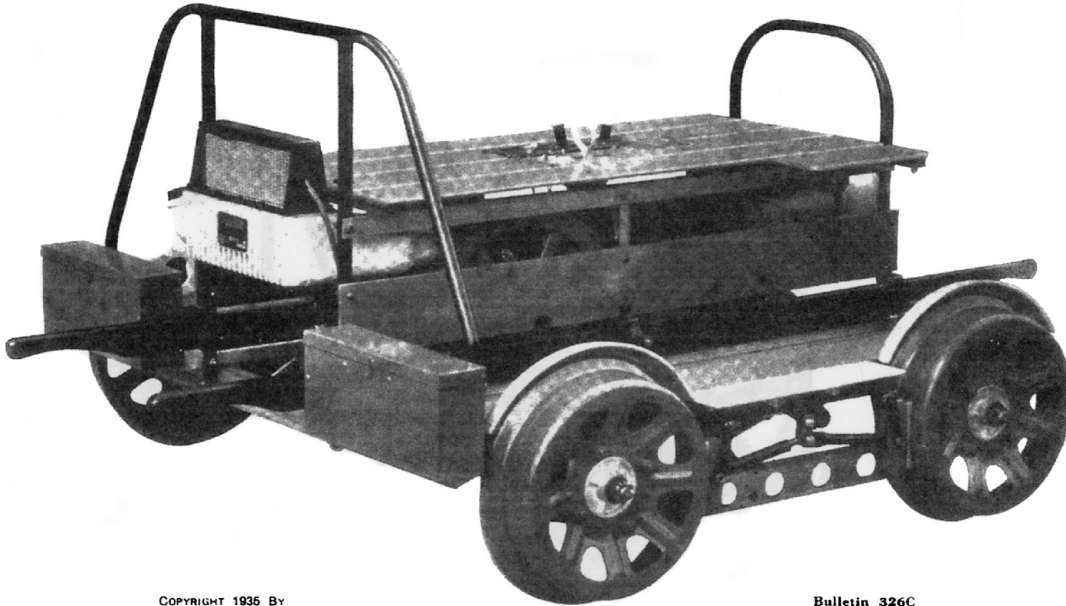
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN
RAILCAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (NARCOA)



The Fairmont M19 (Series "D")

One to Four Man Inspection Car

Aluminum Alloy Frame—Spring Mounted—8 H.P.



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FAIRMONT RAILWAY MOTORS, INC.
FAIRMONT, MINN.

Bulletin 326C
M19 Car
Series D

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Bulletin 526C
M19 Car
Series D

Performance
ON THE JOB
COUNTS

The M19, for Comfort, Capacity, Lightness

DIMENSIONS Over all length 85"; width 63½" Height (above rail) to top of safety rail 39½" seat 26½", deck 10½". Seat inside railing 50½"x23"; driver's projection 12½"x4". Battery and tool boxes, inside, 15½"x23½".

Two trays each, 54½"x14½" inside, depth 7½" front, 10" on seat side, at outer side 2½" between 7½" wheel guards, rear end 2½".

WHEEL BASE 36".

TRACK GAUGE 56½" standard; other gauges (36" and up) special.

WEIGHT Whole car 535 lbs.: front lift 151 lbs.; lift at rear end most carried and swung in setoffs, only 96 lbs.

CAPACITY AND SPEED Up to 28 miles per hour, net load including men, 750 lbs.

TOOL KIT (Standard equipment) Oil can; screw driver; pliers; hammer; con. rod, con. wheel, 4 end wrenches; instruction book.

COLOR AND MARKINGS Woodwork two coats A.R.E.A. medium chrome yellow. Railings and wheels black. Brake rigging, condenser, tray rear ends, all aluminum parts aluminum. Engine red. Other colors if ordered. Railroad initials on car when requested. Brief directions, car serial numbers on etched aluminum plates.

CODE WORD Standard M19 Series D car, Dmstr.

HOW TO ORDER Specify M19 Series D car. For extra equipment (pages 10, 11) give symbol and it will be applied to car at this factory without labor charge above price of equipment.

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Fairmont

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A3, A5, A6 (4 or 3 Speeds Reverse), S12 (2-Speed)

Shapers, Ballast Cleaners
Ballast Drainage Cars

M25 Light, M23 5-ton, scarifies rock, discs gravel, blades both.

Mowers, Weed Burners

Extinguisher Cars

Power Cars: Air, Electric, Paint Spray

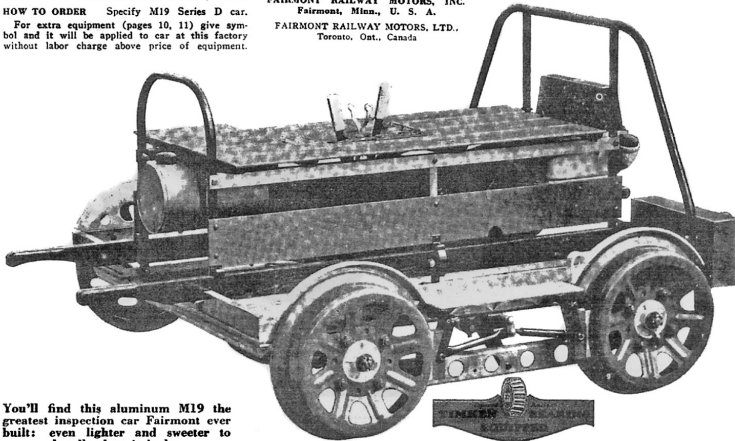
Motor Car Engines

Push Cars and Trailers

Roller Axle Bearings

Wheels and Axles

FAIRMONT RAILWAY MOTORS, INC.
Fairmont, Minn., U. S. A.
FAIRMONT RAILWAY MOTORS, LTD.
Toronto, Ont., Canada



You'll find this aluminum M19 the greatest inspection car Fairmont ever built: even lighter and sweeter to handle than it looks.

Fairmont

FROM THE JACK HOOVER COLLECTION

Fairmont Railway Motors, Inc., reserves the right to make changes in specifications or prices without incurring obligation to have same apply on equipment previously sold.



Motorcars displayed on Train Day.



CHECK OUT THE CRHA:
WWW.HUBCITYRRMUSEUM.ORG/CAROLINA-RAILROAD-HERITAGE-ASSOCIATION
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/CRHA/NC/



CHECK OUT THE HCRRM:
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