

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

Facebook: Carolina Railroad Heritage Association & Hub City RR Museum

Meeting Site:

Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church

307 North Main Street

Fountain Inn, SC 29644

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

**Hub City Railroad Museum and
SOU Rwy Caboose #X3115:**

Spartanburg Amtrak Station

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Wednesday 10-2 & Saturday 10-2

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Articles can be submitted anytime.

Southern Railway Passenger Trains

This continues the article on Southern Railway named passenger trains. Ed.

Crescent (continued)

Southbound, early evening departures from Washington, which had left New York in mid-afternoon, ran



Washington Union Station was Southern Crescent's stopping point in our nations capitol.

all-Pullman from Washington and arrived the next morning in Atlanta. Although the train carried coach cars, and made more stops, between Atlanta and New Orleans, it arrived in the early evening in the Crescent City to connect with the Sunset Limited for Texas and California.

The Crescent sometimes exchanged a through sleeper with the Sunset, creating a transcontinental Pullman service in which a passenger's sleeping accommodation

ran from New York City (or Washington) all the way to Los Angeles.

As passenger service dwindled, the northbound Crescent was combined with the Peach Queen, with through Atlanta to New York coaches. The southbound Crescent was combined with the Asheville Special and the Augusta Special, with through New York to Charlotte coaches. It also carried "deadhead" coaches to Atlanta for the return north on the Crescent.

In 1970, Southern's railway part-



New Orleans Terminal was the Crescent's southern end point.

ners sought to discontinue passenger services, Southern Railway merged its two remaining New York to New Orleans sleepers, the original *Crescent* and the *Southerner*, as

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Museum Happenings

The crew is working hard installing the electronics below the desk in the caboose. →

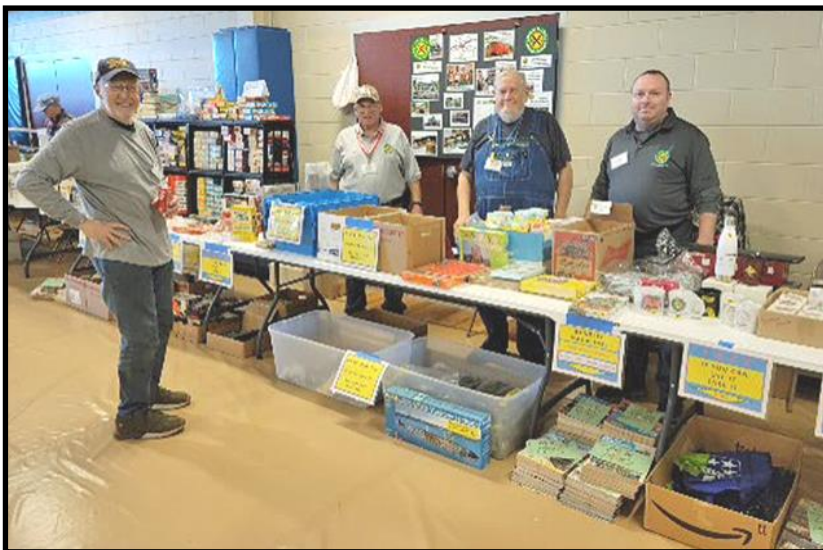
Engineer “Henev” takes his last ride on a modern mode of transportation - not the “Best Friend of Charleston.” ↓



The crew installs the plastic → shield around the HO layout in the caboose. It took 3 tries.



Bo Brown presented a great program on Southern Railway china. →



↑ The Easley Train Show was a great success. Many items were sold with the money raised used to support the museum.

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.

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the *Southern Crescent*. The two trains had shared the same route from New York to Atlanta, but diverged



Atlanta Terminal Station in 1908.

between Atlanta and New Orleans. The *Crescent* took a coastal route over Atlanta and West Point Railroad, Western Railway of Alabama and Louisville and Nashville Railroad trackage between New Orleans and Atlanta, via Mobile and Montgomery.

The *Southerner* stayed inland to run exclusively on Southern Railway trackage through Birmingham. For the combined *Southern Crescent*, Southern moved the train to the Birmingham route instead of the Mobile route. Although the Birmingham route was slightly less direct than the more coastal Mobile/Montgomery route, it afforded Southern the dispatch reliability of moving the train exclusively over its own right of way between Washington to New Orleans and allowed Southern to maintain its passenger service standards. The train was numbered 1 southbound and 2 northbound. Penn Central carried the *Southern Crescent* between Washington and New York along the Northeast Corridor, inheriting the longstanding haulage agreement from the Pennsylvania Railroad.

For most of the 1970s, the *Crescent* was supplemented by the *Piedmont Limited*, a former New York-New Orleans train that had been cut back to a regional Atlanta to Washington (later Charlotte to Washington and Salisbury to Washington) service running along the middle leg of the *Southern Crescent* route.

Meanwhile, the A&WP, Western of Alabama, and L&N continued to run the *Crescent* between Atlanta and New Orleans. Each morning, the *Crescent* and the *Southern Crescent* departed Atlanta for New Orleans over different routes. After November 1968, the *Crescent* was a coach-only train sustained by two storage mail cars. With the discontinuance of the *Humming Bird* on January 9, 1969, it was run combined with the *Pan-American* south of Montgomery, leaving Atlanta at 7:15 p.m. on the old *Piedmont Limited* schedule. In 1970, with the mail contract cancelled, the *Crescent* was discontinued.

Southern Railway, a predecessor of Norfolk Southern, initially opted out of Amtrak in 1971. After May 1, 1971, Amtrak inherited most of Penn Central's passenger services, including the haulage agreement for the *Southern Crescent*. For a portion of the mid-1970s, Southern only operated tri-weekly between Atlanta

and New Orleans, and carried a run-through Amtrak 10-6 sleeper on those days to connect to the *Sunset Limited*. On occasion, when Southern deemed an Amtrak car to be short of Southern standards, it substituted a Southern sleeper in the consist. Also, one of the two dome coaches in the Southern car fleet was added for the leg south of Atlanta.

The *Southern Crescent* was one of the two last privately operated long-distance passenger services in the United States, the other being the *Rio Grande Zephyr*. However,



Southern Crescent in the early 1970s going through Birmingham.

mounting revenue losses and equipment-replacement expenses forced Southern Railway to leave the passenger business and turn over full operation of the train to Amtrak on February 1, 1979. Amtrak simplified the name to the *Crescent*, renumbering it 19 southbound and 20 northbound, although for several years the Southern assigned it operating numbers 819 and 820.

In its present-day form, the southbound *Crescent* leaves New York in mid-afternoon and Washington in the early evening, passing through the Carolinas overnight for arrival at breakfast time in Atlanta, lunchtime in Birmingham, and early evening at New Orleans. North-

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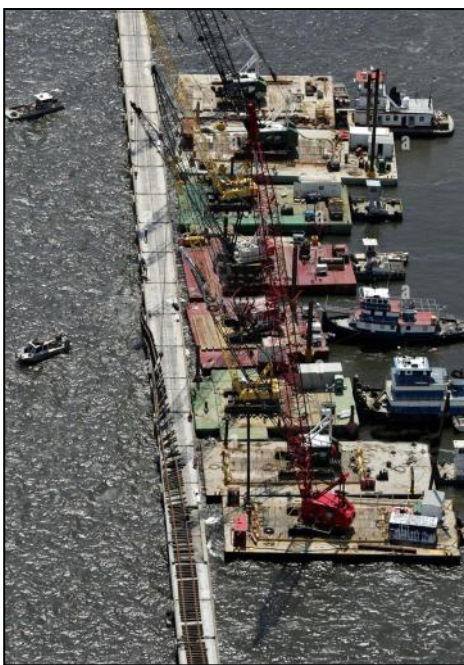
bound trains leave New Orleans at breakfast time, passing through



Early Amtrak version of the *Crescent*.

Atlanta at dinner time and the Carolinas overnight for arrival at the end of rush hour the following day in Washington, lunchtime in Philadelphia and early afternoon in New York.

When Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in August 2005, the *Crescent* was temporarily truncated to Atlanta. Service was restored first as far as Meridian, Mississippi, while Norfolk Southern crews worked to repair the damage to their lines serving the Gulf



Hurricane Katrin damage being repaired.

Coast. Amtrak restored service to New Orleans on October 9, 2005, with the northbound *Crescent's* 7:05 a.m. departure; the first southbound arrival occurred later in the day.

During the summer of 2017, the train terminated at Washington instead of New York City due to track work going into New York. Starting October 1, 2019, traditional dining car services were removed and replaced with a reduced menu of "Flexible Dining" options. As a result, the changes to the consist of the train will have the dining car serve as a lounge car for the exclusive use by sleeping car passengers. The tracks used were once part of the Pennsylvania Railroad; Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad; Southern Railway and North Carolina Railroad systems; they are now owned by Amtrak, CSX Transportation, and Norfolk Southern Railway, respectively.

Fast Mail

The *Fast Mail* was a Southern Railway mail and express train that operated between Washington and New Orleans. The southbound *Fast Mail* carried the train number of 97 and was later known by the nickname of "Old 97". One such trip made by the train, on September 27, 1903, derailed at Stillhouse Trestle in Danville, Virginia, and was later known as the "Wreck of the Old 97", which the service was most well known for.

The train's normal consist was two railway post office (RPO) cars, one express car, and one baggage car. It was the first

exclusively mail and express train in the southern United States, and it was the last fast mail train in the United States to receive a subsidy for its fast service schedule.

The Railway Mail Service was established in the United States in the late 1860s, following the successful introduction of a dedicated railway post office (RPO) car on the C & N W Railway between Chicago and Clinton in 1864. As service improved and railroads were able to operate at faster speeds through the latter part of the 19th century, *Fast Mail* trains were introduced across the country beginning in 1875 on the New York Central Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad. A decade later, the Post Office Department hailed the importance of fast mail service saying in an 1884 report to congress: "The establishment of this fast mail system is a vast improvement over the old service on slow passenger trains that were subject to frequent delays and failures to connect. The mails are now carried on special mail trains that have the right of way over all others and are rarely behind time."

Their high speed service captured the attention of the country and also became the subjects of experiments in high-speed photography, such as by Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad's official photographer Allen Green and his series of photographs of Burlington's *Fast Mail* trains. Fast mail trains, which often included a rider coach for the post office crew, were known to be a faster passenger ride, albeit often at a higher fare, than the railroad companies'

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premiere passenger trains.

Southern had been successfully operating fast mail service over its tracks since the 19th century, with one report in 1899 noting that Southern's service between New York and Atlanta was an average of 0.41 miles per hour faster than the fastest similar service operated by New York Central between New

Orleans after 33 hours. On its southbound run, train 97 normally carried no passengers other than the train and mail crews. The Pennsylvania Railroad operated the train between New York City and Washington, where it was handed off to Southern Railway. Southern Pacific Railroad also collaborated with a



Kansas City—Florida Special

service between Kansas City and the East Coast of Florida with convenient one-change connections at Kansas City and Pacific Coast points. This popular through train has modern roomette and bedroom sleeping cars between Kansas City and Miami, double bedroom and compartment sleeping cars and luxury reclining-seat coaches between Kansas City, Birmingham, Atlanta, and Jacksonville - lounge and dining car facilities." The service to Miami required a transfer in Jacksonville.

The train was inaugurated on November 26, 1911. Sleeping cars were dropped from the train by the train's last year of operation and service was terminated in 1964. The Frisco's *Sunnyland* ran parallel with

KANSAS CITY FLORIDA Special

Reaches MIAMI at Midday

Lv. Kansas City	.....(Frisco Lines)	11:00 PM
Lv. Memphis	.....(So. Ry. System)	1:00 AM
Lv. Birmingham	.....(So. Ry. System)	2:00 AM
Lv. Jacksonville	.....(So. Ry. System)	3:00 AM
Lv. Atlanta	.....(So. Ry. System)	4:00 AM
Lv. New Palm Beach	.....(F. C. Ry.)	5:00 AM
Lv. Miami	.....(F. C. Ry.)	12:00 PM
Lv. New Palm Beach	.....(F. C. Ry.)	1:00 PM
Lv. Jacksonville	.....(So. Ry. System)	2:00 PM
Lv. Atlanta	.....(So. Ry. System)	3:00 PM
Lv. Birmingham	.....(So. Ry. System)	4:00 PM
Lv. Memphis	.....(Frisco Lines)	5:00 PM
Ar. Kansas City	.....(Frisco Lines)	11:00 AM

NOTE—Kansas City-Florida Special operates southbound via Valdosta and northbound via Tampa.

Through Sleeping Cars between Kansas City and Miami, Kansas City and Jacksonville, and Birmingham and Jacksonville • Lounge Car Service available between Kansas City and Miami • Dining Cars Serving All Meals • Chair Cars or Coaches • All Cars Air-Conditioned

LEAVE WINTER BEHIND

Greet summer at its best

The SUNNYLAND

Through Air-Conditioned Sleeping Car Between Memphis and Atlanta

Lv. Kansas City	.....(Frisco Lines)	8:00 AM
Lv. Atlanta	.....(So. Ry. System)	1:00 PM
Lv. Memphis	.....(Frisco Lines)	11:00 PM
Ar. Memphis	.....(Frisco Lines)	6:00 AM
Ar. Atlanta	.....(So. Ry. System)	11:00 AM
Ar. Kansas City	.....(Frisco Lines)	8:00 PM

Air-Conditioned Dining Car and Coaches



The Southern Railway *Fast Main* was mostly head end equipment.

York and Chicago. As Southern Railway and the Post Office Department studied the service, local civic and government leaders along the route provided endorsements hoping to see a better funded fast mail service. Another Southern Railway southbound *Fast Mail* train, number 35 which was scheduled to depart Washington at 11:15 am, had already been providing connecting passenger service from Philadelphia beginning in 1901. A 1901 Senate report recommended that a portion of the Post Office Department's appropriations should be used as "special facility pay" to fund a dedicated fast mail service on the Southern Railway.

Southern Railway inaugurated its dedicated *Fast Mail* service on November 2, 1902, with its first run to Atlanta done in a record 22 hours, and the train maintained its record-setting pace arriving in New

connection in New Orleans on its own fast mail trains westward into Texas.

Kansas City—Florida Special

The *Kansas City—Florida Special* was a pooled night train and the premier train of the Frisco Railroad and the Southern Railway. Operating from Kansas City, Missouri to Jacksonville. It was unique as the only long distance passenger train to traverse the Mississippi River south of St. Louis and north of New Orleans.

Additionally, it contrasted with trains of the Illinois Central Railroad and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad which offered Great Lakes Midwest to Florida service, and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and Seaboard Coast Line Railroad which offered New York to Florida service. A running advertisement read, "Only the *Kansas City—Florida Special* offers through train



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this route, as a local train from Memphis to Atlanta.

Peach Queen

One of the Southern Railway's most elegantly named passenger trains was, ironically enough, only utilitarian in nature. The *Peach Queen* served the Washington, D.C. to Atlanta market as a secondary run behind the premier *Southerner*, one of the railroad's top three trains and an early streamliner candidate.

The *Queen* was a late entry onto

class accommodations, a nod to the Southern's stance of not allowing its services to slip through the very end.

The *Peach Queen* made its first run on August 31, 1947. The train had previously only been known by its numbers on Southern's timetable, unceremoniously working as a secondary and less-expensive alternative to the *Southerner* between Washington and Atlanta. It also offered available through service to Birmingham, New Orleans, and New York (via the Pennsylvania

The designation of the *Peach Queen* was an attempt to grow patronage and give the train a more graceful name. The August 28, 1947, edition of Lexington, NC *The Dispatch* provides a fine overview of the *Queen* and how it was born. The paper describes the new train with the following: "*Beginning on September 1, Trains 29 and 30 will be known as 'The Peach Queen' and the swap of numbers was made to get a closer sequence in the number since a decision was reached to bestow the permanent name. Recognition was given the fact that during the peach season it has become a custom in upper South Carolina, around Spartanburg, to provide peaches to be served free to passengers in dining cars on these trains. No. 29, southbound, passes here in the early morning. The Southern now hauls great quantities of peaches from orchards along its lines from June until September and the two popular trains are being named in recognition of the fruit sections through which it passes in the Piedmont south.*"

The *Peach Queen* always maintained a consist of heavyweight equipment although it occasionally ran with some rebuilt cars with subtle streamlining; normally this included a diner, reclining seat coaches, and through sleepers (New York-New Orleans, although later only went as far south as Atlanta).

Despite the train's late start, it was steam powered for a short while before the arrival of diesels, usually in the form of breathtaking Class Ps4 Pacific or handsome Class Ts Mountain (both of which were clad in stylish Virginia Green with gold trim).



The utilitarian Peach Queen many times ran with a mixture of road and switcher units for power as seen in this photo. It would deliver serviced locomotives.

the company's timetable created after World War II from a previously unnamed consist to honor the southern region in which it operated.

It managed to remain within the fleet until the start of Amtrak, which took over intercity rail services during the spring of 1971. At that time, the train still offered first

Railroad). This was the age of Southern's streamliners.

The railroad was finally convinced during the 1940s to upgrade its top trains with sleek, lightweight equipment from Pullman-Standard and the Budd Company after seeing the successes it wrought on other lines like the Louisville & Nashville and Atlantic Coast Line.

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As rail patronage waned during the postwar era the ever-financially conservative Southern began cutting back its passenger fleet. The *Queen* lost through connections beyond Atlanta after July 5, 1958, and the northbound #30 was canceled entirely after December 26, 1964 (combined with the *Crescent*). It continued offering first-class accommodations (sleepers, a diner, and reclining seat coaches) until the Southern canceled the train entirely after February 1, 1970, at which time the Piedmont replaced it.

Pelican

The *Pelican* was a named train of the Southern Railway which ran from New York City to New Orleans and back until 1970. *The Pelican* departed New York's Pennsylvania Station going south via the Pennsylvania Railroad to Washington then on Southern's line to Lynchburg then to Bristol via the Norfolk and Western Railway with a major stop in Roanoke and several stops toward Bristol. From Bristol to New Orleans, the *Pelican* ran on Southern's line with major station stops in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Birmingham, and Meridian. South of Birmingham it made more local stops than other Southern Railway trains on the Birmingham to New Orleans route, such as the *Southerner*.

In 1957, *The Pelican* carried: a New York to New Orleans 10-roomette-6-double-bedroom sleeping car, a New York to Knoxville 10-roomette-6-double-bedroom car, a Washington to Shreveport 8-section-5-double-bedroom car (handled by IC Railroad between Meridian and Shreve-

port), a New York to Knoxville 10-roomette-6-double-bedroom car, a New York to Bristol 10-roomette-6-double-bedroom car, a Washington to Williamson 10-roomette-6-double-bedroom car (handled by N&W Railway's *The Cavalier*) between Roanoke and Williamson, a Petersburg to Bristol 10-section-1-compartment-2-double-bedroom car (handled by N&W Railway's *The Cavalier* between Petersburg and Roanoke, a Roanoke

to Birmingham dining car, and Washington to New Orleans coaches.

Into the 1950s, the train carried through sleeping cars which would split from the main route at Meridian and continue on the Illinois Central Railroad's *Southwestern Limited* into central Mississippi and central Louisiana to Shreveport. Timetables referred to section, compartment and drawing room accommodations carrying from New York to

"The Southern Railway named a train after me!"

'THE PELICAN!'
(Trains Nos. 41 and 42)

Between
NEW YORK and NEW ORLEANS

Via Pennsylvania to Washington, Southern to Lynchburg, Norfolk and Western to Bristol, thence over Southern to New Orleans Via Knoxville, Chattanooga, Birmingham and Meridian.

Coming Soon - Diesel-power over Southern ... and faster, more convenient schedules.

For schedules and other information, call Southern Railway passenger representatives.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM

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Shreveport.

O. Winston Link recorded the eastbound *Pelican* arriving in Rural Retreat, VA December 24, 1957. The recording is noted as being one of the last recordings of a Norfolk and Western Class J locomotive as well as the chimes from the nearby church. The actual details are all steam power was discontinued on the Bristol Line (Radford to Bristol) after December 31, 1957. The Class J locomotives continued in passenger service on other divisions until April 1959. With passenger traffic declining, the *Pelican* was combined with the *Birmingham Special* in 1970.

Piedmont Limited

The *Piedmont Limited* was a named passenger train operated by the Southern Railway in the southern United States. For most of its life it was a New York to New Orleans train, operating over the same route as the more famous *Crescent Limited*. The Southern Railway introduced the train on March 12, 1899, and it was known as the crack train of the route until the introduction of the *Crescent* in 1925. The Southern Railway discon-

tinued the *Piedmont Limited* in 1967.

In its prime the *Piedmont Limited* operated over the following roads: Pennsylvania Railroad: New York to Washington, Southern Railway: Washington to Atlanta, West Point Route: Atlanta to Montgomery, Louisville and Nashville Railroad: Montgomery to New Orleans. Major cities served, aside from the above cited cities, the train served Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Greensboro, Charlotte, Spartanburg, Greenville, Gainesville, Mobile and Gulfport.

A spur branch served Birmingham, but this was eliminated by 1964. Amid the post-war decline in passenger rail service, the train was eliminated in 1967. Beginning in 1970 the *Piedmont* train served as an Atlanta to Washington daytime service, supplementing the then-*Southern Crescent* along its middle leg. In 1975, its southern terminus was truncated to Charlotte. This train was discontinued in 1976. ✓



Southern Railway Ps-4 Pacific pulling the Piedmont Limited between Washington and Atlanta.



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