

JOURNAL OF THE CSXT® HISTORICAL SOCIETY

____ Volume 2 Number 1 ____



CSXTHS 2013 CONVENTION

CSXTHS is not affiliated with CSX Transportation® and is a nonprofit corporation chartered under the laws of Kentucky.
CSX Transportation ® and its logos are used here with the written permission of CSX Transportation. ®

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The CSXTHS 2013 Convention was a success in that we were able to visit all the sites scheduled and encountered a number of CSXT trains. Both TTI Railroad and R J Corman Central Kentucky Lines were excellent hosts and took the time to walk us through their yards. CSXT Corbin was gracious to provide an escorted tour for us to view and photograph their locomotive service area. The visit to the CSXTHS Corbin locomotive service area was only finalized the day before our visit. Hopefully all saw a part of CSXT operations that they had never seen before.

The 2014 CSXTHS Convention will be headquartered in Pikeville, Kentucky, from Friday, June 6 to Sunday, June 8. We will explore the CSXT Line, ex Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, from Pikeville to Elkhorn City, Kentucky, and the CSXT Line, ex Clinchfield Railroad, from Elkhorn City to Johnson City, Tennessee. The rail tour leader will be Everett Young. The coal industry in the Big Sandy Valley has come upon hard times with many mines closing during 2013. This may be a last chance to see what was once one of the premiere money generating subdivisions of CSXT.

A member sent me an e-mail stating that those railfanning CSXT track might want to consider the Hawkins Motel at Baldwin, Florida. This motel is said to be conveniently located to the CSXT diamond.

One of the items we would like to add to our CSXTHS web site are directions for exploring a particular CSXT rail line. We should soon be posting such directions for railfanning CSXT's C-C Line from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Corbin, Kentucky. If you would like to author driving instructions for rail fanning a particular CSXT rail line, we would be more than happy to post it to our web site.

We are always looking for articles and photo essays to publish in the CSXTHS Journal or on the web. Remember, the Journal and web site can only function with membership support.

COVER PHOTO

CSXTHS members during the 2013 convention were treated to a ride on the turntable at TransKentucky Transportation Incorporated Yard, at Paris, Kentucky. TTI is a subsidiary of CSXT. TTI #5911, a GE B36-7, is ex CSXT #5911, ex SBD #5911.

CSXTHS 2013 CONVENTION

The 2013 CSXTHS Convention was held from Friday, June 7 to Sunday, June 9. The Convention was headquartered out of the Winchester, Kentucky, Holiday Inn.

After gathering in the lobby of the Holiday Inn at 11:30 AM on Friday, we shoved off at noon for Paris, Kentucky, to visit the joint CSXT and TransKentucky Transportation Inc. (TTI) Yard. This former Louisville & Nashville Railroad (L&N) Yard is used by TTI to receive coal from CSXT for transportation to a barge load out at Maysville, Kentucky. The coal is transported by barge to power plants on the Ohio side of the Ohio River. We were escorted through the TTI Yard by Mr. Russell Rogers, President of TTI. High points of our visit were a tour of the 1910 L&N roundhouse, still used by TTI, a visit to TTI's private business car, caboose TTI #253, and a ride on their turntable with locomotive TTI #5911, a GE B36-7. Except for one locomotive of Reading heritage, all of TTI's motor power is ex CSXT. Interestingly, four different TTI paint schemes were visible on locomotives sitting in the yard. TTI is owned by CSXT who operates it as a non-union short line. While at the TTI yard, locomotive TTI #5884, a GE B36-7, re-entered the yard after delivering a car of fertilizer to a customer at Carlisle, Kentucky. TTI provides on demand service for its on-line customers. Within the yard, they offer trans-loading from covered hoppers to trucks and operate a warehouse for the storage of goods in transportation.



The TTI roundhouse at their Paris, Kentucky Yard. Was built in 1910 by the L&N



TTI #5807, ex CSXT #5807, and ex CSXT #5832, both GE B36-7s, sit in the TTI spare part line.



TTI #253 serves as the line's business car. To the rear of her are TTI #5819 and #5802, both GE B36-7s.

From TTI's Yard, we drove south to Lexington, Kentucky, to visit R J Corman's Central Kentucky Railroad Yard. Corman acquired the CSXT line from Winchester to Anchorage, Kentucky, in 2003. During our drive to the yard, we passed under two railroad overpasses, one ex L&N and the other ex-Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, painted in red and emblazoned with white lettering reading "R J Corman." This ex CSXT Yard was formerly operated by L&N. Denied permission by the city of Lexington to put up a sign at the Yard advertising his railyard, Mr. Corman opted to put in a rail line at the entrance to the yard and to permanently park two locomotives here, RJCC #2011 and RJCC #2012, and two cabooses painted in Corman red and sporting "R J Corman" in white lettering.

Our tour of the R J Corman Yard included viewing Corman's two Green Power locomotives: Railpower #1701, a battery powered GG20B, and Railpower #2012, a Genset. We were told that #1701 may be re-engineered in 2014 as a Genset. We were also given a tour of the locomotive repair facility and were able to observe, from a distance, the turning of one of the wheels on RJCC #8799, an EMD SD40-2. The cutter head removed long thin strips of metal from the rotating wheel as the wheel's optional rail configuration was restored. We were also able to view one of the two passenger cars being converted for a proposed Corman dinner train between Lexington and Versailles, Kentucky. Said service was reported to start in 2014. New in the Corman Yard was an SW1200 switcher that had just been painted Corman red and given reporting marks RJCC #1203; its former reporting marks were MVPB #1203. Our last act was to visit the R J Corman 1986 built Chinese 2-10-2 steam locomotive along with its business car, which is housed in a specially built all glass display building near Rupp Arena. It should be noted that since 2012 many of the senior positions within the R J Corman Rail Group family are held by former CSXT employees.



R J Corman Rail Power Technology Genset #1701 at Lexington Yard



During our visit to the locomotive repair facility, we were able to observe a locomotive's wheel being cut to bring it back into specification.



A view of the locomotive service area, from left to right are RJCC #3863, #3802 and #3815

Our next stop was the former CSXT Lexington Netherland Yard, ex C&O. In 1987, CSXT abandoned this yard in favor of the L&N yard. The former C&O coaling tower still stands and is used to hold cement by a local supply company, while the former CSXT yard office is part of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church. After touring the remains of this yard, we headed over to Bluegrass Station, a former U.S. Army Signal Corps warehouse complex once served by CSXT but now by R J Corman. The facility is now used by the U .S. Army to militarize and demilitarize its logistic vehicles. Every two weeks Corman picks up or delivers 50 to 100

vehicles to this facility. CSXT brings the vehicles to Patio Yard for hand off to Corman. While a number of logistic vehicles could be seen inside the fenced area, we decided not to try and photograph them. With this visit completed, we returned to the motel.



The former C&O coaling tower now used by a private contractor for sand storage

We left the motel at 8:00 AM on Saturday and headed south, down along CSXT's C-C (Cincinnati-Corbin) subdivision. Our first stop was at Ford, Kentucky, on the Kentucky River. Here we viewed the 544 feet long CSXT Bridge #36 across the Kentucky River and the north portals of Tunnel #8. The west bridge and west tunnel are no longer used by CSXT, the track in this area having been reduced to single track as it exits Winchester Hill. A series of kerosene heaters were observed buried beneath the switch that controlled the entrance/exit from the dual track located at the bottom of Winchester Hill.

It needs to be noted that most tunnels and bridges between Winchester and Corbin, while they carried one number, they were all twin bridges and tunnels. During L&N operations, one bridge and tunnel carried the east main line track while the adjacent set of bridges and tunnels served the west mainline track. Much of this line was single tracked by the L&N for CTC operations before CSXT acquired this route. Upon returning to our cars after visiting the Kentucky River Bridges, an announcement was made that from this point onward much of our travel would be on narrow gravel and dirt roads.



A view from the north bank of the Kentucky River across Bridge #56 and into the portal of Tunnel #8. The top of the bridge to the right marks the abandoned second mainline.



A kerosene heater rests under the switch points ready to heat the rails this winter.

Our next visit was to the south portal of Tunnel #9, some 636-feet long, located just past Fort Boonesborough State Park. The tunnel was reached by a private gravel road. Here again, as at Tunnel #8, the east tunnel is in service and the west tunnel devoid of track. While the west tunnel is used by locals to reach the Kentucky River, the decision was made to just look into the tunnel, as it is built on a curve and the far end could not be seen.



Above and below are views of Tunnel #9. In the top photo, the abandoned tunnel is at left.



Upon leaving Tunnel #9, we followed the CSXT track into Richmond, crossing the only remaining section of Richmond, Nicholasville, Irvine & Beattyville Railroad track still in existence. The track is used by CSXT to reach some industrial sites. At the CSXT Richmond Yard, we photographed the old Railway Express office now used by the CSXT signal gang, inspected CSXT's Kentucky Valley helpers CSXT #608 and 611, both GE AC6000CW locomotives, and caught a north bound eighty-nine car coal train headed by CSXT #331 and CSXT #432, both GE AC4400CW locomotives. The helpers based at Richmond are used to provide extra dynamic braking when descending the 61,569 foot long 0.63 percent grade Richmond Hill and muscle power when ascending the 0.81 percent grade Winchester Hill.



The former L&N freight house at Richmond now houses the local CSXT Signal gang.



A north bound empty eighty-nine car coal train headed by CSXT #331 and CSXT #432, both GE AC4400CW locomotives, ran past us for Patio Yard while we were at Richmond.

We continued to follow CSXT southward from Richmond. Our next stop was the Bluegrass Army Ordnance Depot, a major DoD storage facility for artillery shells and rockets. Here we parked roadside to view the DOD Railyard. The yard contained a number of container cars. After a short stop here we ran on to Berea, Kentucky. Here we were given a guided tour of the former L&N Depot. It had been sold to the city of Berea by the L&N and is used as their visitor center. Just south of the depot is Tunnel #10 and on the other side of the track is the former L&N freight depot. The freight depot is no longer used by CSXT and has been sold to a private individual.



On left is former L&N passenger depot; on right is former L&N freight depot. In center of photo is Tunnel #10.

Upon leaving Berea, we ran south for Boone Gap and Tunnel #11. Due to heavy foliage, the tunnel could not be seen; however, the approach track was visible. The west tunnel is no longer in use, with all traffic routed through the east tunnel. From Boone Gap we followed the CSXT mainline track southward into Wildie, Kentucky. The straight level track that runs from Boone Gap to Wildie since L&N days had been known as the “Racecourse.” In 1949, an L&N M1 2-8-4 steam locomotive, pulling a dynamometer car, reached a speed of 92 miles per hour on this stretch of rail. Wildie had once been a very prosperous village, but now consisted of a few houses, a closed general store, and a hotel being used as a private residence. Upon leaving Wildie, we would be traveling on gravel and dirt roads as we followed the CSXT track onward to Sinks, Kentucky.

Fortunately for us, the rain had stopped two days earlier so that the streams were down and thus the fords were crossable and the roads just wet, not muddy. Our first stop was Tunnel #13 and Bridge #67. Tunnel #13’s east tunnel has been daylighted but the still intact west tunnel was hidden from us in vegetation. While we were here, a north bound manifested freight roared by headed by CSXT #386, a GE AC4400CW, and CSXT #661, a GE AC6000CW locomotive. A disturbing sight that greeted me at this bridge and the other bridges we would visit during our

journey was the absence of their building plates. These had all been in place in January 2013 when I had last run the line. I'm not sure if these plates were taken by a railfan or a scrapper, but some railroad history had been lost.



Looking north over Bridge #67 at daylighted Tunnel #13. Hidden in the trees on the left is the abandoned Tunnel #13.



While we were here, a north bound manifested freight roared by, headed by CSXT #386, a GE AC4400CW, and CSXT #661, a GE AC6000CW locomotive.

Our next stop was the Twin Tunnels, Tunnels # 14 and #15. Roundstone Creek just north of Orlando, Kentucky, makes an “S” curve. The Kentucky Central Railroad, in building south through this area, was forced by topography to construct three bridges and two tunnels to cross Roundstone Creek. Within less than a half a mile, the track crosses Roundstone by Bridge #68, and then runs on a shelf for 100 feet before entering Tunnel #14. The tunnel’s track exits onto another 100 foot wide shelf that in turn forms the north abutment of Bridge #69 which crosses Roundstone Creek. Bridge #69 provides direct entrance to Tunnel #15 which is exited by directly crossing Roundstone Creek on Bridge #70. These two tunnels are referred to by locomotive crews as the “Needle’s Eye.” Interestingly, at this location, the railroad uses the west tunnels, with the east Tunnel #14 and the daylighted Tunnel #15 given over to nature. Tunnel #14, at 896 feet in length, is the third longest tunnel on the C-C. Tunnel #15 is the shortest at 69 feet.



Looking south through Tunnel #14 at Tunnel #15



Looking north over Bridge #70 at Tunnel #15

After viewing both tunnels and bridges, we drove into Orlando, a village in the process of becoming a ghost town. The general store and gasoline station have long been closed. Orlando had once been the location of an important railyard for L&N. At one time Orlando served, via a branch line, the bridge pillars of which are still visible in Roundstone Creek, a number of coal mines located at Johnetta, Kentucky. At a later date, the Orlando Yard contained a truck served coal loadout facility. The site of the former yard provides an excellent view northward of Tunnels #15 and #14.



Tunnel #15 in the distance. The cut of the abandoned daylighted Tunnel #15 can be seen to the right of the existing tunnel.

From Orlando we drove south to Mullins Station and the 360-foot long Tunnel #18. Mullins Station was at one time a prosperous village. The site was originally developed to mine limestone, and the caverns that led back into the hillside still remain east of the CSXT mainline. Later the area was used as a coal loadout, evidence of which can be seen in the coal dust covering the ground. Of the L&N Yard that had once been located here, only a long lead that runs back to an explosive manufacturing plant remains. CSXT generally drops off a covered hopper or two to this facility every week. The west tunnel is no longer used and the east tunnel is double tracked. It was at this location that we met a local who carefully questioned us to determine why we were in the area. After being assured that we were only railfans, we learned from him all that was wrong with the Obama Administration, in particular its hostility to coal mining and the cutting of timber, plus its crusade against tobacco. All three of these endeavors were/are the legitimate life blood of this area's economy.



The south portal of the double track Tunnel #18

The next site we visited was Sinks, Kentucky. It is here that the Kentucky Central Railroad connected to the former L&N Lebanon Branch. CSXT gutted the Lebanon Branch in the 1980s, taking up its middle segment and only retaining short subs that on the east serve Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, and on the west, Boston, Kentucky. Once or twice a week the Mt. Vernon track sees a unit train of stone coming from the quarry west of Mt. Vernon. During our walk down along the side of the CSXT mainline track to Sinks, we encountered a tent set up next to the right-of-way with some ties burning for a cooking fire. Even though we “Helloed!!” no one responded, so we carefully skirted the tent.

Up through 1980, Sinks was an important location on the L&N. It was here the Lebanon Branch was joined by the KC. While no community evolved at this site, there was located here a station operator and a switch. A major flood circa 1980 and the building of a flood control dam led CSXT to abandon the central portion of the Lebanon Line. Some 20 feet west of the present day CSXT C-C Line is Lebanon Line Tunnel #5. From Sinks south the CSXT mainline is now based on Lebanon Line mile posts. Control of exiting and entering the Lebanon Line to Mt. Vernon is by a remote control switch which is governed by a remote control dwarf signal.



Looking north at Sinks on the left is the Old Lebanon Line and on the right is the line to Winchester. The sign reads “ENTER CC- LEAVE C.” Note trackside tent above the sign.

After taking photos at Sinks, we walked back to our cars and drove south for Lebanon Branch Tunnel #5. The site of this tunnel is reached via a dirt road and a ford, thus we were again thankful for the two day break in the rainfall. The west tunnel has been daylighted and is used today by CSXT. The abandoned east tunnel was buried by the material excavated in daylighting the west tunnel. Also located here was an abandoned hotbox detector that we were able to explore.



The daylighted Lebanon Branch Tunnel #5 with its equipment dragging detector box. The abandoned Tunnel #5 is buried in the hillside to the right.



Our next stop was Livingston, Kentucky. Here L&N had a yard that in the 1980s had served a truck serviced coal loadout. Up until 2012, CSXT had based a Maintenance-of-Way train here; however, in early 2013, CSXT removed the yard and blocked the former yard entrance. Pictures of trains using CSXT Bridge #26 to cross the Rockcastle River are still possible but require a little ingenuity.

We continued south from Livingston for the CSXT Yard at East Bernstadt. CSXT bases two helper units here to assist trains over Crooked Hill. Sitting in the yard covering this service were locomotives CSXT #695, a GE AC600CW, and CSXT #975, a GE ES44AC-H. The remainder of the yard was empty except for a bad order covered hopper, CSXT #260184. The

small coal loadout appeared to be closed even though a coal bucket was dropping off a load of coal next to the tippel.



The coal loadout at East Bernstadt



At East Bernstadt, CSXT bases two helper units to assist trains over Crooked Hill. Sitting in the yard covering this service during our visit were locomotives CSXT #695, a GE AC600CW, and CSXT #975, a GE ES44AC-H.

With time running out, we skipped the CSXT London, Kentucky, yard and headed for Corbin, Kentucky. At Corbin we entered the CSXT Yard and were allowed to tour from the

roadway the GE and the EMD locomotive service facilities. I counted 48 CSXT locomotives sitting outside the two locomotive service facilities. We also visited the coal hopper storage yard, which was filled with empty coal hoppers seeking a load of coal. Buried within this fleet of hoppers were two cars still sporting C&O paint and reporting marks. The U.S. Steel Coal Preparation Plant, immediately to the east of the Corbin Yard, which had been brought back on line in the 1990s, was closed and shuttered. Coal production in Kentucky is but 50 percent of what it was ten years ago, and during the Convention the news media announced the closing of more coal mines in Eastern Kentucky due to the lack of orders for its products. The result is that CSXT rail operations in Eastern Kentucky are way down from ten years ago. However, during our tour of the Corbin Yard, we saw but one empty unit coal train arrive, headed by locomotives CSXT #501, a GE AC4400CW-H, and CSXT #22, a GE AC4400CW, and a loaded string of hopper coal cars being fitted with power, CSXT #991 and CSXT #992, both GE ES44AC-H locomotives, to head south. With the clock showing 5:00 PM, we left Corbin Yard to return to our motel in Winchester.



Above is the CSXT Corbin running repair shop. To the right of the locomotives is the former US Steel coal wash plant.



Above and below is CSXT's main Corbin locomotive repair shop.





During our tour of the Corbin Yard, we saw but one train arrive. It was headed by locomotives CSXT #501, a GE AC4400CW-H, and CSXT #22, a GE AC4400CW.

On Sunday we left the motel at 8:00 AM to explore CSXT's Eastern Kentucky (EK) Subdivision. Our first stop was Patio Yard on the south outskirts of Winchester. Here the C-C, EK, and RJ Corman lines meet. Located in the yard were locomotives CSXT #6937, an EMD GP40-2, and CSXT #2291, an EMD Road Slug, plus a number of flat cars carrying various U.S. Army logistic vehicles, boxcars, covered hoppers, and tank cars. The joining of the EK and C-C track forms a wye at the south end of the yard.



Found at Patio Yard were locomotives CSXT #6937, an EMD GP40-2, and CSXT #2291, an EMD Road Slug.

From Patio we drove south following the CSXT track to the Red River Gorge Trestle. The trestle, built in 1916, is 1,780-feet long and 150-feet high. Due to CSXT and other property

owners no longer cutting back tree growth along the rail line, viewing of the trestle is reduced a little bit more each year. After viewing the Red River Gorge Trestle, we drove to the 70-foot high Galloway Creek Trestle. This trestle, upon being viewed from its base, was completely hidden behind a canopy of trees, and thus only glimpses of its structure could be ascertained. Much of the EK Line can only be viewed during the winter when trees are stripped of their leaves.



The Red River Gorge Trestle

One of the highlights of today's outing was to have been a visit to the former Southeast Coal Preparation Plant just north of Ravenna. This plant is being brought back on line by Bowie Resources and is expected to be back in production by the end of 2013. The plan is to use modern technology to reclaim coal from the acres of spoils discarded when Southeast was operating the coal preparation plant using 1960 technology. However, despite being told that the gate to the site would be open, it was locked with five different locks and no trespassing signs posted. This was surprising as the gate may be closed, but it is never locked as the road, besides leading to the coal plant, provides access to the local airport and a cemetery.

With our path blocked into the coal preparation plant, we turned around and drove to the CSXT, ex L&N, Ravenna Yard. In the early 1990s, this Yard was bursting to capacity with coal trains. Some 39 crews called Ravenna home. The yard had a car repair shop, locomotive service facility, signal gang, and rated its own Yardmaster and Trainmaster. In 2013, four fifths of the yard's track has been removed, the car repaired shop closed, the locomotive service facility shuttered, the position of Yardmaster and Trainmaster abolished, and the one operating crew is now based at Corbin. With two exceptions, all of the former buildings have been torn down; the store house is now use by the signal gang and the car repair shop stands abandoned. As we drove through the Yard, we encountered only four bad ordered gondola cars, one NYC, one SBD, and two CSXT. The wye track is still in place but looks unused. On its side walls, the Ravenna city building has murals of the Yard when it was in its glory.



The CSXT Ravenna Car Shop Safety Board still stands some 15 years after the shop closed.



This former L&N store house is the only ex-L&N building still standing in the Ravenna Yard. Today it houses the CSXT signal gang.

After our tour of Ravenna Yard, we drove south for Texola, Kentucky. Texola was the site of a Texaco refinery that was served by the L&N from 1930 to 1960. The plant still stands but the rail yard is gone. The Ravenna area sat on top of an extensive pool of pure oil and, for a time, Kentucky rivaled Texas, but the pool was shallow and was quickly pumped dry. In 1980, there was a plan to bring the refinery back on line. It was to be used to refine gasoline being captured from underground gasoline tanks located at abandoned gasoline stations. This plan fell through, and then in 1990 the plant was to have again come back on line to reformulate used motor oil. This proposal also collapsed when government funding was withdrawn. At Texola, CSXT has a mainline scale for weighing coal cars. Up until a few years ago, CSXT accepted the weight of the coal in the car as provided by the shipper. However, when CSXT, circa 2005

began to conduct random samplings of loaded coal hoppers, they found them loaded by five to ten percent more tonnage than the shipping documents the coal companies had provided. Thus all coal trains heading out of the EK have their coal cars weighed at Texola by an automated scale to insure they are not overloaded.

Our next stop was Old Landing, Kentucky, on the Kentucky River. The combination general store, U S Post Office, and L&N ticket office still stands across the road from the track. A dragging equipment and hot box detector is located at Old Landing. After inspecting this equipment, we returned to Ravenna where we met with a former CSXT Trainmaster and a former L&N/CSXT locomotive engineer who entertained us for over an hour with stories of Ravenna in its glory days. In 1990, thirty-eight CSXT crews worked out of the Ravenna Yard, but in 2013 only one crew worked out of the yard. Daily traffic over the EK Line consisted of one loaded coal train outbound and one empty coal train inbound. We were told that rumor had that the CSXT's EK Line from Hazard, Kentucky, to Winchester was to be turned over to R J Corman to be operated as a non-union railroad. We had noted as we drove around Ravenna and Irvine that Main Street contained more closed stores than those still open for business. The last furniture store in town was holding a going out of business sale. We were informed that housing sales were at a standstill, and the lack of tax money to finance the schools and local government was resulting in layoffs and cut backs. The hope was that when the former Southeast Coal Company Coal Preparation Plant came on line at the end of 2013, it would result in enough coal traffic to stabilize the town. At 2:30 PM the convention ended, goodbyes were said, and we individually headed out for our homes.



This painting graces the side of the Ravenna city hall and recalls the glory days of Ravenna when some 50 crews worked the yard 365 days a year moving EK Division coal.