



MIDDLE GEORGIA FLYER

The Publication of the Middle Georgia Railroad Association

Macon Central City Park Exchange Club

The Gordon Depot

Meeting the Third Monday of Each Month at 7:00 p.m.

<http://www.middlgeorgiarailroadassociation.com>

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Central of Georgia Railway
Union Depot
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The Middle Georgia Railroad Association

The MGRA is a non-profit organization designed to preserve and promote Railroad History in the Middle Georgia Area, as well as model railroading and railfanning. We welcome all members regardless of sex, religion or race. Middle Georgia Railroads include the Central of Georgia Rwy, Southern Rwy, Seaboard Coast Line, Atlantic Coast Line, Georgia Southern & Florida Rwy, Macon & Birmingham, Hawkinsville and Florida Southern, Macon, Dublin and Savannah, Wrightsville & Tennille, LOP&G, SG, AV&W, Louisville and Nashville, NC&StL, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, and others.

The MGRA meets once a month on the third Monday at 7:00 P.M. at the Central City Park's Exchange Club located at Central City Park in Macon during February, April, June, August, October. Meetings are held at the Gordon Depot in January, March, May, July, September and December. Membership fees are \$20.00 annually. As a member you receive a monthly Newsletter, invitations to field trips, and best of all fellowship! Each month there are a wide range of guest speakers on railroad history, model clinics, and more. For more information, please visit the MGRA website at: www.middlegeorgiarailroadassociation.com

Note from the President

The Middle Georgia Railroad Association will have its monthly meeting on September 17, 2007 beginning at 7pm at the Gordon Depot in Gordon, Georgia. The scheduled program is the Central of Georgia Railway Historical Society presented by Allen Tuten. Come join us and invite a railroad friend. I would like to thank Joseph McKinnon for his outstanding Agrirama presentation last month. Thanks Joe! If you have never stopped and visited the Agrirama you own it to yourself to do so. You will be in for a read railroad treat. I also wish to thank Larry Goolsby from the ACLSAL Historical Society for his visit with us.

--Mark

October Meeting Set

Our next meeting will be held on October 15, 2007 for which we will be back at the Macon Exchange Club Building in Central City Park for the last time. Max Roesel will be presenting his annual NMRA Convention slideshow for 2007. Be making plans to attend now and come and see Max's fantastic slides. Please note that this will be the last meeting in Macon! All future meetings will be held at the Gordon Depot!

MGRA Yahoo! Group

The MGRA now has a Yahoo! Group. The purpose of the Group is to enhance our organization by sharing railroad information amongst its members. Go to groups.yahoo.com/group/mgra to register. Dive in an welcome aboard!

MGRA Trainshow 2008

Plans have been affirmed for the MGRA's 2nd Annual Model and Trainshow set tentatively for April 28 & 29, 2008. The show will be held at the Anderson Conference Center located at the old SAMs on Eisenhower Parkway, also known as the Goodwill Conference Center. Please note that this will be a two day show. Free parking, plenty of space and lots of air conditioning. Please help us spread this announcement and let folks know about it.

The Short Line Railroads

The Irwinton Railroad

In 1883 a group of Irwinton business men got together and formed the Irwinton Railroad Company. The citizens of Irwinton were tired of hauling their supplies and passengers up and down the hill to the McIntyre depot. The men forming the corporation were Thomas N. Beall, Alexander Baum, James G. Ockington, Franklin Chambers, John T. Lingo, Joel A. Smith and Joel J. Butler. The company was to sell shares in the railroad to built the tracks and equip a train for the 3 plus mile "extension" of the Central of Georgia Railroad from McIntyre up the hill to Irwinton. It didn't go off as planned, obviously, and in 1909, 26 years later, another shortline railroad was planned for Irwinton. In 1909 The Irwinton Railway Company was inculcated by James L. Byington, J.W. Lindsey, G.H. Carswell, Ira B. Stinson, Ira E. Burkett, C.H. Parker, B. I. Stevens, R.E. Spears, J.S. Wood and J.W. Rutland. According to the Irwinton Bulletin 12 November 1909, p. 5 the railroad was to "run from a point at or near the railway station on the Central of Georgia Railway Company called McIntyre, in a southwesterly direction to within the corporate limits of the town of Irwinton, at a point to be located in the public street near the Court House Square. The consent of the corporate authorities having been obtained to enter said town, and to pass across, through and over the public square and streets of the same." The amount of capital stock was \$15,000. The railway was to run south into Laurens County and haul all cotton and timber from the area as well as haul in supplies.

According to a local newspaper article written in the 1980s by "The Ol' Wilkinson Wayfairer" by B. Anonymous, John Sorrel, a civil engineer, did a survey which placed the depot down the hill from Irwinton. This survey, not pleasing to the stock holders, resulted in another survey which placed the depot behind the old gym building near the present

day East Wilkinson Library. Bids were advertised in the Atlanta Constitution May of 1910 "for the grading and laying of railroad from McIntyre to Irwinton, distance three and half miles. For full information, write George H. Carswell, Secretary, Irwinton, Ga."

Although another civil engineer recommended the line not to be built because of the steep 400 feet of elevation between Irwinton and McIntyre, it was ignored and a crew of men headed by Andrew Hatfield, started laying the rail. The track started at the old Penny Mine in McIntyre, followed a winding path up the hill into Irwinton and stopped at the library location where a Hugh mound of dirt ended the line. This mound of dirt, still here in the 1950's, was an adventurous place to play by the boys at the Irwinton Elementary School.

In 1911 the railroad was ready to operate and started with a used switcher type steam engine and a combination baggage and passenger car purchased from the Central of Georgia for \$8,000. The engineer was Forest Dixon. Ralph Culpepper, Sr. was learning the business of running the train from Mr. Dixon. The fireman was Willie Whipple. The post office gave the line a contract to haul the daily mail from Irwinton to McIntyre. Despite the local businessmen placing orders for stock that could be hauled by the rail, the business didn't do as well as expected.

In March of 1911, C. O. Hall of Toombsboro, J. H. Plummer of New York, and J. R. Crandall of Midville were interested in locating a railroad route from Athens via Milledgeville, Toombsboro, Dublin and McRae to some point in southwest Georgia or to the gulf coast. They took a road trip and found the route feasible, however there plans appear to be scraped since this railroad was not built.

James L. Byington, the president of the Irwinton Railroad, died in 1912. The much needed extension from Irwinton to Dublin was never built. Emile Johnson took his place as the president of the railroad.

The demise of the Irwinton Railway happened in 1913 with an accident with the morning train on the way to Irwinton. On the train were the engineer Forrest Dixon, fireman Willie Whipple, mail clerk Ike "Squire" Billue and passenger Henry Adkins. Near where the rail crossed Wriley Rd and Boone Hill it was discovered the combine car was on fire. The train was stopped, all four jumped off and put the fire as as best they could and finished the run into Irwinton. When engineer Dixon got to the top of the grade where Parker street and 441 come together today he discovered the brakes had failed. He pushed the Johnson bar (the reverse lever) and the train came to it's last stop in the pile of dirt, putting it's wheels off the tracks.

In July of 1913, Mr. Lee requested a bill to constitute trustees for the stockholders and sell the property to settle debts.

The Lumber Railroad

A.S. Bacon Lumber Company from Savannah contracted to cut timber on Porter Creek and the Big Sandy swamp area in 1913. Using the rail line the company built a paper mill next to the present location of Masonic cemetery and extended the railroad tracks to Porter Creek. Using a sidewinder engine and bogey cars the logs were hauled out. One car had benches on the side for folks to hitch a ride. After 3 years the timber was cut and the company moved on.

Thus the short-lived railroads passed into history.

Sources: (from Mark Byington)Irwinton Bulletin 12 November 1909, p. 5:(from Mark Byington) "The Ol' Wilkinson Wayfairer" by B. Anonymous (from the Wilkinson County News 1980's); Atlanta Constitution March 29, 1911; Augusta Chronicle, February 6, 1912; Atlanta Constitution July 1, 1913; Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly, Georgia's Virtual Library; Victor Davidson History of Wilkinson County; Traffic Department of the Central of Georgia Railroad Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1901?, Alabama Department of Archives and History; clip art - www.rhistorical.com

MGRA Upcoming Events

September 17	MGRA Meeting – Gordon Georgia Allen Tuten and the Central of Georgia Railroad Historical Society
September 29-30	Georgia Southern and Florida Historical Society Workshop on the LOP&G at Live Oak Florida
October 13-14	CofG Historical Society Fall Meeting -- Savannah, Georgia
October 15	MGRA Meeting – Macon Georgia Central City Park NMRA Convention Report by Max Roesel
October 19-20	Manchester Days – Manchester, Georgia
December 1	MGRA Meeting – Gordon Georgia Christmas Meeting and Swap Meet
January 5	Model Train and Railroadiana Show North Atlanta Trade Center – Norcross, Georgia
January 19-20	19 th Annual Model Railroad and Train Show by Costal Buffs National Guard Armory – Savannah, Georgia
January 26-27	17 th Annual Model Train Show and Sale by Flint River Model RR Club Knights of Columbus Hall – Albany, Georgia

January 21	MGRA Meeting – Gordon Georgia (All meetings now in Gordon) Operation Lifesaver – Fred Jones
February 21	MGRA Meeting Slideshow by Bob Branin
March 17	MGRA Meeting SAM Shortline by Stephen Seyfert
April 19-20	MGRA 2 nd Annual Trainshow Anderson Conference Center (Goodwill) – Macon, Georgia

Hobby Shops:

Riverdale Station- Bob Branin
6632 Hwy 85, Atlanta, GA
(770) 991-6085

Open 10AM to 5:30PM Tuesday- Saturday

Trainmaster Models- Mike Devane
Duluth, GA 30096
(770) 622-1611
Closed Mondays

Bull Street Station- Ms. Ellie
151 Bull Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

DCC Installs and Sales- Rick Bell
3414 Cannon Gate Drive
Martinez, Georgia 30907
<http://www.dccinstallsandsales.com>
DCCINSTALLSSALES@AOL.COM

Free Time Hobbies- Russ & Brandon Lowe
124-F West Lamar Street
Americus, Georgia 31709
(229) 924-3490

Historical Societies:

*The MGRA Recommends the Following
Historical Societies:*

Central of Georgia Railroad HS

Georgia Southern and Florida HS

Louisville and Nashville HS

NC&StL HS

Seaboard Air Line/Atlantic Coast Line HS

Southern Railway Historical Association

Tennessee Alabama and Georgia HS