



TRAIN ORDERS

Scheduled and Unscheduled Society Events, Timely News, and Notes of Interest

DECEMBER, 2003

CELEBRATING
OUR *10th Anniversary*

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December 17, 2003—Celebrating 100 years of flight

The Wright Brothers Railroad Connection

From Dayton, Ohio to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina via Train — by Jim Mendrala

The Wright brothers had lived in Ohio, Indiana and Iowa while growing up, but they were not well traveled. The longest personal trip they had ever taken was a visit to the bicycle displays at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The trip to a remote fishing village on the Atlantic shore would be a great adventure. They decided that Wilbur would blaze the trail, traveling to Kitty Hawk with his luggage, camping gear, and most of the parts of the disassembled kite/glider. Orville would follow later, when Wilbur confirmed that conditions were favorable for their experiments.

Dayton, Ohio to Kitty Hawk, NC – September 6 – 13, 1900

"Left Dayton Thurs. Eve. At 6:30 P.M. over Big Four and C. & O. Arrived at Old Point [Comfort] about six o'clock P.M. the next day, and went over to Norfolk via the steamer 'Pennsylvania'. Put up at the Monticello Hotel [Norfolk]."

Wilbur probably boarded the Big Four, train #33 (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railway Company) at Dayton's Union Station at 6:08 P.M. on the evening of Thursday, September 6, 1900. That train arrived in Cincinnati at 7:45 P.M. He connected to a Chesapeake & Ohio (C & O) train in Cincinnati that evening. It was probably C & O train #4, which left Cincinnati at 9:10 P.M., on September 6, 1900. The train that carried him to Old Point Comfort, Virginia, on the edge of Hampton Roads, was known as the "Fast Flying Virginian," or "the Vestibule Limited." It consisted of a "...combined car, day coach, dining car, Pullman sleepers and observation car, assuring all the creature comforts, and affording unobstructed views of the magnificent scenery along the route.

The disassembled parts of the 1900 kite/glider, with the exception of the long spars that Wilbur purchased in Norfolk, were safely stowed away in a baggage car. The financial records of the Wright Cycle Company indicate that Wilbur paid \$2.50 to ship his first full scale flying machine to Norfolk.

The train was painted "...a bright orange -- the Company's standard color -- from front to rear, presenting a strikingly handsome appearance, and is lighted and vested throughout, and equipped with every appliance for safety, comfort and luxury known to modern railway travel." Travelers were assured that "all meals are served in dining cars." On a typical trip, the train reached Huntington, W.Va., 1:15 A.M.; Alderson, W.Va., at 6:05 A.M.; and Clifton Forge at 8 A.M. There was an engine change at Goshen, VA, 9:10 A.M. The train then proceeded to: Basic, VA, 11:19 A.M., Charlottesville, VA, 12:08 A.M., and reached Old Point Comfort, at 6:30 P.M. on September 7, 1900.

Steamers linked to the C & O crossed Hampton Roads to Norfolk regularly. On Friday evening, September 7, 1900, the schedule lists a steamer leaving Old Point Comfort at 6:10 P.M. and arriving in Norfolk at 7:10 P.M. Either Wilbur's train was early, or he took the next steamer.

On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, a Norfolk & Southern Railroad train departed Norfolk at 4:10 P.M. and arrived in Elizabeth City, North Carolina at 6:00 P.M. No one knows if Wilbur was a bit off on the time, or he took the next train.

"At 4:30 left for Elizabeth City and put up at Arlington [Hotel] where I spent several days waiting for a boat to Kitty Hawk. Nobody seemed to know anything about the place. At last on Tuesday I left."

The first journey by rail to Kitty Hawk, leaving the comforts of Dayton for the wild Atlantic shore, was at an end!

The railroad route information that appears in this chronology is drawn from a map/brochure, Chesapeake and Ohio Route to the Springs, Mountains and Sea Shore Resorts (Washington, D.C.: C & O Railway, April 1898), a copy of which is to be found in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress. Additional details and train times are from: The Travelers Official Railway Guide (New York: National Railway Publishing Company, 1900). All quotations are from "The Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright" by Marvin W. McFarland, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953).



In traveling to Kitty Hawk, the Wright brothers took the Big Four train from Dayton to Cincinnati, where they caught a C&O train to Old Point Comfort, VA. From there they took a steamer to Norfolk; a Norfolk & Southern train to Elizabeth City, NC; and a sailboat to Kitty Hawk or Manteo, NC. The C&O traveled straight through West Virginia, including passage through the Big Bend tunnel of John Henry fame. Today, passengers can travel the same famous route via Amtrak. PHOTO: This track is some 700 feet from the original Wright Cycle Shop in Ohio as it looks today. — Photo by Jim Mendrala.



DISPATCH BOARD



DECEMBER 2003



Join us for breakfast, 8:00 AM every Saturday, at the Fillmore Cafe

Weekends: Need Volunteers for the Railroad Visitor Center contact Fred Ervast at fervast@scrvrhs.com or 805 3890787

3rd 7:00 pm - **SCRVRHS Board of Directors Meeting**
Railroad Visitor Center 455 Main Street, Fillmore
Members are always welcome to attend!

6th & 7th **CAR ATTENDANT'S — Be Santa's helper!**
Fillmore & Western Christmas Tree Trains
9:30 am to 4:00 pm — Call Don Hatch: 805 484-8624

13th & 14th **CAR ATTENDANT'S — Be Santa's helper!**
Fillmore & Western Christmas Tree Trains
9:30 am to 4:00 pm — Call Don Hatch: 805 484-8624

10th **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
Railroad Visitor Center - Central & Main, Fillmore
7:00 pm - Refreshments

14th **SCRVRHS Holiday Wine & Cheese Open House**
4:00 to 7:00 pm - Railroad Visitor Center, Fillmore
Come celebrate the festive season, casually, with friends



20th & 21st **CAR ATTENDANT'S — Be Santa's helper!**
Fillmore & Western Christmas Tree Trains
9:30 am to 4:00 pm — Call Don Hatch: 805 484-8624

27th & 28th **Car Attendants Needed**
Fillmore & Western Weekend Excursion Trains
9:30 am to 4:00 pm — Call Don Hatch: 805 484-8624

AROUND THE ROUNDHOUSE . . .

A WINE & CHEESE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE — Sunday evening, December 14th from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Instead of our regular pot luck, the Society is springing for a festive party to 1) celebrate the holidays; 2) thank all of the 2003 volunteers and; 3) show off our very own Railroad Visitors Center. If you haven't seen it yet, this is a great opportunity. Drop by before another party or on your way home from one. No agenda — just have a good time!

LIFETIME MEMBER SHERMAN LEWIS — who earlier this year moved to Arizona, sponsored the refreshments for a recent Membership Meeting. To honor Sherm, Fred Ervast had a special cake made. It looked good, and tasted good too! (Sorry Sherm, you'll have to take our word for it). *Thanks so much!!*



THE 2003 TAX YEAR — is coming to an end. And, we still have a roundhouse to build! Remember, any donation of value, be it cash, stock or railroad memorabilia, is *tax deductible*. Our mailing address is SCRVRHS P.O. Box 492 Fillmore, CA. 93016-0492. If you have questions, see our resident attorney, Society Treasurer Joseph P. D. Kern, Esq. You can contact him at jkern@scrvrhs.com.

SEE THE METROLINK SANTA TRAIN - December 7th — Montalvo station at 5:00 pm; Oxnard 6:00 pm; Camarillo 6:45 pm; and Moorpark 7:45 pm.
December 13th — Simi Valley 5:15 pm; Chatsworth 6:30 pm; Northridge 7:10 pm; Van Nuys 7:45 pm; and Glendale 8:35 pm. *If rain, no train!* Bring the kids if just to see the lights! (the train is not bad too)

Editor/Publisher — Rick Swanson



TRAIN ORDERS

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