



The Norfolk Southern Historical Society

To secure and study the history of, and educate the public about the history of, the original Norfolk (&) Southern Railroad/Railway



1881-1974

<http://www.norfolksouthernhs.org>

Norfolk Southern Historical Society
264 White Cedar Lane
Youngsville, NC 27596-9196

NORFOLK SOUTHERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Dues are \$20 per year. Make checks payable to NSHS.

☐ Yes, please
include my name
in a members-
only directory.

History of the Society

The Norfolk & Southern Historical Society was organized on April 20th, 2002, and incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina. A seven-member Board of Directors, which includes the following four officers, governs the organization: (1) President, (2) Vice-President, (3) Secretary, and (4) Treasurer.

The Society is organized to secure and study the history of, and educate the public about the history of the original Norfolk (&) Southern Railroad/Railway as a charitable and educational organization, within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and to receive gifts which qualify under section 170 of that code, or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Code. The principal office and place of business is at 2222 West Club Boulevard, Durham, NC.

The Society holds an annual meeting, usually the third Saturday in April, at a location, which is selected by the Board of Directors at the previous year's annual meeting. Previous meetings have been held as such:

2006 - Elizabeth City, NC
2005 - Jackson Springs, NC
2004 - Raleigh, NC
2003 - Plymouth, NC
2002 - Beaufort, NC

The Society publishes a semi-annual newsletter, the **Eastern Carolina Despatch**, which contains information about the society's activities and about the history of the original Norfolk Southern Railroad.

Brief History of the First Norfolk Southern Railroad

By Robert C. Reisweber, 2/23/2005

What would eventually become the first Norfolk Southern Railroad was chartered on January 20th, 1870 in North Carolina as the Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad. It was intended to run between its namesake cities, a distance of 46 miles. The track was completed on May 12th, 1881, and the first train from Norfolk to Elizabeth City ran on May 26th, 1881. The line was extended 27 miles southward to Edenton, NC in December 1881.

Owners of the EC&N soon formed plans to extend the line southward. They changed the name of the company to Norfolk Southern Railroad Company on February 1st, 1883 to indicate this. The company entered receivership in 1889 and emerged as the Norfolk and Southern Railroad Company in 1891. At the same time, the Ablemarle and Pantego Railroad became part of the new company. That railroad ran from Mackey's Ferry, NC (now known as Mackeys) through Pantego to Belhaven, NC. It also operated a ferry service from Mackey's Ferry across Albemarle Sound to Edenton, where it connected with the N&S.

In January 1900, the N&S expanded again by absorbing the Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Southern Railroad. In 1904, the N&S took over the Chesapeake Transit Company, which had opened a competing line from Norfolk to Virginia Beach via Cape Henry in 1902.

In March 1904, the N&S purchased the Washington and Plymouth Railroad. The N&S extended this line from Plymouth to

Mackey's Ferry to create a main line 135 miles long, but which required a nine-mile ferry trip from Edenton to Mackey's Ferry.

The N&S expanded southward again on November 23rd, 1906, when it merged with four other railroads. By building connections between these lines, a system was created which ran from Norfolk to Raleigh, NC, with branches to New Bern, Beaufort, Morehead City, Kinston, Goldsboro, Columbia, Oriental, and Belhaven, NC, and Virginia Beach and Suffolk, VA. The 5-mile Albemarle trestle opened on January 1st, 1910.

In 1911, the N&S Ry purchased the charter of the Raleigh, Charlotte and Southern Railroad Company, which had been formed to build a railroad from Raleigh to Charlotte, NC. Once again, the N&S Ry found it expedient to buy four existing railroads and connect them together to accomplish this objective. These railroads also possessed trackage to the cities of Fayetteville, Aberdeen, Asheboro, Ellerbe, Carthage, and Jackson Springs. In May 1920, the NS leased the Durham and South Carolina Railroad, which became its Durham branch. At this point, the total mileage of track operated by the Norfolk Southern reached 942 miles, its greatest extent.

Several branches were abandoned in subsequent years, including those to Suffolk, Columbia, Oriental, Asheboro, Ellerbe, Carthage, and Jackson Springs. Also abandoned was lease of trackage to Beaufort, Morehead City, Kinston, and Goldsboro. On January 1st, 1974, the Norfolk Southern was merged into the Southern Railway System. At that time, just over 600 miles of NS track remained in service.