



Southern Railway's No. 604 is back on track

Rail Yard Given New Life As Museum

SPENCER — In little more than a decade, the steam locomotive repair center known as Spencer Shops has been transformed from a dying grounds for memories of steam locomotives into the South's largest transportation museum.

Begun in 1896 at a point roughly half-way between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Spencer became the site of what was once the Southern Railway Company's largest steam locomotive servicing facility. In fact, the town of Spencer and the Spencer Shops repair center were created solely for the repair of steam locomotives and were named for Samuel Spencer, the first president of the Southern Railway.

The Public Broadcast System will air a documentary featuring the Historic Spencer Shops on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 6 p.m. The documentary contains rare footage of the repair center's operation, provides commentary from former workers at the Spencer Shops, and shows the operation of two locomotives at the museum.

The video, entitled "Of Men

and Machines," was produced by Bob Loehne, president of Personal Video Production in Winston-Salem. It was written by Steve Channing of Video Dialogue Productions in Chapel Hill, with video work by Alpha Video of Durham.

In a review in *Railfan & Railroad* magazine, Mike Del Vecchio said, "'Of Men and Machines' is a complete record depicting transportation in North Carolina from the 1700s with the use of still photos, maps and vintage footage of Southern Railway steam engines from the early 1900s."

"The narration is excellent," he added. "My compliments to Historic Spencer Shops for being able to produce such a fine program."

Charlie Peacock, a retired trainman at Spencer Shops, said, "every time you come to Spencer and look around and see the vastness of it, I think you have to remember the great contributions the railroads made when they finally tied the nation together, with two ribbons of steel."

During its heyday, more than

2,500 people worked at the facility, providing almost all the employment for the towns of Spencer and East Spencer. The railroad center also spawned hundreds of jobs for the neighboring city of Salisbury.

The center, one of the finest in the world, buzzed with activity while servicing 100 steam locomotives a day and had a multiple track system that accommodated 265 railway cars at a time. A massive crane inside the machine shop (still among the largest industrial buildings in the state) could lift a 150 ton steam locomotive off its wheels.

The Spencer Shops was able to boast the remarkable record of averaging a total rebuild of one steam engine per day, working 3 shifts a day, seven days a week, year-round.

With the advent of diesel locomotives in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the need for most of the operations at Spencer waned. Southern Railway closed the main repair shops in 1960, but a handful of workers stayed on

through the 1970s for minor diesel engine repairs.

Peacock added, "The first time I ever saw one of them (diesel Locomotives) pull in here, I knew it was going to be the end of the steam locomotive."

Jim Mesimore, a retired mechanical foreman who took the last regular service train out of Spencer in the late 1950s, added, "I can remember when they lined up all the steam engines to be shipped up North for scraps — some of the old fellows here had tears in their eyes."

Finally, in the late 1970s all work came to a halt when Southern Railway moved its repair shops to a new, modern complex in nearby Linwood, North Carolina. With the end of Spencer's operational existence, talk immediately began of turning the complex into a museum.

In September 1977, Southern Railway President L. Stanley Crane presented a deed to Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr. for nearly four acres of the site for development of Cultural Resources. Later, Southern donated an additional

53 acres along with several historic buildings. Historic Spencer Shops has acquired several million dollars worth of rare transportation artifacts and has made possible their restoration and display.

The prize possession of the Historic Spencer Shops is a fully restored Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad steam locomotive. Reborn as Southern Railway Number 604, the locomotive now pulls several restored coaches around the site on a 30-minute tour to give visitors an overview of the size and complexity of the former operations. Also in operation is a Southern Railway FP-7 restored diesel locomotive painted in the famous green and gold Southern passenger colors.

Among its other displays, the Historic Spencer Shops exhibits a Conestoga wagon, portions of plank roads, a dugout canoe, early automobiles (featuring a Model AA Ford truck), a Commonwealth Skyranger airplane and North Carolina's first Highway patrol car.

Historic Spencer Shops first opened in 1983 and is the South's largest transportation museum, currently featuring 6000 square feet of exhibit space, and thousands of more square feet yet to be renovated, chronicling the history of transportation in the Tar Heel state.

Located near Interstate 85 in Spencer, the 57-acre complex is open year-round and is administered by The Historic Sites Section under The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. A staff of five full-time employees and more than 50 volunteers, many of whom are retired railroad workers, maintains the 57-acre site.

The Spencer Shops documentary, entitled "Of Men and Machines," will be broadcast on PBS is available on VHS, Beta, or 8mm videocassette from Historic Spencer Shops. For more information or to purchase a copy of the "Of Men and Machines" video documentary, write to: Historic Spencer Shops; P. O. Box 44, Spencer, N. C. 28159; (704) 636-2889.

Along The Pathway

Along the pathway of life we are often worried about tomorrow and what it holds. Why should we worry when we have a Heavenly Father that cares about us? If we would take time to consider the lillies of the field and how they grow, how God cares about the little sparrow, we would know he cares about us too. He loved us enough to create us, so surely he cares about us. He loved us so much that he sent his only son to be born in a manger as the poorest of them to be our savior. Not only was he born in a manger but he lived as the poorest and het he trusted the Heavenly Father. He was tempted, tried and died a shameful death on the cross so we could be free.

There is not a lily trampled down without God knowing it. A sparrow does not fall without God looking on. He knows every thing that touches of lives. He is concerned. He does care about you and me. He has the answer for everything. He will give us answers if we will come to him in faith, believing he is a rewarder to them that diligently seek him. He will give us strength for everything that touches our lives. He will make us stronger if we will submit ourselves to him. He will bring deliverance in due time if we faint not. When everything seems to be wrong, we must not doubt but we must still trust him. He holds the future in his hands. So why not lean on him in faith?

His strength is sufficient for us.

I know, because I have been through many things. If I had tried without God, I would have crumbled along the way. If I had not leaned on him these past eight weeks that my brother has been missing, I would have probably been in a mental institution or done some very foolish thing. There is one thing I know. God knows where he is and is able to cause someone to find him and the reasons for all this that has happened. I know he will not fail us if we trust him. He has all the answers. He is the answer. So why shouldn't I, and why shouldn't you, trust him? He can lead, guide and calm the troubled waters of the soul. Faith in him is the answer to everything.

Trust Him

Trust him, oh, child of sorrow,
He holds in his hand tomorrow.
If you trust, he will lift you up,
With peach he will fill your cup.

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Transportation Board Member Reappointed

Gov. James G. Martin has reappointed Randy Doub of Greenville to the N.C. Board of Transportation. He was sworn in during a ceremony Friday at the highway building in Raleigh.

Doub, 33, is a partner in the law firm of Dixon, Duffus & Doub.

He will represent Division II, which includes Craven, Jones, Beaufort, Carteret, Greene, Lenior, Pamlico and Pitt counties. This will be Doub's second four-year term.

Doub is a Winston-Salem native. He graduated with honors from East Carolina University in 1977. He then attended the

School of Law at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Doub is a member of the Pitt County Bar Association, the N.C. Bar Association and the American Bar Association.

He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce and the Eastern Carolina Vocational Center. Doub is a member of the Greenville Rotary Club, the ECU Alumni Association and the ECU Pirate Club.

He is married to the former Toni Susan Pegg of Winston-Salem.

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