

## Rail South 2011: Handout

*by R.G. Blocks*

Depart Wisconsin by small aircraft or auto and your first temptation, as a railfan might be The Illinois Railway Museum at Union, Illinois. We'll not stop there. Or, it may be one of the wonderful rail yards or humps in and around Chicagoland. The closest to our path, just south of O'Hare Airport is the huge yard at Bensenville. It has a roundtable near its western terminus.

The brand new Intermodal Yard at Joliet is our next interest. This one can be photographed from a small airplane. Look at the configuration. 107 car's easy. Five trains building, five disassembling.

Then, we drop down to Jackson Tennessee on our way south. There, we find Casey Jones. Next it will be Vaughn MS the town where Casey ended life in old 99.

From there it is Foley, AL where the largest O gauge layout in the south occupies the old L&N Foley Depot. I'd encourage you to visit the place.

I had to break stride and visit Jacksonville Naval Air and their museum. Many flyer types rate Jacksonville Navy Air Museum as the best. It is at this hallowed place that two of my favorite aircraft reside. They are the Chance Vought FU8 Crusader, better known as the last 'Gunfighter'. It had the highest kill ratio in Vietnam 19:3. My job was to make a special alloy to stiffen the wing. The other, a Cessna Bird Dog, two seat observation airplane, about like the C150 I learned in. A great story.

Then, we go north heading home to Calera, Alabama where the state Rail Museum is located. It's a nice simple affair. You can walk about it without problem.

Further north, we're at one of my favorite places, Chattanooga, TN. Nearby is Chickamauga Battlefield, the south's last victory (North's Rosecrans's vs. Braxton Bragg). It is here that US Grant, a seventh cousin (twice removed) of my wife's father, and Wm T Sherman, famous for Bull Run, won the battle above the clouds. Here Sherman began his march to the sea. Both Generals were distant cousins on my wife's side. But our talk is about rail and I've digressed.



Richard Horton's eightieth birthday

The Chattanooga Choo Choo and NMRA are places to visit if you're a railfan. We'll take you through about fifty photos to illustrate the extent of the place and layout.

Written by Roger G Blocks for WUJRRC, Sturtevant, WI for presentation on April 20, 2011 on the date of our celebration of

## Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum

by R.G. Blocks



Little to see or amaze you driving down Interstate 65 in Alabama. You're either going to or returning from somewhere like Ft Walton Beach, Gulf Shores, Orange Beach or perhaps Pensacola.

Then, you pass the little burg of Calera, Alabama and the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum becomes apparent. We turned off the super highway, always a soft touch for anything riding on steel

rail. See <http://www.hodrrm.org/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx> If you want to call: try 205-668-3435. Write: them at PO Box 727, Calera, AL 35040.

It's an exciting little rail museum and very accessible from the street. Handicap folks don't miss much of an overview if they stay right in the car.

Thomas the Tank Engine will be there April 9, 10, 11, 17, and 18 this year. September 18, 19, 25 and 26 they'll have a 6-mile



excursion pulled by Flag Coal #75 an 0-4-0 Tank engine built by Vulcan Iron Works in 1930 that looks a lot like a Varney 0-4-0 Dockside.

Marge and I spent about a half hour prowling about the place. Wish we'd called ahead and found out their hours and organized activity. You now have the entire scoop we missed. Good Luck.