

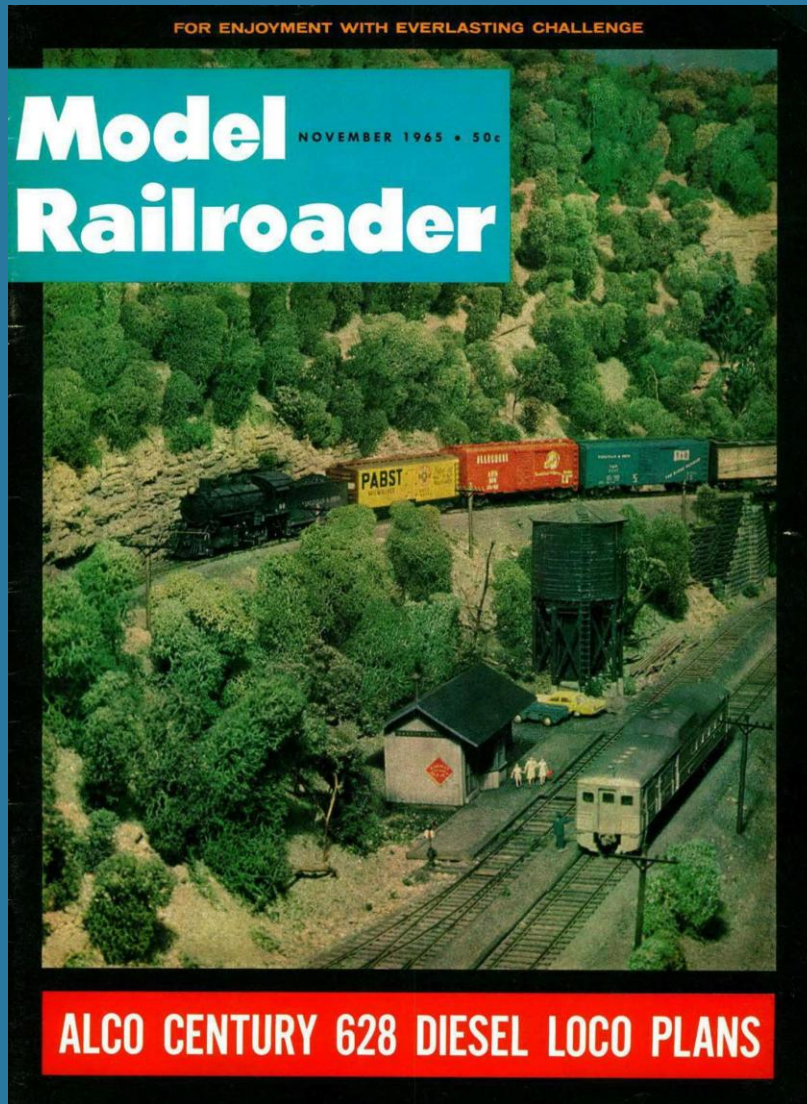


ABERDEEN
&
ROCKFISH
R.R. CO.

**Aberdeen &
Rockfish
Railroad**

The Road of Personal Service

My Initial Interest in the A&R



The day's work begins on the A&R. GP-7 leaves Aberdeen with through freight, while F-7 (now scrapped) waits to couple up to Raeford local.

A&R: a railroad you can model

North Carolina short line offers fine operating challenge, plenty of varied industries, diesels or steam

By Michael J. Dunn III

PICTURESQUE in name and in character, the Aberdeen & Rockfish RR. in North Carolina offers a broad appeal for any type of model railroader. Even the greenest beginner can purchase EMD cab and hood units (either conventional or low-profile Geeps) and put a simple version of the A&R in business almost at once. The trackwork enthusiast can have the fun of re-creating the marvelous spiderweb of Seaboard-A&R-Norfolk Southern mains, yards, and terminals. The operations devotee can concern himself with duplicating the A&R dual daily train operations.

Few short lines with as little mileage as the A&R's 45 miles send as many as two trains daily into the commercial fray. Both depart the Aberdeen shops and yards soon after 8 a.m. after picking up the overnight Seaboard interchange which provides the lion's share of A&R traffic. A new GP-18 generally heads the first train out. This is virtually a through freight, for it runs nonstop to Raeford—almost the midpoint of the line—and has few pickups or setouts as far as Skibo, almost at the terminal. The run ends at Fayetteville.

The local soon follows the through freight out of Aberdeen, but makes local

stops all along the way to Raeford. This was once handled by an F-3 no longer on the roster. The engine that previously handled the through freight, a GP-7, now takes the local.

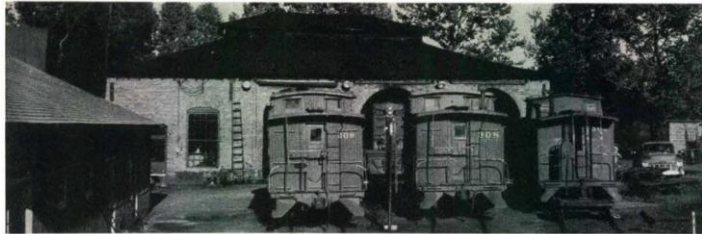
Each train makes its principal pickup from an interchange with the SAL, located in downtown Aberdeen almost in front of the handsome awninged station and headquarters offices. Nightly the two returning trains arrive about an hour apart. Each threads its way across the Seaboard's signal-dotted main lines and auxiliary tracks to set out its consist in a generously weed-grown interchange yard a mile or so below the heart of town.

Retracing their way, the two medium-blue white-striped engines bed down in the A&R three-stall enginehouse. Until lately A&R No. 40, a 2-8-2, was a companion, but No. 40 now sleeps by herself, locked away from public sight in one of several adjacent sheds. With her is a little rail-wheeled Chevy sedan of mid-thirties vintage that did official and inspection duty in busier days. The refurbished 2-8-2 is still toted out by the diesels and put on display to help celebrate occasions of state such as a recent civic anniversary celebration at Raeford. The shops at Aberdeen can handle most



A relic of past years, No. 40, a 2-8-2, is preserved and displayed at civic celebrations.

My Initial Interest in the A&R



↑Cabooses line up for their picture in front of A&R's brick enginehouse. #Aberdeen station, built in 1904, is a stately structure reminiscent of gracious days. ↓The wrought-iron balcony and summer awnings are noteworthy and seldom-seen details that are well worth modeling.



of A&R's engine repairs, but occasionally a Seaboard "loaner" has appeared on the A&R while the larger road services either of its little neighbor's machines. Similarly, a Seaboard big hook based at Hamlet handles any A&R emergencies.

Leaving Aberdeen eastbound, a train at once encounters a steep grade out of town. Growling its loudest, it creeps past lovely Bethesda churchyard where John

Blue, founder of the A&R in 1892, and his several sons lie sleeping out eternity. In their turn, the sons directed the fortunes of the road. This hill, cresting finally near Ashley Heights, severely challenges the diesels if they have generous trains. It often stalled the steamers, especially in the heavily trafficked days of World War II. On the other hand, the passenger- and mail-carrying Brill cars (one

boasting a home-built streamlined front after a wreck) walked right up. The Brills disappeared from the scene many years back. The area especially served by the local is a land of roller-coaster hills and rollicking curves that show obvious logging-road parentage. The first few miles of line east of Aberdeen was built to serve John Blue's turpentine and timber en-



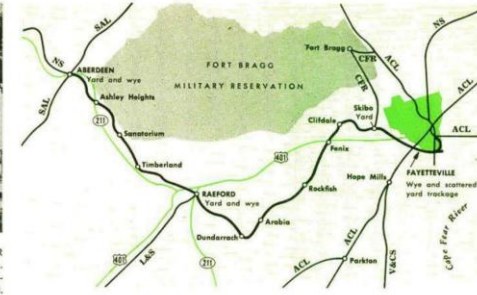
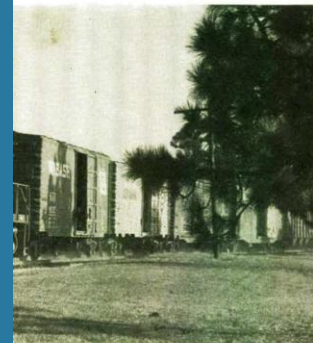
At Fayetteville a train of loaded tankers from Gulf Oil plant on Cope Fear River moves up tree-lined street to the main line. Brakeman darts ahead to flag highway crossing.



↑Pleasing background of tall trees frames A&R shops at Aberdeen. Lots of modeling ideas here. ↓Who says stub switches are extinct? Three-way turnout is Aberdeen enginehouse lead.



terprises at Aberdeen. Nearer Raeford trackage was built expressly for through railroad service and shows construction standards of the latter 1890's. Interrupting the train's progress are a number of sidings and spurs. The first serves a large fungicide plant; succeeding ones in small settlements are used for pulpwood loading and fertilizer unloading. A significant item of business is



Scale: 8 miles to 1" Main line A&R Foreign roads
A&R - Aberdeen & Rockfish
ACL - Atlantic Coast Line
CF&S - Cape Fear Ry.
L&S - Laurinburg & Southern
NS - Norfolk Southern
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V&CS - Virginia & Carolina Southern

sand, quarried in a number of lineside pits, reached mostly by the A&R tracks leading in from the east - trailing-point spurs. Whenever these are switched by the westbound afternoon train, they become facing-point spurs and the loads have to be rolled by in order to be placed behind the engine. In such cases hilly terrain can be an advantage!

The big boilers of the state tuberculosis hospital and sanatorium (mile 9) use coal ferried in by the A&R. In the days when l.c.l. freight was a major item, the freight shipments consigned to the sanatorium were set onto a little covered

platform, still standing a hundred yards or so from the coal track, by the motor car or freight crews. Farms and peach orchards join with scrub-pine woods to dominate the landscape. Reaching Raeford limits, the local infrequently switches the three tracks of two ultramodern textile plants. In the heart of town it may leave several cars for the GE 70-tonners of the Laurinburg & Southern - usually including several cars of powerplant coal, part of a continuous shipment to a station near Lumberton. On-line business for the A&R in this small city includes fertilizer and



←GP-18, a September 1963 addition, replaced the F-3. Train is passing piny area typical of line's western end. ↑Side-door steel caboose is the most modern one on the A&R.

My Initial Interest in the A&R



GP-7 and a trainload of Fayetteville pickups roll past the tuberculosis hospital warehouse at milepost 9, on the home stretch to Aberdeen.



A&R freight stops at Cape Fear Rys. interchange, Skibo. F-3, working the Raeford local turn, switches a carload of scrap at the east end of town.

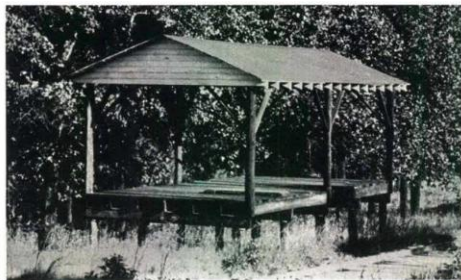
plywood. These are handled near the neat green-trimmed station and its flower gardens. In addition there is a liberal traffic in material to and from an oil mill, a concrete products plant, a feed mill, and an ice plant. Coal, scrap iron, lumber and building supplies round out the justification for the daily visit of the local. Finishing its work, the train turns back after lunch.

The Fayetteville train, which preceded the local out of Aberdeen, has traversed the level terrain stretching perhaps 6 miles east of Raeford—passing through colorfully named hamlets like Dundar-

rach, Arabia, and somnolent Rockfish, temporary terminal of the line in 1902-04. It has dipped into cool and leafy creek bottoms and angled northeast toward Cliffdale and Skibo. This portion of the A&R was completed in 1912. The cuts and fills are in marked contrast to the earlier line west of Raeford, which often simply follows the ground surface.

Likely as not the run to this point has been nonstop; there is little cause to interrupt the run except for an unusual car of feed or fertilizer for one of the hamlets. However, a wood-treating plant and a feed mill in the Cliffdale-Skibo

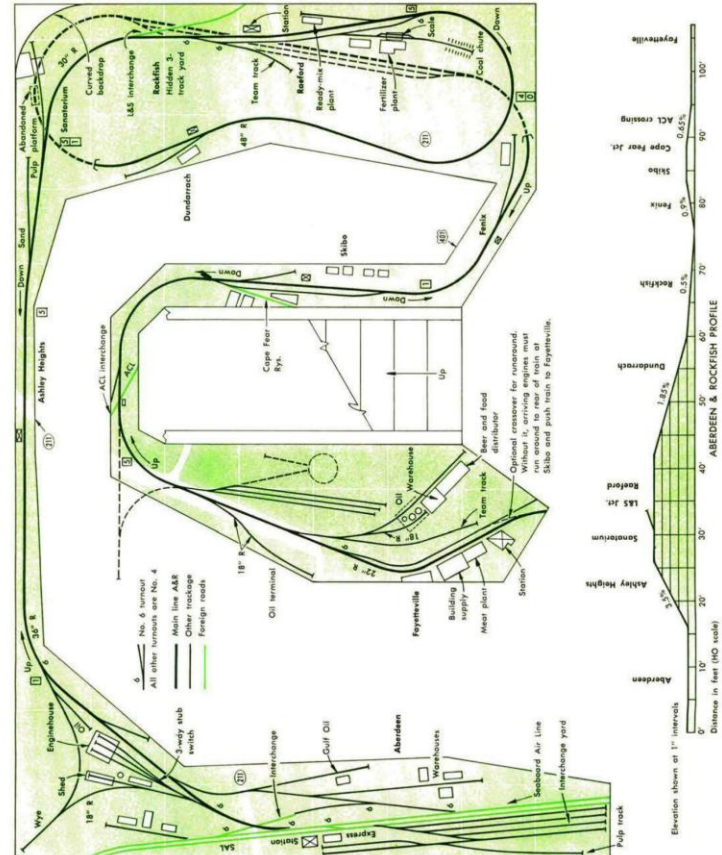
area are regular railroad patrons. At Skibo that inconspicuous track meaking in from the north is that of Cape Fear Rys., Inc. A&R crews hardly ever encounter the CF's black (leased U.S. Army) Alco road switchers directly at the Skibo yards, where interchange is made in a three-track yard holding over 80 cars. Here, during the war, as many as 500 pullmans were exchanged in a single week, along with countless other cars of military cargo for Fort Bragg. Today the interchange traffic is more modest and less colorful. An occasional open military load on a flatcar may break the monotony



Loading platform at McCain Sanatorium was used for L.C.I. shipments when A&R operated passenger runs. Dumper and heating plant at the sanatorium. Coal for this unit is shipped in by A&R.



Model Railroader



THE ABERDEEN, ROCKFISH & FAYETTEVILLE: an around-the-room track plan by Gordon Odgaard. This layout will fit into one end of a typical ranch-style basement if built in HO. The table shows key dimensions for construction in various gauges. Dimensions directly on the plan are for HO and should be adjusted accordingly for other sizes. The scenes are separated into two areas because the trackage passes under the rear entrance landing. The various portions of the plan be enlarged or condensed to suit individual requirements. As shown, the plan is a close reproduction of the prototype, with a steep 3.5 percent grade just outside of Aberdeen. There is ample room to add more industries. If you use a GP-type diesel unit for motive power there is no need to provide turning facilities at Fayetteville. Sites for optional turntable and wye are shown for those who may prefer to use a steam locomotive or diesel cab unit for motive power.

	N	TT	HO	S	O
Length of space, feet	15*	18*	23	34½	46
Depth of space, feet	9*	13*	16	24	32
Size of square, inches	12	18	24	36	48
Min. radius, inches†	12	18	24	36	48

*For N and TT gauge layouts the drawing must be adjusted for relatively broader sidings. Dimensions in table allow for this.
†Dimensions for exceptional mill and other narrow-gauge structures. Multiply by ½ for N, ¼ for TT, 1/3 for S, or 2 for O for corresponding dimensions in other gauges.

My Initial Interest in the A&R



This cotton warehouse at Raeford is typical of such warehouses served by A&R freights.



The old and the new at Raeford: old frame station, now a warehouse, and the modern one.



Oil and fertilizer plant is serviced by the A&R.

of the usual exchange of high cars and tank cars of jet fuel. The A&R does a brisk business in Fayetteville. To reach much of the concentration of customers the line crosses the double-track ACL main. This generally means a wait by the A&R until clearance is obtained. In this district are cotton warehouses: new ones of gray-painted sheet metal; old ones of red brick with dark red wood trim. Water towers are necessities for fire protection. Reached from the A&R wye are an oil bulk plant and a small warehouse. Here too is the ACL interchange at the crossing of a

Coast Line branch; beyond is the interchange with the Norfolk Southern. The A&R spans a gap between two NS branches, but little through traffic is generated by this. The A&R main line proceeds northerly along the center of a back street for the few blocks it extends to reach the terminal. Here is a sidetrack parallel to the main, plus a number of industry spurs that serve a variety of shippers and receivers. Prominent are tank car users, an oil plant, and a nitrogen dealer. A third area of activity is near A&R's small terminal station. Here, compactly

grouped, are building supply and fuel dealers, beer and meat distributors, the freight house, and public loading tracks. The railroad gets a generous share of traffic from these businesses because it controls access to the back entrances of the establishments and restricts the use of trucks that otherwise would steal most of the trade. The station itself is fronted by an imposing cream-colored brick office, handsomely groomed in the proud A&R tradition. A fourth concentration of freight activity near Fayetteville is along the River Branch. This track links the A&R main



From the front, Fayetteville station is another stately structure in the A&R tradition.



Side view shows terminal trackage at the station.



Practical rear of station is in contrast with front.



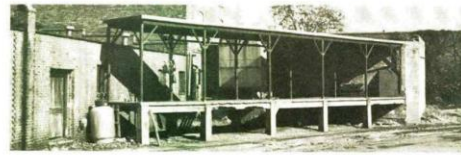
Concrete plant, another Raeford industry serviced by A&R, is notable for its tall mixing tower.

line to the navigable waters of the Cape Fear River. At the end, barges unload their cargoes for rail and truck haul. A&R serves a Gulf Oil terminal, an Esso asphalt plant, a Borden chemical factory, and a steel fabrication facility here. A&R began vigorous development of this area after 1934. Operations on this segment are particularly interesting because of the large number of tank cars handled, as well as the residential areas and open blocks traversed and the sandy, tree-arched streets down which the tracks run part of the way. The branch has promise of even more future industrial growth.

Fayetteville gives the A&R a sort of duality: justifying its running two trains and, contrasting to the rural nature of its other operations, the sophistication of a distribution, manufacturing, military, and interchange center. [This article describes the modern A&R; modelers interested in the road in its earlier steam period will find a picture of the now-retired No. 40 on the head end of a train on Ashley Heights grade, together with photos of the Chevy sedan and the streamlined-front Brill car mentioned, on page 72 of Lucius Beebe's *Mixed Train Daily*.—Ed.]



Industries at Fayetteville include meat warehouse, oil dealer's terminal, building supply firm.



Angled unloading dock at meat distribution warehouse would be an unusual touch in a model.

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The Road of Personal Service

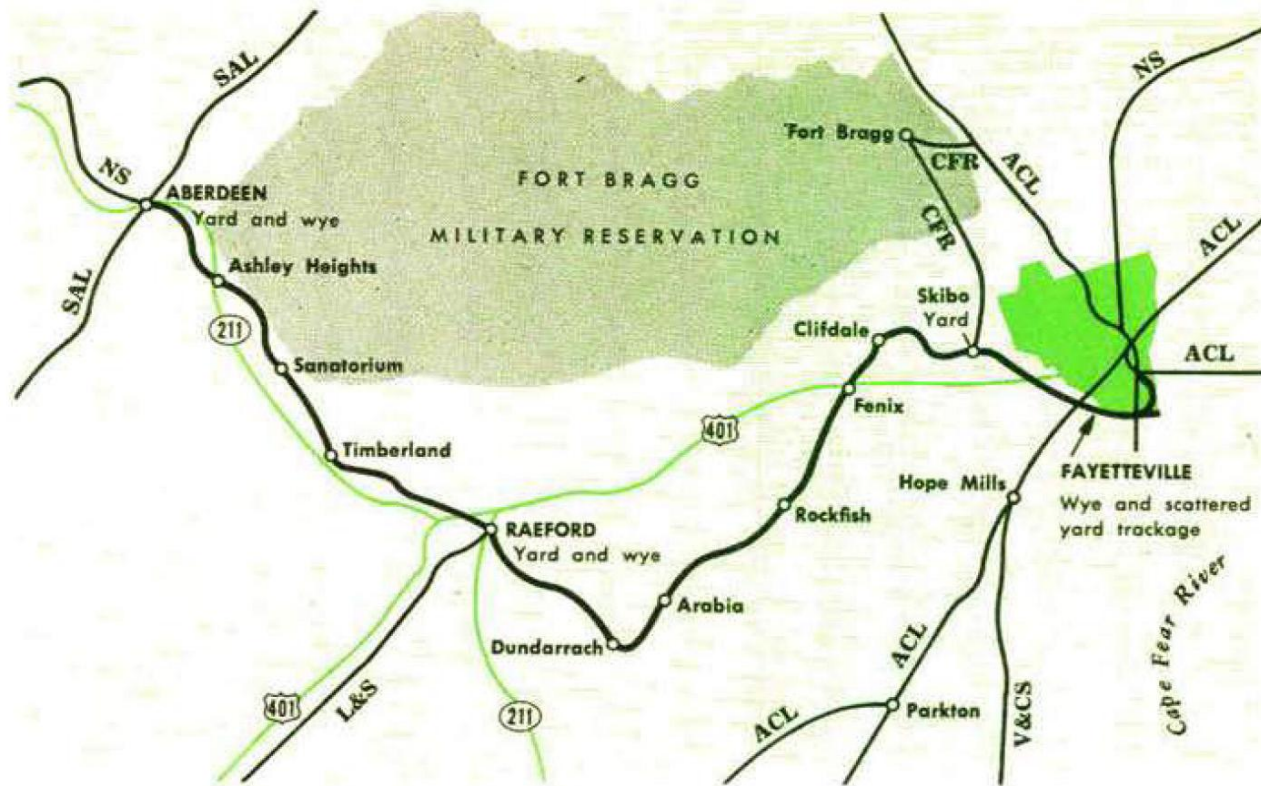


don wallworth

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Number 1 railroad in the U.S.
- 47-mile shortline railroad in south central North Carolina, first alphabetically in the U.S.
- Formed in 1892 by John Blue to support his lumber and turpentine business.
- Still owned by the Blue family today.
- Connected with three Class 1s (SAL, ACL and NS) and two shortlines (LRS & CFR).



Scale: 8 miles to 1"

— Main line A&R
— Foreign roads

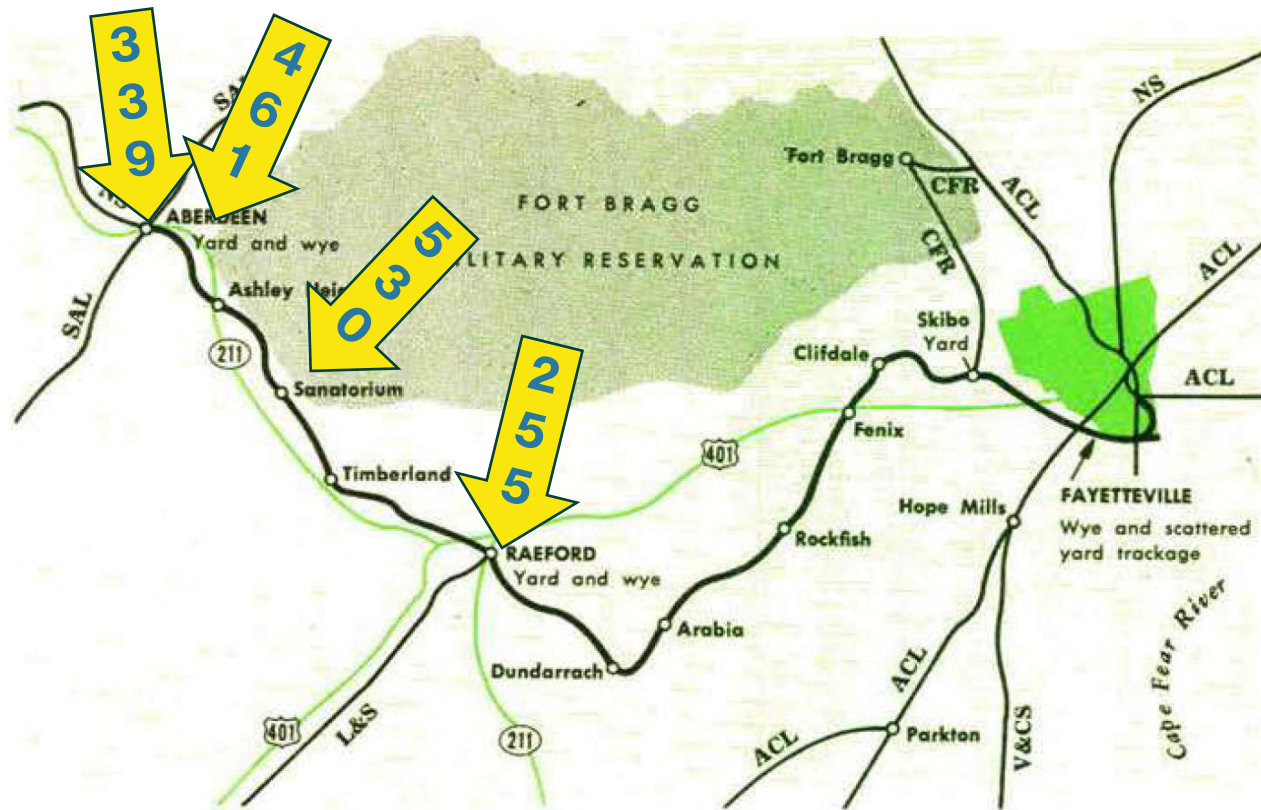
N O R T H C A R O L I N A
Aberdeen o Fayetteville
Hamlet o

A&R — Aberdeen & Rockfish
ACL — Atlantic Coast Line
CFR — Cape Fear Rys.
L&S — Laurinburg & Southern
NS — Norfolk Southern
SAL — Seaboard Air Line
V&CS — Virginia & Carolina Southern

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Aberdeen – Raeford segment built in the sand hills region
 - MP 0 Aberdeen – 339’
 - MP 1 Blue’s Y – 461’
 - MP 5 Ashley Heights – 433’
 - MP 9 McCain – 530’
 - MP 10 Montrose – 450’
 - MP 13 Timberland – 370’
 - MP 17 Saunders – 287’
 - MP 19 Raeford – 255’

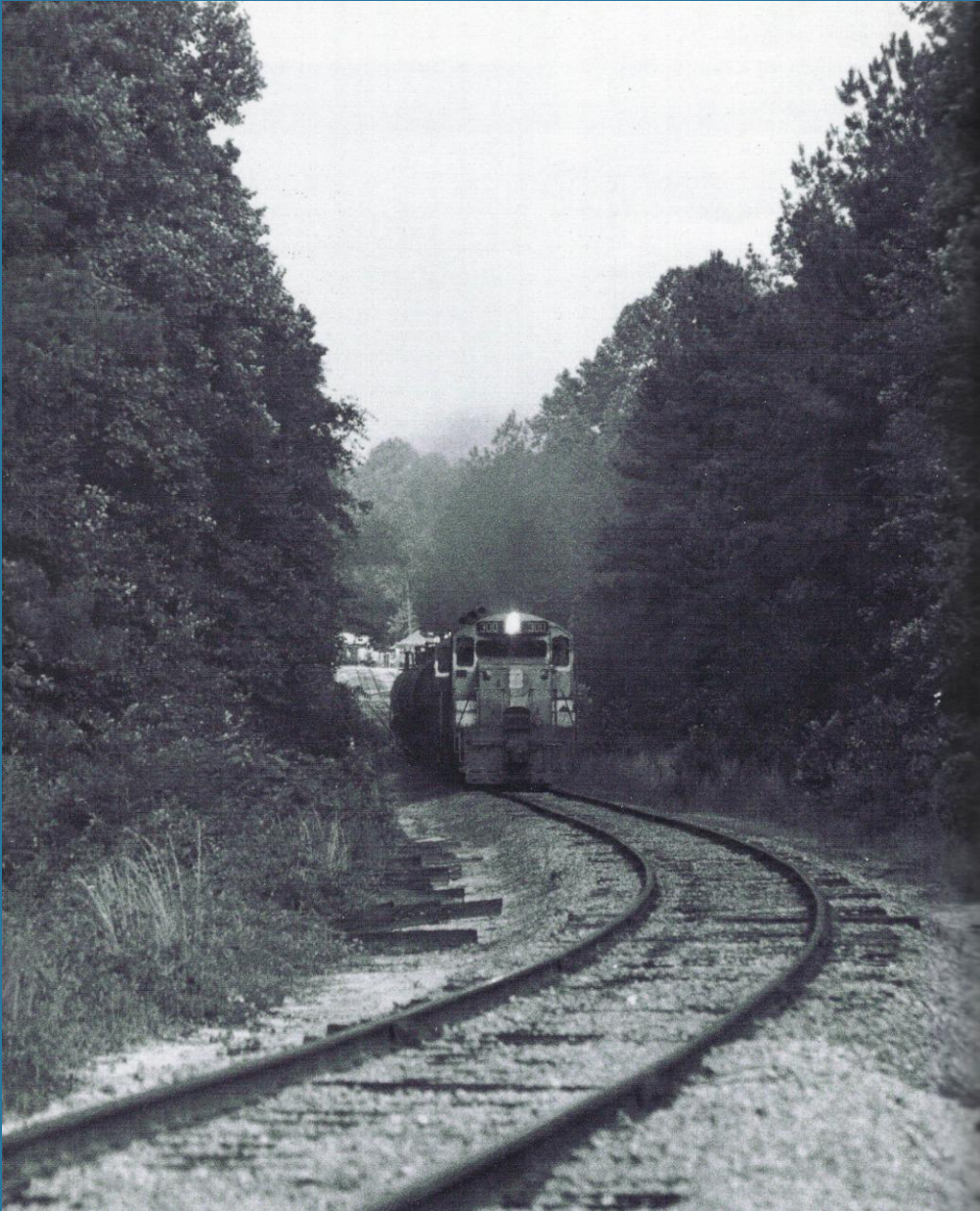


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NORTH CAROLINA
Aberdeen o Fayetteville
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Aberdeen & Rockfish

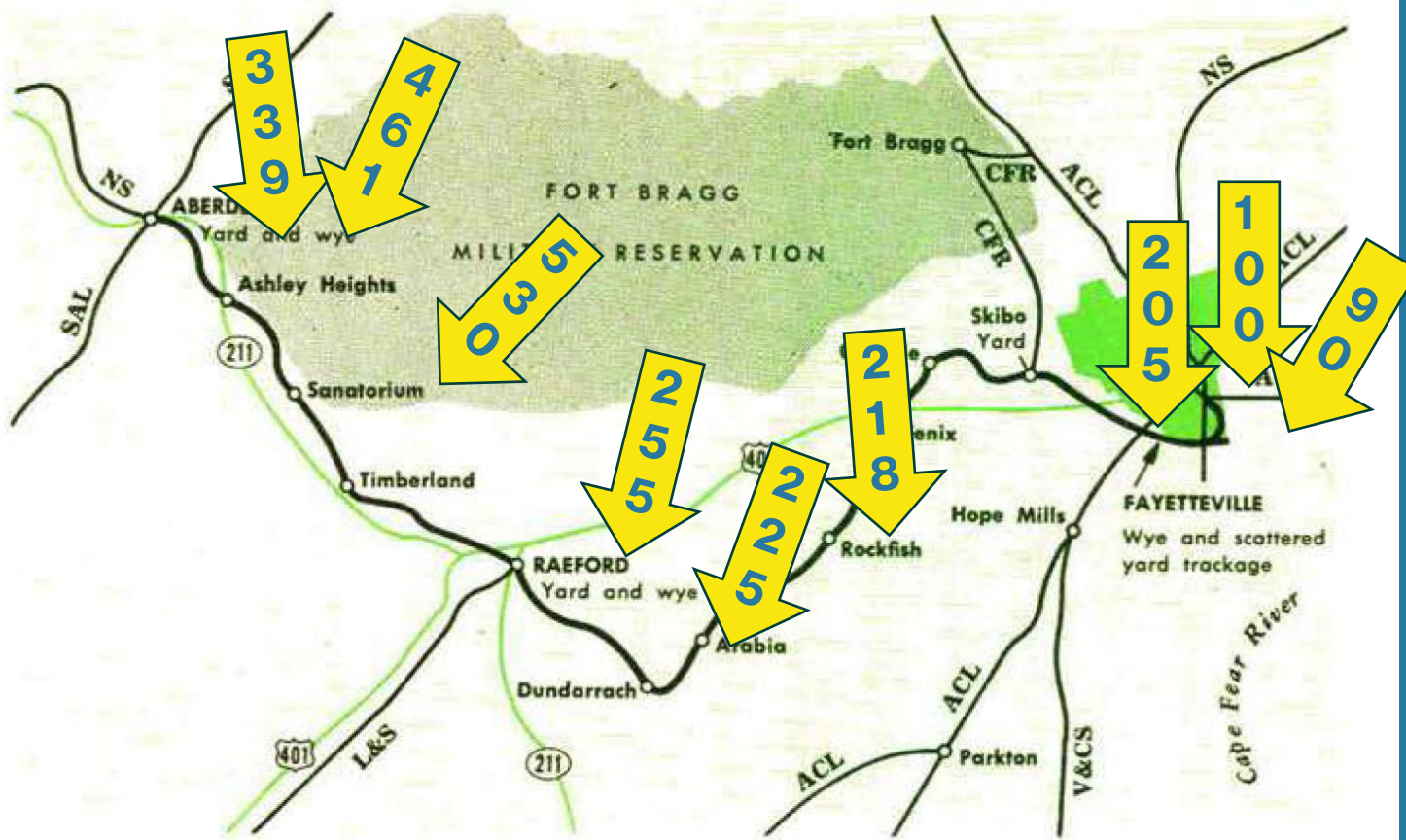
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Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Raeford – Fayetteville segment built on the coastal plains
 - MP 19 Raeford – 255’
 - MP 21 Upchurch – 242’
 - MP 24 Dundarrach – 225’
 - MP 30 Rockfish – 218’
 - MP 36 Clifdale – 237’
 - MP 40 Skibo – 216’
 - MP 42 Owens – 205’
 - MP 45 Fayetteville – 100’
 - MP RT2 River Terminal – 90’



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NORTH CAROLINA
Aberdeen o Fayetteville
Hamlet o

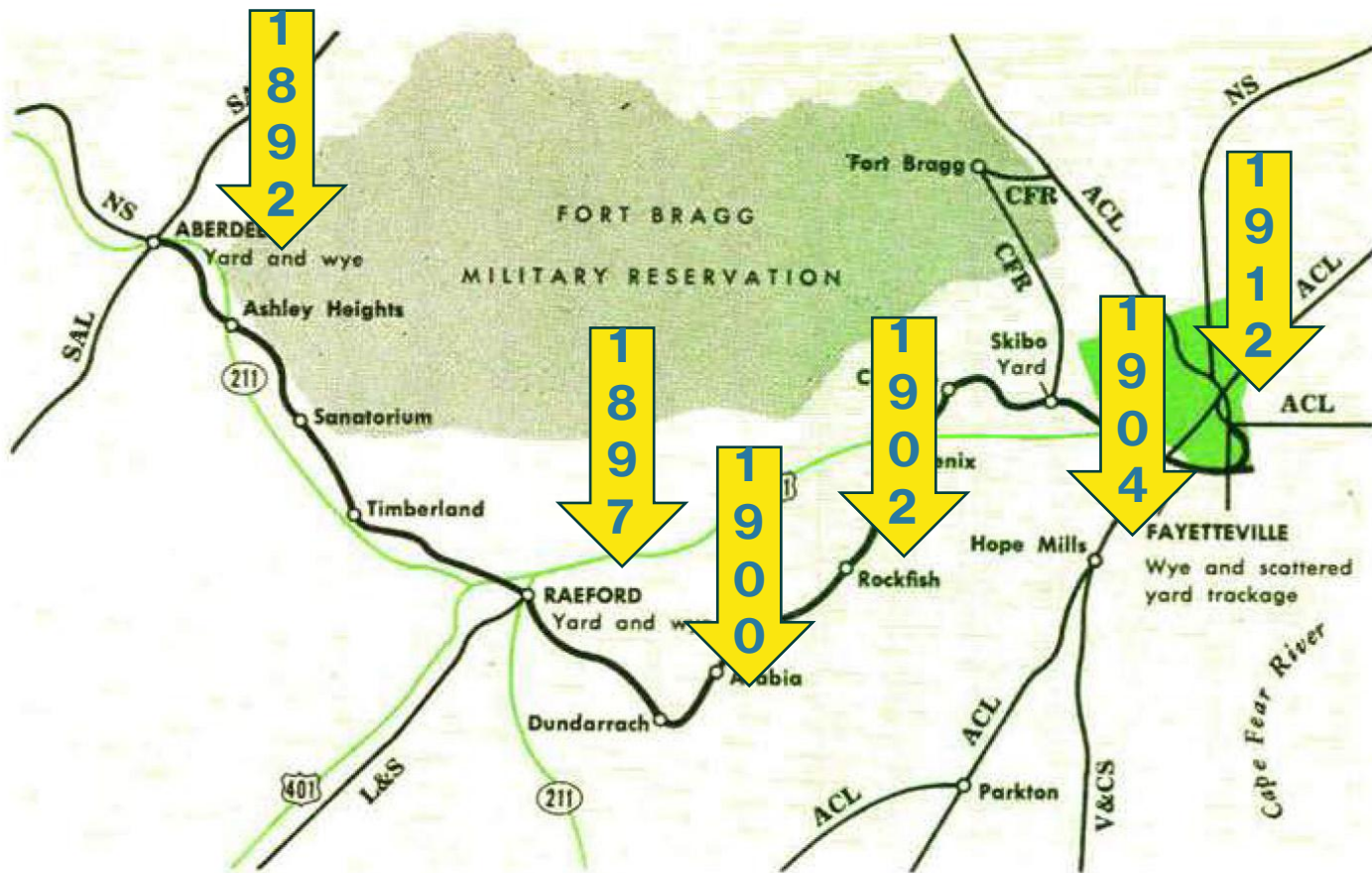


John Blue
1845 - 1922
Founder of Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad
1892

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

Founder John Blue



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 — Foreign roads

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NORTH CAROLINA
 Aberdeen o Fayetteville
 Hamlet o

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Completed to:
 - Raeford in 1897.
 - Dundarrach in 1900
 - Rockfish in 1902
 - Hope Mills in 1904
 - Fayetteville in 1912.



Aberdeen & Rockfish

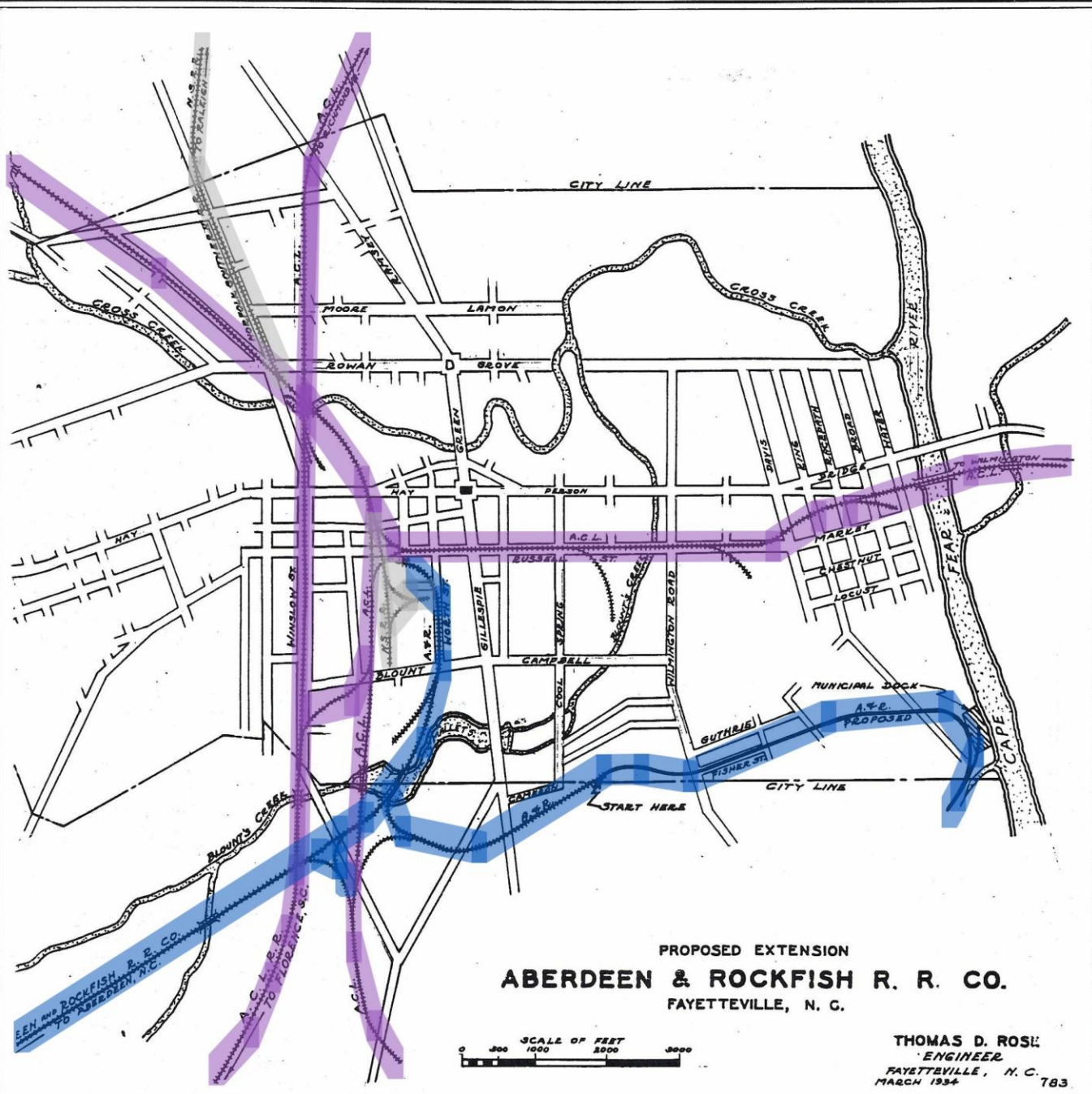
“The Road of Personal Service”

River Terminal Extension, 1934

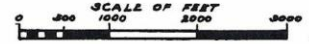
Aberdeen & Rockfish

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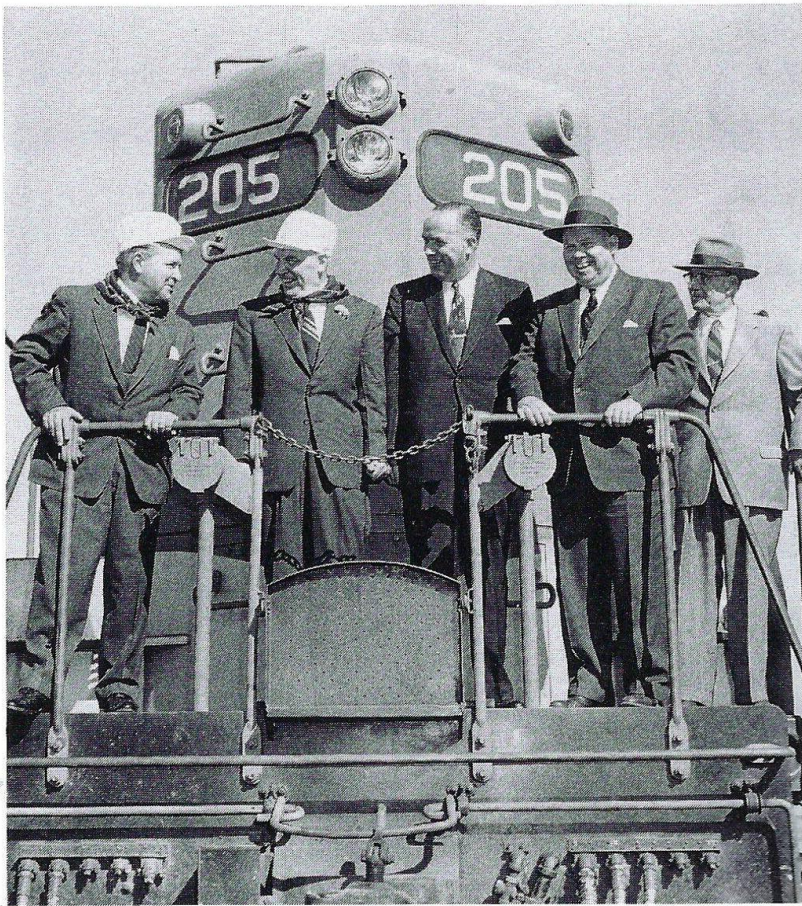
River Terminal Extension, 1934



PROPOSED EXTENSION
ABERDEEN & ROCKFISH R. R. CO.
FAYETTEVILLE, N. C.



THOMAS D. ROSI
ENGINEER
FAYETTEVILLE, N. C.
MARCH 1934 783



(l.to r.) Stanley Hope, president of Esso Standard Oil, N.C. Governor Luther Hodges, Esso division manager H.R. Dowd, A&R president Forrest Locky and A&R traffic manager George Dempsy turn out to announce the location of a new \$1,000,000 asphalt plant at River Terminal in October, 1955. The plant made material to pave roads through out the area and proved to be a mixed blessing as freight took to the new blacktop highways. A&R collection

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- River Terminal Expansion, 1950s-1960s:
 - Esso Standard
 - Borden Chemical
 - Cape Fear Feed Ingredients
 - Union Corrugating.



Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

River Terminal Today

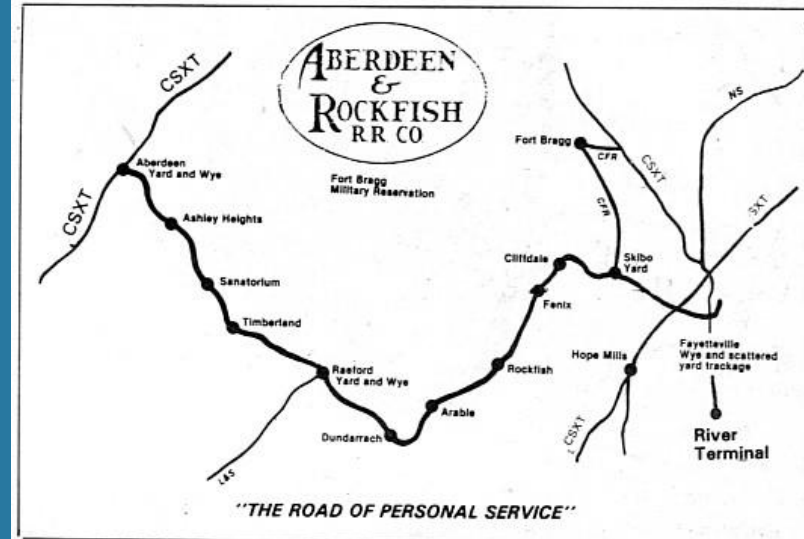
Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Aberdeen: No major customers
- Ashley Heights: Geigy Chemical, Koppers
- McCain/Sanatorium: NC State Hospital
- Raeford: Burlington Industries, Upchurch Milling, Hoke Oil Co, Farm Center, Inc., LRS interchange
- Skibo: Cape Fear Rys. Interchange
- Fayetteville: Borden Chemical, Gulf Oil Co., Esso Standard Oil Co., Cape Fear Feed Ingredients, Swift & Co., Cohen & Green Salvage, Fayetteville Bonded Warehouse, ACL & NS interchange
- Elsewhere: Pulpwood, sand, agricultural

ABERDEEN AND ROCKFISH RAILROAD COMPANY

GENERAL OFFICE: P.O. Box 917, Aberdeen, NC 28315 (919)944-2341
 TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT: P.O. Box 1845, Fayetteville, NC 28302 (919)483-3543



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 JUANITA K. BAKER, *Treasurer* Aberdeen, NC 28315
 Ms. PENNY BENOIST, *Secretary & Auditor Freight Accounts* Aberdeen, NC 28315
 CHARLES MONROE, *Vice President-Engineering Construction Roadway & Equipment* Aberdeen, NC 28315
 PAUL T. McARDLE, *Vice President-Traffic* Fayetteville, NC 28302
 VANCE H. CRANE, *Manager, Rates & Divisions* Aberdeen, NC 28315
 MARGARET BYERS, *Agent-Trainmaster* Fayetteville, NC 28302

Schedule 1—Aberdeen to Fayetteville

22	Frequency of Operation		21
Ex. Su			Ex. Su
	Km	Mi	
0730 -1	0	0	Dp Aberdeen, NC ET + Ar 1450 -1
⁶ 0745 -1	8	5	AshleyHeight, NC ⁶ 1435 -1
⁶ 0750 -1	13	8	Sanatorium, NC ⁶ 1430 -1
⁶ 0801 -1	19	12	Timberland, NC ⁶ 1420 -1
0830 -1	27	17	Raeford, NC + 1410 -1
⁶ 0842 -1	37	23	Dunarrach, NC ⁶ 1350 -1
⁶ 0855 -1	48	30	Rockfish, NC ⁶ 1335 -1
⁶ 0912 -1	58	36	Cliffdale, NC ⁶ 1330 -1
⁶ 0930 -1	63	39	Skibo, NC + ⁶ 1310 -1
⁶ 0933 -1	66	41	Owens, NC ⁶ 1255 -1
0945 -1	72	45	Ar Fayetteville, NC ET + Dp 1245 -1



Aberdeen & Rockfish

"The Road of Personal Service"



Ft. Bragg and Cape Fear Railways

Aberdeen & Rockfish

“The Road of Personal Service”

- Over the years, A&R published its train schedules in the *Official Guide*.
- Aberdeen – Fayetteville train 21 left at 8:00 AM, returned as 22 after 3:30 PM.
- Aberdeen – Raeford local (41) left before 9:00 AM, returned as 38 after 4:30 PM.
- Aberdeen in mid-1960s saw 21 SAL trains pass a day: 12 passenger and 9 freight (plus a local).
- Fayetteville also saw 21 trains – 12 passenger and 9 freight, including locals.
- Both cities were branch terminals for the “original” NS, served by a daily turn job.

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⁶ 0912 -1	58	36	Cliffdale, NC ⁶ 1330 -1
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⁶ 0933 -1	66	41	Owens, NC ⁶ 1255 -1
0945 -1	72	45	Ar Fayetteville, NC ET † Dp 1245 -1

Aberdeen Today

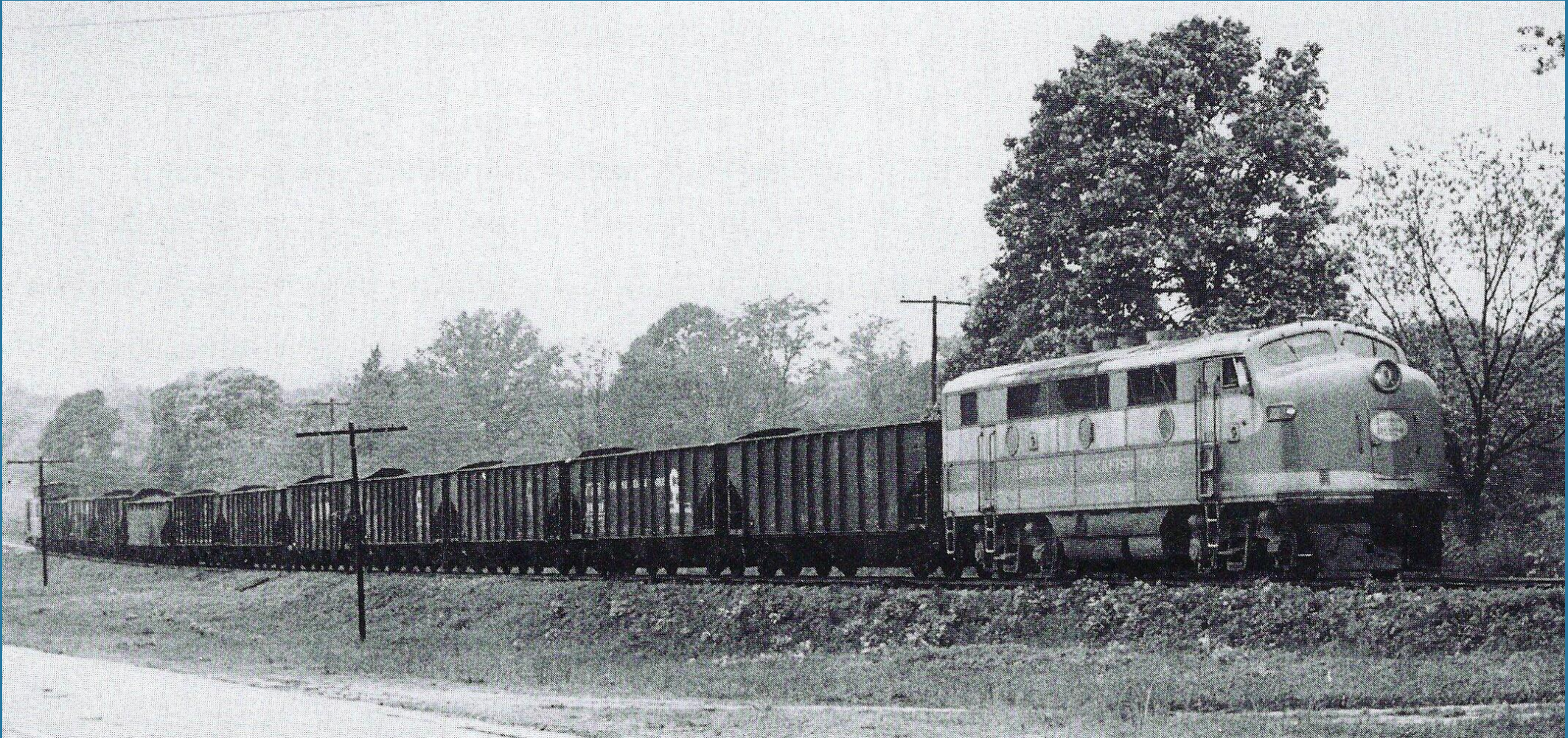


Inbound Train at Aberdeen



F3A 200 runs around its inbound train at Aberdeen, 7-62

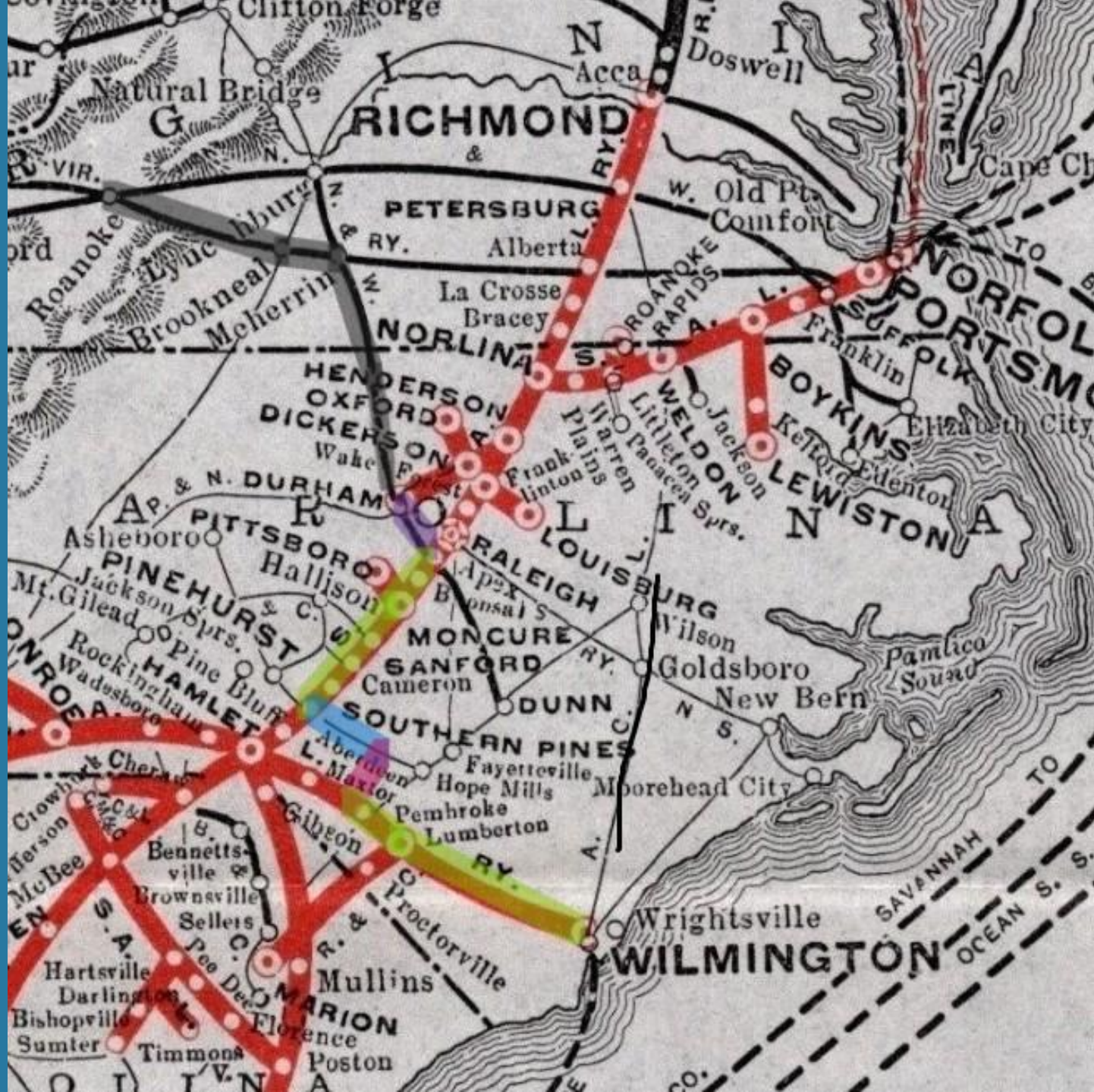
Unusual Operations



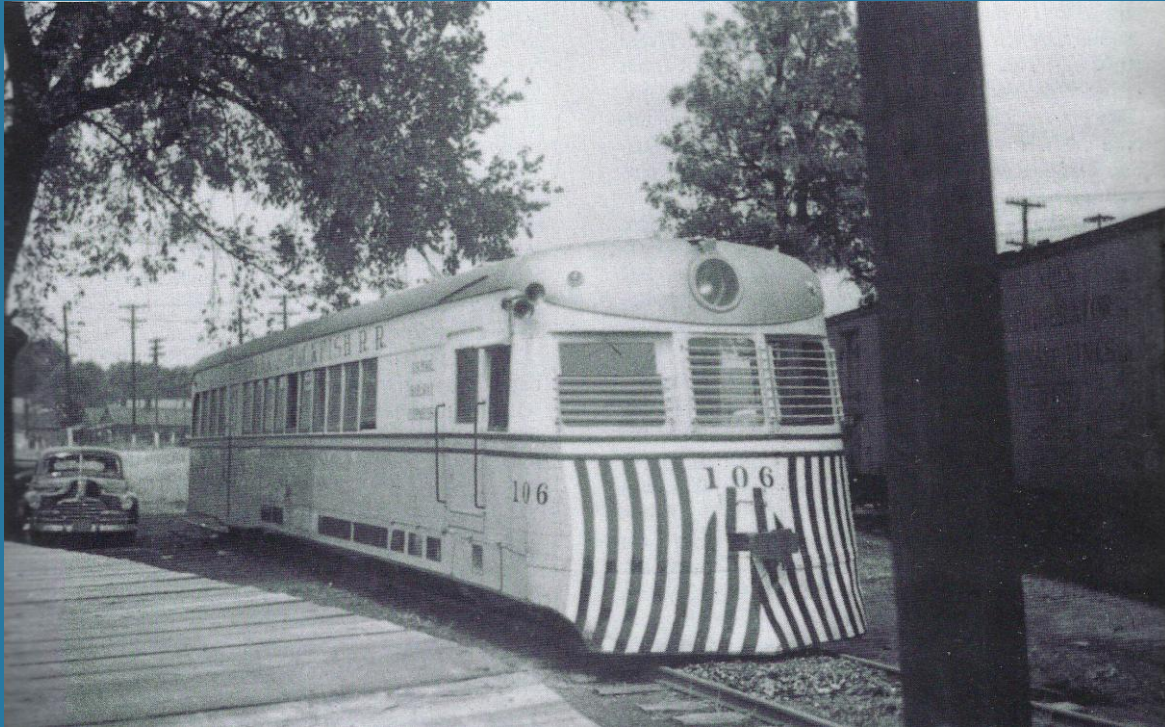
Raeford local at Timberland 7-62

Unusual Operations

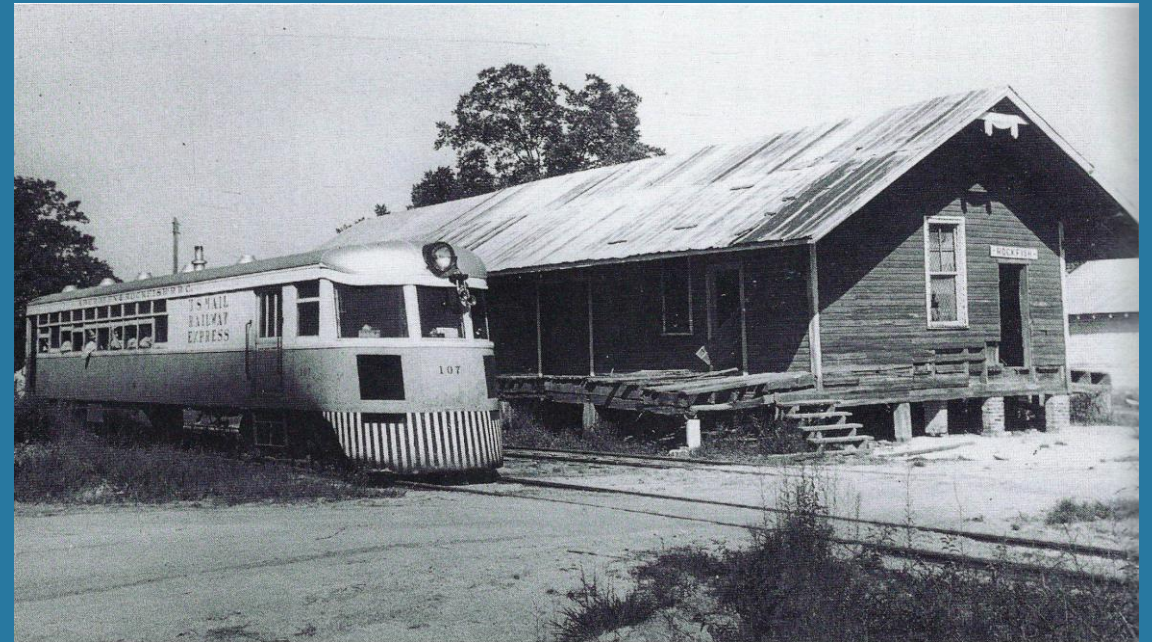
Routing of CP&L coal train



Passenger Service



Jitney 106 at Fayetteville late 1940s



Jitney 107 at Rockfish depot 8-1945

Locomotives



First diesel, F3A 200 at EMD 3/47



F3A 201 at Fayetteville, 1951

Locomotives



GP7 205 at Fayetteville 1961



GP18 300 at Rockfish, 10-1-75

Locomotives

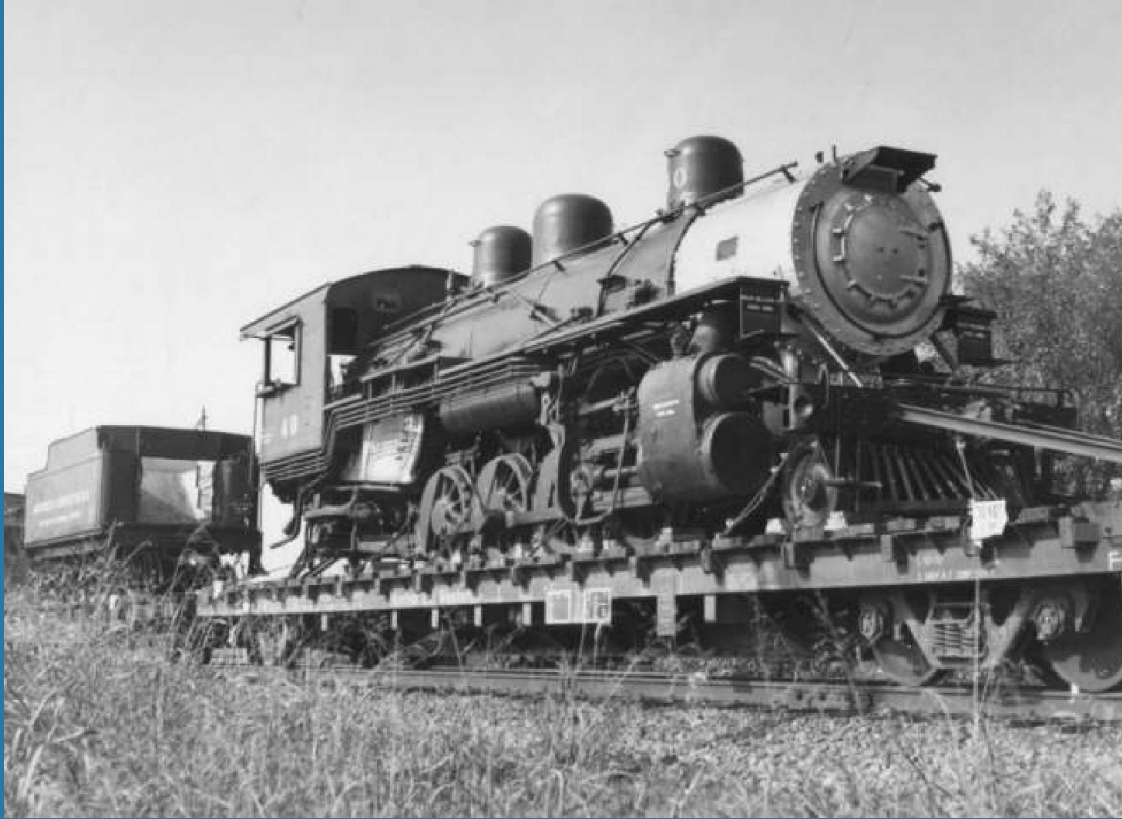


GP38 400 switches Koppers 3/88



GP38 405 at Fayetteville, 12/2019

Locomotives



2-8-2 40 departs for Valley RR, 1977



2-8-2 40 in service at Valley Railroad

Other Equipment



**1935 Chevy Inspection Car,
Aberdeen ca 1963**



**Diesel fuel tank car 307
at Aberdeen, 3/73**

Caboose



Caboose 309 at Aberdeen 3/19/65

Caboose



Caboose 303 at Aberdeen, 2/17/80



Caboose 308 at Aberdeen, 7/68

Along the Line



Aberdeen Offices, ca 1906



Aberdeen Offices, 1/2025

Along the Line



Aberdeen Union Station, ca 1900



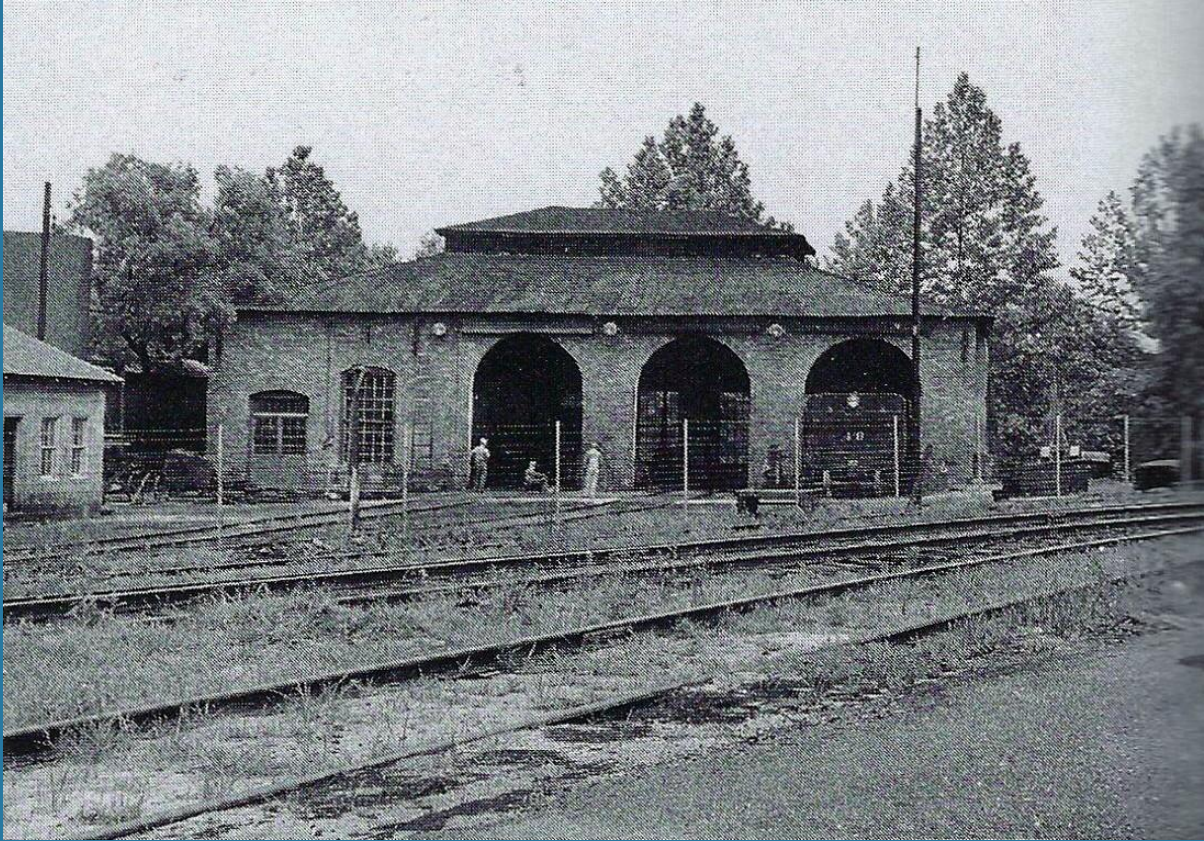
Aberdeen Union Station, 1/2025

Along the Line



Aberdeen Union Station trackside, 1/2025

Along the Line



Aberdeen Shops, ca 1940s



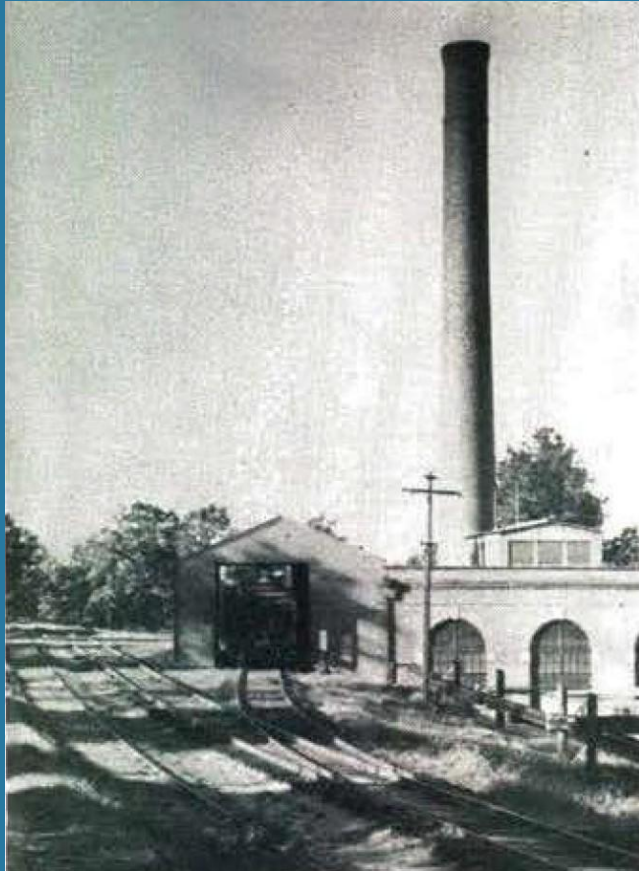
Aberdeen Shops, 1/2025

Along the Line



Aberdeen Shops 3-way stub switch, 1992

Along the Line



McCain, ca 1965



McCain, 1/2025

Along the Line



North Carolina State Hospital, 1/2025

Along the Line



Raeford depot, ca 1950s



Raeford Depot, 1/2025

Along the Line



Laurinburg & Southern GE 70-tonners 103, 104 and 105 arriving in Raeford, 1965

Along the Line

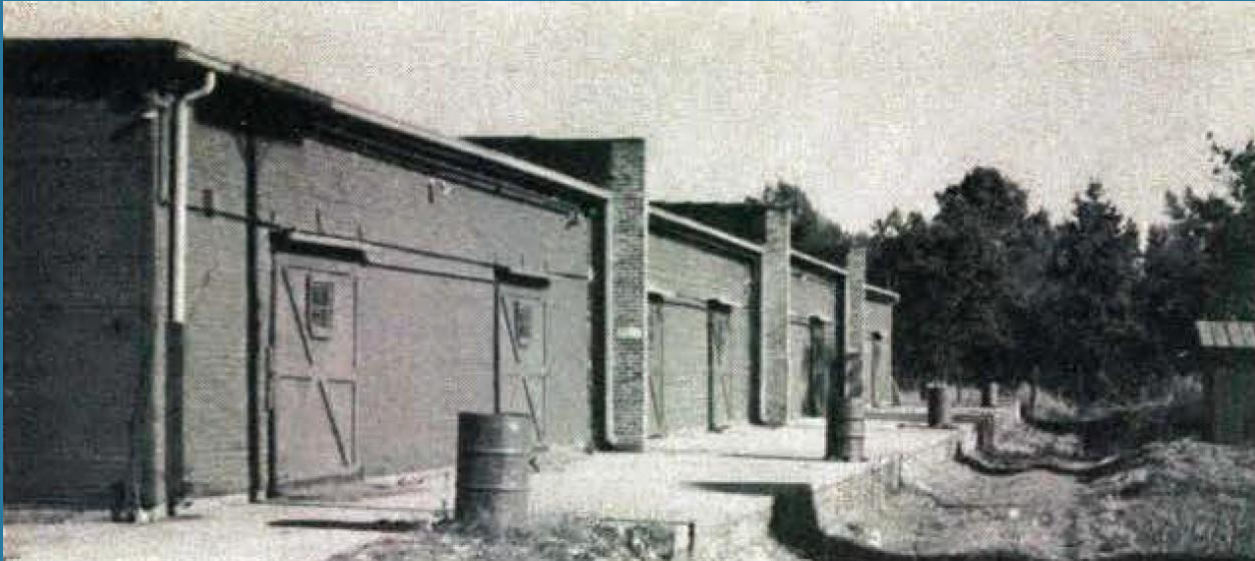


**GP7 205 switches Upchurch Milling Co at
Raeford, 6/1965**



Raeford, 1/2025

Along the Line



Raeford Hoke Cotton warehouse, ca 1965



Raeford, 1/2025

Along the Line

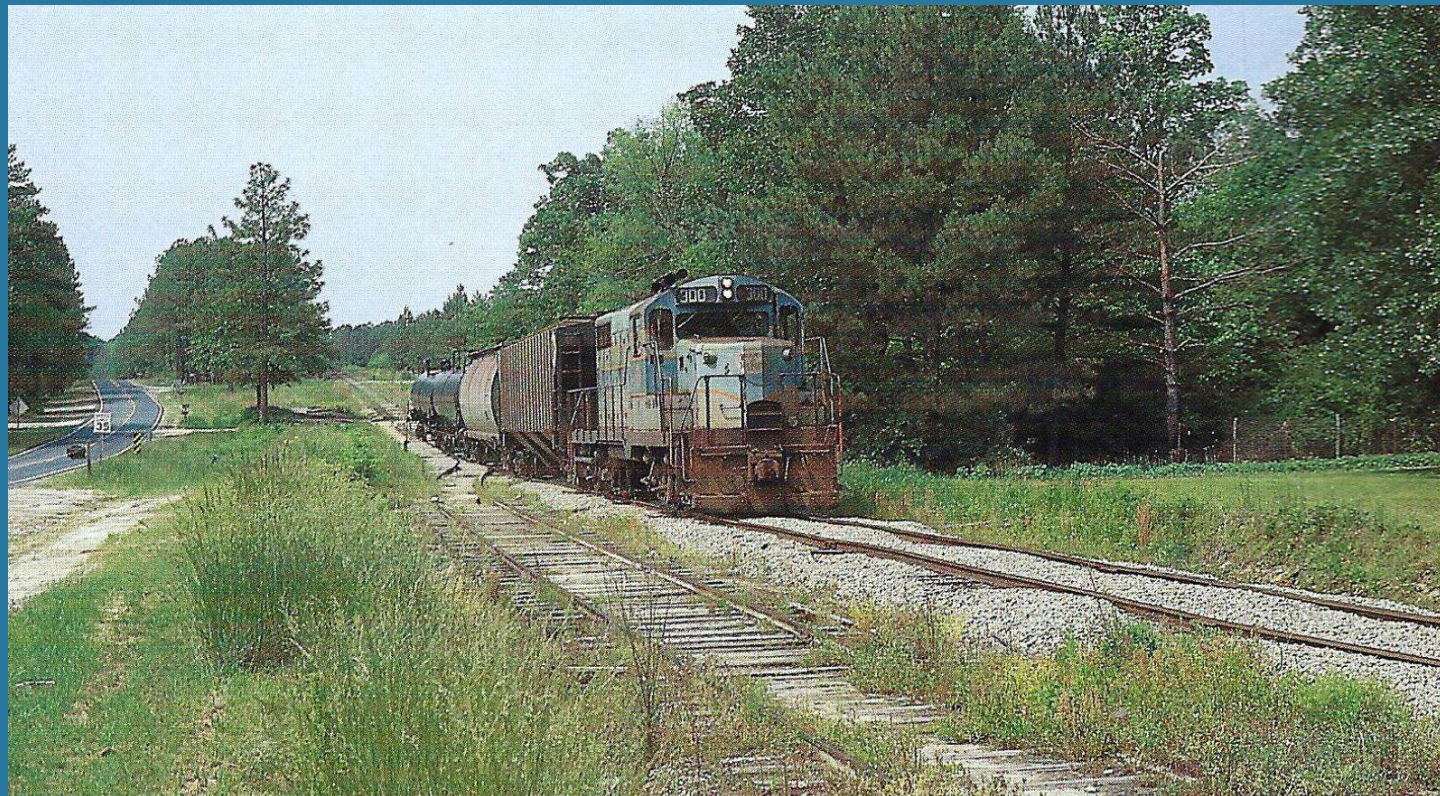


Dundarrach, ca 1970s



Dundarrach, 1/2025

Along the Line



Rockfish, ca 1960



Rockfish, 1/2025

Along the Line



**Cape Fear Rys. (US Army) RSD1 8679
interchanges with A&R GP7 205 at Skibo yard,
ca 1965**



**North end Skibo
Yard, 1/2025**

Along the Line



Fayetteville, 1932



Fayetteville, 1/2025

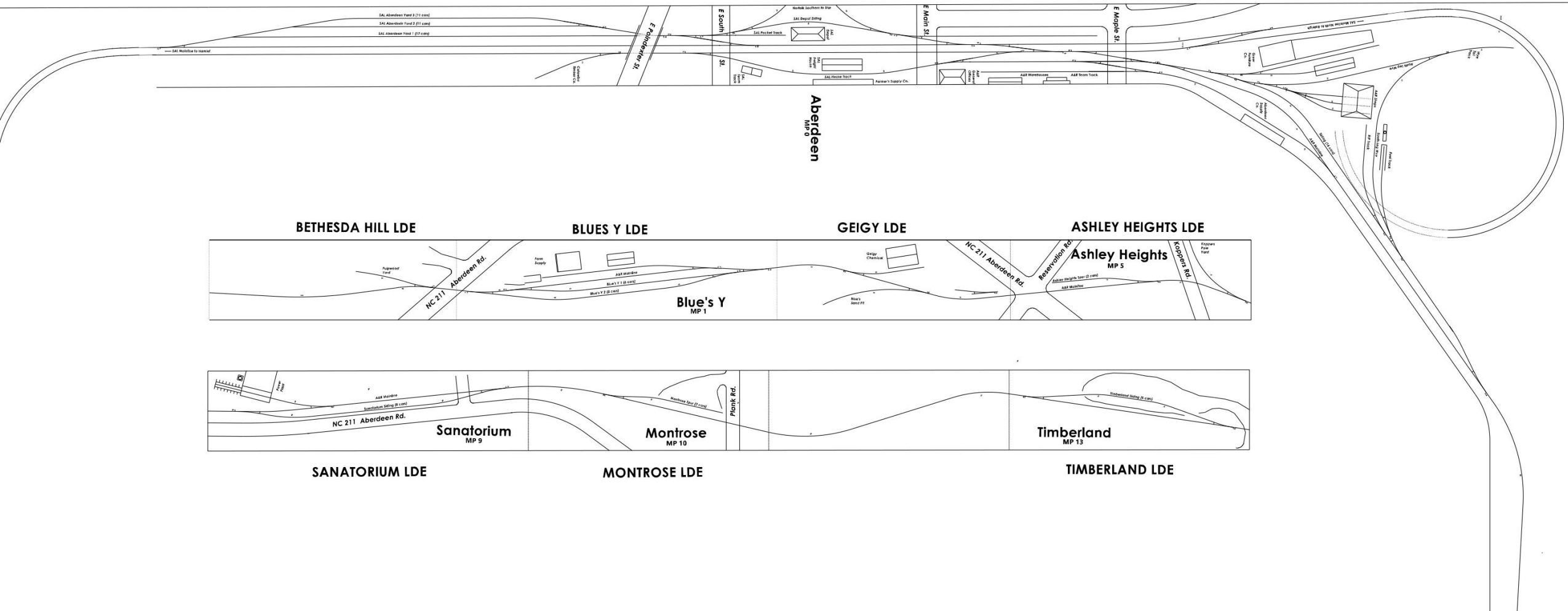
Expansion



Pee Dee River RR, Bennettsville SC

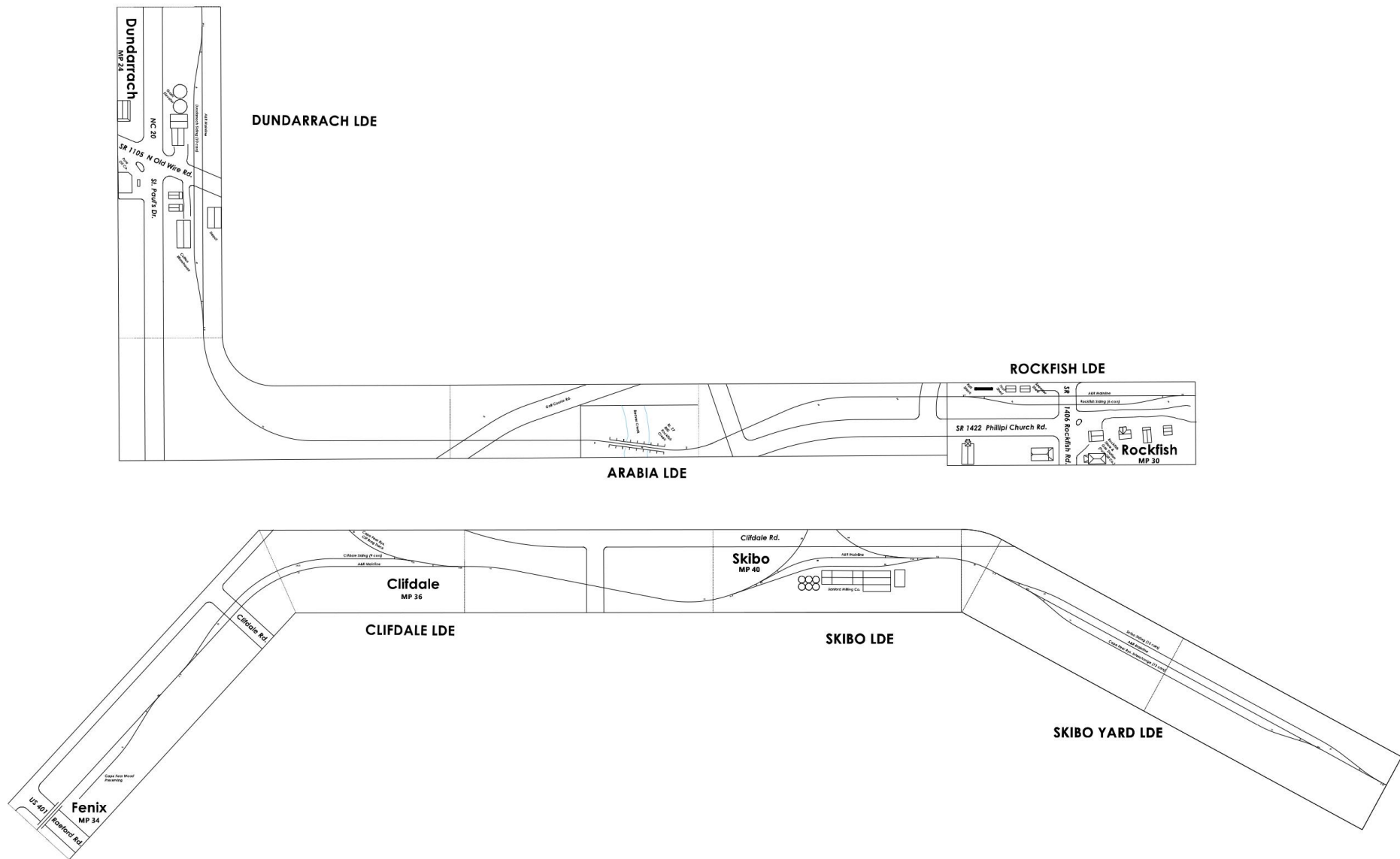


Dunn-Erwin RR, Dunn, NC



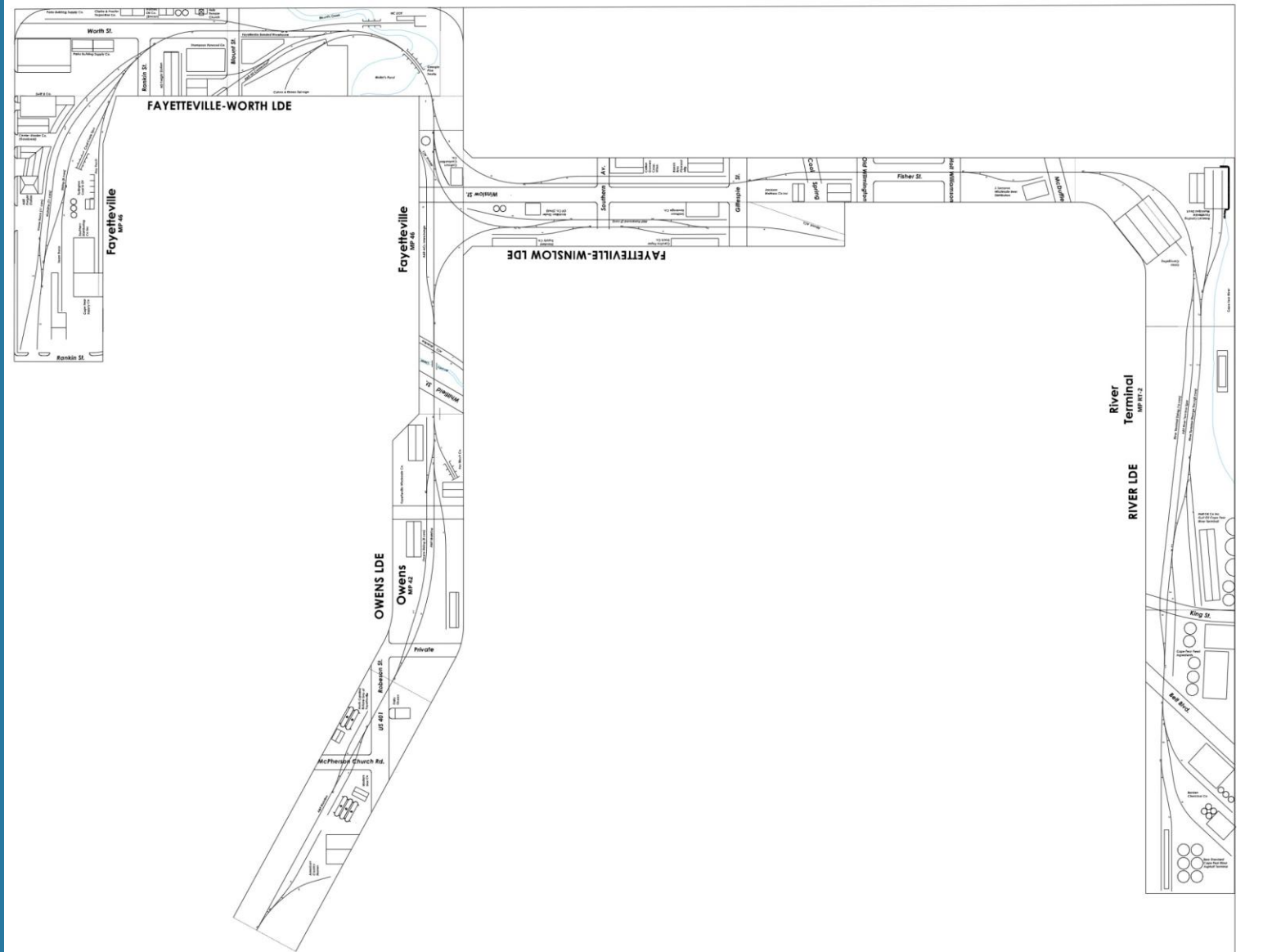
Modeling the A&R

Aberdeen to Timberland LDEs



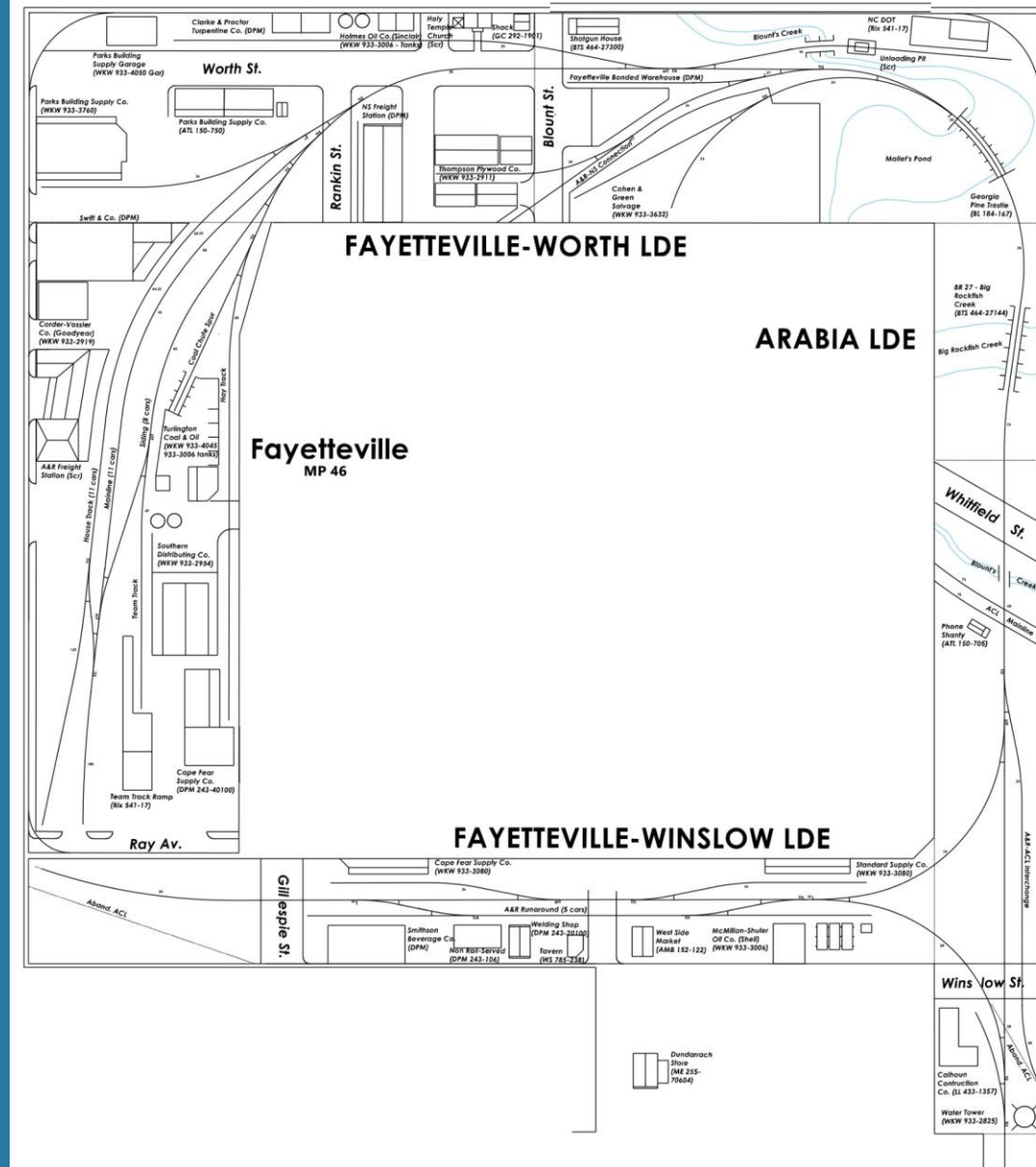
Modeling the A&R

Dundarrach to Skibo LDEs



Modeling the A&R

Fayetteville Area LDEs



Modeling the A&R

Fayetteville LDEs – Apartment Configuration

Questions?

