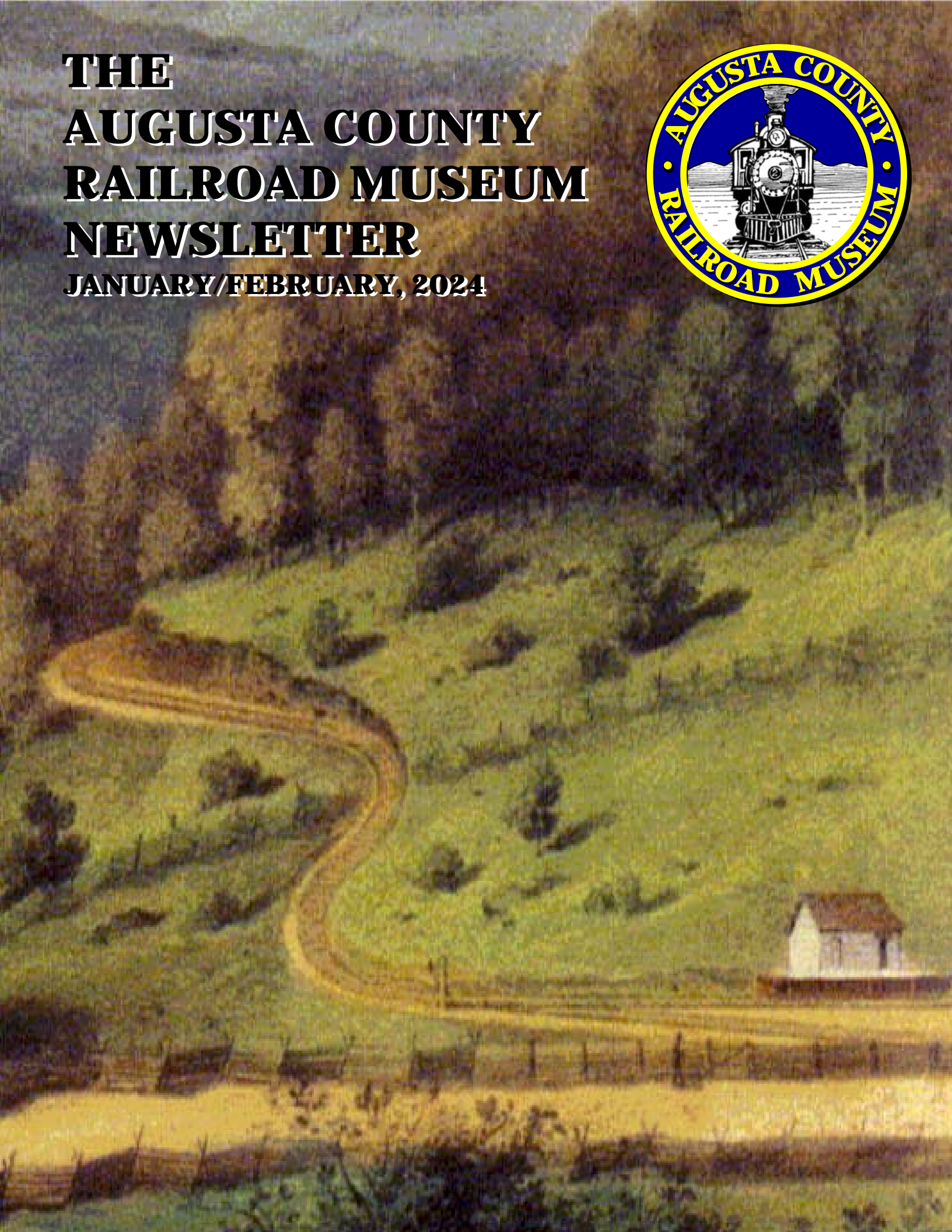


**THE  
AUGUSTA COUNTY  
RAILROAD MUSEUM  
NEWSLETTER  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2024**



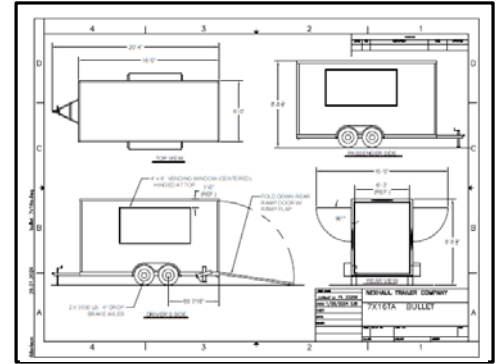


# What's Happening Now ?

## A caboose !, a caboose!, we are getting a caboose !

Not totally true.

While cabooses left the mainline tracks many years ago as technology replaced the necessity to keep railway workers on both ends of a train, the Augusta County Railroad Museum has contracted with ProLines Trailers of Rocky Mount Virginia to construct a traveling trailer shaped like a caboose. The trailer will feature an enclosed traveling layout and will participate in railfan and community activities in the region, promoting Augusta County rail heritage and tourism. Be on the look out for our caboose while traveling the local Interstate and know it's coming to an event near you. Anticipate that we will be providing you with progress updates, photos of the work to create it , and schedule for seeing it, as it progresses to completion.



Plans of the caboose include features allowing for the sides to be raised and rear ramp lowered to promote visibility and viewing access



Arrival in Staunton as the Buckingham Branch Railroad train crew gently ease RF&P 101 onto the Shenandoah Valley railroad inbound delivery track.

## GP 7 ex-R&FP 101, ODCX 101 visits Staunton for repairs

News of GP7 ex-Richmond Fredricksburg & Potomac 101, now-Old Dominion Chapter of the National Railroad Historic Society's 101 impending arrival reached Staunton about five days before it traveled from Clifton Forge to the Shenandoah Valley Railroad yards in Staunton Virginia. The locomotive was originally RF&P 104 built in 1953. The locomotive is scheduled for mechanical repairs which will be conducted with the talented assistance of Precision Locomotive Services LLC of Staunton. The locomotive previously saw excursion service on the Buckingham Branch between Strathmore and Dillwyn Virginia in May 2018. Its travels from Clifton Forge to Staunton delighted nostalgic rail fans as the locomotive was placed together once again with Buckingham Branch locomotives now serving the ex-C&O Mountain Subdivision. More historic pictures of the locomotive can be found at <http://www.rrpictures.net> and on YouTube. Search for RF&P 101. You can learn more about the Old Dominion Chapter of the NHRS at <https://olddominionchapter.com>

## Virginia Scenic Railway announces 2024 schedule for it's Allegheny Special and Blue Ridge Flyer dining excursions

The Virginia Scenic Railway has opened ticket reservations for it's Allegheny Special and Blue Ridge Flyer dining excursions commencing January 20, 2024 – June 30, 2024. This season, the AUGUSTA dining car (44 seats) joins the ARVONIA (34 seats) on each trip. Two journeys depart Staunton's downtown station on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The Allegheny Special departs at 10:30 a.m. heading to Goshen and return; while the Blue Ridge Special departs at 3:30 p.m heading to Ivy and return. The ticket price is \$120 per person. Tables are sold as two seats or four seats, meal choices are selected at time of reservation. Rides will depart from the Amtrak station in historic downtown Staunton. Please allow plenty of time to find parking. Check ticket availability at <https://www.virginiascenicrailway.com>



Interior dining area of the newly refurbished AUGUSTA dining car.



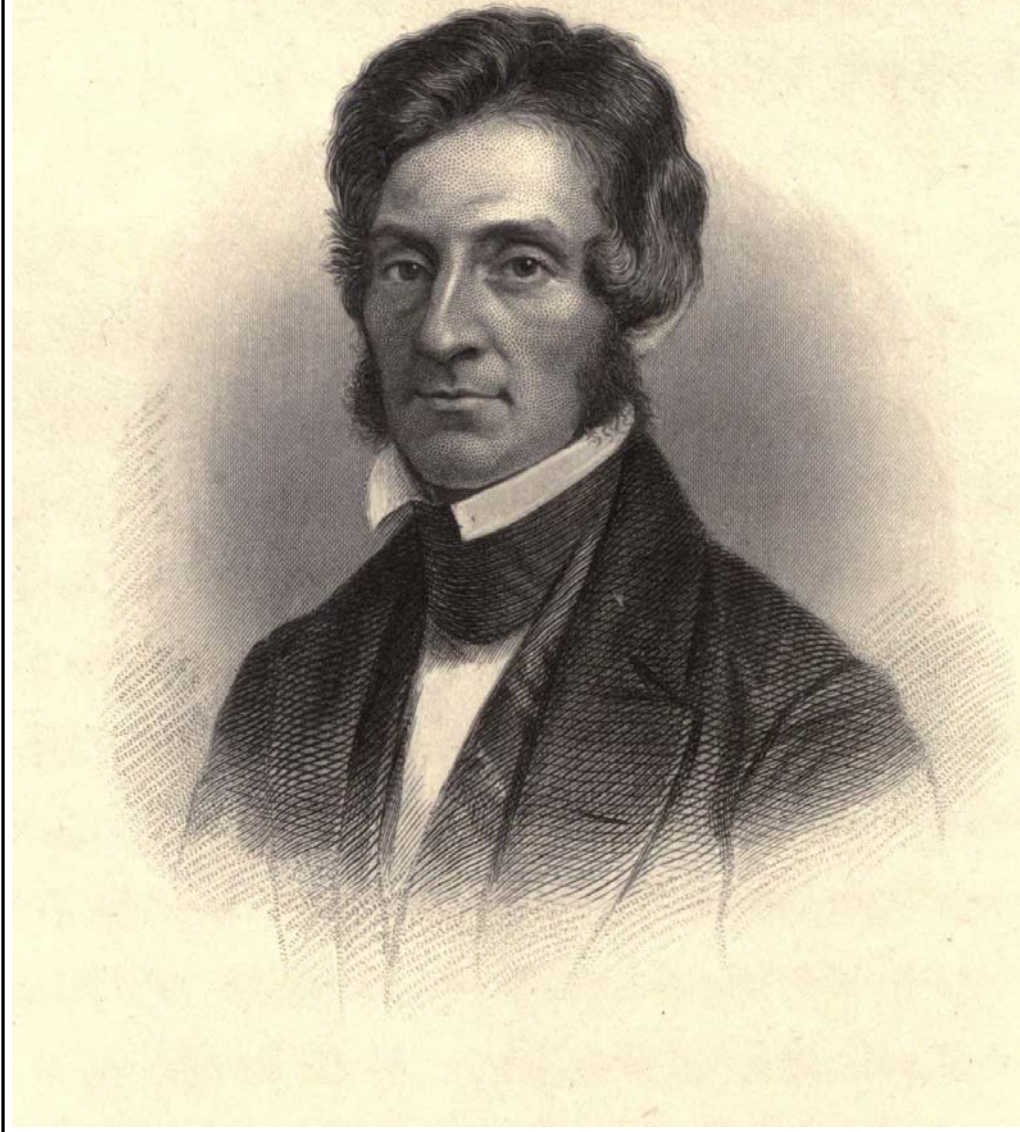
## Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society schedules it's 2024 George Washington Train Show for March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

The Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society has scheduled it's 2024 George Washington Train Show on March 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and then on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Visiting areas will include the C&O Heritage Center at 701 Main St, the Clifton Forge Fire Department at 701 Church St, as well as a series of historic presentations at Mountain Gateway Community College, Warren Hall, 1000 College Dr., Clifton Forge Virginia. The Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society headquartered in Clifton Forge serves as the premiere custodian and repository for the vast document collection that allows the Society to publish its regular magazine and specialized books. Admission is \$5.00. You can find more specific information online at the museum's website <https://cohs.org/heritage>





## Charles Ellet Jr., who is he ?



Col. Charles Ellet Jr. as rendered by H. B. Hall engraver in *Lives and works of civil and military engineers of America*, Charles B. Stuart's, D. Van Nostrand New York, 1871, opposite p.257 (Courtesy Wikipedia)<sup>1</sup>

For most people, Charles Ellet Jr. is unheard of. That would be certainly understood unless you live near one of his remaining achievements. In only a few instances you might investigate him further, as almost everything that is old in America was built by someone. Another person is just another person.

As the Museum began the study of the work by the Virginia Central Railroad to cross into Augusta County, three names stood out. There was William Kuper, who surveyed westward passage to Harrisonburg by Swift Run Gap, and offered comparison to westward passage by Rockfish Gap to Staunton. Then the very notable Col. Claudius Crozet of the

Virginia Board of Public Works in charge of the Blue Ridge Railroad and tunnel construction and strangely there was a third, Col. Charles Ellet Jr. as chief engineer of the Virginia Central Railroad. Certainly there was a role to be played in 1854 as the Chief Engineer of the Virginia Central Railroad.

As described in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biographies*, Volume 4, James T White New York 1895, page 360<sup>2</sup>; which begins

**“ELLET, Charles**, civil and military engineer, was born at Penn's Manor, Bucks County, Pa., Jan. 1, 1810. (He was the sixth child of 14 born to

Charles Ellet Sr. and Mary Israel.) His father was a farmer, and in farm work the boy passed his life until the age of sixteen, when he was sent to school at Bristol, Pa., where he developed a special fondness for mathematics and decided to become an engineer.

He commenced his career as a rod-man measuring for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” holding a sixteen and one half foot pole ( a linear rod commonly marked with measured delineations ) that can be sighted using a survey compass to determine offsets and distances.



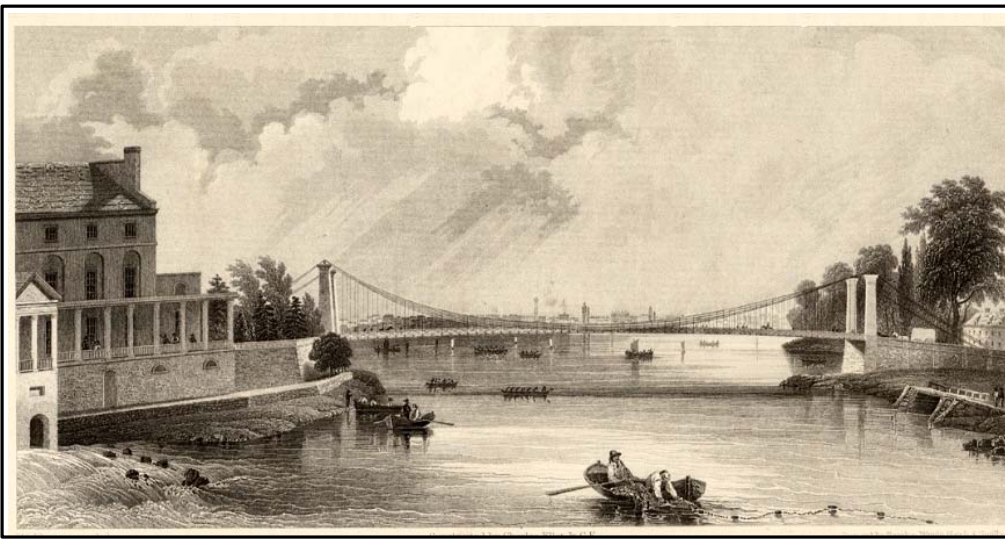
Early American survey tools consisted of a chain (20 links, that could be stretched to 66 feet), survey compass, slide rule, and rods (not pictured) (Courtesy American Philosophical Society)<sup>3</sup>

At the age of eighteen he was assistant surveyor of Maryland, working for Benjamin Wright as a volunteer and then promoted with salary to Assistant Engineer of the Fifth residency.

Benjamin Wright was prominent in early American Civil Engineering. He served as chief engineer of the Erie Canal and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and later hailed as “Father of American Civil Engineering”.<sup>4</sup>

Having saved enough money to study in Europe, he boarded a sailing vessel headed to Paris France. Armed with a letter of introduction to the Marquis Lafayette, both Lafayette and the American Ambassador “pulled strings” to enroll Charles in the “L'Ecole Polytechnique de Ponts and Chaussées”<sup>5</sup> (*trans.* Technical School of Bridges and Highways) Charles studied bridge construction and the use of new construction materials, such as twisted steel wire. After studying four months, he toured Europe and became a firm believer in the use of twisted wire for

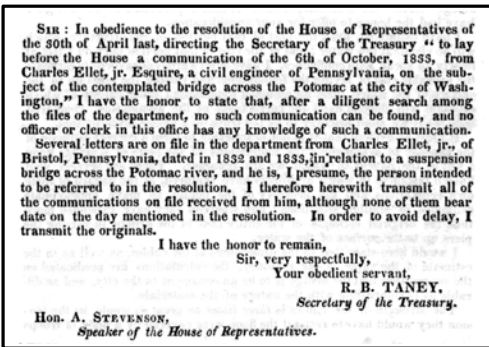




The Fairmont Bridge in Philadelphia as illustrated in an engraving. It was the first wire suspension bridge in America. (Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress)

suspension bridge construction.

Returning to America he began his new career in civil engineering by proposing to Congress the construction of a suspension bridge in the vicinity of Georgetown in Washington D.C.



Cover letter to a proposal submitted to Congress. (Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress)

But the endeavor did not prove successful as the technology was unproven, as well as, it was felt he was too young and inexperienced.

He found employment as the Assistant Engineer of the Utica and Schenectady Railroad and then a position as surveyor on the New York and Erie Railroad with Benjamin Wright.

Both Benjamin Wright and Charles Ellet Jr. found follow-on assignments on the James River and Kanawha Canal Company. Charles Ellet was assign the third section from Tye River to Lynchburg Va. and took lead of a survey crew, mapping the path, and formulating the solicitations for proposal. After Benjamin Wright departed to another employment

opportunity, Charles Ellet was appointed Chief Engineer and continued to work the position until 1839, with the work of construction completed in 1840. Ironically history would repurpose the tow path March 5<sup>th</sup> 1880 as the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad.

Charles returned to Philadelphia to write *An Essay on the Laws of Trade*. He submitted a proposal to St Louis for a suspension bridge crossing the Mississippi and began surveys of Philadelphia.

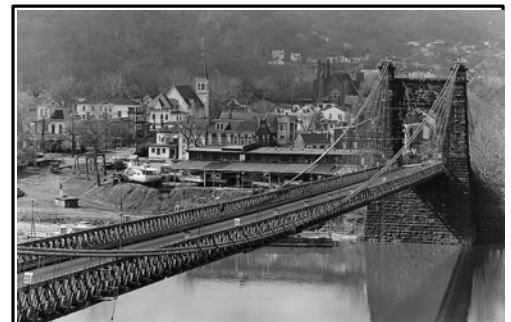
In 1842, he successfully bid and constructed the first suspension bridge in America at Fairmont Pennsylvania.

He continued by writing *The Position*

and *Prospects of the Schuylkill Navigation Company* as a proponent of canals hauling coal in competition to the newly constructed Reading Railroad. His canal advocacy endeared the stockholders and they employed him as President of the Schuylkill Navigation Company. As President, 1846-1847, he surveyed and enlarged the canal to accommodate larger barges and completed that task.

His next project was the proposal and construction of the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge. Begun by sailing a kite across the river, the 800 foot bridge spanned the Niagara River and was constructed as a temporary bridge in 1848. It later received a carriage way and finally a railroad in 1855.

Following litigation with the Niagara Bridge project, Charles moved on to the proposal and construction of the Wheeling Virginia (now West Virginia)



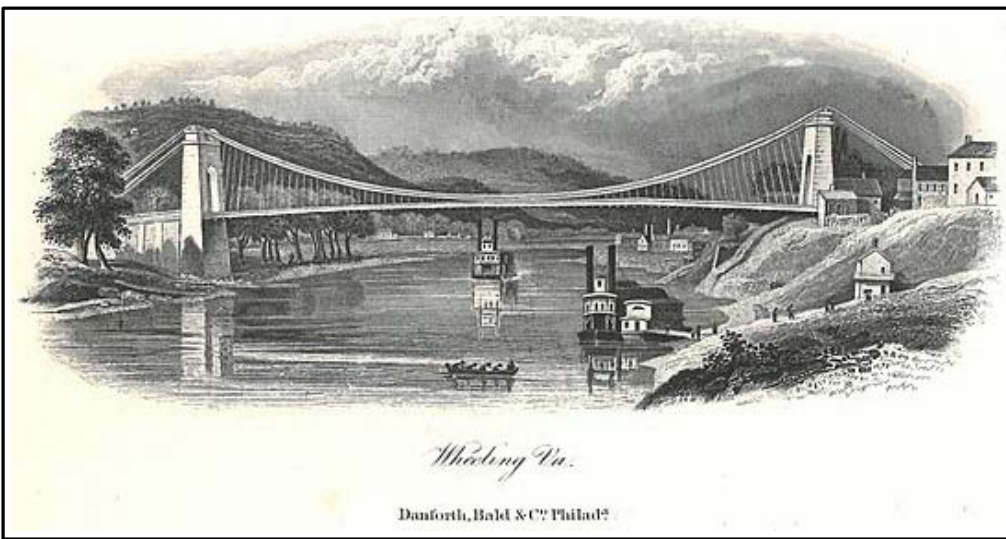
The Wheeling Suspension Bridge, from 1848-1851 it was the largest suspension bridge in the world. (Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress)



The Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge designed by Charles Ellet Jr. and constructed as a temporary bridge in 1848. It was later completed by John August Roebling in 1855 (Courtesy Wikipedia)







The Wheeling Bridge in Virginia as illustrated in an engraving. At the time of its construction it was the largest suspension bridge in the world. (Courtesy Wikipedia)

Bridge.

This bridge also found itself in litigation. The steam boating interests argued that it blocked the river passage, and the Supreme Court ruled in their favor. Charles immediately lobbied Congress and passed into law, that the bridge served as a postal route, and the Supreme Court did not have authority to rule in the steamboat interests. The bridge later suffered damage in a storm and was repaired. It remains in use today.

With three historic bridges, Charles was becoming notable in civil engineering circles, the U.S. War Department commissioned him to conduct a study of the Mississippi delta, for which he

published as *The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers*.

Charles then became the chief engineer for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and later submitted a second proposal for a suspension bridge at Georgetown Maryland titled, *Report on a Suspension Bridge Across the Potomac, for Railroad and Common Travel*<sup>6</sup>, in 1852.

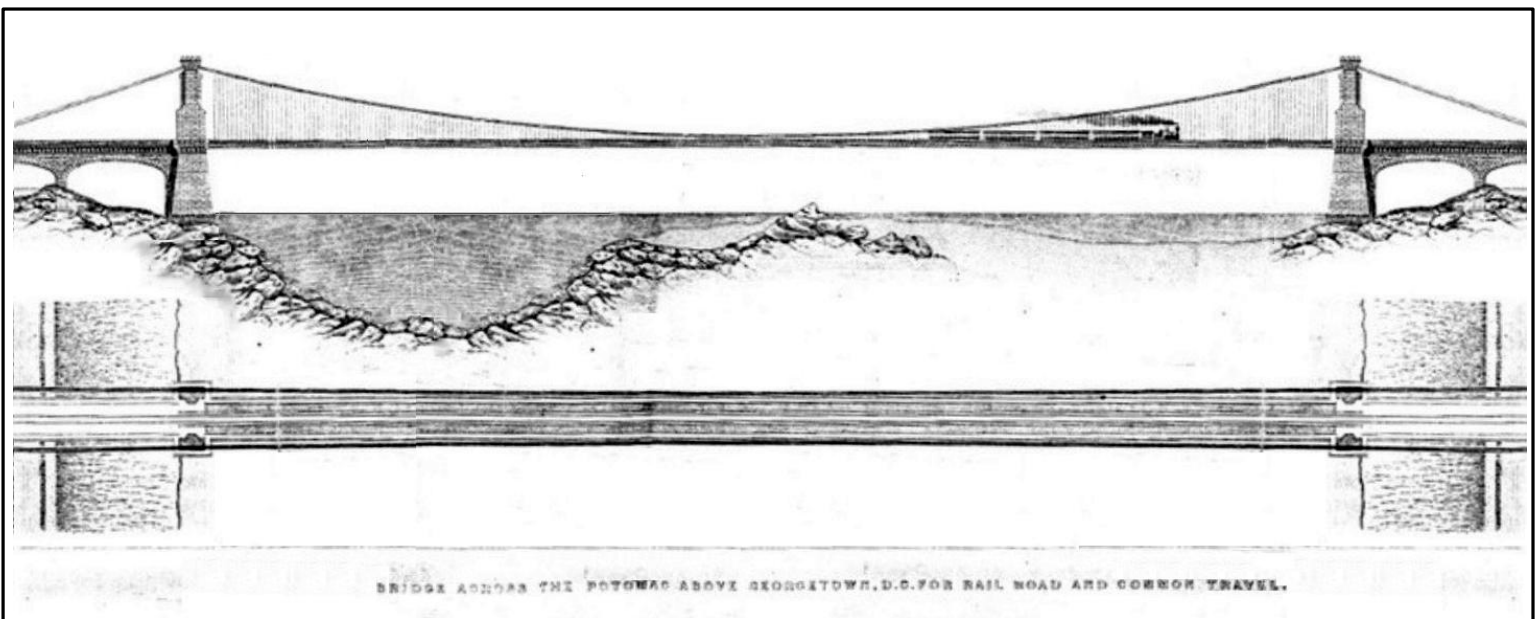
In 1853 he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Virginia Central Railroad. In this new position, he was issuing solicitations for bid to construct the railroad from Waynesboro through Staunton to Panther Gap near Goshen. As railroad grading crews finished the roadbed, Charles had an unforeseen problem. The intermediate link between

Woodville and Waynesboro was uncompleted. The task of constructing the line by the Blue Ridge Railroad was taking more time than anticipated due to the difficulties of that construction.

With pressure mounting to get heavy rails, ties, anchor plates and spikes into the Shenandoah Valley to lay track, he proposed the construction of a temporary railroad over the mountain at Rockfish Gap. After analysis and explanation of why it was necessary, his proposal was accepted, and slave crews directed by Claiborne Rice Mason began carving a ten foot ledge from east of Waynesboro, over the mountain to near west of Brooksville. On March 13, 1854 the temporary line from Waynesboro to Greenwood was successfully tested, put in service April 1, 1854, and remained in operation until the tunnel opened in April 13, 1858.<sup>7</sup>

Sub sequentially, Charles addressed construction west of Staunton, and ventured to Europe with Virginia Central bonds to secure iron rails for the passage to Jackson's river.

It was during this trip to Europe that Charles read a steamship, the SS Vesta, accidentally rammied the SS Artica, sinking a vessel ten times larger. He immediately proposed such an idea to the Czar of Russia for use in the Crimean War. He received interest, only to lose the opportunity when the Czar was



The "Bridge across the Potomac above Georgetown D.C. for Railroad and Common Travel" as designed by Charles Ellet in 1853. As designed, this would have been the furthest railroad bridge southeast of Harpers Ferry. Today, a modern swing bridge links the Jefferson Memorial in D.C. with Crystal City Va.

assassinated.

Returning to America he sought to bring his observations to the attention of the Navy and other Secretaries by publishing, *Coast and Harbor Defences, or The Substitution of Steam Battering Rams for Ships of War* (1855).

As the United States of America entered into Civil War, Charles renewed his efforts to market this ideas to the Union, but there seemed to be a lack of interest to the point of comic satire.





## Getting a railroad built to Waynesboro



*A postcard circa 1906 shows the right-of-way west of Crozet Va. heading to Greenwood Va. through Blair's Park.*

At the beginning of 1840, the Lousia Railroad had completed the task of reaching Gordonsville, and a paralyzing political debate swirled in Richmond dividing the state into completing investments. To the south, from Richmond to Lynchburg, and heading Buchanan to Clifton Forge was the ambitious undertaking of the James River and Kanawha Canal. It's early arrival at Scottsville, and it's lucrative plank road trade from Scottsville via Rockfish Gap into Staunton, barred any political consideration of running a railroad any further south than Swift Run Gap.

But in 1847, a surprising vote of the Louisa Railroad stockholders, plunged the Louisa Railroad into State Legislative controversy as the line deviated from its envisioned course to Harrisonburg and headed south to Charlottesville and west to Staunton and Clifton Forge. The Virginia Board of Public Works balked at matching the obligatory 2/5 stock subscription. On a judicial appeal Mamamus, the State Attorney and Virginia Courts reviewed the new Virginia Central charter and were forced to accept and favorably support the subtle alteration of "extension to the base of the Blue Ridge".

This entwined the Virginia Board of

Public works financially into a commitment to build a railroad from Blair's Park to Waynesboro.

Not to be understated, 1847 proved to be a huge year for the Virginia Central. In seeking independence from the influences of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac; the Lousia Railroad ordered it's first four 4-4-0 Norris locomotives and began grading and masonry construction west of Gordonsville, through Cobham, Lindsay, Keswick, Shadwell and Charlottesville.

No longer a mere farm-to-market branch line of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac; the freshly chartered Virginia Central had a willingness to challenge political opponents in the State legislature, and this placed the Virginia Central at competitive odds with it's previous mentor. Everything previously considered status quo, was now on the table for negotiation. It included revising freight rates, addressing rules of anti-competition of Alexandria based travel, and formulating rules of freight transshipment at Hanover Junction (Doswell). As discussions grew increasingly competitive, the Virginia Central sought and was granted authority to independently construct tracks into Richmond.

Track construction remained identical to the method employed at that time across the State which consisted of logs U notched for wooden stringers supporting iron strap. This had been amply suffice for the little Stephenson Planet locomotives imported from England, but as locomotives were becoming heavier, and the exposed wood aging, it would become necessary to replace this track with iron T rail. A bill would soon be passed in the legislature mandating 55 pound iron rails.

The Virginia Central would also appoint William A. Kuper to extend tracks west of Gordonsville. His appointment lasted until tracks arrived at Shadwell, when a legislative debate found T. J. Randolph (political representative of Albemarle, nephew of Thomas Jefferson, and awarded Virginia Central contractor) and Mr. Sengar in dispute about accusations of using heart pine to construct materially deficient culverts. Unfortunately William A. Kuper had the decency to factually address the matter, and suffering the wrath of an opponent's political sword, he shortly resigned thereafter.

With his resignation, the Virginia Central Board conferred in a special meeting and appointed his assistant, T. Colden Ruggles, as Chief Engineer of the Railroad. Ruggles quickly set to work, soliciting bids from Moores Creek to Christians Creek. This placed all tracks west of Charlottesville to Staunton under contract for grading, masonry, bridge construction, and ancillary structures.

Meanwhile the State chartered the Blue Ridge Railroad and placed Col. Claudius Crozet at it's helm. Budgeted at \$1,000.00 per year, and estimated at four years work, the task was to build a line from Blair's Park to Waynesboro. By February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1850, Crozet had surveyed and formulated a path, that would equitably rise from Blair's Park, and plateau at both Greenwood and Afton, allowing for a station halt without gradient. The remaining portions of the line would be inclined, with the apex at the west portal of the main tunnel. Contracts were let in eight sections, numbered one at the main tunnel and sequentially in return to Blair's Park.



As Claudius Crozet supervised the the Board of Public Works activities of the Blue Ridge Railroad, the Virginia Central aggressively pushed it's surveys and grading contract work toward Covington Virginia, in the hopes of jointing with the Covington and Ohio Railroad. All was going to plan, until T. Colden Ruggles accepted the Assistant Engineer position with Mr. Shaw on the Covington and Ohio. This left the Virginia Central looking for engineering talent, which it soon found in Mr. Charles Ellet Jr.

Charles Ellet Jr. soon found that he had severe logistical obstacles in the way of moving construction materials into the Valley, due in part to the absence of a continuous route through the Blue Ridge Railroad segment. All of the rails, chairs, spikes and ties needed in the Valley were being hauled by wagon from Woodville over the mountain to Waynesboro.

The bridge over Mechum's River would be soon completed, and potentially the racks built to Greenwood. Charles began survey of a temporary route for the tracks to go over the mountain and then into Waynesboro.

With that in mind he proposed, moving a locomotive into the Valley by wagon via the roadway, raising funds in Richmond by having the public vote for Richmond endorsement of Virginia Central Railroad bonds, building a temporary track across the mountain, and ordering specialized tank locomotives from Baldwin Locomotive Works and Anderson and Souther of Richmond. By July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1853, everything was in place.

Claiborne Rice Mason, superintendent of the Virginia Central, found 60 negro slaves available for the task, and began cutting a ten foot shelf in the mountainside about a half mile west of the tunnel. It formed a big arc northwest of the bore and then progressed steadily to the summit of Rockfish Gap and then descended gently to intersect the planned path before Dove Spring Hollow.

As both the cuts and fills of the final path were still in construction.,

deviations around the work were added for the fill at Doves Hollow, detour around the second, Little Rock, tunnel and detour around the third, Brooksville, tunnel.

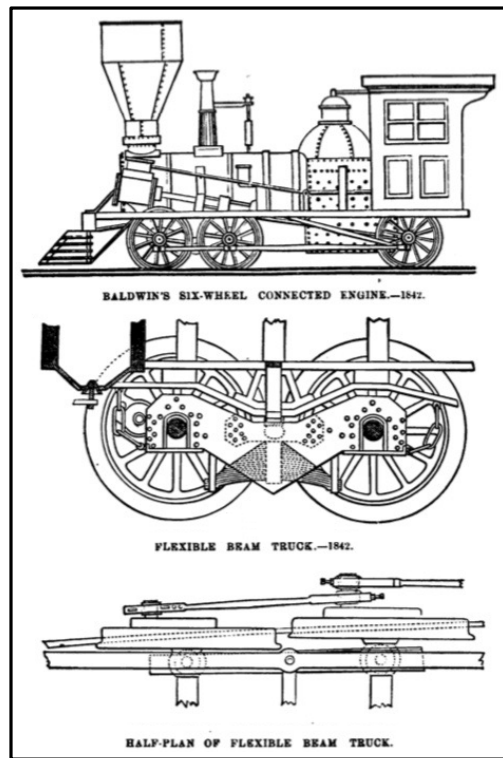
Tracks were now at Greenwood and the Greenwood tunnel, near complete. The segment from the main tunnel to Waynesboro, not started.

History will lack record of the delicate negotiation between Col Claudius Crozet, Claiborne Rice Mason , and Charles Ellet Jr.; but the result was a survey by Claudius Crozet to cut into the hillside on approach to the river so that it could create the fill materials needed for the embankment to the bridge head. Resources previously committed elsewhere were reapportioned to the work.

Sharp eyed visitors touring the Tredgar Iron Works in Richmond soon noticed the kit components for the three span bridge for South River and the behemoth *J.R. Anderson* 0-8-0T ordered for the Virginia Central. Both would soon leave the works headed to Greenwood.

At nearly the same time, Mathais Baldwin had just finished the first of two locomotives for the Virginia Central. The *M. W. Baldwin* was a 0-6-0T flexible beam locomotive of traditional proportions. But as a saddle tank locomotive, and with Baldwin's flexible

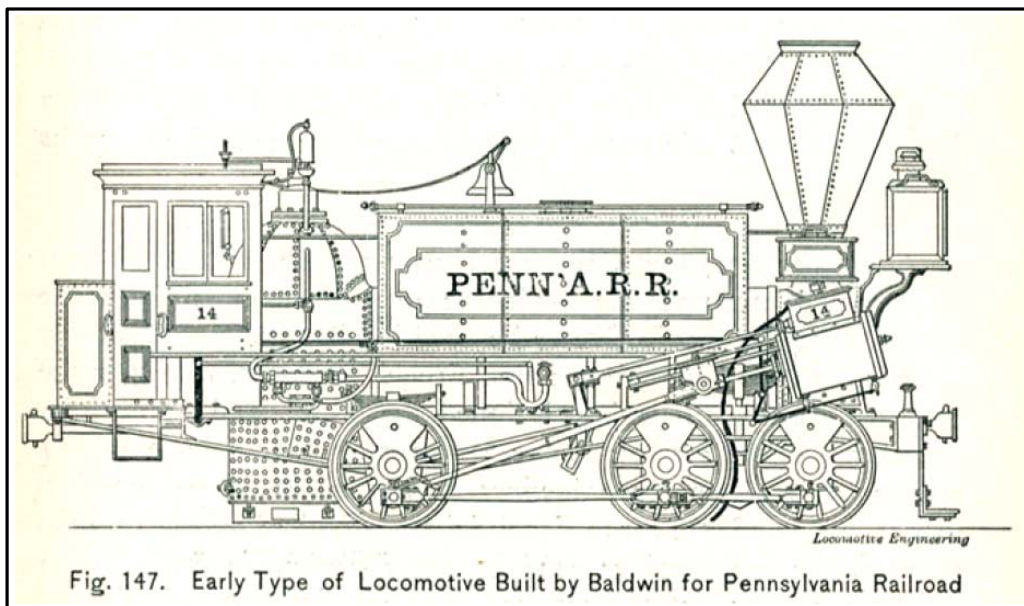
beam adaptation, it became notable in locomotive evolution as a mountain climbing locomotive.



Baldwin's flexible beam technology, allowed the front two axles to flex in lateral movement as a parallelogram, enhancing it's ability to tolerate curves.

The *C. R. Mason*, the second of the two Baldwin's soon arrived in Greenwood. A depot, water tank, engine house and turntable would be installed.

As preparations were being completed near Greenwood, a near equal set of preparations were occurring in



Angus Sinclair illustrated several of the locomotives adapted by Mathais Baldwin for use as six coupled and eight coupled locomotives using his flexible beam technology, this was the 0-6-0T tank locomotive.





Waynesboro. The kit for the Bollman trestle bridge fabricated by Anderson and Southers of Richmond arrived and work crews were busy setting the webbed lattice of cast iron parts upon the masonry stone piers in the river.

Greenwood, and after refueling returned back to Waynesboro.



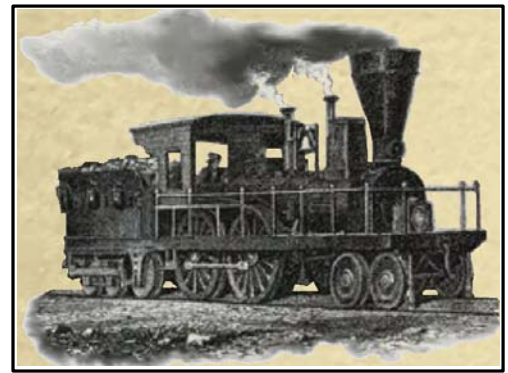
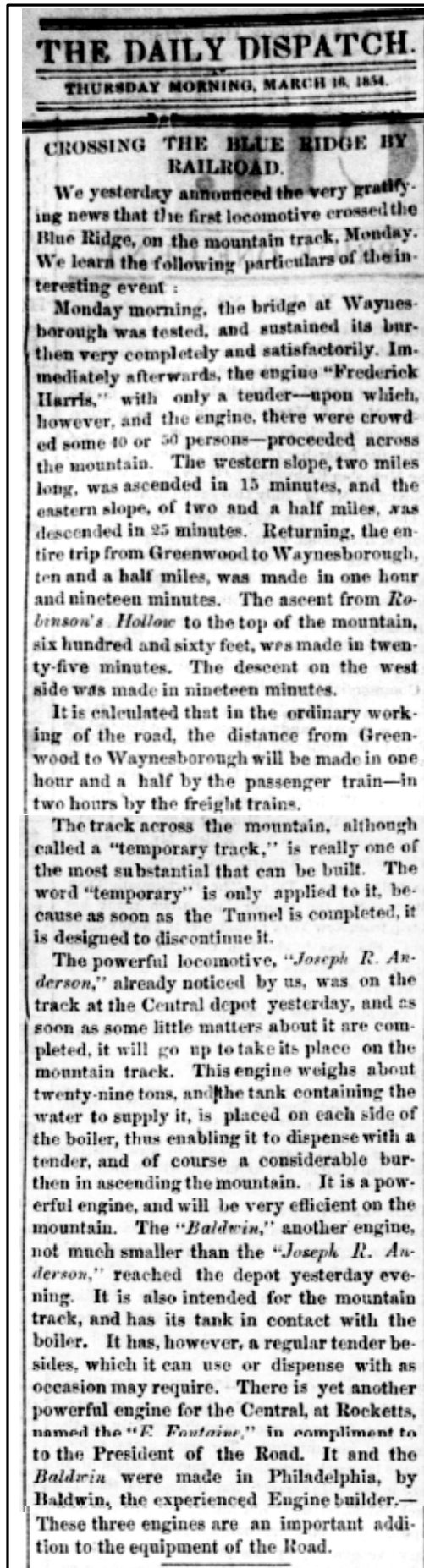
The South River bridge in Waynesboro became the first iron bridge cast and constructed in the Virginia

Meanwhile, back in Richmond, the additional locomotives ordered from the Tredegar Iron Works were nearing completion.

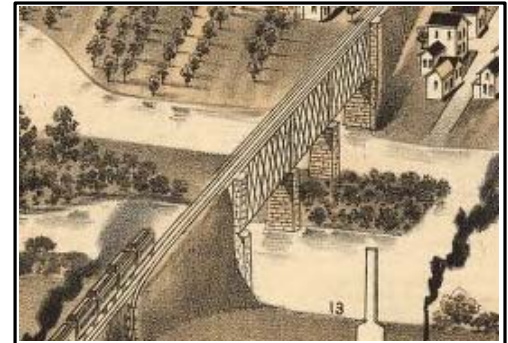


Although undocumented, it is suspected the longer 0-8-0T J. R. Anderson featured flangeless drivers on its second and third axle to accommodate tight curves. At 30 tons the J. R. Anderson was nearly double the size of the newly made 18 ton Monroe.

Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> 1854 proved to be a monumental day for the Virginia Central, for on that day the lil *Frederick Harris* ran backwards over the South River bridge, up the grade to the summit of Rockfish Gap, descended to

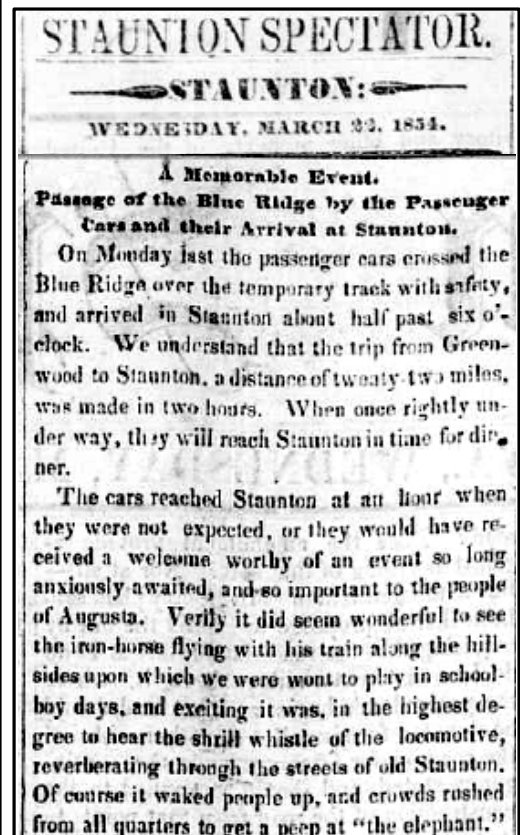


Ironically, the lil 14 1/2 ton Frederick Harris rather than the 27 ton M. W. Baldwin or C. R. Mason became the first locomotive to steam out of and back into Augusta County.



The 1854 Bollman bridge appears in the 1891 Perspective Map of Waynesboro (Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress)

Testing continued on the mountain track as the 30 ton *J. R. Anderson* was put to the test. This time, continuing over the bridge at Waynesboro, through Fishersville, and into... Staunton !





Some there were who had never before seen a passenger car, and they looked on with admiration and amazement; while others, to whom it was a familiar sight, gazed at it with an inquiring stare, as if they wished to say, where did you come from? and where are you going to? There were not a few who apparently regarded it as a thing of life, approaching it with the utmost caution, and touching even its exterior with extreme tenderness. Several handsome omnibuses had been provided for the occasion, but the cars came in with such a rush that the drivers did not have time to hitch up. Our good friends, the proprietors of the Hotels, owe the passengers an apology.

Strange as it is to see a train of cars in our midst, it is stranger still to think that on their way hither they have actually surmounted that great barrier to trade and travel, the Blue Ridge! Ten years ago if any one had predicted such an event, he would have been regarded as insane by nine-tenths of the population, and perhaps been consigned, upon *fama clamosa*, to one of the cells of the Lunatic Asylum from which the inmates now gaze daily upon the passing cars. It is indeed a splendid triumph—a wonderful achievement—that ought to immortalize the names of the accomplished engineers, whose genius conceived the idea of crossing over while others were boring through the Blue Ridge, and by whose energetic labors the work has been so soon and so successfully accomplished. Their names will live in the history of Virginia alongside the “Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe”—the first white men who ever crossed the Blue Ridge, and penetrated the Valley of Virginia.

We learn that the cars will not run regularly to Staunton until the 1st of April. By that time, however, our people will have the full benefit of a railroad connexion with the best markets of Virginia. Three cheers for steam!

As successful as this was, the return trip was not as nearly so triumphant, as Charles Ellet attempted to verify the worthiness of the passenger car to withstand repeated halts on the descent of the Greenwood grade by hand brake.

## STAUNTON SPECTATOR.

—STAUNTON:—

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1854.

### The Railroad Accident.

In a part of our issue last week, we gave an account of a fearful accident which occurred on Tuesday the 21st inst., on the mountain track.—The engine left Staunton that morning with a single car attached, containing the engineers and thirty or forty passengers. While descending the mountain on the Eastern side, the car was detached from the engine and left to depend upon its own brakes to retard its speed. The brakes gave way, and the car being then unmanageable, rushed into the engine. Several persons jumped

off after the collision, and one of them—George Clemens, a fireman—fell upon the track and having both legs and one arm crushed by the car, died a few hours afterwards. Some four or five other persons were burned and bruised, but not seriously injured. The damage done to the engine and car is estimated at \$100 to \$150.

The accident is attributable solely to a defect in the brakes, and no apprehension need be felt from the same cause hereafter. The cars have since crossed the mountain repeatedly with entire safety, stopping at various points, and thus proving that they are perfectly under the control of the brakes.

The trip on which the accident occurred was experimental, and the passengers went at their own risk, contrary to the advice of Mr. Ellet, the chief engineer.

Despite this tragedy, regular passage of trains Richmond to Staunton commenced.

## STAUNTON SPECTATOR.

—STAUNTON:—

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1854.

### Advent of the Cars!

On Monday last the passenger train came through in regular course from Richmond and reached Staunton about 4½ o'clock in the evening. A freight train had come in about two hours previously. It was Court day, and when the whistle of the engine was heard the people were seen flocking to the depot from all directions as if at the call of a trumpet, and soon a crowd had gathered around which no man could number—scarcely.

The passenger trains, we are informed, will now run regularly through from Richmond and will reach Staunton every afternoon at about 4 o'clock. The trains on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad made their first connection with the Central cars at Gordonsville, on Monday also, and will henceforth run regularly in conjunction with the Central trains, Eastward and Westward.—Passengers by this route can now leave Staunton in the morning and reach Baltimore the same evening, and thence to New York in a few hours more!

No fears need be apprehended on account of the late accident at the temporary track. “Danger is the parent of safety,” and the consequence of that mishap is only to induce a caution which ensures against a repetition of this or other accidents like it for the future.

Experiments were made on Monday last with heavily laden burden cars, which were passed successfully down the steepest grades of the temporary track with nothing but the brakes to control their descent; thus proving that if the apparatus of the brakes is in good condition, cars may be controlled entirely by that means.

But the determination is never to trust the pas-

senger car again to descend detached from the Locomotive. The power of reversing the movement of the locomotive, instantly, gives ample means to check the descent of a train attached and prevent danger from this source.

The danger of a car becoming accidentally detached, on ascending the grades, and thus left to run backwards is to be provided against by several expedients besides the mere reliance on the brakes;—spiked stakes will trail at the rear of a car at such angles as to stick in the ground and stop the car when it starts to move backwards, and other still more effectual contrivances are also to be arranged, so that little danger need be apprehended from this cause.

We understand that Mr. Ellet will himself accompany every passenger train over the mountain track for some time yet, until perfectly assured of the safety of a passage, by providing against all probable causes of danger, and by practising all the employees of the train to their appropriate duties under his own direct supervision.

So far this experiment had been, an exhausting pursuit of an insurmountable objective. It connected Staunton to Richmond and put into immediate service the tracks of the Virginia Central west of the Blue Ridge. It promised to generate revenue to pay the interest due on bonds, pay a dividend, and then as if things couldn't get worse in late March, ...it snowed!

## RICHMOND ENQUIRER.

FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1854.

CARS FROM RICHMOND TO STAUNTON.—To-morrow (1st April) trains will commence running daily between Richmond and Staunton. No fears, says the Staunton Spectator, need now be apprehended, on account of the late accident on the mountain track. “Danger is the parent of safety,” and the consequence of that mishap is only to induce a caution which ensures against a repetition of this or other accidents like it for the future. Experiments were made on Monday last with heavily laden burden cars, which were passed successfully down the steepest grades of the temporary track with nothing but the brakes to control their descent. Besides, other safeguards have been introduced, guaranteeing the most perfect safety to passenger and freight trains. All possible causes of danger have been anticipated and amply provided for.

Much snow and ice were on the mountain-top track, yesterday. It was expected that the trains would not be able to stand such a trial as this, but we are informed, on the authority of passengers, that the trip was made yesterday in the most satisfactory manner. The train was entirely under the control of the brakemen. The cars were not detached, but the use of the brakes made it unnecessary to resort to the power of the engine to keep them back.

As summer approached, the schedule of the trains was adjusted, and arrangements made to transport patrons by stage coach west of Staunton to the resort hotels near the springs.





# THE DAILY DISPATCH.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1854.

## CENTRAL RAIL ROAD OPEN TO STAUNTON.



CHEAPEST, MOST COMFORTABLE AND EXPEDITIOUS ARRANGEMENT EVER MADE FOR TRAVELLING TO THE SEVERAL VIRGINIA SPRINGS, LEXINGTON, &c.

THE COMPANY is provided with a LARGE ADDITIONAL SUPPLY OF NEW ENGINES and PASSENGER CARS—have but one change of baggage from cars to stages on the whole route, and present the only line running through steam times a week.

The cars pass over the top of the mountain at Rockfish Gap, where, at various points in the ascent, scenery is presented to the view of surpassing grandeur and beauty.

Commencing with the 20th day of July, an Express Mail Train will be run daily between Richmond and Staunton, and an Accommodation Train also daily, (except on Sundays) with the view of securing to ladies and invalids the greatest amount of comfort.

Leave Richmond at 6.30 A. M. and arrive at Staunton at 2.30 P. M.

By this Line passenger cars leave Petersburg and Richmond in the morning, and arrive at the White Sulphur Springs next day at 6.30 P. M.

Leave Staunton at 1 P. M. and arrive in Richmond at 2.30 P. M.

The Accommodation Train will leave Staunton at 6 A. M. and arrive in Richmond at 2.30 P. M.

The Second Train going up will stop at the usual intermediate points for passengers, but will not stop coming down, except at depots.

### FARES:

Between Richmond and Gordonsville,.....\$2 60  
" Gordonsville and Alexandria,.....3 50

### THROUGH TICKETS:

Between Alexandria and Charlottesville,.....\$4 25  
" " " Staunton, .....5 90  
" " " Lynchburg, .....7 25  
" Richmond and Fauquier Springs,....  
" " " White Sulphur Sp'gs, 8 50  
" " " Sweet Springs,.....8 00  
" " " Bath Alum Springs,....8 00  
" " " Warm Springs,.....8 00  
" " " Hot Springs,.....8 25  
" " " Rockbridge Alum Sp'gs 8 00  
" " " Lexington, .....7 00  
" " " Natural Bridge, .....7 75  
" " " Buchanan, .....7 25  
" " " Winchester, .....7 25

RICHMOND, June 21st, 1854.

By order: H. D. WHITCOMB,  
Supt. Transportation.

### STAGE LINE.

Our Stage Lines will connect with each of the Trains of the Central Railroad, as follows, viz:

Passengers from the Express Train will leave Staunton immediately after dinner, say at 2 o'clock P. M. and arrive at Cloverdale by dark, same day, from Richmond. Leave next morning at daylight and arrive at White Sulphur by 6 P. M.

Passengers by the Accommodation Train will leave Staunton at 6 o'clock, A. M., arrive at the Warm Springs at 6 P. M. Leave next morning after daylight and arrive at White Sulphur by 3 P. M.

N. B. This arrangement proposes strictly and literally altogether Daylight Travel—and we pledge ourselves to ensure to Passengers the comforts they have a right to calculate on.

Returning, our Lines will leave White Sulphur at 11 A. M. Passengers desiring expedition will reach Staunton next day in time to get to Richmond by 9 P. M., being less than a day and a half. Those desiring comfort will arrive at Warm Springs at 6 P. M., rest all night, leave next day at 6 A. M., and arrive in Staunton 6 P. M. ready for the Morning Train for Richmond, Alexandria or Baltimore.

Passengers for LEXINGTON, NATURAL BRIDGE, BUCHANAN and FINCASTLE will be taken through the same day from Richmond by the Express Line. Those for LEXINGTON by dark.

Passengers for ROCKBRIDGE ALUM arrive to breakfast 2nd day.

Passengers who get Through Tickets may stop at any point, or change from one Line to the other.

Those desiring Extra Stages can charter them at Staunton WM. F. FARISH & CO.  
June 21st, 1854. je 24

# THE DAILY DISPATCH.

Thursday Morning, July 31, 1858.

## Excursion to Millboro'.

—THE CENTRAL RAILROAD.

ceeds that of last year. There were seven hundred visitors at the White Sulphur Springs the latter part of last week, and five hundred at the Rockbridge Alum. The last is now comparatively easy of access, the present terminus of the Central Road being only five miles distant. At Jarman's, Meschum's River, our company found some very agreeable and palatable refreshments prepared, which put most of us in good spirits, and enabled us to recover in some degree from the effects of the late drought. The mountain passage, the huge locomotives which are there attached to the trains, and with slow but irresistible power draw their burthens steadily and securely over the mountain track, the magnificent prospect from Rockfish Gap, are all too familiar to the reader to require description. When we cross the Blue Ridge mountain we never know which most to admire, the grandeur of the scenery spread out before us, or the greatness of the human mind, as shown in railroads, locomotives, and especially in this mountain track, an achievement which ought to immortalize Mr. Ellet. In crossing the mountain our attention was called to an object which even the unprecedented cold of last winter had failed to overcome. In one of the water tanks, which supply the iron horse in this lofty mountain section, the water was never frozen during the most intense cold of last winter! It is fed by a bold spring, close at hand, and which, no doubt, is very cool and refreshing in summer. We have already published an account of the progress of the main tunnel, from which it appears that but a small portion of the work remains to be completed, and it is hoped that all will be ready for travel by the beginning of next year. As soon as the tunnels are ready the temporary track will be taken up, and used elsewhere, and the trains will dash through in perfect safety at twenty miles an hour. At least an hour will be saved in time by the completion of the tunnel, to say nothing of the facilities for the transportation of freight which cannot be carried, in any very heavy burthen, over the mountain track. Arrived at Staunton, we found an excellent dinner awaiting us at the American Hotel, near the depot. Staunton continues to improve more than any inland town in Virginia.—Not only the public institutions, seats of education, churches, &c., are elegant and even imposing, but the proportion of handsome private residences is larger than in any town of the size we have ever seen. The passengers are allowed twenty-five minutes for dinner, and then start West.—This was to us the novelty of the occasion, having never been on a rail-car West of Staunton. The road has been lately constructed to a point forty miles West of Staunton and near Millboro'. It

Travel via the Mountain Top Track lasted until April 13<sup>th</sup> 1858, when the eastbound mail train entered the Blue Ridge Tunnel and made the route over the mountain, forever redundant.

In it's abandoned state, Mountain Top Track would eventually become a farm road, and later lay the path for Virginia

# THE DAILY DISPATCH.

Friday Morning, August 23, 1854.

## Excursion on the Virginia Central Railroad.

[REPORTED FOR THE DAILY DISPATCH]

On Tuesday morning, an excursion party started up the Central Railroad, to visit the present terminus of that great improvement. It consisted of Gov. Wise and family; Alex. Dudley, Esq., and sundry other invited guests.

The party took passage in the mail train, at 7 o'clock, the splendid new engine, Jno H Timberlake, under the skilful guidance of Jno Harden, furnishing the motive power. There were four cars, besides the mail and baggage. The last of the former was a new and beautiful specimen from the Union Works, Portsmouth, Va., just received, and used for first the time, on this occasion.

The distance to the Greenwood Tunnel was soon accomplished and the train divided, "the Baldwin" taking one half and "the C. R. Mason" the other, preparatory to the grand feat of crossing the Blue Ridge. This has been so often described that any attempt now is deemed superfluous. Suffice it to say that those who never had crossed before were filled with admiration and awe in contemplating the magnificent mountain scenery, and witnessing the triumphs of the engineering skill which first conceived the idea of crossing the Virginia Alps with iron rail, while all were pleased. The two queer shaped iron monsters, rightly named Mountain Climbers, did their appointed work slowly and surely, and on the arrival of the trains at the foot of the mountain on the other side, they were joined as before and proceeded on, drawn by the "Alleghany," a large and powerful engine, recently built by the Tredegar Works. Arriving in Staunton at 3 o'clock the party proceeded under the conduct of C. B. Hill and other officers of the road, to partake of an admirable dinner at the American Hotel. Embarking again the voyagers safely reached Millboro, where they were met and welcomed by Col. Fontaine.

Department of Transportation engineers to construct U.S. Route 250.

Charles Ellet would go on to write an authoritative essay, titled the *Mountain Top Track*, T. K. & P. J. Collins Philadelphia 1856, documenting the engineering wonders of the line. This book can be downloaded and read in entirety from,

<https://books.google.com>

Mathais Baldwin would continue to produce steam locomotives and would insert Charles Ellet's recommendation for mountain climbing locomotives in his company's promotional materials, titled, *Baldwin Locomotive Works, Illustrate Catalogue of Locomotives*, M. Baird and Company Philadelphia. 1878. That book can be downloaded and read in entirety from,

<https://books.google.com>

althought, Ellet's detailed excerpt is found on pages 32 and 33.

From 1854 through 1858, the mountain track served many, as we read in this excerpt.