

THE BIG MOVE

IN 1983, THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER EQUIPMENT COLLECTION WAS MOVED FROM FARMVILLE (MP NS 160) TO RALEIGH (MP NS 232) IN A SPECIAL MOVE NOT EXCEEDING 20 MPH, DUE TO THE AGE OF THE EQUIPMENT. THE TRAIN THEN LEFT RALEIGH ON THE NC LINE (MP H81) FOR DURHAM (MP H55), AND THE VERY LAST TRAIN TRIP BEGAN FROM DURHAM (MP W-34) TO BONSAI (MP W-10). THE RAILROAD LEFT ALL THE EQUIPMENT IN THE PASS TRACK AT NEW HILL, AND RAN BACK TO DURHAM WITH LIGHT ENGINES.

THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER OPERATED UNDER ITS OWN POWER FROM NEW HILL TO BONSAI LATER BEHIND 45 TON GENERAL ELECTRIC ENGINE NUMBER 67.

THE DAY AFTER ARRIVAL AT BONSAI, THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY BEGAN REMOVING THE RAILS FROM NEW HILL BACK TOWARDS DURHAM THUS LAND LOCKING THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER AT THEIR NEW HOME.

SINCE THE ORIGINAL RAILROAD AT BONSAI HAD BEEN CHARTERED AS THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD, THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER DECIDED TO CALL ITS NEW RAILROAD THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILWAY.

THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER IN THE PURCHASE OF THE NEW HOPE VALLEY, (4 MILES FROM BONSAI TO NEW HILL), WAS GIVEN A SMALL SEGMENT OF THE OLD RIGHT OF WAY IN THE PURCHASE DEAL. THAT PIECE OF RAILROAD CAME OFF THE "NEW LINE" AT BONSAI AND RAN WESTWARD TOWARDS JORDAN LAKE. TRACKAGE TOTALED APPROXIMATELY 2 MILES, INCLUDING A PASSING TRACK AT HILL TOP (NEAR THE END OF THE LINE). THIS WAS ALL ORIGINAL TRACK LAID IN 1906 WITH VERY LITTLE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE YEARS.

THE "OLD LINE" RAN FROM BONSAI ABOUT 1.2 MILES TO STATE ROAD 1008, CROSSING THE ROAD, AND THEN RUNNING PARALLEL TO THE ROAD ON THE SOUTH SIDE THE REMAINDER OF THE WAY UNTIL CROSSING AGAIN. THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER OWNED ALL THE WAY TO THE SECOND CROSSING OF SR. 1008.

IN 1985, THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER SOLD THE ROAD FRONT PROPERTY FROM THE FIRST CROSSING OF SR. 1008 TO THE END OF THE LINE TO A LAND DEVELOPER FOR A SUM OF \$40,000.00. THIS REDUCED THE OLD LINE TO A 1.2 MILE BRANCH. THIS MONEY WAS USED TO COMPLETELY RETIRE THE DEBT FOR PURCHASING THE PROPERTY, AND THE CHAPTER AND THE NEW HOPE VALLEY WERE DEBT FREE.

SINCE ARRIVING AT BONSAI IN 1983 THE NEW HOPE VALLEY HAS BEEN OPERATED BY VOLUNTEERS AND RUN PASSENGER TRAINS FOR THE PUBLIC TO ENJOY. THE FIRST TRAIN RIDE FOR THE PUBLIC WAS IN APRIL OF 1984. REGULAR SCHEDULED PASSENGER TRAINS BEGAN IN 1988, THUS MAKING 1998 THE TENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF SCHEDULED PASSENGER SERVICE AT BONSAI. TRAINS RUN FROM MAY THROUGH DECEMBER.