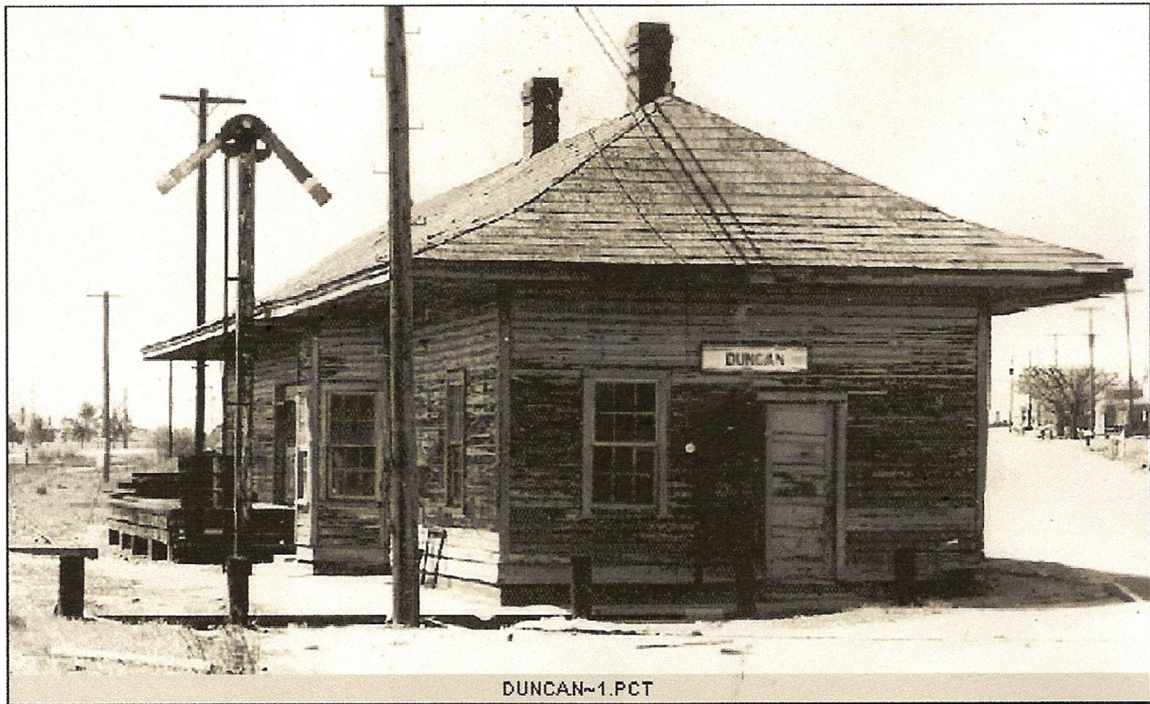


The Durham Branch

1904 - 1998



DUNCAN-1.PCT

Compiled by:
David W. Younts

May 1998



**HISTORY OF THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD
1905-1920**

FROM RICHARD PRINCE'S BOOK; NORFOLK SOUTHERN

ORIGINALLY CHARTERED IN 1904 AND PROJECTED SOUTHWARD OUT OF DURHAM, NC AS THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD, THE LINE FOLLOWED THE NEW HOPE CREEK FOR A NUMBER OF MILES. RENAMED THE DURHAM & SOUTH CAROLINA RR IN 1905, THE ROAD WAS CONSTRUCTED BY W.R. BONSALE, AND OPENED IN OCTOBER OF THAT YEAR 30 MILES FROM DURHAM TO FORM A CONNECTION WITH THE SEABOARD AIR LINE RY AT BONSALE. TRACKAGE RIGHTS OF TWO MILES WERE INCLUDED IN THAT FIGURE AND WERE OBTAINED OVER THE DURHAM & SOUTHERN RY BETWEEN EAST DURHAM AND D&SC JUNCTION.

AFTER THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN RR WAS EXTENDED WESTWARD FROM RALEIGH TO CHARLOTTE, THE DURHAM AND SOUTH CAROLINA RR CONSTRUCTED A 10 MILE EXTENSION SOUTHWARD FROM BONSALE TO A JUNCTION WITH THE NS RR AT DUNCAN. THE D&SC WAS LEASED BY THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN IN MAY 1920 FOR 99 YEARS AND PURCHASED BY THAT ROAD IN 1957. IT IS EXPECTED THAT SOME TRACKAGE ON THAT DURHAM BRANCH WILL BE RELOCATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DAM AS PART OF A FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT ON THE CAPE FEAR RIVER.

THE D&SC RR OWNED THREE LOCOMOTIVES AS OF 1911 AND TWO OF THESE WERE TENWHEELERS THAT LATER CAME TO THE NS RR. D&SC RR NO. 100 WAS BUILT BY BALDWIN IN 1906 AND BECAME NS RR D-4 NO. 137, WHILE NO. 101 BY THE SAME BUILDER IN 1911 WAS ASSIGNED AS D-4 NO. 138.

*(THIS BOOK WRITTEN PRIOR TO THE TRACK RELOCATION OF 1973.)
THE END*

THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD

THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD WAS CHARTERED IN 1904 WITH THE INTENT TO BUILD A RAILROAD FROM BONSALE TO DURHAM, AND SEVEN 100 FOOT STRIPS OF RIGHT OF WAY WERE PURCHASED IN CHATHAM COUNTY. NO TRACK WAS EVER CONSTRUCTED BY THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RAILROAD.

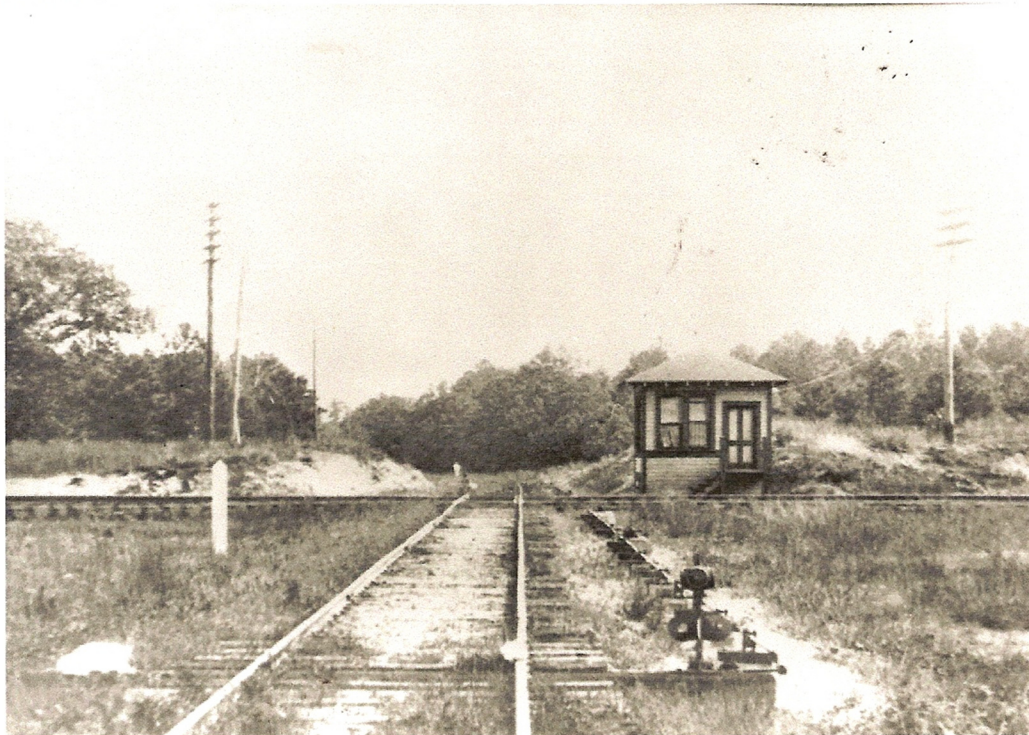
ON APRIL 01, 1905 THE NEW HOPE VALLEY RR COMPANY WAS SOLD TO THE NEWLY FORMED DURHAM AND SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD. THE D&SC RR WAS CHARTERED ON JANUARY 20, 1905 AND PLANNED TO CONSTRUCT A LINE FROM DURHAM TO SOUTH CAROLINA.

CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1905, AND D&SC RR BUILT TRACK FROM BONSALE NORTHWARD TO DURHAM, AND LATER EXTENDED THE TRACK SOUTHWARD FROM BONSALE TO DUNCAN.

IN 1920 THE D&SC RR WAS LEASED BY THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILROAD FOR 99 YEARS. THE LINE WAS LATER PURCHASED IN FULL BY THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN. THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN HOWEVER ELECTED TO KEEP THE D&SC AS A SEPARATE AFFILIATE COMPANY ON PAPER. THE D&SC RATED ITS OWN PAGE EACH YEAR IN THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN ANNUAL REPORT.

THE DURHAM & SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD EXISTED MOSTLY INTACT, UNTIL FEBRUARY 15, 1983 WHEN THE PROPERTY FROM BONSALE TO NEW HILL WAS DEEDED TO THE EAST CAROLINA CHAPTER N.R.H.S.

THE LAST PORTION OF THE D&SC WAS FILED FOR ABANDONMENT ON DECEMBER 09, 1993 BY NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORP. THIS CONSISTED OF KEENE YARD, THE AMERICAN TOBACCO SPUR, AND THE D&SC JUNCTION TRACKAGE.



BONSALE TOWER AND INTERLOCKING PLANT IN 1932
PHOTO : DAVID YOUNTS COLLECTION

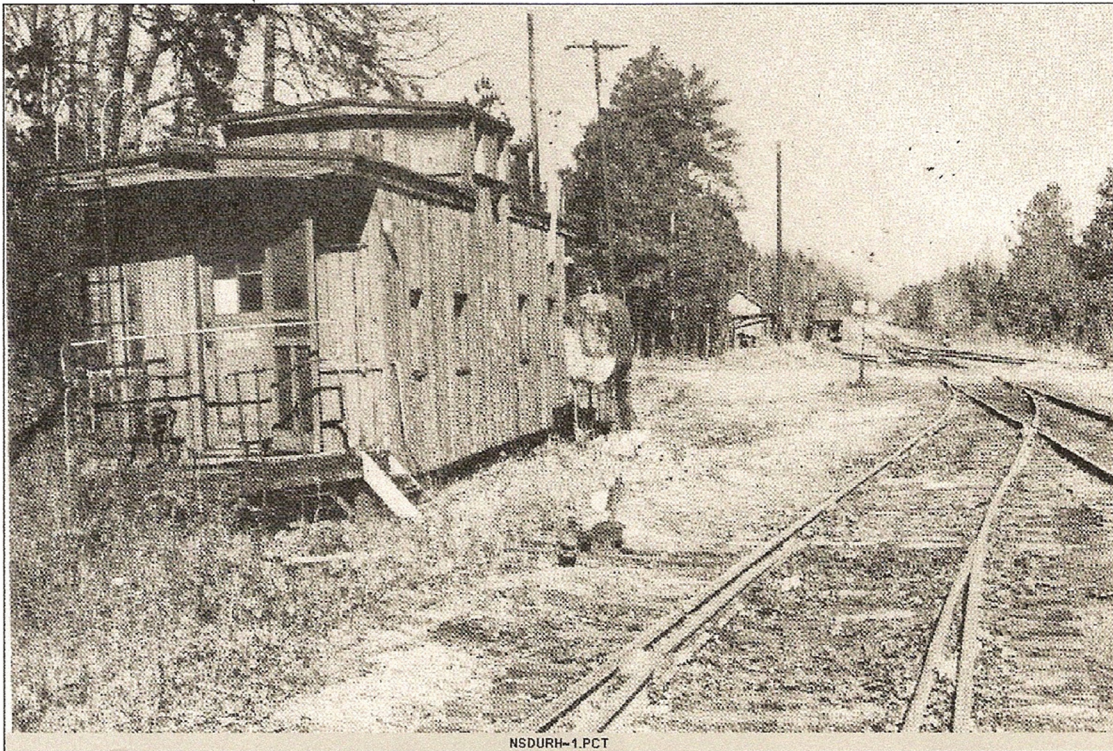
THE DURHAM BRANCH

THE DURHAM BRANCH OF THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAN 40.5 MILES FROM DUNCAN, NC TO DURHAM, NC. THE LINE CAME OFF THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN'S NORFOLK TO CHARLOTTE MAIN LINE AT DUNCAN, NC (MP 256.7) AND RAN TEN MILES TO BONSAI, NC (MP 10.2) WHERE THE ROAD INTERCHANGED WITH THE SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILROAD. AT BONSAI, NC. THE ROAD DID BUSINESS WITH PIEDMONT WOOD YARD.

AFTER LEAVING BONSAI, THE ROAD CONTINUED ON TOWARDS THE COMMUNITIES OF BEAVER CREEK, SEAFORTH, FARRINGTON, AND PENNY BEFORE REACHING ITS TERMINUS OF DURHAM. ALL OF THE COMMUNITIES LISTED ABOVE HAD PASSING TRACKS THAT RANGED FROM 8 TO 19 CARS IN LENGTH. FARRINGTON ACTUALLY HAD A SAW MILL AS AN ACTIVE CUSTOMER UP UNTIL THE MID 1970'S.

JUST BEFORE ENTERING KEENE YARD AT DURHAM, WAS THE SOLITE COMPANY WHICH RECEIVED LOADS OF SOLITE PRODUCT TO MAKE CEMENT BLOCKS. SOLITE ALSO HAD A LARGE OPERATION ON THE NS MAIN LINE WHICH WAS SOUTH OF STAR, NC NEAR AUQUADALE TOWARDS CHARLOTTE.

KEENE YARD WAS LOCATED AT MP 35.9 ON THE EAST SIDE OF DURHAM AND CONTAINED THREE YARD TRACKS, A WYE IN EARLY YEARS, A SMALL ENGINE SERVICE FACILITY CONSISTING OF A SAND BOX AND A FUEL PUMP HOUSE, A WATER TANK IN EARLY YEARS, AND MOST INTERESTINGLY A CABOOSE AS A YARD OFFICE.



NS KEENE YARD OFFICE AT DURHAM
PHOTO CIRCA 1971 BY FRANCIS H. PARKER

NS CABOOSE #359, BUILT NEW IN 1929 FOR THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN, WAS SET OFF ITS TRUCKS AT DURHAM AFTER 1961 AND USED AS THE KEENE YARD OFFICE UNTIL THE MERGER IN 1974. THIS CABOOSE IS NEARLY IDENTICAL IN DESIGN TO THE NS #335 WHICH WAS DELIVERED NEW TO THE NS ON NOVEMBER 13, 1913 AND IS NOW AT BONSALE. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NS CABOOSE #335 IS THE ONLY EXISTING EXAMPLE OF A WOODEN NS CAB.

ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE YARD OFFICE/CABOOSE, WAS A WOODEN STATION SIGN FOR "GRANTS" WHICH WAS A LOCATION ON THE BAYBORO BRANCH OF THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN. THIS CABOOSE COULD HAVE BEEN AN OFFICE THERE PRIOR TO COMING TO DURHAM. SHORTLY AFTER THE MERGER, THE YARD OFFICE MET ITS DEMISE IN THE FORM OF A BULLDOZER.

AFTER PASSING THROUGH KEENE YARD, RUNNING STRAIGHT DOWN THE MAIN LINE, THE TRACK CONTINUED AN ADDITIONAL FIVE MILES TO THE AMERICAN TOBACCO CO. WHERE SEVERAL TRACKS ENTERED THE PLANT.

AMERICAN TOBACCO WAS THE BIGGEST CUSTOMER ON THE DURHAM BRANCH AND RATED ITS OWN DEDICATED SWITCH ENGINE FOR MANY YEARS CALLED "THE A.T. SWITCHER". THE MAIN JOB OF THE "A.T. SWITCHER" WAS TO SPOT LOADS OF COAL INSIDE THE PLANT, SPOT EMPTY BOX CARS TO LOAD FINISHED TOBACCO PRODUCTS INTO, AS WELL AS LOADS OF UNPROCESSED TOBACCO TO BE UNLOADED FOR PROCESSING.

DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1920 AND 1940, ANNUAL REPORTS INDICATE THE DURHAM BRANCH GENERATED ENOUGH REVENUE TO CARRY THE OPERATION OF THE ENTIRE 500 MILE NORFOLK SOUTHERN SYSTEM.

LINING THE SWITCH AT KEENE FOR THE DURHAM & SOUTH CAROLINA RAILROAD JUNCTION, THE TRACK CONTINUED TO THE NORTH 2.8 MILES TO THE D&SC JUNCTION (MP 37.8) LOCATED ON THE DURHAM AND SOUTHERN RAILROAD. THE NS WENT TO DURHAM, BUT COULD NOT INTERCHANGE WITHOUT TRACKAGE RIGHTS. NS CREWS WOULD THEN USE A PHONE TO CALL THE DURHAM & SOUTHERN DISPATCHER FOR PERMISSION TO LINE OUT ON THEIR MAIN LINE AND PROCEED TOWARDS DOWNTOWN DURHAM.

FROM THE JUNCTION, IT WAS APPROXIMATELY 3 MILES TO DOWNTOWN DURHAM WHERE THE NS INTERCHANGED WITH THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY, NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILROAD, SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILROAD, AND THE DURHAM & SOUTHERN RAILROAD. IN VERY EARLY YEARS THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN ALSO HAD PASSENGER SERVICE WHICH WOULD RUN ALL THE WAY TO DURHAM UNION STATION (MP 40.5).

MOTIVE POWER

POWER FOR THE TRAINS ON THE DURHAM BRANCH IN STEAM DAYS WAS PRIMARILY THE 200 AND 500 CLASS 2-8-0 CONSOLIDATIONS OWNED BY THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN. THESE ENGINES WERE ASSIGNED TO THE WESTERN DIVISION (RALEIGH-TO-CHARLOTTE) FOR THEIR ABILITY TO HANDLE THE ROUGH TERRAIN AND STEEP GRADES.

CONSOLIDATION #203 IS THE ONLY SURVIVING NORFOLK SOUTHERN STEAMER IN THE UNITED STATES. THE REST WERE ALL SOLD TO MEXICO BY 1955. #203 WAS A 2-8-0 BUILT BY BALDWIN IN 1911. #203 WAS BUILT AS RALEIGH & SOUTHPORT #10 AND BECAME NS #99 WHEN THE RALEIGH AND SOUTHPORT BECAME PART OF THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN. LATER RENUMBERED #203, THE CONSOLIDATION WAS ASSIGNED TO THE WESTERN DIVISION AND MAY HAVE OPERATED OVER THE DURHAM BRANCH.

NS #203 WAS SOLD TO THE ATLANTIC AND WESTERN RAILROAD ON JUNE 6, 1948 TO BECOME ATLANTIC & WESTERN #12. THE #12 WORKED ON THE A & W UNTIL RETIRED. #12 WAS DONATED TO THE CITY OF SANFORD, NC FOR DISPLAY AT THEIR DEPOT, WHERE THE ENGINE CAN BE SEEN TODAY.

IN THE DIESEL ERA, TRAINS WERE PULLED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BY THE BALDWIN #1500 AND #1600 CLASS DIESELS. THE #1500 SERIES BALDWIN WERE 1500 HORSEPOWER BALDWIN A-1-A TRUCK ROADSWITCHERS WHILE THE #1600'S WERE 1600 HORSEPOWER A-1-A TRUCK ROADSWITCHERS OF VERY SIMILAR DESIGN. THESE ENGINES WERE ALL BUILT BETWEEN 1948 AND 1955 FOR THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN.

THE #1500 AND #1600 CLASS DIESELS HAD A VERY LIGHT AXLE LOADING DUE TO THE IDLER AXLES, SO THEY WERE JUST RIGHT FOR THE SMALL 56, 60, AND 70 POUND RAIL THAT WAS LAID ON THE DURHAM BRANCH. THE #1600 SERIES DIESELS WERE THE MOST COMMON DIESELS ON THE DURHAM BRANCH AS THE #1501-1510 WERE GONE FROM THE NS ROSTER BY THE MID 1960'S.

RECENT HISTORY 1971- PRESENT

THE DURHAM BRANCH RELOCATION PROJECT WAS BEGUN IN 1971 AND COMPLETED IN LATE 1973 AS PART OF THE LAKE JORDAN DAM PROJECT. THE OLD OR EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY WAS MOSTLY FLOODED AS IT FOLLOWED THE NEW HOPE CREEK.

THE NEW RIGHT OF WAY CONSTRUCTED BY THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WAS COMPLETED AND TURNED OVER TO THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN IN LATE 1973 EVEN THOUGH THE RAILROAD HAD EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN ABANDONING THE BRANCH FROM DUNCAN TO DURHAM.

THE LINE WAS OPENED JUST AS A 3 MILE PORTION OF THE NS'S NORFOLK TO CHARLOTTE MAIN LINE WAS ALSO RELOCATED JUST NEAR THE JORDAN LAKE DAM, NEAR CORINTH.

FROM: NORFOLK SOUTHERN ANNUAL REPORT 1971

A TWENTY-MILE SEGMENT OF TRACK IN THE CENTRAL PORTION OF OUR DURHAM BRANCH IS TO BE RELOCATED BY THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AS PART OF A FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION OF A DAM ON THE NEW HOPE RIVER. PROGRESS ON THE RELOCATION HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTINGLY SLOW DUE TO THE APPARENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GRADING CONTRACTORS AND THE U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. FINALLY, THE CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILWAY LINE WAS LET IN MAY OF 1971, AT WHICH TIME NORFOLK SOUTHERN DEPOSITED THE SUM OF \$107,750.00 FOR BETTERMENT'S DESIRED BY THE RAILWAY. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE DELAYS ABOVE MENTIONED, THE BETTERMENT'S FOR WHICH THIS MONEY WAS PAID HAVE NOT YET BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. WE ARE NOW ADVISED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS THAT THIS RELOCATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE FALL OF 1972.

THE OPENING OF THE RELOCATED DURHAM BRANCH WAS ACCELERATED DUE TO A DERAILMENT ON THE RALEIGH TO CHARLOTTE MAIN LINE NEAR BUCKHORN CREEK (MP 259). THIS DERAILMENT IN 1973 DESTROYED MOST OF BUCKHORN TRESTLE AND FORCED ALL NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAINS TO BE DETOURED OVER THE SEABOARD FROM RALEIGH TO COLON WHILE BRIDGE FORCES REBUILT THE BRIDGE. AS A RESULT, ALOT OF DUNCAN TRAFFIC WAS HANDLED OVER THE NEW DURHAM BRANCH.