

## THE "SWAMP RABBIT"

MRS. ROBERT NORMAN DANIEL

In this year of 1964 when thousands of miles of railroads criss-cross the country and jet airplanes are commonplace, we take modern transportation for granted and forget what railroads meant to industry one hundred years ago. That railroads did mean much is evidenced by the population increase they caused in the little town of Greenville. In the two and one-half decades following 1853, the time the first railroad steamed into the area, Greenville grew from a village of fewer than two thousand people to a town with a population of nine thousand. The growth was largely due to the fact that in 1872, Greenville became a stop on the main line of the Charlotte and Atlanta Airline Railway. This railroad, later to become the Southern Railway, greatly increased commercial opportunities and caused Greenville to become the best market for trade in the upper part of the state. At least William A. Williams so claims in a sketch which he attached to the 1887 "Charter and Ordinances of the City of Greenville." He gives us this picture of the growing town:

As a manufacturing city Greenville ranks first in the state there being several large cotton mills, a plaid factory, a cotton and oil mill, one of the largest carriage and wagon factories in the South, several planing mills, two foundries, a furniture factory and many other mechanical industries beside, all of which are in operation and prospering.<sup>1</sup>

Industries such as the thriving town of Greenville now had badly needed coal. Just across the mountains in Tennessee was coal—coal in abundance. Direct access to the coal mines would certainly create a great manufacturing city. What was clearly needed was another railroad—a railroad which could cross the mountains.

In December 1882, the legislature granted a charter to the Greenville and Port Royal Company permitting it to construct a railroad from Greenville to Port Royal.<sup>2</sup> In December, 1885, the charter was amended and the name changed to the Atlantic, Greenville and Western Railway Company. Permission was granted to run from some point on the Atlantic coast to the North Carolina state line. In 1887, under the provisions of the General Railroad Act, the Atlantic, Greenville and Western Railway Company was con-

<sup>1</sup>Greenville News, June 26, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Federal Reporter, CXIII, 824.

solidated with a corporation existing under the laws of the state of North Carolina and of the state of Tennessee and it then became known as the Carolina, Knoxville, and Western Railway Company. Under its new charter it was authorized to construct a railroad from Augusta, Georgia, to Knoxville, Tennessee.<sup>3</sup>

To arouse interest, the company arranged public meetings at Reedy River Church, Marietta, Merrittsville, Dickey, Sandy Flat and Wares. These meetings were followed by others at Fountain Inn, Walkersville and Greenville Courthouse. The handbill advertising the meeting read: "Prominent speakers from along the line of this great railroad have been invited and will address our citizens. Good music and good speaking may be expected. All our citizens are earnestly invited to turn out and hear this subject which is of vital importance to our city and county fully discussed."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Alfred Taylor of Taylor's Station who directed the band which provided the music for these meetings made the following entries in his diary of December 1887:

Tuesday 13th—the band is off to Reedy River meeting for CR Railroad. Spent the night at Dr. Goodlett's.

Wednesday 14th—To Marietta good turn out to Harvey Cleland's spent the night.

Thursday 15th—out for Merrittsville excitement runs high to Arthur Hodges spent the night.

Friday 16th—To Dickeys stayed all day and night.

Saturday 17th—off to Sandy Flat excitement runs high many opposed to railroad. We have been out five days 15 dollars per day comes to \$75.00.

Wednesday 28th—"Manage election here [Taylor's Station in Chick's Springs Township] for Railroad to Knoxville 54 for 75 against."<sup>5</sup>

Despite this defeat, construction was begun finally with the railroad named the Carolina, Knoxville and Western. A directory of the city and county of Greenville published in the spring of 1888 states:

The most important factor to the future growth and prosperity of the city is the new railroad now being built from here to Knoxville. The completion of this line will place us within easy

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, CVI, 260.

<sup>4</sup>Greenville *Piedmont*, November 11, 1930.

<sup>5</sup>Alfred Taylor, "Diary III, December 13-17, 28, 1887" (Ms. Volume III contains Alfred Taylor Diary from January 1, 1880, to July 30, 1909.)

reach of the delightful mountain resorts of this state and North Carolina. It will open up a vast territory now underdeveloped which will contribute to the commercial and manufacturing interests of Greenville.

The amount of capital raised was probably very little. So, the new railroad started out across what all the older residents of Greenville still call "the meadow" and followed the swampy valley of the Reedy. The route along Reedy River required little grading and building costs were low.

In its on-and-off existence the little railroad has had many official names, but to old timers it will always be known as "The Swamp Rabbit." C. A. David in an article, "Greenville of Old," wrote:

You may name your boy Percival, Algernon, or Montamoressi, but if some chap at school dubs him "Sorrel Top" or "Buster" the nickname will stick and his real name be forgotten. So it has been with this little railroad—its owners christened it the Carolina, Knoxville and Western, but some chap with a bit of humor in his makeup spoke of it as "the Swamp Rabbit" and that appropriate name continues to the exclusion of the longer and higher sounding one.

Although some grading was done below Greenville and some round Cedar Mountain, N. C., track was completed only to the quarries at Hellams Crossing, some twelve miles above Greenville, from which stone was hauled to the town by the railroad. When the railroad reached this point, the construction company which had been building the railroad went bankrupt and soon afterward the railroad itself was declared insolvent, and went into the hands of a receiver. The court appointed H. C. Beattie as receiver.<sup>6</sup> Since the twelve miles of railroad ended in the woods, Beattie, soon after his appointment, applied to the court for permission to issue certificates to build three more miles of track so as to reach the town of Marietta. He felt that by connecting Greenville with a town, the business of the railroad would improve and profits would increase. Receiver's certificates were issued, \$12,500.00 was borrowed, and in 1892 the railroad reached Marietta.<sup>7</sup>

When the train reached Marietta, the town held a big celebration. Norwood Cleveland, at that time a small boy, was given a spike gilded to look like gold. This he presented to the proper

<sup>6</sup>*Federal Reporter*, CXIII, 825; CII, 210.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

railroad authority, and with much ceremony the track was completed to Marietta.<sup>8</sup> A picture owned by Cleveland Beattie shows the wood-burning engine, the *Richard Humbolt*, at Marietta. Bill Jeanes was the engineer. The railroad was a source of recreation for young and old. A popular form of amusement on moonlight nights was a ride on flat cars with a picnic at the destination.

Lack of capital and antagonistic interests harassed the little railroad. The creditors applied for a sale of the road and on July 23, 1896, a foreclosure was ordered.<sup>9</sup> On August 3, 1896, the property was sold to James T. Williams, H. C. Beattie, and D. F. Jack under an agreement that the property was for the benefit of the three.<sup>10</sup> The purchasers of the railroad discontinued its operation. Residents in the upper part of the county then brought suit in an effort to compel them to operate. They charged that the railroad could be run profitably, but that the purchasers preferred to benefit by destroying it rather than to run the risk of continuing its operation. Years of litigation followed. Finally, the court decided that it was futile to attempt to run the railroad without ruinous loss of money and directed the receiver to remove the rails and sell them and the rolling stock. In 1899 the rails were taken up and sold to the Charleston and Western Carolina Railway Company for \$28,000.00. Included in the sale were one engine, one passenger car, five boxcars, twelve flat cars, and 1,263 tons of steel and iron rails, bolts, anglebars, and spikes, together with the right to own the real estate in Greenville and to own the right of way through Greenville. Appeals before the court were denied, and on May 1, 1906, the Carolina, Knoxville and Western Railway became a thing of the past.<sup>11</sup>

But need for a railroad across the mountains still existed. In 1904, the Greenville and Knoxville Railroad Company, with Hugh H. Prince as its President, applied for a charter to operate on the old roadbed of the Carolina, Knoxville and Western.

At this time there seems to have been no desirable railroad from the Piedmont area across the mountains. In 1905, six railroads were making an effort to cross the mountains, and among them was the Greenville and Knoxville. The Blue Ridge Railroad which

<sup>8</sup>Personal interview with Norwood Cleveland.

<sup>9</sup>*Federal Reporter*, CII, 210.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, CLXV, 282-284.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, CVI, 261.

got as far as the Stumphouse Mountain Tunnel was one of the main competitors of the Greenville and Knoxville. The Blue Ridge Railroad was aided by the Southern Railway which had already made the Saluda Mountain cut—a cut which was considered too expensive to operate and too dangerous to be desirable. Some railroads were working from the other side of the mountain ranges. The development of the coal and natural wealth in the area was their primary interest. The *Manufacturer's Record* in an article, "Railroads Dig into the Mountains" stated:

Like impenetrable walls of iron the Great Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and Carolina for years have bade defiance to all efforts of railroad projectors—Their towering peaks, mighty ranges and chasms—like gorges seem obstacles too tremendous to be overcome by engineering which would be permitted by business considerations.<sup>12</sup>

The promoters of the Greenville and Knoxville went ahead with construction, however, even though they had none of power-driven machinery of today. The *Greenville News* of September 12, 1905, reported that contracts had been signed by Hugh H. Prince, president of the Greenville and Knoxville Railway Company, with a Philadelphia construction company to complete the old line of the Carolina, Knoxville and Western Railway. A little later another article tells of Capt. G. D. Howard, constructor and promoter, and J. K. Bowie, capitalist of Philadelphia, who were on a visit to Greenville to survey the proposed route of the Greenville and Knoxville Railroad.<sup>13</sup> This connection with Philadelphia interests rather confirms the statement of one of our Greenville residents who says that when the Pennsylvania Railroad abandoned wooden cars and went over to steel ones some of the old wooden cars were purchased by the Greenville and Knoxville Railroad.<sup>14</sup>

Marion Pack tells an interesting story of a trip which he made at this time with President Prince. Prince went to look over work being done to restore the old roadbed which was badly washed, and to see something of the proposed extension of the road. The trip was made over incredibly bad roads in one of the early Buicks, as far as Pott's Cove. Prince decided that he wanted a more picturesque name for a station on his railroad which he expected

<sup>12</sup>Quoted from *Manufacturers Record* by *Greenville News*, September 22, 1905.

<sup>13</sup>*Greenville News*, November 14, 1905.

<sup>14</sup>Recollection of Norwood Cleveland.

to attract tourists. So, he then and there changed the name from Pott's Cove to River Falls.

In the office of the Register of Mesne Conveyance is an application for an increase of capital stock in the sum of \$340,000.00. The increase was asked for by Hugh H. Prince, W. H. Patterson, and D. C. Patterson as a majority of the board of directors of the Greenville and Knoxville Railroad. The application was granted March 6, 1906. I have been told that this capital was supplied by Asa Candler, the Coca-cola magnate of Atlanta, Georgia, who was a personal friend of William Henry Patterson.<sup>15</sup> Patterson now became president of the railroad and his son, E. B. Patterson, became the superintendent.

Although the roadbed as far as Marietta had needed little grading, a foot hill of the mountains intervened between that town and Cleveland. A big cut was needed before the train could go across. This cut, known as the Hart Cut, was years being constructed. I have been told that four construction companies which undertook the task had to abandon the effort because of the cost. The cut was finally finished by the railroad.<sup>16</sup>

Trains were never operated beyond River Falls. A train schedule printed on May 24, 1908, gives the trains operating daily and Sunday as far as Marietta. The following were listed:

Greenville

Monaghan

White Oak

Montague—[where the track crosses Duncan Chapel road, just as it enters the campus of Furman University.]

Altamont—[named for the hotel on top of Paris Mountain. A carriage (called a hack) met the train here to carry visitors back and forth to the hotel.]

Traveler's Rest

Hellams Crossing—[not far from Ebenezer Church. Named for the Hellams family.]

Bates Crossing—[named for the Bates family.]

Marietta

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<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

Sometime after 1908 three other stations were added:

Cleveland—[named for the Cleveland family.]

River View—[where the tracks crossed Oil Camp Creek Road. A hack met the train here to carry guests back and forth to Caesar's Head.]

River Falls—[the last station. From here the Jones' Gap Road led to Cedar Mountain, N. C.]<sup>17</sup>

My own recollection of travel on the Swamp Rabbit which dates back to about this time (1910-1915) is expressed very well in this quotation from Mr. C. A. David's article "Greenville of Old.":

There was something delightfully informal about this friendly little railroad and there was a certain element of chance about riding on it that added zest to the trip. It did not always stop at the same place, but you could always flag it down anywhere simply by holding up your hand and it would slow down and let you on. . . . Most of the rolling stock was second hand and had been retired on a pension by some other road and under the varnish of the passenger coach could be distinctly read the legend, Pennsylvania R.R. Co., showing that it was far from home and friends. . . . Someday's it (the train) would make the trip without a single break-down and then again it would have to stop for repairs every few miles. . . . Returning one night the engineer discovered that he had lost the cowcatcher and he had to back the train a mile or so before he found it in a ditch by the track where it had come loose and dropped off. Such little things were always happening but no one thought anything of them and took it as a matter of course.

"The Swamp Rabbit," true to its name did not mind irregularities in its pathway, so the track went up and down following the lay of the land whenever possible. Lack of funds for upkeep of the roadbed, light rails, and cheap equipment generally served to make it one of the roughest I have ever encountered and before a passenger got to the end of his journey he was considerably shaken up and found that he owned bones that he did not know he possessed. . . . I have heard that some of the farmers' wives utilized this shaking up and made the railroad do their churning. They would take their churn of milk along with them when they were going to town and when the whistle blew for Greenville all they had to do was to take off the top and remove the butter to a plate—

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<sup>17</sup>Greenville News, May 24, 1908.

churned by the motion of the train. I do not say this was true, but it certainly was possible.<sup>18</sup>

My friends and I claimed that the initials "G & K" really stood for "Jerk and Kick."

There was never enough capital, and before long the Greenville and Knoxville could no longer operate. Again the Swamp Rabbit went into the hands of a receiver. All its rights, franchises, etc. were sold under a foreclosure suit in 1914 for \$36,000.00 and a new corporation was organized. The railroad now became known as the Greenville and Western Railway Company.<sup>19</sup> On July 1, 1914, the Greenville and Western issued first mortgage bonds for \$460,000.00 with interest at six percent. No payment of interest was ever made and before the little railroad could get used to its new name it was again in trouble. On August 18, 1917, complainant solicitors filed suit against the railroad and on August 31, 1917, Carl H. Lewis, a banker of Atlanta was appointed receiver. On November 2, 1917, under oath, Lewis, the receiver, and Superintendent H. T. Grimes reported the roadbed in such bad condition that life and property would be jeopardized if trains were run, and that the cost of repairs was not available. Judge Johnson authorized the receiver to discontinue the operation of trains.<sup>20</sup>

Leading citizens who lived in the upper part of the county were most unhappy over this action. On November 16, 1917, they entered the case as "relators" or "intervenor" (private persons allowed to give information to be used at court).<sup>21</sup> Under affidavit these residents of the upper county testified that the Railroad Commission of South Carolina had inspected the roadway of the railroad in the spring of 1917 and passed it as safe and that further work had been done on the roadbed during the summer. They claimed that although the railroad had failed previously to operate at a profit, conditions of late 1917 were much changed. For one thing the European war made it necessary for the coal mines of the United States to supply large quantities of coal to

<sup>18</sup>C. A. David, "Greenville of Old", *Greenville News*.

<sup>19</sup>Records of Federal Court in case of Central Bank and Trust Corp., et al. vs. Greenville and Western Railway Co., Case # Ev. 27.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, *Ex Relations*. They included R. Mays Cleveland, J. Harvey Cleveland, H. A. Batson, J. E. Thackston, G. N. Nickles, J. A. League, H. Y. Thackston, J. Bearden Jennings, W. J. Thackston, E. C. Stroud.



friendly nations. Strikes and labor troubles had greatly reduced the output of the mines. As a result, a coal famine threatened the United States with prospect of great suffering to the people and also seriously threatened the manufacturing and industrial interests of the country. The relators testified that the coal supply of Greenville was practically exhausted, a fact which was vouched for by affidavits signed by H. C. Harveley, Greenville's Mayor; by M. R. Beaman, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce; and by W. C. Beacham, member of the local fuel commission. The relators pointed out that forests in the territory served by the railroad afforded an almost inexhaustible supply of wood. During the winter to come, it was believed that more than twenty-thousand cords of wood would be shipped from these forests to the City of Greenville, giving the railroad a profitable business and giving the city relief from a serious situation.

It was also cited that a large artillery range at the upper end of the railroad was being constructed by the government. There the government contemplated using some two thousand men who would be shifted every two weeks. Also some four hundred horses and mules would be used at the range. Transportation of soldiers, guns, ammunition, and supplies would give the railroad new and profitable business.

Judge Johnson studied these and other facts presented by the relators. On November 26, 1917, he ruled that Carl H. Lewis, while an estimable gentleman, was a banker unfamiliar with the railroads and that he lived in Atlanta and could not leave his business. Therefore, he appointed V. E. McBee as co-receiver because McBee knew the local situation and also knew railroading. Judge Johnson ruled further that the railroad must resume operation and the receivers issue a sufficient amount of certificates not to exceed \$3,000.00 to put the road in condition to be operated. He justified this ruling because along the line of the railroad were freight-furnishing enterprises—granite quarry, sand pit, brickyard, forests of at least one hundred thousand acres, all of which were in unprecedented demand at the highest prices ever known, because the coal shortage in Greenville was acute with people likely to suffer unless wood could be had, and because the government had established an artillery range which would require transportation of men and quantities of supplies. At the same time Judge

Johnson also signed a decree of sale so that the property could be sold without delay.

The complainants in the suit, the Central Bank and Trust Corporation, *et. al.*, bond-holders of the road, denied most of the allegations. They insisted that the cost of repairs would be ruinous, that the wood would be difficult to cut, that the coal shortage would soon be relieved, that the government could commandeer the railroad and operate it. So the complainants appealed Judge Johnson's ruling and refused to co-operate with V. E. McBee in resuming operation of the railroad. Nevertheless, McBee without a dollar in cash and without credit went forward and repaired the track and operated freight cars over it. If he could have used one passenger car, he could have made more profit without extra expense. As it was, he met the cost of repairs and had a balance of \$1500.00.

However, the complainants carried the suit to the United States Court of Appeals which ruled that the District Court had abused its discretion in appointing a co-receiver, in ordering the issuing of certificates to repair the roadbed, and in requiring resumption of the operating trains. And so the railroad was again advertised for sale. Several sales days passed with no sale. Finally on May 5, 1919, it was sold to R. A. McTyre for \$75,000.00; he being the highest bidder.<sup>22</sup>

On August 26, 1919, McTyre sold the railroad to W. H. Cook of Duluth, Minnesota.<sup>23</sup> A few months later the railroad once more changed hands. A wealthy corporation of Chicago, the Baker Fentress Co., owned some twenty-five thousands acres of virgin timber rights in upper Greenville County. The Swamp Rabbit was just what was needed to transport the timber. On January 7, 1920, the Secretary of State of South Carolina issued a new charter and the Swamp Rabbit's name was changed to the Greenville and Northern Railway, the name which it now bears. A. B. Birkeland of Chicago was the new president and Frank G. Hamblen, who became a great civic asset to Greenville, was vice-president and general manager. The Saluda Land and Lumber Company was

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>Information given by D. U. Harrell, Secretary and General Manager of the Greenville and Northern Railway Co.

the parent corporation, and the Greenville and Northern was its subsidiary.<sup>24</sup>

By the 1950's the Saluda Land and Lumber Company no longer had use for the road and was ready to sell it. On March 13, 1957, S. M. Pinsley of Boston proposed to buy the road from the Baker Fentress Co., subject to the approval of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The offer was accepted and permission granted. On July 7, 1957, Pinsley assumed operation of the road as its president and D. U. Harrell became secretary and general manager.<sup>25</sup>

The Swamp Rabbit now runs between Greenville and Marietta. It services local warehouses and carries cotton sweepings, lumber, pulpwood, and petroleum products. The track runs through the new Furman University Campus. Much of the heavy material used in the construction of buildings there was carried by the railroad. For several years the seniors and faculty members of Furman have had an annual excursion as guests of the railroad. The old lumber mill near Cleveland which was used to saw the timber of the Saluda Land and Lumber Company has recently been abandoned. A seven-hundred acre tract of land there will be developed as the Echo Valley and Railroad Resort. Part of its entertainment will include the use of four and one-tenth miles of the Swamp Rabbit Railroad with a steam locomotive and authentic old cars. Today the railroad is being used from Cleveland to Marietta to service Echo Valley Park.

Looking backward across the years, we think of our little railroad, the Swamp Rabbit, with a smile for its ambition to cross the big mountains. But the sober fact is that Greenville lost tremendously because of that failure. Who knows what great commercial opportunities would have opened up if a good track could have been completed and connections made between Greenville and the boundless West?

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

## GREENVILLE'S FIRST STREET RAILWAY SYSTEM

THOMAS CHARLES GOWER

Seven years after Appomatox, the Charlotte and Atlanta Air Line Railway began operations. Due to the efforts of General William King Easley and the fact that Greenville County had issued bonds to help finance its building, approximately seventeen miles of its tracks ran through Greenville County. Yet the railroad barely touched the perimeter of the two and a half mile circle that was the "city limits" of the town of Greenville. In his *Greenville Century Book*, Col. S. S. Crittenden wrote (page 64): "The completion of the Richmond and Danville Air Line in the early seventies gave new courage to the hearts and minds of our people and made Greenville the best mart for trade in the upper part of the state." He states that the growth in population between 1870 and 1880 was greater in ratio than any other decade in its history.

By 1873, the Airline Railway had built freight and passenger depots at the end of what is now West Washington Street. The Greenville and Columbia Railroad had its depots on Augusta Street near the intersection with Vardry Street. There was no rail connection between the two railroads. At this time there were no paved streets and very few sections of paved sidewalks in Greenville. During wet weather, heavily loaded wagons would mire up almost to the axle. A normal load of two thousand pounds on a two-horse wagon in dry weather would have to be reduced during bad weather, sometimes to as little as five hundred pounds. Thomas Claghorn Gower,<sup>1</sup> grandfather of the writer, believed there was a wonderful opportunity in establishing a horse-drawn street railway connecting the freight and passenger depots on West Washington Street with the business area a mile and a quarter away, and also with the depot on Augusta Street. Permission was secured from the city for a horse-drawn street railway and the

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<sup>1</sup>The Claghorn ancestor of the Gower family was captured by Oliver Cromwell's soldiers in Scotland and sent to New England as an indentured servant. He was lucky at that for some of Cromwell's soldiers went into battle singing hymns and then cut their enemies' heads off.

tracks were laid in 1873.<sup>2</sup> The line of the street railway ran from the end of West Washington Street to Main Street, on South Main Street across a wooden bridge over the Reedy River, and out Augusta Street to the Greenville and Columbia Depot.

According to family tradition, there were two passenger cars, three flat cars for freight and a "Tallaho" for special occasions. A storage warehouse, two stories and basement, was built at the southeast corner of West Washington and Laurens Streets. A cotton storage platform was built on the opposite corner of Laurens Street, and to the rear of this, a brick stable was built with an Assembly Hall on the second floor. This was on Laurens Street where the Greyhound Bus Station is now located. After the old Opera House on the corner of Coffee and Main Streets was condemned, "Gower's Hall" was used for a few years by travelling dramatic companies. Ten, twenty and thirty cent stock companies presented such plays as "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," "Damon and Pythias," "East Lynn," and others.

After the Car Line and the storage warehouse were completed, a service to deliver freight shipments to the merchants was offered. The shipments were transferred from the railroads to the warehouse on the flat cars and then distributed to the merchants. Delivery charges of five cents for small boxes and ten cents for large boxes were added to the freight bill and collected after the shipments were delivered to the merchants. One of the Negroes who delivered the shipments could not read or write, but he had memorized the names of the merchants and recognized them. Practically all of the shipments came in white pine boxes and some of them were carefully opened with a nail puller and reused. Others were used for furniture by Negroes. They also made good kindling and wonderful "whittling stock." Nearly all of the manufactured goods came from New England in those days.<sup>3</sup>

An interesting relationship grew up between the personnel connected with the steam railroads and the horse-drawn Street

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<sup>2</sup>This date is established from a clipping in the author's possession and references in the notes of his father, Arthur Gaillard Gower. The formal franchise may not have been given until a year or so later. Col. Crittenden in *The Greenville Century Book* gives the date of construction as the early seventies.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Grady, who lived in Atlanta and was a gifted public speaker, stated that the South should produce more of our needs and said that everything from the rattle that a baby first heard to the shroud that it was finally buried in came from New England.

Railway System. When the railroad company moved its terminal from Central (located about thirty miles south of Greenville) to this city in the early eighteen nineties, it significantly affected the development of the section around the depot, that is West Washington Street, Mulberry Street, and Hampton Avenue. A round house, machine shop, and turn table were established and train crews including engineers, firemen, brakemen, flagmen, wrecking crews, dispatchers, and their families settled in the vicinity of the depot. They were dependent upon the horse-drawn Street Railway System for local transportation and were loyal patrons of its services.

After 1881, when the Richmond and Danville Railroad purchased both lines, the tracks of the Airline Railroad and the Greenville and Columbia were connected and the West Washington Street station became the principal freight terminal for Greenville. In 1891 the wooden bridge across the Reedy River was replaced by a light steel bridge, and it was decided to abandon the street car line from Main and Washington Streets to the Greenville and Columbia Depot.

In October, 1894, Thomas Claghorn Gower was drowned in French Broad River and ownership of the Street Railway System was acquired by Arthur Gailliard Gower, father of the writer. He leased the Washington Street Warehouse to the Southern Railway (which had reorganized the Richmond and Danville) and entered into a contract to haul freight between the warehouse and the depot. The leased warehouse was used as a downtown freight depot until the Southern Railway built the present depot on River Street in 1897. With no freight to haul, the horsedrawn Street Railway System had completed its service. It was dismantled and the rails sold.

My memory covers the period from 1891 to 1897 during which the Street Car System was being operated and I would like to briefly describe the Main Street business section that began at the Reedy River bridge and ended at North Street. There were some residences below Broad Street and there were no stores north of North Street. In 1901 there were fourteen residences between North and College streets and W. C. Cleveland, uncle of the Bill Cleveland that we knew, lived where the Kress Building is now located at the corner of Main and McBee Streets. A *City Directory* published in 1901 lists a White Boarding House across from Mahon and Arnold. I recall that in 1903, it was called, perhaps charitably,

a Negro Boarding House. There were twelve Negroes in business on Main Street, north of the Bridge. Some of those mentioned are:

Dock Austin: Barber  
L. M. Rive: Barber  
Rector and Moultrie: Grocers  
M. Wiggins: Restaurant  
L. M. White: Shoemaker  
Brier and Tolbert: Grocers  
J. C. Thompson: Butcher  
B. D. Goldsmith: Grocer  
Goldsmith and Dyson: Grocers  
Burgess and Simpson: Barbers  
Samuel Williams: Shoemaker  
Samuel Montgomery: Restaurant

Before the State Dispensary System was set up there were numerous saloons just off Main Street. Intoxicated men staggering on the streets was a common sight. Practically all business in Greenville at this time was locally owned. Woolworth Company opened in Greenville about 1904. The period during which the horse-drawn Street Railway System was operated was definitely the "Pre-Hot Dog" Era. "Hot Dogs" were introduced to Greenville by Charlie Spencer about 1903 or 1904. He stood at the corner of Main and Washington Streets, or in the street and announced in a voice that could be heard for several blocks that you could "Get 'm while they're hot." He dispensed them from a kerosene-heated box. It was also the "Pre-Sandwich" Era. Biscuits and corn bread were the prevailing breads. Applying the rule that the area of a circle varies as the square of the diameter, country biscuits were more than four times the size of town biscuits. It was also the "Pre-Safety Razor" Era. Some men could not shave themselves and depended on the barber. A number of barber shops opened up for two hours on Sunday. The prevailing wage scale for Negro men in 1895 who worked for the Railway Company was \$4.00 per week. Cooks were paid \$1.25 or \$1.50 per week. When the first units of Poe Mill, American Spinning Company and Mills Mill were built in 1895 laborers were paid 60¢ per day.

In 1885 the first electric street railway system was started in operation in Baltimore, Maryland. The successful application of

electric motive power to railway cars did not come overnight. It had a background of hard work and disappointments. Success was finally achieved in Richmond, Virginia, after test after test had failed and the car had to be pulled back to the barn with mule power. With the success of the Baltimore system, there was a rapid expansion of the electric street railways. Horse-car lines were obsolete overnight. Due to the cost of conversion, however, horse-drawn lines in small cities were handicapped and changes were slow. Both my Father and Grandfather considered changing to electricity-driven cars but found the cost to be prohibitive, the traffic not sufficient to produce profitable income, and the rails were too light for the heavier cars.

In 1898, after the dismantling of the horse car tracks, the City of Greenville granted to George M. Bunting and Associates of Philadelphia two franchises, one for an electric street railway system and one for a gas, electric light, and power company. Bunting also represented The American Pipe Company which owned and operated the Paris Mountain Water Company which had been incorporated in 1891. The interests of Rueben R. Asbury and his son, Abner D. Asbury, who at that time operated the Gas and Electric Company, were purchased. Three corporations were established: The Greenville Traction Company; The Greenville Gas, Electric Light and Power Company, and the Paris Mountain Water Company. Within the next two years tracks were laid from the Southern Depot to the city limits on Pendleton Street and within a block of the limits on Augusta Street. Other tracks were laid from Main and Washington Streets to Poe Mill via Main Street, College Street, and Buncombe Street. Tracks were laid also on North Street, crossed through Manly Street (or thereabouts) to McBee Avenue and then back to Main and Washington. Cars returned from Poe Mill via North Street. About 1904 the "Belt Line" was built. The tracks at the end of Pendleton Street were connected via Woodside Mill, Monaghan Mill, and American Spinning Company to the track that ended at Poe Mill. Later a spur was built to the Sans Souci Country Club.

This rambling account cannot close without mention of the locally-famous "Lightning." The Street Railway was known as a horse-car line but in reality it was a mule-car line. One of the small mules that pulled the passenger cars was named "Lightning" because he could kick as quick as lightning. He could be used



to pull the cars because practically no harness was needed—no breeching, no holding back straps and no crupper. Not many people would have had the courage to attempt to put the crupper under Lightning's tail.

The most important and colorful character associated with the horse-drawn street cars was its stocky Negro driver, Billy Fronaberger. Holding the reins of capricious Lightning loosely in his lap, he was free to slow down and pick up patrons arriving late at the corner, free to wave to all the children along the route, free to exchange his views about the weather, free, also, to transmit local happenings of interest down Washington and Main Streets from whence the news would be carried to adjacent streets by the listening passengers.

Life was then geared to a leisurely pace which suited perfectly the philosophy of the friendly driver . . . and the ambition of Lightning. One wonders if in substituting speed for deliberateness, impersonal relations for friendly interest, and the jet plane for the mule-drawn car, we have really gained in the exchange. Billy Fronaberger would not think so.