

Tracking down old tracks

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Life in the early 1900s was unique, in that the U.S. was both troubled, yet expanding.

Troubled by international issues leading up to World War I and domestically expanding because of the industrial boom during and after the war (remember the Roaring 20s?).

Lumber was a growing business and there were vast amounts of timber that had never been harvested. This was also true in eastern Tennessee.

Who would have had any idea that there were, in the early 1900s, trains running through and around what we now call Fairfield Glade. It is hard to comprehend that to be so. But it was. Lumber was so much in demand that lumber companies afforded to actually build their own railroads to bring the timber to saw mills and eventually to the market.

It was not uncommon to have satellite saw mills near the cutting areas.

The railroad was named the "Cumberland Northern Railroad" and the owner of this railroad was the Cumberland Lumber Company. The purpose of this railroad was to transport the timber harvest of the area now known as Fairfield Glade, and also known as the Peavine Mountain area. It is not known whether the lumber company actually owned the acreage or had a lease agreement.

We hope that the information provided in this article will serve to provide you a picture of the locations of the tracks and rail beds. It is easy to say a great deal of the tracks existence has been covered or grown over, but one can use his or her imagination to get a mental picture of those earlier times.

The starting point of this railroad was in a town called Dorton, TN (on US 70 between Crossville and Crab Orchard).

Near the AmeriGas business location (on US 70), about one mile further east is a stone company sign which reads "Tennessee Building Stone Co".

Turning left at that point will bring you to the Old Rockwood Road and the stone company. The stone company has purchased the right of way from the "Tennessee Central Railroad" which at the time served as the starting point of the Dorton Spur of the Cumberland Northern Railroad.

The town of Dorton received its name from the owner of the lumber company and it was the surname of the lawyer for the firm that handled the legal matters in the transition.

The railroad was started in 1910 and took approximately one and a half years to construct. It operated for about 12 years.

Because of the steep inclines that the track route was to take, the engine was only capable of pulling a certain load. As such, trains were limited to the engine, a tender, and two cars.

The route taken to Fairfield Glade was as follows:

- From Dorton, go east to Chestnut Hill Rd., then north to Shorty Barnes Rd. to Peavine Rd. (at Classique Kitchen Cabinets).
- It continues northeast, up Peavine to the four-way stop sign and turns left down Stonehenge Dr.
- Continue north down Stonehenge Dr., and as you go down the hill ... the rail line is now to your left. The rail line passes near (300 yards) a spring fed pond which served to provide water for the steam engine. The rail line is still left off Stonehenge Dr. where it crosses the creek—which still has the abutment remains of a trestle, then goes into Wilshire Hills and down Runnymede Rd., connecting to Dartmoor Dr.
- The RR follows Dartmoor to its end and then continues forward in the same direction. If you were doing so, you will be walking on the track beds. You can recognize this by the depression of rails in the ground, continuing until you come to the Wexford pumping station.

(It is believed that the lumber company had a saw mill located in the Wilshire area of the Glade. Nothing remains of the actual saw mill however it is believed to be roughly in the center of the Wilshire complex.)

- Back to the rail, go in the same direction as Dartmoor Dr., cross over Stonehenge Dr. and you will find similar characteristics and the depressed track beds. Continue until you come to a fork in the track bed. The left fork goes toward the Heatherhurst Country Club. Those left fork track beds have been erased by the extensive development surrounding Heatherhurst.
- The fork to the right remains very visible and crosses Laurelton Ct. On the other side you again pick up the road bed and follow it to the edge of Lake Dartmoor. At the time of the RR, Lake Dartmoor had not been formed, however, there did exist a creek called “Lick Creek.”

The track continued on until it reached what we now know as the Lake Dartmoor boat landing on Rotherham Dr.

You might ask yourself “why did the rail line go so far out of the way to get over to Rotherham Dr.” The answer is – this route had the least incline of all route options. This spur was built to transport the logging of Peavine Mountain.

- We now go backward, back to the place where the track crosses the trestle over into Wilshire. Just after crossing the trestle and a short way down Runnymede there was another spur line built. It crossed over Stonehenge at Kingsboro Dr., goes in back of the 11th green and through the Time Shares, up around the creek and comes back out onto Kingsboro just before the maintenance complex and then through the second fairway to Catoosa.

Going north on Catoosa, it went to Rotherham Ct. which served as the rail loading area for both timber and coal (in this vicinity).

- Just a short way down on Rotherham Dr., to the left, is a short dirt road. It is on this road, to the left, that one will find the lost coal mine and old winch trenches (of which there are four) which were used to bring the timber up the hills to the rail loading site.

Speculation is that the winches were powered by steam engines, fired by cord wood and later by coal. It is believed that coal was also transported to Dorton, and possibly transferred to the main rail line and on to other markets.

So there you have it Glade residents — this was once a thriving railroad community!

Perhaps some of your ancestors were here working on the railroad — as the old song says — all the live long day.



The Cumberland Northern Railroad went right through Fairfield Glade in the early 1900s when the need for lumber was a huge business