

Aberdeen, Carolina, and Western Railroad ^[1]

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Aberdeen, Carolina, and Western Railroad

by Larry K. Neal Jr., 2006

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In 1889 the Aberdeen & West End Railroad was chartered to build a line from Aberdeen to Star, while the Asheboro & Montgomery built a line from Asheboro to Star from the other direction in 1896. These lines, along with the Jackson Springs Railroad, were formally merged as the Aberdeen & Asheboro (A&A) in 1907. Five years later, the Raleigh, Charlotte, and Southern was established by the [Norfolk Southern Railroad](#) ^[3] (NS) to take control of the A&A. Afterward, construction continued west from Mount Gilead to Charlotte, a distance of 52 miles, until completion on 1 Dec. 1913.

The NS operated the Charlotte-Raleigh line as part of the Western Division until 1974, when the [Southern Railway Company](#) ^[4] incorporated the NS into its system. Southern continued operations until 1982, when abandonment proceedings were begun for the line from Star to Aberdeen.

An agreement was reached with the Southern in 1983 to operate this section of the old NS as the Aberdeen & Briar Patch (A&BP) under the control of Willard Formyduvall. The A&BP was in service for five years before it was sold in 1987 to Robert M. Menzie, who changed the name to the Aberdeen, Carolina, and Western Railroad (AC&W). Menzie soon realized that the relatively short section of track was greatly dependent on both the Southern Railway and the Aberdeen & Rockfish for survival. He therefore leased the section of the old NS from Charlotte through Star to Gulf, a distance of 105 miles. The resulting AC&W became a vibrant short line headquartered in Star, finding a niche hauling traffic once thought too light for the big systems.

By 2004, serving businesses in [Montgomery](#) ^[5], [Moore](#) ^[6], [Mecklenburg](#) ^[7], [Cabarrus](#) ^[8], [Chatham](#) ^[9], and [Stanly](#) ^[10] Counties, the road carried lumber and [forest products](#) ^[11], grain and [agricultural products](#) ^[12], plastics, building materials, propane gas, and solite rock products. Since its inception, the AC&W has upgraded more than 30 miles of its track with 132-pound, continuous-welded rail to handle modern larger-capacity freight cars. In the early 2000s it had connections with four railroads ([CSX](#) ^[13], Norfolk Southern, [Aberdeen & Rockfish](#) ^[14], and [Winston-Salem Southbound](#) ^[15]), operated 160 miles of track, had 20 employees, and carried 12,000 carloads (about 1.2 million tons) a year with its 12 locomotives.

Reference:

R. E. Prince, *Norfolk Southern Railroad-Old Dominion Line and Connections* (1972).

Additional Resources:

Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway official website: <http://www.acwr.com/> ^[16]

"Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway." Railway Association of North Carolina. http://www.ncrailways.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=5 ^[17] (accessed August 3, 2012).

Elkins, Ken. "Midland business park gets on track with Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway." *Charlotte Business Journal*. July 22, 2011. <http://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/print-edition/2011/07/22/business-park-gets-on-track.html> ^[18] (accessed August 3, 2012).

T&W Productions. *Ride with the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway* ^[19]. DVD. Granite Falls, N.C. 20??..

Image Credits:

Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway (ACWR) near Candor NC 1:28. YouTube video. Posted by trekky60 on June 23, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_8Vbwh4JCA ^[20] (accessed August 3, 2012).

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[26]

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