

## Virginia Scenic Railway – Staunton to Goshen

### Welcome Information – 01:30

**Hello everyone** and welcome aboard the Virginia Scenic Railway, hosted by the Buckingham Branch Railroad! Today, you'll be enjoying a 64-mile round-trip journey from Staunton to Goshen. This route's beginnings date back to 1836 and was completed by the Virginia Central Railroad. More to come later on the history of the line.

Goshen is located in Rockbridge County, Virginia. The name "Goshen" was taken from the Egyptian city of the same name, prominently mentioned in the Bible. Referenced in the Book of Genesis, it was called the "promised land". In Biblical times, Goshen was considered to be the most fertile land in Egypt. It was suitable for the cultivation of both livestock and crops.

Along the way, you will see some of the finest mountain and rural countryside the state has to offer. During today's journey, we will be pointing out some interesting historical facts about the communities through which we pass. Be sure to listen for the \_\_\_*Insert Sound*\_\_\_ and that will be your indication of an upcoming narrative.

Now, sit back and enjoy the journey as we traverse over one of Virginias *most* historic railroad routes.

### Staunton

Our trip begins in Staunton, located in Augusta County. Staunton was first settled in 1732, the Virginia General Assembly established it as a town by 1761 and was later incorporated by 1801. Staunton is so named after the wife of colonial governor Sir William Gooch, a Mrs. Lady Rebecca Staunton.

Prior to the coming of the railroad, farmers in the area had no way to get their goods to markets in eastern or western Virginia. So, that is exactly why the railroad was built! When the railroad was completed, farmers could sell their goods to stores in Charlottesville, Richmond, and many other cities. The focal point for shipping those goods was at the local railroad station where boxcars would be loaded and then shipped to their destination. The railroad allowed the towns in the area to grow and prosper.

During the Civil War, the Staunton played an important role as a manufacturing center, troop staging area, and supply depot. Staunton is the birthplace of the 28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, and the location of his presidential library. Staunton is also home to the country music legends The Statler Brothers and a few educational organizations including Mary Baldwin University and Virginia's School for the Deaf and Blind. Today, Staunton has a population of about 25,000 people

When the Virginia Central Railroad laid tracks from the Blue Ridge mountains to Staunton by 1854, it also established a locomotive and car shop in the area now called C&O Flats located on the western side of Staunton. Today, C&O Flats is the location of Buckingham Branch's rail yard and dispatch center. Since 2004, Buckingham Branch has provided local freight service to businesses in and around Staunton as well delivered and or receives freight cars with the Shenandoah Valley Railroad which is another short line railroad located just on the northeast side of Staunton. Staunton is also a stop for Amtrak's famous passenger train, The Cardinal, which has two trains running the same route, just one running east to west; the other west to east. These trains route between New York down through Washington DC, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Clifton Forge Virginia west/ north west to Huntington, West Virginia on its way over to Cincinnati, Indianapolis and lastly Chicago in a large "U" type shape. Its roughly a 26-and-a-half-hour journey. The Cardinal stops in Staunton three times a week - Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

### **What you may see today and why**

Today you will be traveling over a portion of the Buckingham Branch Railroad's Richmond & Alleghany Division. This division extends 199 miles between Richmond and Clifton Forge, Virginia. On this line, The Buckingham Branch Railroad delivers rail cars to or receives rail cars directly from three other railroads including CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad.

This is a busy freight line with many types of trains operating on it. On any given day, we may pass one of The Buckingham Branches four local freight trains while it provides "last mile" delivery service to over 30 customers that rely on this route. In addition to Buckingham Branch's trains, this route is also used by CSX Transportation to move empty coal and grain trains from east coast ports back to the coal fields of West Virginia or the grain mills of the Mid-West. If we're lucky today, we just might get to pass one of these freight trains pulling 175 -200 plus rail cars.

In addition to these freight trains, this track is also used by Amtrak's long distance passenger train named "The Cardinal". The Cardinal runs between New York's Penn Station and Chicago's Union Station in a big "U" shape. The Cardinal runs on the Buckingham Branch's Richmond and Alleghany line for roughly 125 miles.

Now, you may be thinking that's a lot of trains on one line...and you'd be right! More than 150,000 freight and passenger railcars annually traverse the R & A Division. The Buckingham Branch is responsible for all track construction and maintenance, signals, and rail traffic control (also known as dispatching) for all BB, CSXT and Amtrak trains. In order to safely coordinate all the train movements on the line, Buckingham Branch's Rail Traffic Control Center located in Staunton communicates with these trains using a combination of radio systems, train signal systems, and train traffic control software to ensure the safe and efficient movement of all the trains - including this one!

Now we welcome you to sit back, relax, and enjoy your ride on the Virginia Scenic Railway.

### **LaGrange - 01:00**

We are approaching LaGrange. At this location there is a track siding that's 3,800 feet in length. Sidings are ways in which trains can safely pass each other - While a train waits in the siding, another train can pass by

We'll also be passing Cros-B-Crest Farm, which you'll be able to view on the south side of the train car. Established in 1894, this farm has a diversified agricultural history. Here you will find apple orchards, beef cattle, sheep, row crops, poultry and greenhouses. If you look on top of the hill, you may catch a glimpse of the greenhouses. They cover a full 2 acres of land. These greenhouses are energy efficient and offer the best protection and environment for growing plants. Since 2008, the farm has principally focused on wholesale production of bedding plants including spring and fall annuals, and holiday poinsettias. Cros B Crest Farms sells directly to retailers, nurseries, as well as local and regional landscapers.

### **Taylor and Boody Organ Builders**

Looking out the south side of the car, *behind* the church closest to the track, you'll see what looks to be a brick school house up on the hill with some white columns. Founded in 1977, George Taylor and John Boody founded the Taylor and Boody

Organ Builders company. This company specializes in designing and building tracker organs grounded in historic tradition and high quality. Over the years, this group has completed more than seventy-five instruments for schools, private studies and churches as well as museum quality restorations on historical organs throughout the country.

If you check out their website, it's quite fascinating that here in rural Virginia is an organ builder that has designed and built organs used not only across the United States but across the Globe, as far away as Japan, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom.

### Jonesboro

Now, it's going to be hard to see from the track, but looking out the south side of the passenger car over in the tree line is an area known as Jonesboro here in Swoop, Virginia. This community was founded in 1878 on an original area of sixty-three acres. When the civil war ended, African Americans were thought to have represented 20% of Augusta County. Upon emancipation, African American families started reuniting with those family members who had been separated by slavery. They started building strong communities that had been denied to them before the war. By 1885, Jonesboro was noted on historical maps of Augusta County as a large cluster of houses where African Americans lived. This community had its own churches, schools, tavern and cemetery and was thriving until the mid-1950s. The community is thought to have had seventeen homesites. It's unknown why the community vanished, but today the area lies in ruins and is slowly disappearing.

### East North Mountain - 00:55

Looking out the North side of the car, the large mountain you see is North Mountain. This mountain is 3,062 feet in elevation, but it is more plateau than peak.

This mountain has one of the more difficult mountain biking trails along its ridge, just one in the collection of iconic mountains in Virginia's Ridge-and-valley portion of the Appalachian Mountains. You'll find North Mountain displayed on the "Elliott Knob" US Geological Survey topographical map quadrant.

This section of track is known as Little North Mountain. This is a 9-mile grade uphill when heading west from Staunton. This section of track was one of the highest elevation points on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Back in the day,

this section was riddled with short sidings every 3 to 4 miles for passenger trains to get around freight trains at the time.

The location of this line you are riding on today is not the original location of track throughout this area. Instead, the Virginia Central Railroad jetted off in various directions, snaking throughout this area to find areas of least cut and fill for the track bed in the 1850's. Looking out the windows of the passenger car today, you may see mounds seeming to be level across the tops and elongated. Those are the remnants of the original line! During that time, ash and cinder were often used to fill in depressions in the ground. This ash and cinder though is very acidic and has made it difficult for trees and other vegetation to really grow where the line used to be. It wasn't until 1947 when a man by the name of Robert Young with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (owners of the line at that time) wanted to revitalize passenger rail service post World War II. To do this, railroad curves needed to be elongated and straighter stretches of track constructed for speed. It was Young who proposed this line be used for more Passenger trains and the Chesapeake and Ohio's then James River line be used more for freight.

Today, along this steep section of track there is a track siding that provides room for trains, that are up to 4,460-feet long, to pass each other safely. That's 8/10s of a mile! Once trains top this section of mountain grade, its mainly downhill from here in either direction.

### **Fordwick -01:00**

Next up is an area known as Fordwick. Located on the North side of the train you'll notice a tall woven wire fence between the passenger car and mountain cut. This is called a slide fence. This is used to detect rocks that may fall off the adjacent hillside onto the tracks. If a rock hits the fence, it pulls the fence out of line. Fence stringers connected to relay boxes send an indication to the track signal to change the light from green to red, meaning stop any train in route to this section.

If one or more rocks were to fall and hit the fence, the rail traffic controller is notified electronically there may be a problem at this location. The rail traffic controller will then send a maintenance person to inspect the track to make sure it's safe for continued train traffic.

Just another way in which railroads operate in a safe and effective manner.

### East Craigsville - 01:00

We're coming into the town of Craigsville. This town is located within *Augusta* County. Back in 1721 Scottish immigrants William and Jeanette Craig received a land grant from the government for the purpose of farming. They settled right here. Eventually, the town was named for them. From 1721 until around the 1850s, the area remained predominately a farming community. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century companies like the Lehigh Portland Cement Co. and the Stillwater Worsted Mill called Craigsville home. The siding to get into the Cement plant was near Fordwick. Foundations of the concrete plant remain today, but hard to recognize due to the overgrowth.

By 1968, both businesses closed along with many other businesses that served the community. A lot of good, hard-working people live in Craigsville today, but the tattered remnants of its heyday are impossible to ignore.

As for the railroad line, there is a single end track at Craigsville that is used for storing equipment.

### East Bells Valley to West Bells Valley - 00:55

We're now approaching Bells Valley; which is located in *Rockbridge* County. Bells Valley has always been an agricultural area and was named after one of the areas earliest settlers, the Bell family.

Looking out the north side of the train car you'll be able to see Blue Ridge Lumber's Bells Valley dry kiln facility. Lumber is trucked from local sawmills to this facility where it goes through a drying process. This prepares the lumber for commercial use. -The Bells Valley yard holds an estimated 2 million board feet of kiln-dried lumber which it distributes worldwide. Board feet is the measurement of the volume of a board, that's one-foot in length, one foot wide, and one inch thick.

There's also a track siding in Bells Valley that is 3750 feet long. Though it is used to pass trains, it's sometime used to store rail cars.

When the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad operated the line, at the west end of the Bells Valley siding there was an addition switch and track off to the South which was as a location for loading and unloading live cattle. Back then, cattle could be shipped by rail as it was faster and trains could carry large volumes at one time to markets. The railroad ties are still in the ground today where this siding for loading cattle cars used to be. The pin that held the cattle until loading is no longer there. In the 1950's the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad closed the site as the cattle business was not a big customer of theirs.

### **East Goshen to West Goshen - 02:45**

We are approaching the small town of Goshen, our run around point for this excursion. Today, our trainset will come to a complete stop at which point our locomotive will separate from the train and go up and come down the 3,720 ft siding in order to swap ends on this train to head back towards Staunton.

### **Uncoupling Procedure and Recoupling:**

We've come to a stop so our train crew can do what's called, "Run Around the Train". Now, this doesn't mean you'll see any of our train crew physically get out and run around the train. "Run Around the Train" is a railroad phrase for the process of decoupling the locomotive from one end of the train, and recoupling it to the other end.

Procedures for a run around move are simple and safe. It begins by stopping the train. The Conductor manually tightens the brakes. You may hear a ratcheting noise when he is doing this. That is the chain being drawn tight, applying the brake shoes to the wheel. After the shoes are tightened, the locomotive can bump slightly against the train car to make sure the brake shoes are holding the train car in place. Last thing we want is a runaway coach car....

After the brakes are verified as applied, the conductor will cut the air supply off to the passenger car from the engine and separate the two pieces of equipment. The conductor communicates with the engineer that he is in a safe spot; that he has

opened the knuckles; and that the locomotive can now separate away from the passenger car.

Trains do not rely on brake fluid. Instead, all braking is applied through movement of air throughout the train. Each locomotive is equipped with its own air compressor. This compressor generates the air that is then moved from the air tanks on the locomotive through a pipe to a black hose which you see at the ends of each and every locomotive and or freight and passenger car. They are called air lines. These air lines are connected manually by our conductor and they are held together by a device known as a glad-hand. Think of a hand shake, each end of an airline has a glad-hand that can lock together with another glad-hand. Each and every car is coupled together not only with what is called a knuckle, but also by air lines. When our Locomotive engineer applies the brakes, he can release pressure through the air lines to not only apply braking to the locomotive, but also braking to the rest of the train in the consist.

Now, back to the run around procedure.

As the engine separates from the train, the switch for the siding up ahead is controlled remotely from the Buckingham Branch Dispatch office in Staunton. Signal systems much like a stop light on the highways are used to communicate with trains. When the light is green, a train can go past. When a light is yellow, a train must slow and prepare to stop, and when a signal light is red, it must stop – not going past the red light. These colored lights are operated from our dispatch office. Communication of where the train is on the track is also done through the rail. The rail acts as a conduit to transfer a signal back to the computer software, indicating to our dispatch team where the train is.

Dispatch teams communicate with each train engineer, letting the engineer know what's up ahead and whether they have permission to proceed in addition to the signal light. Here, our engineer will communicate with dispatch via a radio/ walkie talkie to verify the train can proceed out of one track and come down another to “run around the train.” Once the locomotive clears the switch point, the engineer can change direction of the locomotive simply by moving a lever, going from moving forwards to going backwards. The engineer can see out both ends of the engine. Locomotives can run safely forwards or backwards! As the engine passes, be sure to wave to our train crew and see if you get them to sound a horn!

As the engine heads back to the other end of the track, there again, our dispatch team will remotely throw the switch for the locomotive, aligning the switch so the engine can come onto this track. As the locomotive approaches, the engineer will



slow down the speed in preparation for coupling to the other end of the passenger car. As the engine approaches, the engineer is watching carefully to see how close they get in order not to bump the car too hard when recoupling to the passenger car. As the engine couples, you may feel a slight bump of the car. This results when the knuckle on both the passenger car and locomotive lock up. A locking pin drops between both knuckles, preventing them from opening. When our engine is coupled to the passenger car, the conductor will ask the engineer to give a little tug on the passenger car and see if they separate. This is done as a check of the locking pin.

Finally, the conductors secure the air lines from the engine to the passenger car.

Once the air hoses are attached, the hand brakes can be released from the passenger car and we are ready to head back out for the return portion of our trip.

### **Goshen Land Company Bridge**

Looking out the south side of the passenger car you should be able to see a metal truss bridge spanning over the Calfpasture River. Originally constructed in 1890 by the Goshen Land and Improvement Company, this bridge was built to accommodate trolley tracks as well as a roadway and cantilevered sidewalk. The bridge was one of Virginia's earliest multi-span truss bridges, spanning 258 feet and was typical of late 19<sup>th</sup> century bridges. It was also to be a symbol of achievement and pronounced presence for the area's optimism to become the next Birmingham of America during the iron ore boom. However, this never came to fruition and the bridge is all that remains of the Goshen Land and Improvement Company. On top of the bridge is a crest sign proudly listing the officers of the Goshen Company. In 2002, Virginia's Department of Transportation re-galvanized the bridge. Over 300 tons of steel were disassembled and then blast-cleaned to remove more than 100 years of rust. These steel pieces were then carefully put through the galvanizing process and reassembled. The bridge is now protected from corrosion for a lifetime, serving the public as the grand bridge it was first envisioned to be by its designers over a century ago.

### **Rail car types:**

We are often asked what kind of freight car is that? On the Virginia Scenic Railway, you may see a variety of cars, but certainly not all the types of railcars out across the United States.

The car you are in today is a passenger car. These cars are designed to carry people, the most precious commodity on the railroad. After passenger cars, there are freight cars. On the Buckingham Branch the freight car types vary from boxcars, to tank cars, to covered hoppers, to gondolas, to coal cars, flat cars, rock cars, vacuum hopper cars, and wood chip cars. These are the majority of rail car types used on this line, but certainly not the limitation. These cars carry a variety of products including cardboard, lumber, propane, butane, ethanol, grains, aggregates, railroad ties, transformers, plastics and wood chips. There are other rail cars out there across the country including autorack cars, intermodal cars, super heavy weight cars, log cars, piggy back cars, refrigerated cars and more.

Each of these cars are designed to carry a commodity, whether in liquid, dry or gaseous state. These commodities can also be temperature controlled throughout its journey, but more often than not, these products are able to be shipped as is.

Often, we are asked if we use a caboose. The answer is sometimes! Back in the day, cabooses had a few purposes - not only were they a location for a brakemen and trainmen to keep an eye on their train, but also were train crews home away from home! When a train crew is in the locomotive, it can be almost impossible to see the entire train you are pulling if it's of any great length. A train engineer could potentially have no idea anything is going wrong behind him because of a train's length. Trains back in the day could be upwards half a mile in length (or more!) and that can put the tail end of the train out of site to the train crew in the front that's possibly going around curves or up and down mountains. Larger freight trains today are often at minimal a mile in length, but more often two miles long!

Today's trains have electronic boxes on the rear which can notify the train crew in the front something may be wrong with the brakes and they should stop the train. Back then though, trainmen and brakemen would ride the caboose and use flags or lanterns or flairs to communicate to the locomotive things were good on the tail end of the train - nothing dragging, nothing coming loose, no hot wheels OR that somethings not looking right and they should stop. However, this could only be communicated when a train was in an open curve where an engineer could look back and see his train or on straight section of track. Trainmen in the caboose could also apply the brakes manually should they feel the need to stop. This would notify the engineer in the front something is wrong as the train would begin to slow without him braking.

Trainmen in the caboose could also manage their paperwork for the train, ensuring customers' orders and cars were delivered to the right location. In the early days, all paperwork was done manually with pencil and paper.

When a train crew arrived to its destination and their day was done, this train crew could camp out in their caboose car for the night until they were ready for their next run. Often these men would not necessarily go back to the same place they started. Railroads back then often sent these men away for days, going from destination to destination before heading back to their home station. These cabooses were often equipped with a pot belly stove for cooking on and warming the car, often had a toilet and a tank of water that was gravity fed and bunk or bench to sleep on in addition to a few captain's chairs and a desk.

Today, cabooses are nearly extinct as during the 1980's technology evolved so much that a caboose and extra train crew personal was no longer needed. Today, the Buckingham Branch retains a few operating cabooses, used for some freight, and on the Virginia Scenic Railway for show.

### **Horn Sequence:**

As our train approaches public road and railroad crossings, have you ever noticed there is a sequence to the horn blows - two longs a short and a long? This sequence dates back to the Queen of England when she used to travel by ship down the river Thames. In morse code, the Letter Q is communicated by two longs a short and a long. The letter Q in this example stood for Queen. Ships would do a long long short and long sequence to announce to other ships in the harbor this is the queen, get out of the way. When the queen switched from traveling by boat to rail, the same signal sequence followed. Train engineers thus too would blow two longs a short and a long.

When US railroads began, the tradition from England was maintained as the standard signal and it is still used today, almost 200 years later! Rules regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration dictate that 15-20 seconds before the train enters the crossing, but no more than a quarter mile from reaching the intersection of track and road, train engineers should begin this sequence. The last long is to last for the entire time the train is going through the crossing.

Note however, train horn sequences, lengths for beginning and end are completely subject to the train engineer's judgement. This feature is not automated to be

perfect every time. It's simply a rule though all train engineers must abide by across the country.

### **Locomotive Power and Speed:**

The Buckingham Branch relies on diesel powered locomotives as do most railroads operating today. The locomotives used today are more efficient and cheaper to operating and maintain as compared to steam engines of yester years. The maintenance required for boilers and wheels and moving parts on steam engines cost large sums of money and many hours of work to tear down, clean and put back. *IN* addition, steam engines were labor intensive, requiring multiple men to operate - whether it was job at the throttle, a fireman feeding the fire. Running multiple steam engines together for more pulling power also meant crews for each steam engine. However, multiple diesel engines coupled and operating together are able to communicate between each other with only one crew in the front locomotive.

When diesel engines entered the railroad industry around the 1940s, railroads were quick to catch on to their cost savings whether in train crew size, fuel source, maintenance and repair. Diesel locomotives throughout the ages have taken on many different shapes and styles. There have really only been a handful of manufactures whom ventured into this market to build these powerful machines.

Today's diesel engines can generate upwards of 4-6000 horsepower and 137,000-foot pounds of traction effort. Traction effort is defined as the amount of linear output force (or how hard it pulls) to get up and going. More modern diesel locomotives also weigh in excess of 390,000 pounds.

Locomotives on the Buckingham Branch and Virginia Scenic Railway often had previous lives dating back to the 1950's up through the 1980s. These locomotives began their careers operating for other railroads before our railroad acquired them. It's often much cheaper to purchase an older locomotive and fix it up as compared to buying new. New locomotives today cost in the millions of dollars to purchase just one. Over the years, these locomotives have been modified slightly, but overall are still the workhorses they were created to be. Within our fleet of 21 locomotives, most average around 2000 - 3000 horsepower, can produce roughly 50-60,000-foot pounds of traction effort and weigh on average 250,000 lbs. each. The horsepower and tractive effort are produced though its 16-cylinder diesel engine generator which turns an alternator which creates current. It's the use of current, or electricity, that actually turns the wheels to make a locomotive move.

Average speed for today's trip will be about 25 mph. Although we are permitted to run upwards of 40 mph on this line, we want to take you on this journey at a fun and adequate speed for viewing the countryside. Freight trains on this line you may see, such as CSX Transportation or our own local Buckingham Branch Freight train can run upwards of 35-40mph as well. Amtrak trains however have permission to run upwards of 60 mph on this line!

### History of Line and Trains may see

You may ask, "How did the Buckingham Branch Railroad get to operate on this historic rail line?" To answer that, we need to go back a bit in history.

In 1836, the Louisa Railroad was chartered by the Virginia General Assembly to begin a railroad at a terminal known then as Hanover Junction (now known as Doswell). This junction connected with the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad (often referred to as the RF&P Railroad). The RF&P railroad network ran more of a north south direction. The Louisa Railroad was tasked to expand westward per its original charter to traverse through the Counties of Louisa and Orange destined to build a corridor across the Blue Ridge Mountains and into Harrisonburg, Virginia.

By 1839, the Louisa Railroad had reached Louisa courthouse. It was then the Commonwealth requested a survey be conducted to determine a feasible route to Staunton by way of Charlottesville. Ultimately, this route, which passed over the mountains at Rockfish Gap, was chosen as a better alternative than the original plan to cross at Swift Run Gap to the north.

In 1847, the charter was modified again by the General Assembly to allow for the Louisa Railroad to create a rail line to the eastern base of the Blue Ridge and two years later, in 1849, the Blue Ridge Railroad was chartered for the purposes of building a rail line for crossing the mountains at Rockfish Gap to Waynesboro.

Now, in order to cross the Blue Ridge Mountains, it was determined that building a series of tunnels through the mountains and corridors along hill sides was more cost effective and efficient in terms of train time as compared to building up, over and around the mountains. In 1849, the Virginia Legislature chartered the Blue Ridge Railroad. It had the responsibility of constructing 17 miles of track from where the Louisa Railroad had ended. The Blue Ridge Railroad started its line 7 miles west of

Charlottesville and continued west to Waynesboro along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. This rail corridor is the same one you are riding on today. The Blue Ridge Railroad appointed Claudius Crozet as Chief Engineer of the Blue Ridge Railroad. Under his leadership and direction, the Blue Ridge Railroad began construction over the Blue Ridge Mountains, blasting away a series of tunnels and grade for the track.

In January of 1850, the Commonwealth authorized the Louisa Railroad to create and sell more stocks in order to build a rail line now from Staunton west to Covington. In February, the Louisa Railroad had expanded so much since 1836 through the 1840s, stretching from Hanover County westward through central Virginia to the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Louisa Railroad so changed its name to become the Virginia Central Railroad. The newly named Virginia Central Railroad bypassed the under construction Blue Ridge Railroad by laying temporary track through Rockfish Gap. Additionally, the railroad had laid enough track to reach from Gordonsville to Charlottesville. Track was also beginning to be laid that year from the western edge of the Blue Ridge, heading west through the Shenandoah Valley to Staunton.

Seven years later, the Virginia Central Railroad had reached the western towns of Clifton Forge and Covington from the western edge of the Blue Ridge mountains and by 1858, the Blue Ridge Railroad had completed their series of tunnels to shorten the distance through Rockfish Gap. The bypass route around the blue ridge mountains was eventually removed. Citizens of Virginia now had a rail corridor spanning from Doswell, VA to the Shenandoah Valley.

A few years after the civil war ended, the Virginia Central Railroad and the Covington and Ohio Railroad merged to form the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad around 1868-1869. This allowed for a rail corridor to span from Richmond all the way to the Ohio River Valley by 1873. By the 1880s, the Chesapeake and Ohio expanded its eastern presence via the Peninsula Subdivision to Newport News, Virginia.

For over 100 years, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad operated numerous networks of rail corridors. In the 1980s, the Chesapeake and Ohio was reorganized through a series of mergers and became what exists today as CSX Transportation.

CSX had been the primary railroad operator of the line you're on today until Buckingham Branch Railroad Founder Bob Bryant offered to maintain and operate the rail line on behalf of CSX. In 2004, the Buckingham Branch began its lease

agreement for 212 miles of this line stretching from AM Junction (just norther of Richmond) through Doswell all the way to Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Most recently, December 2019, then Virginia Governor Ralph Northam announced a \$3.7B transportation investment to include acquisition of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way and 225 miles of track - *Preserving an existing freight corridor of 199 miles between Doswell and Clifton Forge for future east-west passenger service.*

Today, Amtrak, CSX Transportation, and the Buckingham Branch Railroad operate trains on what was originally the Louisa Railroad, later becoming the Virginia Central Railroad, and so forth - preserving this historical infrastructure for current day freight and passenger rail service needs.

### **Other railroad related things to do in Virginia**

If you're looking for more "railroad related things" to do here in Virginia, there are attractions nearby we'd like to highly recommend! First on our list: the C&O Railway Heritage Center. You should know that the line you are riding on today continues west to the town of Clifton Forge, Virginia - the home of the C&O Railway Heritage Center. This museum has a broad collection of freight cars, passenger cars, and locomotives from the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. The museum has its own signal tower (no longer in use), an O gauge model train room, and a gift shop. This museum is open daily throughout the year. Be sure to check out their website: [www.candoheritage.org](http://www.candoheritage.org)

Just a little way south down Interstate 81 is the city of Roanoke. "Back in the day" it was known as the Town of Big Lick. In Roanoke you'll find the Virginia Museum of Transportation. The large museum presents numerous rail cars and locomotives of yester year. You'll also find other relic forms of transportation including vintage cars and airplanes.

Also in Roanoke, be sure to stop by the O. Winston Link Museum. This museum is known for documenting the end of the steam locomotive era of the former Norfolk and Western Railroad. You might know that train line today as the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The O. Winston Link Museum is actually located in a former passenger train station. Your visit there will give you a unique opportunity to admire some of Americas most iconic train photography.

**Factory - 00:50**

On the north side of the train car we'll be passing a building occupied by Graphic Packaging. At this location, Graphic Packaging transloads rolls of paperboard from a rail car to truck. It's then transported to other processing facilities that convert the paperboard into paper-based packaging products used for consumer goods.

It may sound like an "odd word", but **Transloading** is a shipping term that refers to the transfer of goods from one mode of transportation to another that's en route to an ultimate destination. Transloading can provide significant cost savings to manufactures producing products often purchased or shipped in large bulk amounts or are heavy in weight. Rail can provide a significant savings not only in cost, but reduces truck travel on major interstates and is environmentally friendly as compared to other modes of transportation when compared to amount of tonnage moved per mile per gal of fuel.

**Nearing end of Ride:**

We're nearing the end of your experience with us today. We certainly hope you enjoyed your time on the Virginia Scenic Railway. Please be sure to check out our website for future rides and special events. We also have social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. At this time we'd like to ask you to look around your table and make sure you have all your belongings.

Thank you for riding with us today and we hope to see you again soon for another adventure on the Virginia Scenic Railway and Buckingham Branch Railroad.