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From the Editor

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From the Editor:

Huntsville and Madison County are at the center of North Alabama's railroad history. The first railroad west of the Alleghenies was built a little over 50 miles away. The first locomotive-driven train west of the mountains came within about 25 miles. Huntsville's freight depot is the longest continuously used in the nation and the Passenger Depot is "one of the oldest surviving railroad stations in the nation." The depot is now a transportation museum and promises to keep Huntsville at the center of railroading history. Another exciting railroad museum has found a home at Chase: The North Alabama Railroad Museum, Inc.

Because of the efforts of countless individuals, Huntsville and Madison County boasts a host of major preservation coups. Catherine Gilliam's efforts to save the downtown depot from I-565 still inspire Foundation members. Harvie Jones' meticulous fidelity to the highest standards of restoration also stays fresh in our minds. Hugh Dudley's tireless efforts to secure a home where the growing number of railroad enthusiasts in North Alabama can collect and display railroad cars and engines have found success. While the Chase Depot is not the oldest or the longest in service, it has the unique distinction of being the "smallest union station in the country." (A union station is one that serves more than one railroad line.)

The future for our transportation museums looks bright—if we remember that local support is as necessary as tourist dollars.

This issue was inspired by Guy Spencer, Chairman of the Huntsville Depot Museum, and Harvie Jones, who alerted me to the work being pursued by railroad enthusiast Don Dobravolsky.

What follows is a progress report of sorts, by Don of some aspects of a larger work he is compiling on the complete history of the Memphis and Charleston, from its first 2 miles of track, to its full extent from the Mississippi to Stevenson. Don most graciously stopped his research to meet this April deadline.

Since many readers will be meeting Don for the first time, you'll be interested to know: Don is a native of Boston, Massachusetts. His wife Carol is also from "Bean Town." A Project Engineer for SCI, Corporation, Don is an avid railroad buff. He builds HO scale model railroad cars, **from scratch**, and he searches high and low for railway history. A craftsman in wood and words, Don is a member of various historical societies and is Associate Editor for the *Mountain People Gazette* (Dave Carney, publisher). Welcome aboard Don!

Lastly, thanks **SUZANNE**, from **ALL OF US**, for a **JOB WELL DONE!**