



THE BRANDYWINE & BENEDICTINE RAILROAD

“The Mason / Dixon Line”

General Information

The Brandywine & Benedictine Railroad is an Appalachian coal-hauling railroad, modeled in 1953. It runs north and south from Winston Salem, N.C. to Pittsburgh, Pa. Motive power is a 50/50 mix of steam and first-generation diesel power.

The modeled portion of the railroad covers the 55 miles from Martinsville, Va. to Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Gandin Yard in Salem, VA serves as the Division Point between the Carolina Division to the south and the Alleghany Division to the north. Most trains get switched and get a motive power change at Gandin Yard. Coal is the central theme of the railroad; however, the B&B is a major trunk line with its share of freights, passenger trains and locals.

The model railroad is designed with prototype operations in mind. Thirty-six staging tracks at six different locations on the railroad supply the B&B with plenty of traffic and can keep the dispatchers and yard crews very busy.

The railroad can comfortably accommodate 14 to 18 operators. Available jobs are:

- Carolina/Alleghany Division Dispatcher
- Gandin Yard Master
- North Gandin Yard Switcher
- South Gandin Yard Switcher
- Pauldon Yardmaster (footboard)
- Pauldon Helper Engineer
- Blueridge Steel Mill Switcher
- 7 to 10 - Road Crews

The layout occupies a 2300 sq. ft. finished basement. The whole basement is devoted to model railroading, consisting of the railroad room, a workshop, and a crew's lounge. The railroad has close to 2000 ft of hand laid code 70 track. All the visible turnouts are custom made and hand laid. The layout is a “Loop to Loop” type track plan. Scenery is nearly complete with some detailing yet to do.

The railroad operates 3 – 8 hr shifts using a 3 to 1 fast clock. Each “Trick” takes 3 plus hrs. to complete. Car forwarding uses a homemade Car Card and Waybill system. With the recent completion of the signaling system the railroad operates under CTC (Centralized Traffic Control). Communications are handled via a custom-made telephone system.

The B&B is controlled using Digitrax Command Control. Crews use any flavor of Digitrax Throttle, tethered or wireless. The B&B also has a WiFi server for WiFi Throttles. A computer running RR&Co. software is used to assist in the control of the railroad. The computer screen is configured like a 40's era CTC machine enabling the Dispatcher to control the signals.

Traffic consists of a mix of Coal, Merchandise and Passenger Trains. All locomotives are sound equipped with TCS WOWSound decoders. The schedule is heavy on coal trains with a few local freights to keep it interesting. Helper locomotives are added to most northbound trains at Pauldon. The trick is getting the light helper engines back down the grade in time for the next push up the hill.

I've done my best to make the B&B representative of a thriving transportation system of the 1950's.

Norm Stenzel - General Superintendent
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