

HAPPY 10th BIRTHDAY, HANDY DANDY!

Denton FarmPark's Handy Dandy Railroad is observing its 10th birthday at this year's Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion. The steam locomotive which pulls the train is much older.

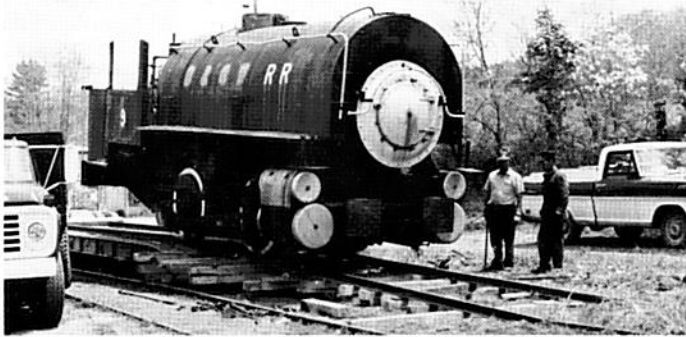
The dismantled engine was trucked here in 1979 from Burnsville, N.C., where it had been idle for 30 years. Restoration of the engine, building the track, and obtaining and restoring three passenger cars and a caboose and tender car, lasted the next three years.

Reunion director Brown Loflin and Howard Latham (he's the engineer in the traditional striped attire with red bandana) were

partners in the venture. "It was a lot of work," said Loflin, "and it's still a lot of work. A steam locomotive needs constant repair and maintenance, and keeping up the track is something that never ends."

Latham agreed: "It's an awful lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun. I get the compensation I want when I see how much it's enjoyed by kids from two to 102."

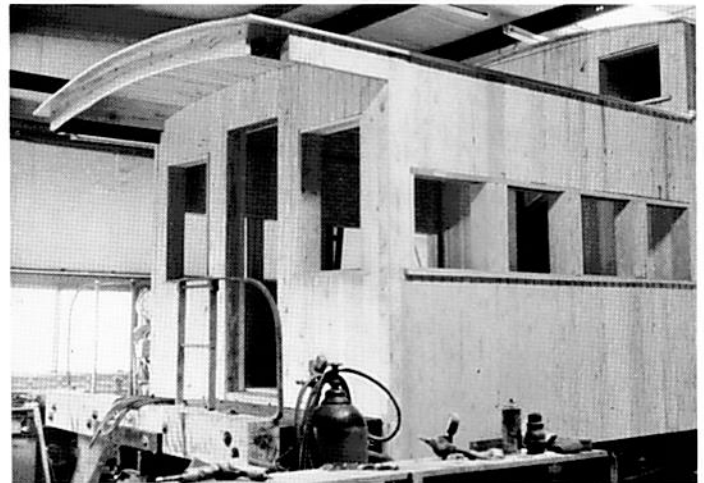
Pardon our pride in the park's most prominent offspring. We had to say "Happy 10th birthday, Handy Dandy," and you'll understand we had to dig out these old baby pictures.



Above, May of 1979: With tracks laid for loading, stripped-down engine and wheels are loaded on truck at Burnsville. At right, later that year: Margaret Tucker of High Point, winner of \$50 prize in contest for naming railroad, in cab with Loflin. Without a track, the engine is still resting on blocks.



Above: Believe it or not, that was the caboose when it arrives at the park. A time-consuming dirty job removed rust and grime from wheels, bed and steel framing that remained. At right, in the park's restoration building: Walls are replaced, inside and out, with doors and windows framed, and it looks like a caboose again.



At left: Spring is bustin' out in 1982, and so is the Handy Dandy Railroad as grading, crossties and rails make way for the start of a railroad's life at that year's Threshers' Reunion. Why Handy Dandy? The park is in the Handy community of Davidson County, with one entrance from Handy Road. In these parts, it's still fashionable to name a baby for its ancestry.