One of the essentials in building commerce and industry in America is the railroad. Long ago, the railroad was known by “railbarons.” Very few towns or businesses grew and prospered without the services of the “iron horse.”

Did the steam really end in the United States when the Norfolk Western decided to dissolve or when the Grand Trunk Western fully closed down the last workday Class I steam operations? Some may conclude that it all ended at 3 p.m. on August 21, 1979 when No. 97 of the Mobile & Gulf Railroad, a morgel with holes in her tender and stack, finished the days switching at the wood-generating plant in Browns- ville, Alabama and her fire was allowed to die.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the development of alternative modes of transportation became important. The expansion and improvement of intemate highways, air travel and inland waterways played a major role in deforming “King” railroad.

The Alabama Railroad System

Railroad operations in Alabama historically have been oriented to the movement of goods between major population centers and Gulf Coast port cities. Through the years, these routes radiating out from the land-water transfer points have been integrated into a much more comprehensive rail network. Prior to 1865, the center of rail activity in Alabama existed with its governmental center of Montgomery, while the industrial city of Bir-

mingham was still relatively isolated from rail service. Since those early days, the increased production of large quantities of bulk commodities in the greater Birmingham area has resulted in the increasing importance of that city as the railroad hub of the state and the region. The Rail Network is categorized by classes as follows:

Class I Railroads

Four railroads in Alabama are classified by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) as being Class I railroads with base gross operating revenues in excess of $346.79 million per year. Over the years, the $346.79 million per year base revenue threshold has been revised to reflect inflation. These Class I railroads are as follows:

1. Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS)
2. CSX Corporation (CSX)
3. Union Pacific Corporation (UP)
4. BNSF Railway (BNSF)

Class II Railroads

One railroad in Alabama is classified by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) as Class II. Class II railroads are defined by the STB as any railroad that has base gross operating revenues between $27.74 million and $346.79 million per year. The base revenue levels have been adjusted due to inflation.

1. Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway (AGS)

Class III Railroads

Twenty-seven railroads in Alabama are classified by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) as being Class III companies. These operating companies, generally referred to as “Short Line Railroads,” are distributed throughout the state and generally serve as feeder routes for the Class I railroads. These railroads each have base gross operating revenues of less than $27.74 million per year. The base revenues have been adjusted due to inflation. These Class III railroads are as follows:

1. Alabama Railroad Co. (KAR)
2. Alabama Southern Railroad (ASR)
3. Alabama & Tennessee Railroad, L.C. (ATR)
4. Alabama Panhandle Railway (APW)
5. Alabama Northern Railway (ANR)
6. The Bay Line (BAY)
7. Birmingham Terminal Railway (BTR)
8. Calera and Shelby Railroad & Museum, Inc. (CSRM)
9. Central Gulf Ferry (CGF)
10. Chattanooga Bay Railway (CBA)
11. Columbus & Chattahoochee River Company (COCR)
12. ConocoPhillips Railway (CSX)
13. Eastern Alabama Railway (EATR)
14. Georgia Southern Railway Company (GS)
15. Mobile & Alabama River Company (MARC)
16. Mobile & Southern Railroad (MARS)
17. North Alabama Railroad (NAR)
18. Southern Electric Railroad (SER)
19. Southeastern Valley Railroad Company (SEVR)
20. Three River Railroad (3RR)
21. Tennessee Southern Railroad Co. (TNSR)
22. Wiregrass Central Railroad Co. (WCR)

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Note: Due to the scale of this map, some of the railroad spurs and side tracks are not included in the map in this format.

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