

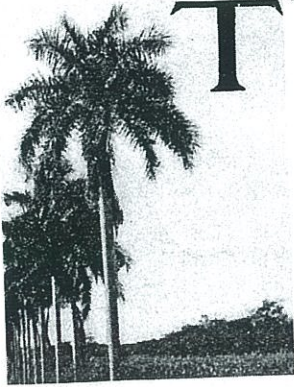
JAMAICA
GOVERNMENT
RAILWAY

C H RIFF
DON McQUEEN

The Island of Jamaica and Its Railway System

By J. POWTER

Director, Jamaica Government Railway



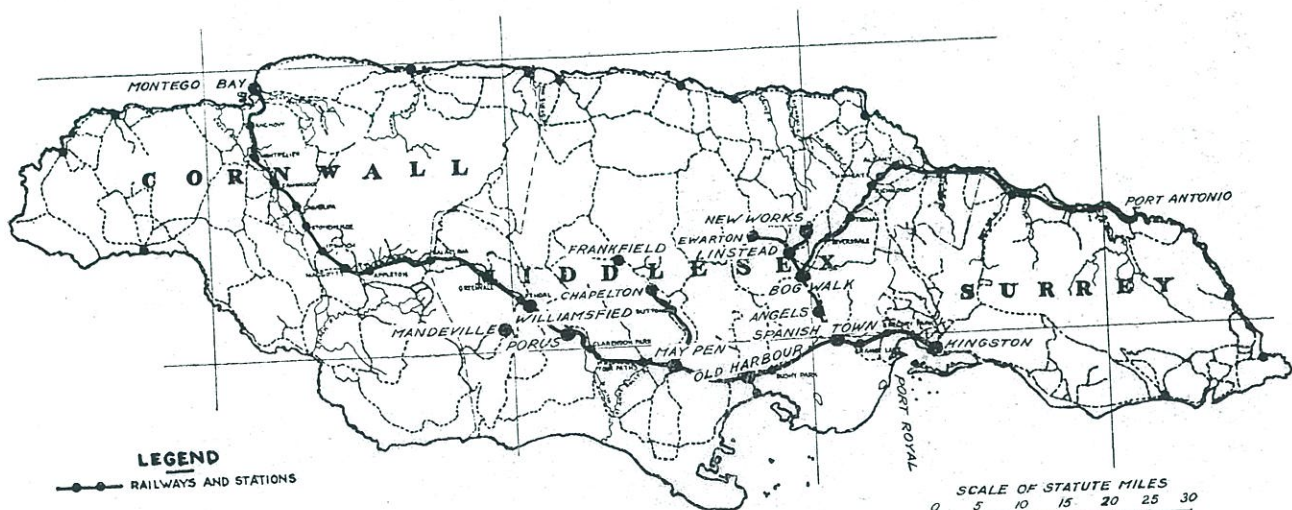
THE beautiful Island of Jamaica is the largest of the British West Indian possessions, being situated towards the North of the Caribbean Sea, at about where the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea conjoin. It is 4207 square miles in extent, having an extreme length of 144 miles, and an extreme width of 49 miles. The Island is mountainous especially in the eastern part where Blue Mountain Peak rises 7360 feet above sea level. Economically the mountains are valuable, because they are not composed of barren rock, but have cultivatable soil up to their very summits, and it is from the main range, the Blue Mountains, that the finest coffee in the world, known as "Blue Mountain Coffee," is obtained.

The approach to Kingston from the sea is beautiful. The city nestles at the foot of the Blue Mountains, and the natural harbor, protected by a long narrow sand

dune, known as The Palisadoes, is one of the best and safest in the world. At the end of the Palisadoes stands Port Royal, famous for centuries as the headquarters of pirates and brigands. The old fortifications still remain to remind the visitor of the grim and romantic history of the old Port Royal.

The climate of Jamaica in the main is tropical, but at the same time the various mountain resorts offer all the advantages of a temperate climate with sunshine almost every day in the year. From November to March the climate is ideal, with warm brilliant sunshine during the day, followed by nights that are cool and frequently quite cold. In Kingston, even in the hot months of the year, the nights are always cool. All the year round, during the day time, a breeze prevails from the sea to the land, but during the late afternoon it changes from land to sea and becomes delightfully cool.

The Island of Jamaica has many attractions for the tourist; and the fine hotels, together with adequate railway and motor transportation, make it possible for the visitor to travel in comfort. The Myrtle



Railway Map of the Island of Jamaica



Roadside Scene Near Rozelle

Bank Hotel, overlooking the harbor at Kingston, is up to date in every way and is situated in its own beautiful grounds. A jetty, projecting from the foot of the gardens, provides a place where visitors may sit and enjoy the breezes from the sea. Bourne-mouth Baths, a huge, open air, sea water bath, overlooking the harbor, is only about two miles out from the center of Kingston. Other hotels are the "South Camp," in the city, and "Manor House" and "Mona Great House," near the foot of the hills and about six miles from the city. There are two nine-hole golf courses at Kingston: the Liguanea and Constant Spring, to which visitors can be introduced by the managers of the various hotels.

The Parish of Manchester with its chief town of Mandeville, a favorite resort of tourists, has all the advantages of a temperate climate, owing to its altitude of over 2000 feet

above sea level. Here the visitor will find several good hotels, a golf course and tennis courts. Another favorite place for the tourist is Moneague, in the Parish of St. Ann. This is also a "hill" resort, with facilities for golf and tennis. The Moneague Hotel is not far from Dunn's River, a famous bathing beach where fresh water falls tumble into the sea. Roaring River Falls, and the beautiful Fern Gully are also near Moneague.

The principal crops

of the Island are bananas, sugar and coffee, of which bananas are an easy first, the 1926 lists of exports showing bananas 52 per cent, sugar 16 per cent and coffee 9 per cent of the total exports. The same year showed an export of over 20,000,000 stems of bananas of which over 10,000,000 were handled by the Government Railway.

The history of the Jamaica Government Railway begins in 1845, with the opening of a privately-owned railway known as the Jamaica Railway, between Kingston and



A Typical Country Road Near Kent Village



Loading Bananas at Frankfield

Angels, a distance of a little over 14 miles. In 1869 a branch from the ancient Spanish capital of the Island, then known as St. Jago de la Vega, and now known as Spanish Town, was completed as far as the town of Old Harbour. Ten years later, in 1879, the Government of Jamaica purchased the entire property of the Jamaica Railway Company at a price of £93,932 which represented only about one-third of the capital expenditure. Extensions from Old Harbour to Porus, and from Angels to Ewarton were opened in 1885, the mountains at these two termini deterring further extensions. In 1890 a Foreign Syndicate bought up the whole Railway for £800,000 under bond to extend it from Porus to Montego Bay, over the well-known "Melrose Hill," and from Bog Walk ("Boca del Agua" was its more musical Spanish name) to Port Antonio, the promised extensions being opened to Montego Bay in 1894, and to Port Antonio in 1896. Financial difficulties soon followed, and possession of the Railway was again secured by the Government of Jamaica in

August, 1900, and it has since been administered as a Government department.

Additional construction was not undertaken until 1912, and a year later a thirteen-mile branch line from May Pen to Chapeltown was opened for service. In 1921, another branch line was built from Linstead (on the Ewarton Line) to New Works, a centre of the sugar cane and banana area. The latest construction completed is that of the extension of

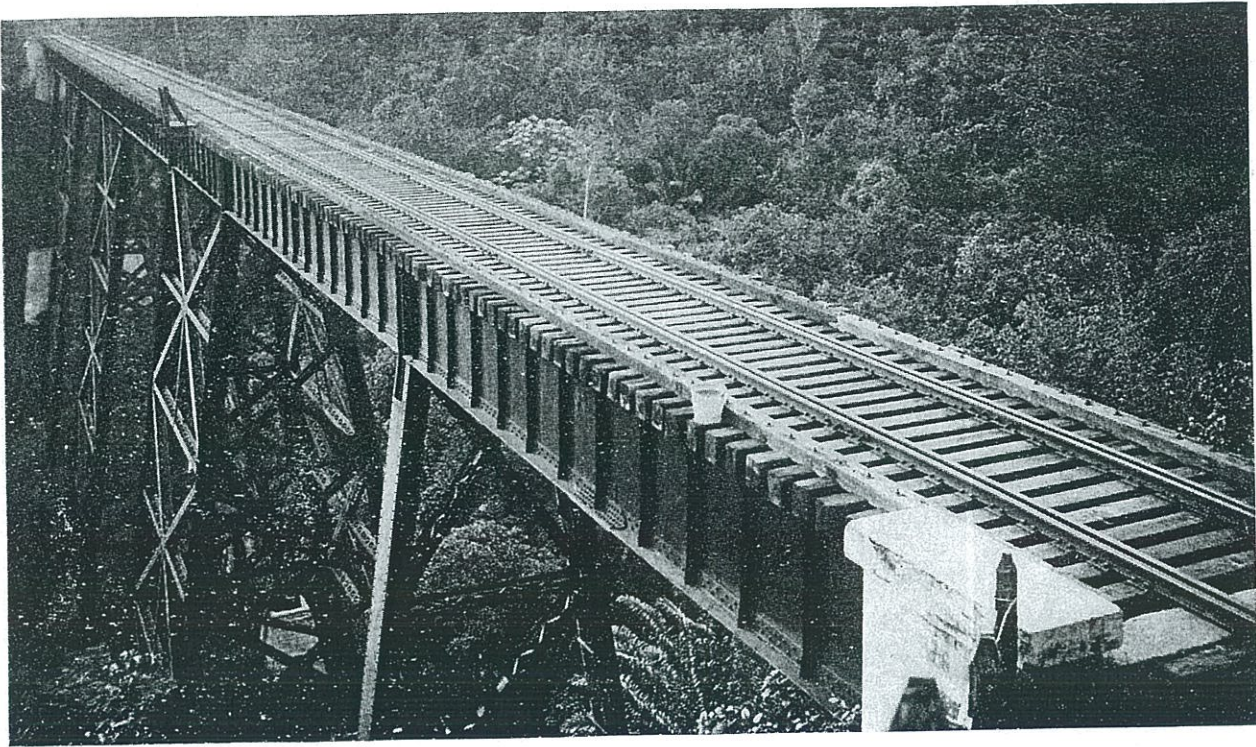
the Chapeltown Branch to Frankfield which was formally opened by the then Governor, Brigadier General Sir Samuel Wilson, in 1925.

The total mileage now amounts to 210 miles of main line and 35 miles of sidings, making a total of 245 miles of standard (4 feet 8½ inches) gauge track, which is now being relaid throughout with flat-bottomed rails weighing 80 pounds to the yard. Sharp curves and heavy grades are encountered at many points on the lines, which reach a maximum altitude of 1760 feet above sea level at Greenvale Station.

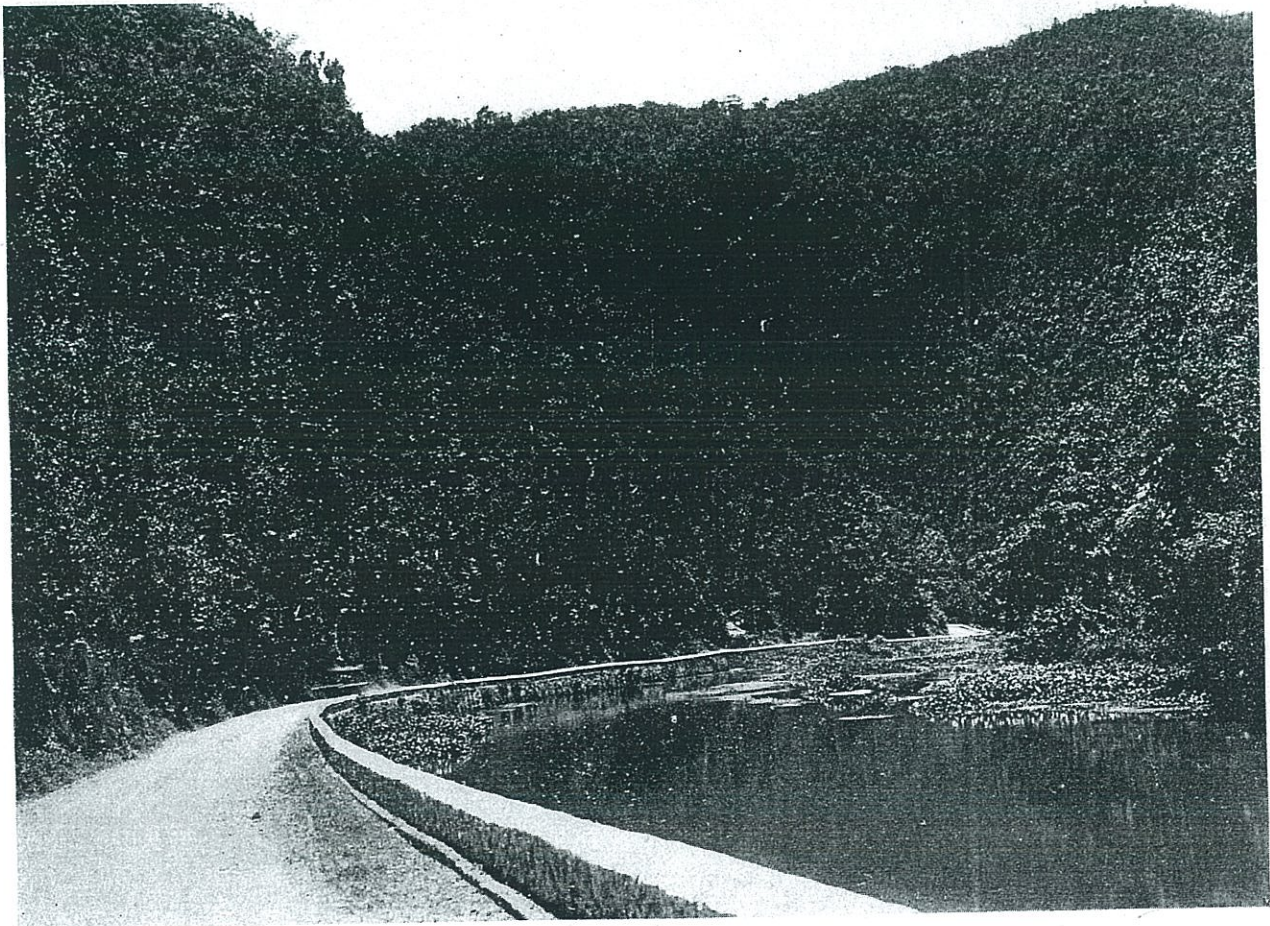
The severest test of the efficiency of the



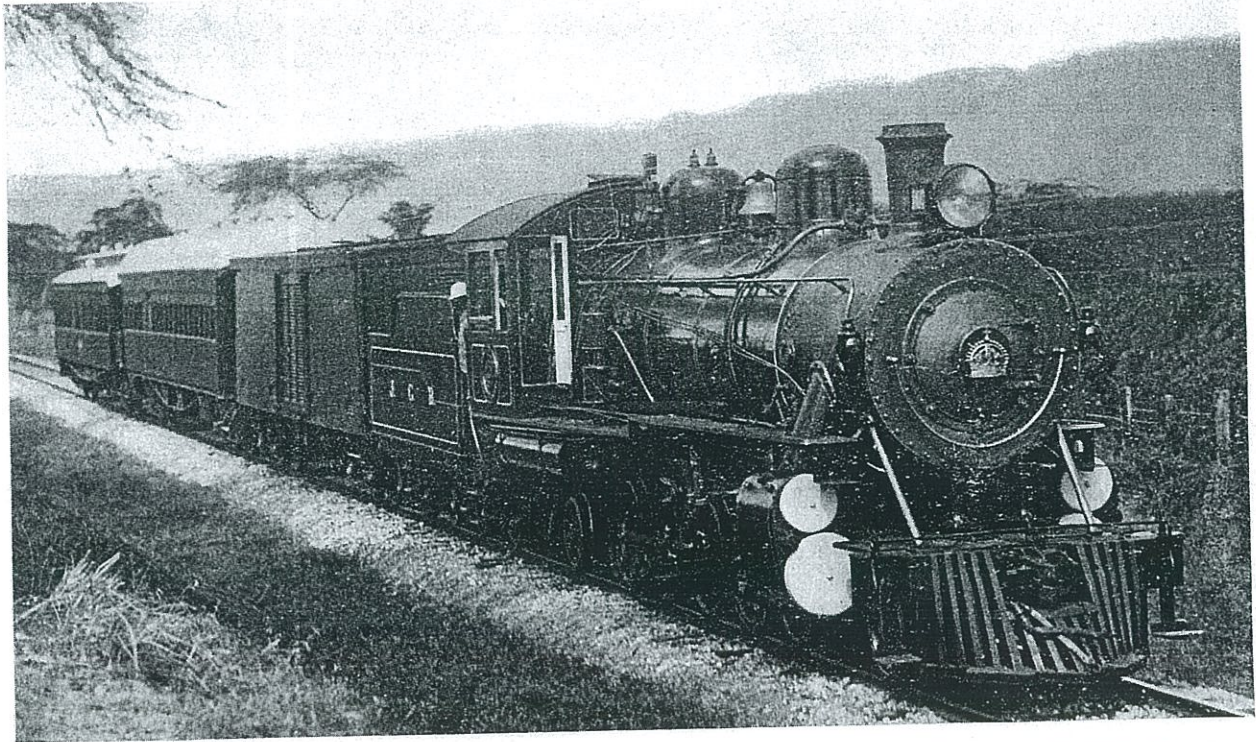
Native Rafts on the Rio Grande



Viaduct Near Trout Hall on the Frankfield Line, Jamaica Government Railway



Bog Walk, One of the Most Alluring Spots in All Jamaica

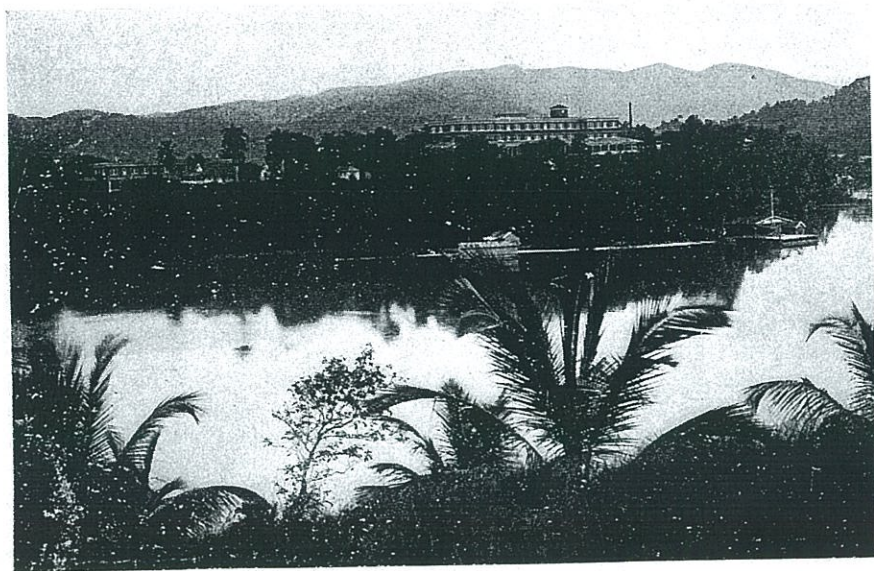


Special Train Conveying Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York from Ewarton to Kingston, on January 21, 1927

The locomotive is one of the Mountain (4-8-2) type locomotives built by The Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1916. The locomotive was named "Duchess of York" in honor of the occasion.



Blue Hole, Near Port Antonio, is one of the Many Spots in Jamaica which Must be Seen to be Appreciated



The Hotel Titchfield at Port Antonio

motive power (and of the fireman) is found on the "Melrose Hill," between Porus and Williamsfield. The train leaves the first named station, 435 feet above sea level, and winds its way around the mountain to Williamsfield, which has an altitude of 1300 feet above sea level; a climb of 865 feet in $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles over a maximum grade of 1 in 30 with sharpest curves of five chains (330 feet) radius not compensated, there being many reverse curves without a tangent between. The views from the train when passing over this section are magnificent and well worth the trip from Kingston to Williamsfield and back. Williamsfield is the station used by those traveling to the resort at Mandeville which is five miles to the south.

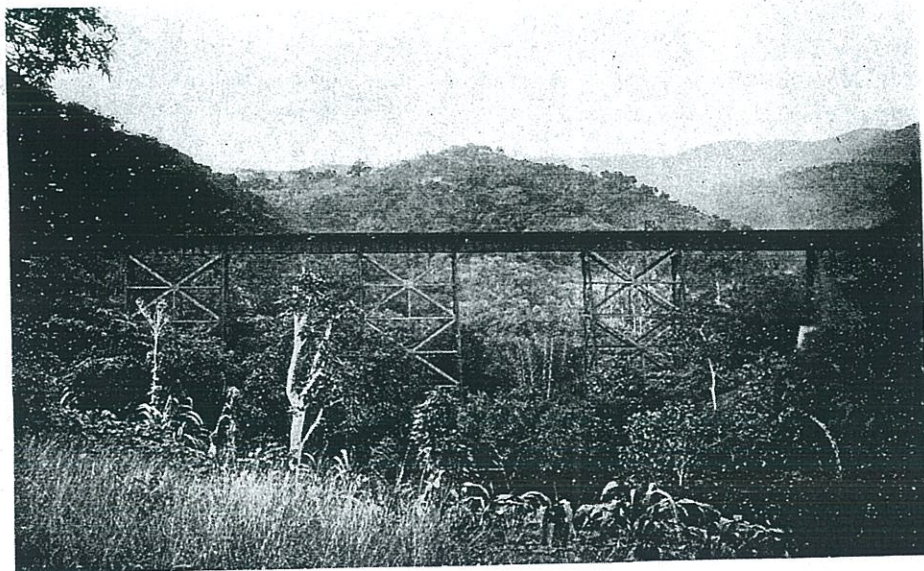
On the branch from May Pen to Frankfield the maximum grade against the load is 1 in 40 and against the empties is 1 in 33, with curves slightly over 7 chains (462 feet) radius. From Bog Walk to Port Antonio, a distance of 55 miles, the maximum grade is 1 in 30, with sharpest curves of 5 chains (330 feet) radius. Twenty-four tunnels are encountered on this line, 16 of which occur

within the short distance of 15 miles. The longest tunnel is 2194 feet in length and is known as the "Gibraltar Tunnel." A particularly fine view of the Bog Walk Gorge can be obtained from the train immediately after it emerges from the north end of this tunnel.

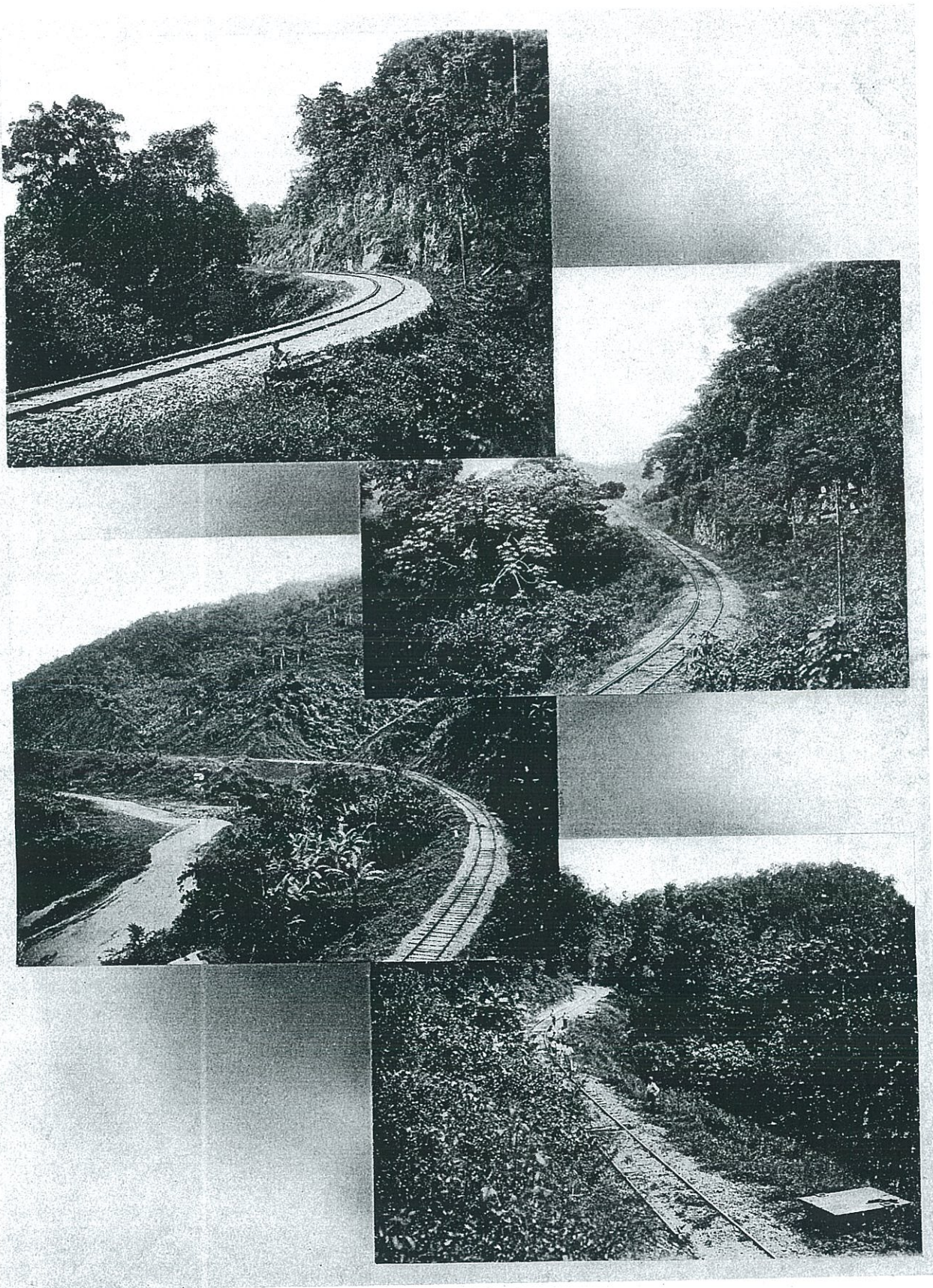
In the last two years the Railway has made a vigorous attempt to secure tourist traffic and it is felt that the number of tourists and visitors to the Island would greatly increase if the beauty of the scenery were only better known.

A favorite day trip, which is arranged in conjunction with the Tourist Agencies, is between Kingston and Port Antonio, one half of the party going by train to Port Antonio, and the other half by road, the process being reversed on the homeward run. The Hotel Titchfield at Port Antonio provides excellent accommodations of every sort during the winter months. Montego Bay is well worth visiting for its wonderful bathing at "Doctor's Cave," and the baths at Milk River (8 miles from May Pen station) are unrivalled even by the best continental Spas and Bads.

The rolling stock of the Jamaica Government Railway consists of 43 locomotives,

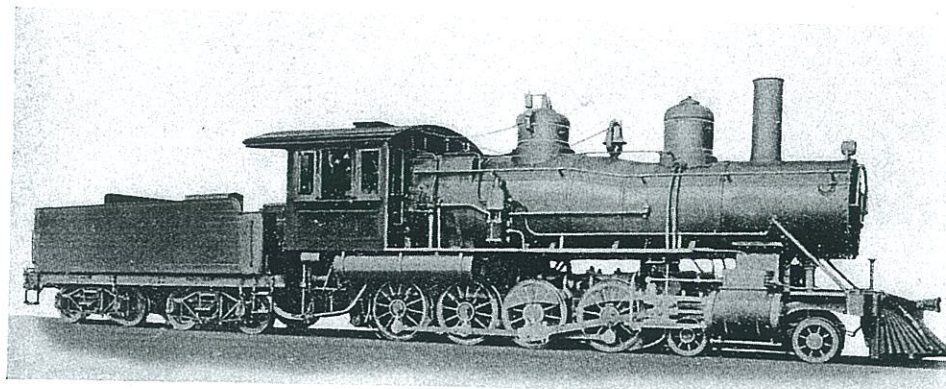


This Viaduct Carries the Frankfield Line Over a Mountain Ravine of Surpassing Beauty



Typical Scenes Along the Lines of the Jamaica Government Railway

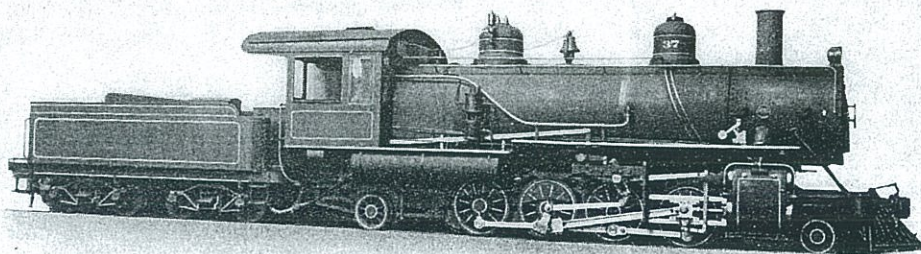
BALDWIN LOCOMOTIVES



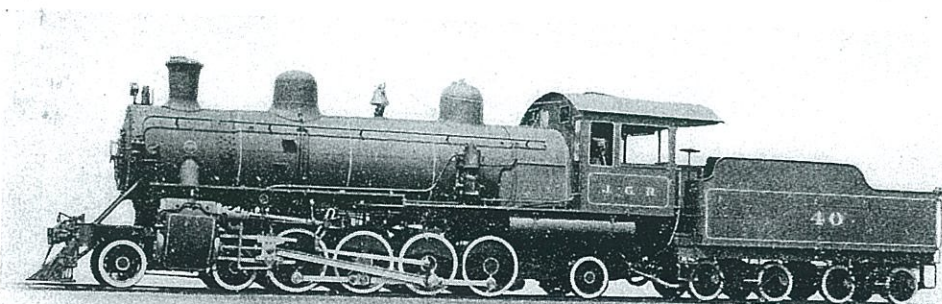
Cylinders	19" x 26"
Drivers, diam.	46"
Steam pressure	190 lb.
Weight on drivers	107,930 lb.
" total engine	133,330 lb.

One of the Two 4-8-0 Type Locomotives Built by The Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1907

Cylinders	19" x 26"
Drivers, diam.	46"
Steam pressure	190 lb.
Weight on drivers	125,200 lb.
" total engine	159,100 lb.



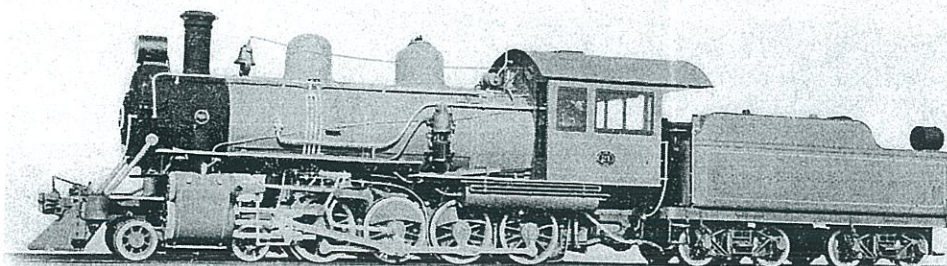
A Baldwin Mikado Type, Four of Which were Built in 1914. Two Mikados Similar to the One Shown, but without Superheaters and Piston Valves, were Furnished in 1911



Cylinders	19" x 26"
Drivers, diam.	46"
Steam pressure	190 lb.
Weight on drivers	114,900 lb.
" total engine	157,400 lb.

Mountain Type Locomotive Built for the Jamaica Government Railway in 1916. The Two Locomotives on this Order were the First Mountain Type Locomotives Built by The Baldwin Locomotive Works

Cylinders	19" x 26"
Drivers, diam.	46"
Steam pressure	190 lb.
Weight on drivers	108,300 lb.
" total engine	136,900 lb.



One of Six 4-8-0 Type Locomotives Ordered by the Jamaica Government Railway from The Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1919

34 passenger coaches, 532 freight, fruit and cane cars, one 40-ton traveling locomotive crane and two small traveling cranes.

The Baldwin Locomotive Works have on various occasions furnished locomotives to the Jamaica Government, first in 1907 when two engines were constructed. These locomotives were of the 4-8-0 type having cylinders 19 x 26 inches (a Jamaica Government Railway standard) and Stephenson link motion. In 1911 two "Mikado" (2-8-2) type were purchased, these being the first engines on the line to have Walschaerts valve gear; these were followed in 1914 by four engines of the same type but fitted with superheaters and piston valves. Two "Mountain" (4-8-2) type engines were completed and shipped in 1916, which incidentally were the first locomotives of this type ever constructed by The Baldwin Locomotive Works. Additional orders followed, three locomotives being furnished in 1919, and three in 1920, all of the 4-8-0 type. It was one of the "Mountain" type engines, No. 40, that had the honor of hauling the special train conveying their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York from Ewarton to Kingston on the 21st of January, 1927, during their visit to Jamaica. The engine was specially named "Duchess of York" for the occasion, and the Pullman saloon car, originally purchased

in America by Sir Henry Norman (a former Governor of the Island) was specially redecorated and furnished for the occasion. It will be a satisfaction to American car builders to hear that the Royal Party commented upon the comfortable riding of this car.

The Railway operates adequate repair shops at Kingston, capable of maintaining all locomotives and cars in good condition. Adjoining the shops is a twelve-stall roundhouse, each stall provided with a pit. Access to the roundhouse is obtained over a seventy feet turntable and adequate water and coaling stations closely adjoin the main line leading to the turntable. These shops are modern in every respect, having been remodelled, re-equipped and electrified in 1923. The modernizing process still continues and at the moment a new, large, heavy-duty wheel lathe and a two-hundred-ton hydraulic wheel press are being installed.

It is hoped that the various illustrations accompanying this article will convey to the reader some idea of the beauty of Jamaica, but no sort of illustration can convey, for example, the extraordinary blue of "Blue Hole," the beauty of the "Roaring River Falls," or the fascination of "Fern Gully." These and other beauty spots must be visited to be fully appreciated.



A Distant View of Port Antonio

BALDWIN LOCOMOTIVES

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Roaring River Falls, One of the Beauty Spots of Jamaica

KINGSTON

A History of the
Canadian Locomotive Companies
1854 to 1968



by
*Donald R.
McQueen
and
William D.
Thomson*

A
Canadian
Railroad
Historical
Association
Kingston
Division
Publication

Jamaica Government Railway.
 The first railway on the Caribbean island was opened in 1845. By the early twentieth century the JGR was operating over 200 miles (350km) of track.

1620-1622
 1620-1622
 1623-1629
 1623-1629
 1862-1863
 2120-2125

1929- ?
 1920-1929?
 1929-1963?
 1920-1929
 1929-1963?
 1944-1963

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M
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4-8-0
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 4-8-0

:2nd
 :2nd
 :2nd
 :1st
 :2nd

16-18
 22-24
 42-44
 45-51
 49-50
 51-56

JGR
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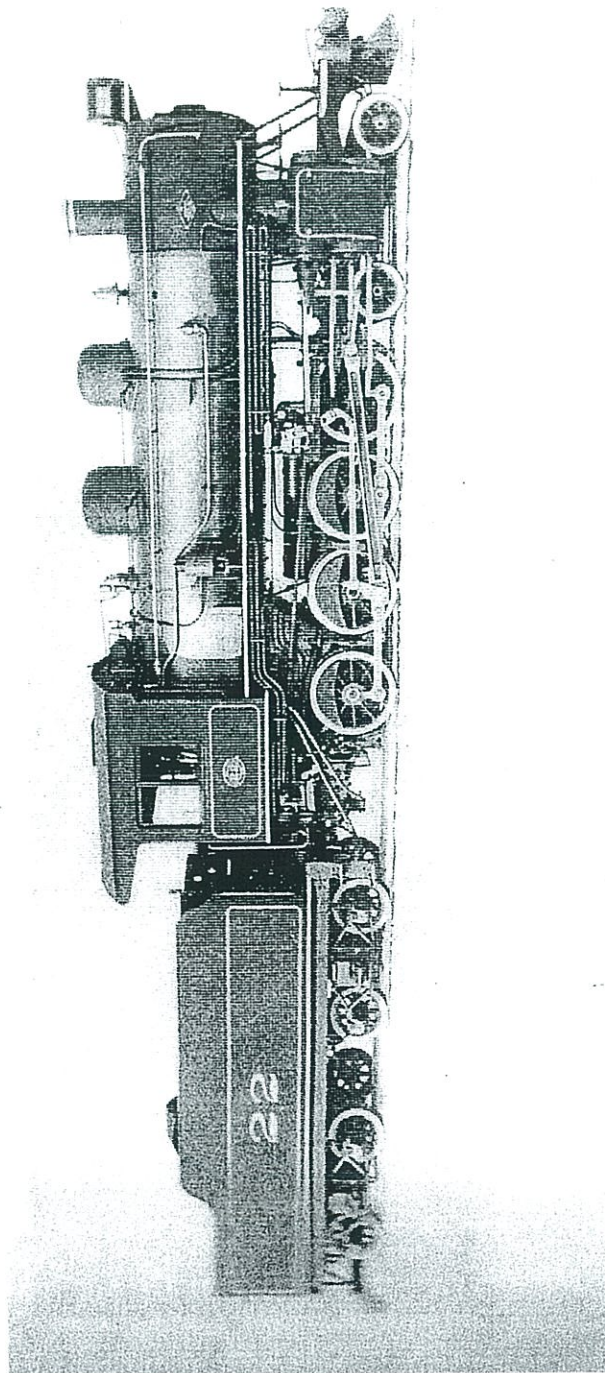
1920

1623 to 1629

C-542

7 Twelve-wheel Type 4-8-0
19x26 46" 190# 148300 240800 32870 50-2'

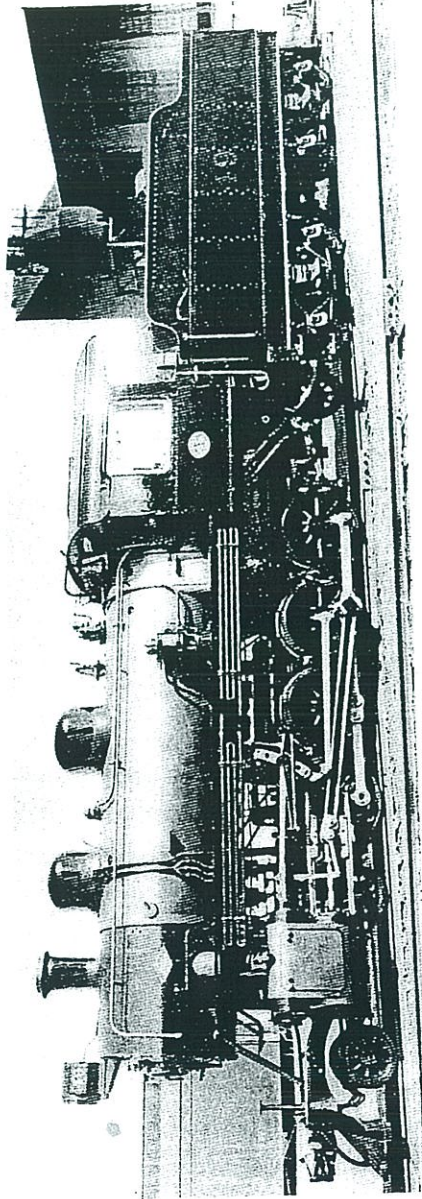
Jamaica Government Railway class **M1 45-51**, ordered in November 1919, were shipped in two groups in May 1920. This JGR 45-48 went on May 11, and JGR 49-51 on the 21st. This order had larger boilers and fireboxes than those in C-541. Cast cab plates had the year built as well as JGR lettering and the road number, similar to those in C-541. In 1929 JGR 45-51 were renumbered to **JGR 42-48**. All had been scrapped some time before the final steam retirements in 1963.



Twelve-wheel types built by CLC were sold exclusively to the JGR. The Caribbean island railway purchased eighteen 4-8-0s in four orders between 1920 and 1944. Contracts C-541 and C-542 for ten locomotives were shipped from Kingston for ocean transport in January-February and May of 1920. The three lighter and smaller locomotives were built under C-541 while the slightly larger ones under C-542. Each locomotive had a cast cab plate with the year built as well as JGR lettering and the road number.

CLC- photographer unknown, Don McQueen collection.

JGR 4-8-0 49 was the first in the third order for the unique Twelve-wheel type. The cast oval plate on JGR 49's cab read (in uppercase letters) 'JAMAICAN GOVT RAILWAY 49 1929'. The engine weight in this order was 2,700 pounds heavier than those built nine years before (#1623-1629), and the tender of this group was 2,500 pounds heavier. The only internal differences between these newer Twelve-wheelers was a total heating surface of 1774/- square feet, 44 square feet less than their predecessors because they had no water tubes. CLC- photographer unknown, Harold Fenton collection.



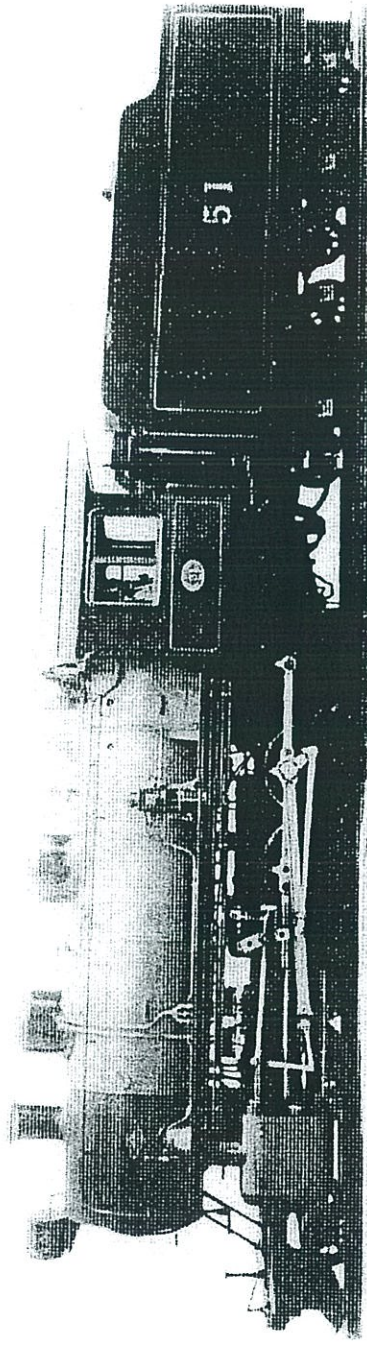
1862 to 1863

2 Twelve-wheel Type 4-8-0 C-576

1929

19x26 46" 190# 151000 246000 32870 50-4'

Jamaica Government Railway class M2 2nd 49-50 were both shipped August 17, 1929. <CLC has road numbers 49-50>. they may have been ordered as JGR 2nd 51 and 52. Some records show them delivered as JGR 51-52 and renumbered when they arrived on the island; but CLC records and photographs suggest otherwise. Both 4-8-0s had been retired for scrap by 1963. Both had been retired for scrap by 1963.



JGR 51 was the first in the fourth, and last, order for the unique Twelve-wheel type. Cast cab plates had the year built as well as JGR lettering and road number. The locomotives were painted black with red trim lines. The six engines were slightly lighter than the previous two which had been built under serials #1862-1863. However, their tenders had been redesigned to carry 5,400 imperial gallons and 18,000 tons of bituminous coal, 1,900 gallons and 4,000 tons more than those built in 1929.

CLC- photographer unknown, Don McQueen collection.

2120 to 2125

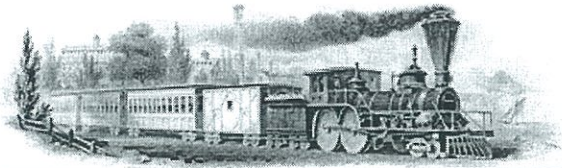
1944

6 Twelve-Wheel Type 4-8-0 C-599

19x26 46" 190# 150500 270140 32870 51-3

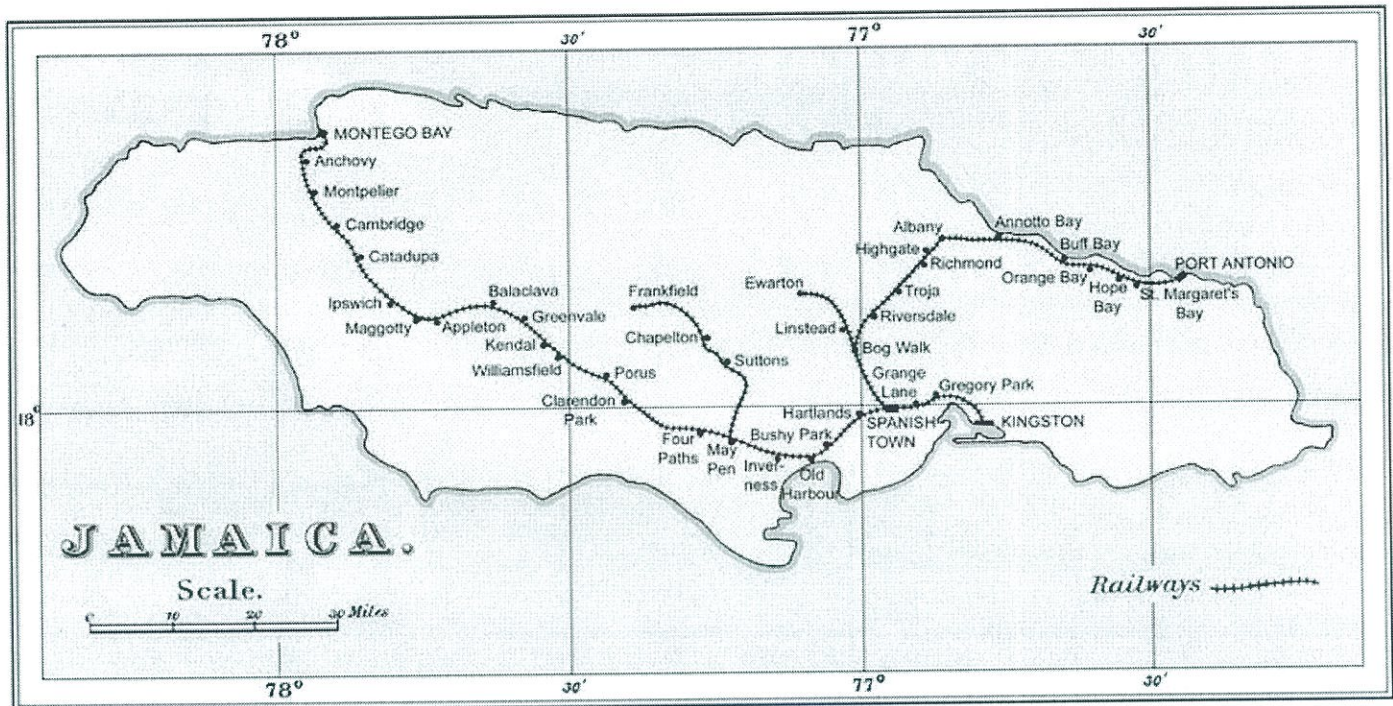
Jamaica Railway Corporation class **M3 2nd 51; and 52-56** were shipped from Kingston in a knocked-down condition during June 1944. <CLC has road numbers 51-56>. They were built with low axle loads because of the JRC's light rail and bridge weight restrictions. The flangeless front pair of drivers, and the lateral motion built into the rear drivers were designed to assist the locomotive negotiate the sharp curves found on the island's railway. Originally superheated and designed to burn coal, all were converted to oil between 1946 and 1950. All but two had been retired for scrap by December 1963. JRC 54-55 were stored serviceable and for the next year used as stationary boilers for a factory in Kingston, Jamaica. They were officially retired in December 1965. One, JGR 54, was restored with the help of the Jamaican Railway Society and ran a 75-mile excursion on July 17, 1966 between Kingston and Port Antonio. It also starred in the MGM motion picture *Dark of the Sun*. To mark the 140th anniversary of Jamaican railways in 1970, it was cosmetically restored and put on display in **Kingston, Jamaica**.

2120 to 2125		Shipped	
CLC#			
2120	JGR 51	6-17-44	Sc by-63
2121	JGR 52	6-17-44	Sc by-63
2122	JGR 53	6-22-44	Sc by-63
2123	JGR 54	6-22-44	Su 12-63 Rt 12-65 Pd -70
2124	JGR 55	6-27-44	Su 12-63
2125	JGR 56	6-30-44	Su 12-63
			Sc by-66
			Sc by-63



JAMAICA RAILWAY

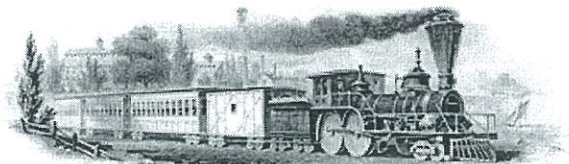
[Home](#) [History](#) [Photos](#) **[Map](#)** [Stats](#) [Mail](#) [Philately](#)



The Jamaica Government Railway in 1925

Click on a station name to view station photos.

Note: Kingston, Bog Walk, Williamsfield, Richmond, Troja and Montego Bay stations are currently enabled.



JAMAICA RAILWAY

Home **History** Photos Map Stats Mail Philately

1843 The Assembly of Jamaica approves a 12 mile track between Kingston and Spanish Town and a 2½ mile branch line to a sugar estate in Angels. An equity issue for the Western Jamaica Connecting Railway is floated in the amount of £150,000.

Nov. 1845 The track to Spanish Town is completed. The Governor of Jamaica along with guests and investors partake in an inaugural ride. The event is covered in the [Jan. 31, 1846 issue](#) of *The Illustrated London News*.

1845 Even before the first section of track is completed, a [£1 million equity issue](#) is floated to build a line to Montego Bay. This project was never started, and it is not known how much was raised or what the funds were used for.

1846 England passes the Sugar Duties Act which equalizes imported duties for sugar from the colonies. This Act, along with the recent abolition of slavery, makes Jamaican commodities less competitive and creates a compelling reason to lower transportation costs by expanding the Railway to various plantations.

1869 The plantation economy declines more than anticipated, affecting rail revenue and expansion capital. An eleven mile extension from Spanish Town to Old Harbour is completed.

1877 Sir Anthony Musgrave becomes Governor of Jamaica and proposes a government takeover of the privately owned railway company.

1879 The Government purchases the railway for £93,932 and undertakes a modernization program costing some £100,000.

1880 The improving market for sugar and the establishment of several new banana and sugar plantations leads to the construction of railway extensions from Old Harbour to Porus and from Spanish Town to Ewarton and Bog Walk.

1885 Cost analyses and surveys are undertaken to determine the feasibility of extending the railroad from Porus to Montego Bay and from Bog Walk to Port Antonio. The estimated cost to build both extensions is £1.5 million. The Government does not have the means to finance the expansion and the plans are shelved.

Nov. 1888 An American syndicate offers to buy the Railroad and build the Montego Bay and Port Antonio extensions.

Jan. 1890 The Railway is sold to the West India Improvement Co. for £100,000 cash and a £700,000 4% second mortgage. The acquirer is authorized to issue bonds as sections of the Montego Bay and Port Antonio extensions are completed.

1894 The Montego Bay line is completed.

1896 The Port Antonio line is completed. Over the next few years, bananas become Jamaica's major export crop. The United Fruit Co. soon becomes the dominant corporate entity in Port Antonio.

1898 Cash flow does not cover all the interest payments to bondholders. The West India Improvement Co. falls into receivership.

1900 The Jamaica Government again assumes responsibility of the railroad.

1913 A 13 mile extension from May Pen to Chapelton is completed in order to service the growing citrus industry.

1925 A 9¼ mile extension from Chapelton to Frankfield is completed.

1940 Bauxite deposits are discovered in the interior. The railroad plays a key role in the development of bauxite mines. By 1975, bauxite accounts for over 99% of railroad cargo.

1952 Following the 1951 hurricane, a rehabilitation program is undertaken. Steam engines are replaced with diesel locomotives.

1962 Jamaica is granted independence. Nationalization of unprofitable industries results in a diversion of railway maintenance funds to keep these industries afloat.

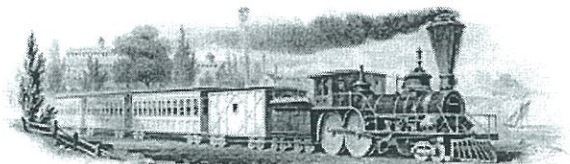
1974 The May Pen to Frankfield line is closed due to lack of maintenance.

1975 The Bog Walk to Port Antonio line is closed due to lack of maintenance.

1988 Hurricane Gilbert destroys much of the remaining railroad infrastructure.

Oct. 1992 The Jamaica Government Railway ceases to operate with the exception of the bauxite lines which are privately funded.

2011 In April 2011, a section of the railway between Spanish Town and Linstead was reopened to the public. This operation was not financially viable and closed in Aug. 2012.



JAMAICA RAILWAY

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GENERAL STATISTICS AS OF 1925

MILES OF TRACK

Kingston to Montego Bay	112.75
Spanish Town to Port Antonio	62.25
May Pen to Frankfield	22.25
Bog Walk to Ewarton	8.50
TOTAL Track	205.75

NUMBER OF TUNNELS

Montego Bay Line	13
Port Antonio Line	28
Frankfield Line	2
TOTAL Tunnels	43

NUMBER OF VIADUCTS

Port Antonio Line	3
Frankfield Line	1
TOTAL Viaducts	4

NUMBER OF BRIDGES

TOTAL Bridges	234
----------------------	------------

Rail transport in Jamaica

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Railways of Jamaica**, constructed from 1845, were the first railway lines opened to traffic outside Europe and North America, and the second British Colony after Canada's Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad of 1836 to receive a railway system.^{[1][2]} Construction started only twenty years after George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington Railway commenced operations in the United Kingdom.^[3]



Kingston Railway Station, closed since 1992, as seen in 2007

The public passenger railway service in Jamaica, which was closed in October 1992,^[3] had a brief revival in 2011 only to be closed once again in August 2012.^[4] The Parliament of Jamaica debate leading towards a revival under a public joint venture corporation proposed with an offshore partner.^[5] Private freight transport continues on limited tracks leading to the various docks around the Caribbean island, transporting bauxite and sugar cane for export.

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History

1845 to the Second World War

The first railway called the **Western Jamaica Connecting Railway** was built in 1845 from Kingston 23.3 kilometres (14.5 mi) to Angels.^[3] The railway was proposed and started by William Smith, originally from Manchester who owned land in Jamaica, and his sugar planter brother David.^[3]

The system approved by the Assembly of Jamaica in 1843 was for a double track between Kingston and Spanish Town, with branch lines to Angels, Port Henderson and the Caymanas sugar estate.^[3] On 21 November 1845^[6] the Governor of Jamaica James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin and ten carriages of passengers, pulled by the companies two locomotives *Projector* and *Patriot* built by Sharp Brothers of Manchester,^[3] travelled 19 kilometres (12 mi) from Kingston to Spanish Town.^[3] The first train came after the British Government had enacted the Sugar Duties Act 1846 and just after the emancipation of slaves, meaning the sugar industry needed the efficiency that the railway would bring to the difficult to passage island.

The construction of the first single-track section was budgeted to cost £150,000, but cost £222,250, or £24,747 per kilometre (£15,377 per mile). As a result of the cost of building and a downturn in the sugar industry, only another 18 kilometres (11 mi) were added until 1869 in the form of an extension from Spanish Town to Old Harbour^[3] at a cost of £60,000.^[6]

After a period of decline, new Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave agreed a deal in 1879 to buy the existing 42 kilometres (26 mi) of the system for £93,932.^{[3][7]} After an investment and improvement programme, the expansion of the citrus and banana industries led to two extensions, extending the total system to 105 kilometres (65 mi): westward from Old Harbour to Porus (39.4 kilometres (24.5 mi));^[6] northwards from Angel to the interior district of Ewarton^{[3][7]} (22.93 kilometres (14.25 mi)).^[6] Both were completed in 1885 at a total cost of approximately £280,000.^[6] *Main article: Railways of Jamaica: Spanish Town to Ewarton.*

After debates about extensions, on 1 January 1890 the railway was transferred to an American consortium headed by New York merchant Frederick Wesson, and extensions from Porus 100 kilometres (62 mi) to Montego Bay in 1895,^[7] and an extension through the banana, cacao, citrus and coconut districts of St Catherine, St Mary and Portland was developed over 87 kilometres (54 mi) from Bog Walk to Port Antonio in 1896.^[7] *Main article Railways of Jamaica: Bog Walk to Port Antonio.*

The Jamaican system now had a total of 298 kilometres (185 mi) of railway lines stretching from the south-eastern to the north-western and north-eastern ends of the island.^[3]

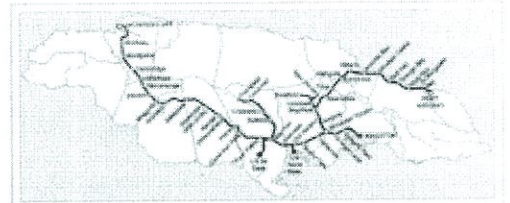
However, the loans taken out to secure railway ownership by the company, together with its purchase of 308 square kilometres (76,000 acres) of prime Crown land in various parts of Jamaica, proved too strenuous. After defaulting in 1897 and 1898, by order of the Jamaican Supreme Court the company fell into receivership. In 1900 the government assumed responsibility for the railway again, and made it a department of government. It appointed a Railway Advisory Board in 1902 to advise, which remained in place until 1960 when the statutory 100% government owned J\$6million company the **Jamaica Railway Corporation** was created.^[3]

Between 1900 and 1950, less than 80 kilometres (50 mi) of track was added, mainly to support opening of the interior to banana cultivation:^[3]

- 1911 - 21-kilometre (13 mi) branch off the Montego Bay line, from May Pen to Chapelton, completed in 1913 and extended in 1925 by 16 kilometres (10 mi) to Frankfield. *Main article*

Railways of Jamaica: May Pen to Frankfield.

- 1921 - 4.8 kilometres (3 mi) from Linstead to New Works, opened on the Bog Walk to Ewarton extension *Main article Railways of Jamaica: Linstead to New Works.*
- 1942 - in support of military needs for the Second World War, a 10.5-kilometre (6.5 mi) branch line from Logan's Junction near May Pen, to the US military base at Fort Simmonds in Vernamfield. The British government purchased four USATC S161 Class to provide transport for the military base.^[8] After the line closed in 1956, these were subsumed by JRC.



Map of the Jamaica railway system at its pre-bauxite peak c1945.

Bauxite lines

In the 1940s deposits of Bauxite were discovered in the interior, and companies developed both interconnected as well as independent lines to extract, process and ship the minerals:^[3]

- Alcan - used the JRC lines from Bodles to ship its product to Port Esquerville, completing 5 kilometres (3 mi) of lines in 1951
- Alcoa - built an 31-kilometre (19 mi) railway in 1962 to connect its Woodside mines with the port at Rocky Point Port. Leased to the JRC, Alcoa provided locomotives, rolling stock and its staff operated and maintained the line under JRC management
- Kaiser Bauxite Company - built 19 kilometres (12 mi) of independent track and 12.1 kilometres (7.5 mi) of sidings running from mines in upper Saint Ann Parish to Discovery Bay. The company tended to run Baldwin locomotives, and purchased eight between 1952 and 1971.^[9]
- Alpart - built 18 kilometres (11 mi) of independent track in the 1970s to connect its refinery at Nain with Port Kaiser near Alligator Pond
- Reynolds - built a short independent railway to link mines, drying plants and ports
- Windalco- Bauxite Line

Post-Second World War

The agricultural driven growth of the railways were created by a harsh interior geography, and developing consumer need meant that post-Second World War only two days after cutting, bananas had to be on a ship. Having shipped 330,000 stems in 1880 to 24 million stems in 1930, a quickening decline in the industry meant that by 1969 the transport of bananas by rail ceased. In 1895 Jamaica had exported 97 million fruits; by 1940 the figure had plunged to 40 million, and hit by the loss of the monopoly of the British market and the 1951 hurricane, in 1975 it was just 5 million. Passenger figures had also started to fall, as pre Second World War the government had started a bridge building programme. By 1971 Jamaica had 11,590 kilometres (7,200 mi) of roads, 1,350 of which were paved; alongside motorbuses which were accessing further inland, private cars had increased from 15,000 in 1950 to 142,300 by 1975.^[3]

After a post-Second World War report by C. E. Rooke recommended closure of the Port Antonio to Spanish Town line, the government only closed the Linstead to Ewarton branch in 1947.^[3] The 1951 hurricane brought about a recommendation by the United Nations envoy to invest in the railway to keep the bauxite traffic, and hence the passenger rates economically viable.

Jamaica Railway Corporation

1960 to 1975

The government agreed change of the railway after the 1 September 1957 crash, the worst transport accident in Jamaica's history, in which a 12-car wooden body train carrying 1,600 passengers derailed at Kendal, killing 175 passengers and injuring over 800.^[10]

The first diesel power had entered Jamaica in 1939 with two D Wickham & Co diesel coaches. After the creation of the **Jamaica Railway Corporation** in 1960, management increased this transformation significantly from 1963 onwards:



A motorised railcar leaving a railway station in 1960.

- 19 multi-unit Metro Cammell railcars, powered by Rolls-Royce C6T Mark IV engines of 260 kW (350 hp) acquired at a cost of J\$621,000. These were all composite in two formation, with 7 cars carrying 20 first-class and 58 second-class passengers; and 30 cars with 83 second-class passengers
- The unique "market car wheel" built by Metro Cammell, a modified boxcar fitted to carry passengers and their goods to market
- Two Clayton Equipment Company shunting locomotives with the same Rolls Royce driving system as the Metro Cammell boxcars
- Two English Electric 750 h.p. locomotives to handle bauxite traffic

In 1967, two ALCO RS-3 1,500 h.p. diesel-electric locomotives were purchased. With the phasing out of the steam power, by 1970 Jamaica's railways had fourteen diesel-electric locomotives and only one steam locomotive was still in operation.^[3] Between 1972 and 1976, an additional 18 ALCO RS-8's, manufactured by MLW in Canada, were purchased in three batches of six locomotives.^[11]

By 1975 there were:^{[3][12]}

- 348.4 kilometres (216.5 mi) of 1,435 mm (4 ft 8½ in) (standard gauge) in control of JRC^[3]
- 47 kilometres (29 mi) of private industrial railways in Jamaica.^[3]
- Totalling 370 kilometres (230 mi)^{[3][12]}
- Carrying 1.2 million passengers per annum^[3]
- Transporting 900 million tonnes of goods, 95% bauxite and alumina which had driven the shippage from 900,000 tonnes in 1959.^[3]

Closure

By 1973 JRC's operational deficit had risen to J\$3.4 million, and in 1975 it was nearing J\$4 million and carrying a J\$11 million loan. The government was paying over J\$1.4 million in subsidy to keep the island's trains running. However, the financial crisis had led to a backlog of deferred maintenance, with stock and buildings also neglected. In 1974 the May Pen-Frankfield line closed, with the Bog Walk-Port Antonio line closing in 1975.^[3]

Public pressure forced the government to reopen the Port Antonio line at a cost of J\$1.4 million in 1977. The condition of the track resulted in reclosure of the line in 1978. Hurricane Allen in 1980 damaged much of the JRC railway system, and totally destroyed a section of the Port Antonio line running along the coast

between Buff Bay and Orange Bay.

In October 1992 public railway transport services finally ceased operating on Jamaica,^[3] although four of the private industrial lines continue to operate today, in part using JRC lines.^[13] Of the total of 272 kilometres (169 mi) standard gauge at the time on the island, 207 kilometres (129 mi) of common carrier service belonging to JRC are no longer operational, leaving 65 kilometres (40 mi) in private hands.^[14]

Current operations

The Jamaican Railway Corporation still exists today -see below under "Revival". It is responsible for management of the JRC interests and property, and maintaining its locomotives but not the rolling stock.^[15]

In November 1990 JRC signed a 30-year Track User Agreement with Alcan Jamaica, which was renegotiated with the successor Windalco in December 2001.^[16]

The company makes J\$40 million per year through track user fees for the hauling of alumina and bauxite, and the residual from the rental of real estate and its three operable locomotives. The company has a staff of 76, who fulfill contractual obligations to users of the company's facilities.^[17]

Revival

The Jamaican Government is discussing resumption of national railway services, initially with Canadian National Railway^[18] and then Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES);^[17] and now with the China Railways after a deal was signed by the Prime Minister P J Patterson with Chinese vice-president Zeng Qinghong in Jamaica in February 2005.^[19] During the 1990s, a plan was considered which would see commuter services between Kingston and Spanish Town, later extended to Linstead. It was proposed to cost US\$8 million and be up and running by January 2001, with the government holding 40% of a public-private venture.^[20]

Passenger service returned to Jamaica for the first time since February 1992 on 16 April 2011, when an inaugural train operated from May Pen to Linstead.^[21] There was also talk of establishing a tourist route on Jamalco's line between Rocky Point and Breadnut,^[22] however all passenger services were stopped once again in August 2012.^[4]

Mail carriage

Exactly when mail began to be carried by the railway is not known, but it is known that in 1873 the postmaster terminated a mail contract with the railway because he found the service to be more unreliable than the road service.^[23]

In 1878, a limited mail collection system was established with the placement of a post office receiving box at each of the Kingston, Spanish Town and Old Harbour railway stations.^[23] Whether this service continued between 1890 and 1900 when the West India Improvement Co. owned and operated the railway is not known.^[23] However, with the resumption of government ownership in 1900 a concerted effort was made to

give the railway a more active role in the collection of mail.^[23] A few stations were stops at major plantations and although the volume of mail from these locations was very small, timely pick-up of this correspondence, much of it commercial, was deemed vital to the well being of the economy.^[23]

The railway station clerk was responsible for cancelling the stamps on correspondence with a date-stamp.^[23] Each station already had its own date-stamp (used to validate passenger railway tickets); this same date-stamp was used to cancel stamps on mail.^[23] Forty one railway stations are known to have cancelled mail though some of them handled very little mail.^[23] Inland mail to and from the Jamaica Government Railway could be sent postage free if it related to official business.^[24]

From 1 September 1913 sorting carriages were added to trains on the main routes: Kingston to Port Antonio and Kingston to Montego Bay.^[25] These carriages were fitted with posting boxes.^[25]

Following the First World War, the Jamaican economy experienced a decline and the government decided to eliminate the expense of maintaining a railway station postal system; by then, these offices duplicated the services of most nearby post offices.^[23] Effective 31 December 1924, the government withdrew the facilities for posting mail at railway station windows and receiving boxes, thereby eliminating the system of clearing the railway station postboxes ten minutes before a train was due.^{[23][25]} However, a few of the stations continued to accept stamped parcels for four more years. Stamp-less official mail continued as late as 1948.^[23]

The travelling post office service resumed on 28 March 1927.^[26] Its last run was on 14 May 1966.^[27] An official note c.1954 stated that "passenger trains between Kingston and Montego Bay (TPO 1) and Kingston and Port Antonio (TPO 2) are each equipped with a post office with a postman in charge. There is a letter-box at each station which the train postman clears en route."^[26]

Architecture

The railway architecture, developed and seen through the stations which were built between 1845 and 1896, is a reflection of classical Jamaican Georgian architecture.^[1] Although under the care and maintenance of the JRC, those that are not used for commercial purposes and rented out to traders are presently in a state of disrepair.^[17]

Accidents

The Jamaica Railways have a good record on accidents, but two incidents stand out:

- 30 July 1938 - a passenger train was heading from Kingston to Montego Bay. The engine jumped the rails at Balaclava and embedded itself into the mountainside, followed by coaches which were forced on from the rear. 32 people died and over 70 were injured.^[20]
- 1 September 1957 - a diesel hauled train of 12 wooden carriages leaves Kingston for Montego Bay. The outbound journey had 900 passengers on board, correlating with the design limit of 80 passengers per carriage. However, the return journey had 1,600 passengers loaded at 130-150 persons per carriage including hundreds of members of the Holy Name Society of St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church, hundreds of pickpockets, and their targets the tourists who made up over 1,000 of the total

passenger loading. At 23:30 near Kendal, Manchester three shrill whistle blasts signalled that the driver had lost control of the train, and it derailed minutes later at speed.^[20] 200 people lost their lives, and 700 sustained injuries in the worst transport disaster in Jamaica's history, and the second worst rail disaster in the world at that time. The cause of the accident was determined to be the closure of an angled wheel (brake) cock, with survivors suggesting that the pickpockets had tampered with the brakes while riding on the carriage platforms.^[20] Confidence in the rail service was shaken and much looting and robbing of the dead and injured occurred after the crash. The ensuing investigation found a number of deficiencies within the Jamaica Railway Corporation, which was resultantly given its independence in 1960.^[3]

Natural disasters

- 14 January 1907 - Kingston experienced a great earthquake which demolished many railway buildings and killed or injured a number of officials, officers and employees.^[26]
- 18 May 1909 - Number 2 railway pier in Kingston destroyed by fire.^[26]
- 1951 - Hurricane Charlie causes extensive damage to railway infrastructure.^[23]
- 1988 - Hurricane Gilbert causes extensive damage to railway infrastructure.^[23]

Managers

This list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rail_transport_in_Jamaica&action=edit).

1845–1865	David Smith ^[28]
1900-????	James Richmond ^[28]
c.1945	H R Fox ^[28]
c.2005	Owen Crooks ^[29]

See also

- Jamaica
- Lists of rail accidents
- List of railway tunnels in Jamaica
- Rail transport by country
- Railways of Jamaica: Bog Walk to Port Antonio
- Railways of Jamaica: Linstead to New Works
- Railways of Jamaica: May Pen to Frankfield
- Transportation in Jamaica

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Further reading

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External links

- Official website of the Jamaica Railway Corporation (http://www.mtw.gov.jm/dep_agencies/ja_rail.aspx)
- Jamaica Railway Corporation Finances - FY 2007/08 (<http://www.mof.gov.jm/downloads/2007/ped/jrcorp.pdf>)
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A Jamaica Information Service photograph of Gregory Park railway station, Jamaica in February 1980-02. The station opened in 1845, closed

More details

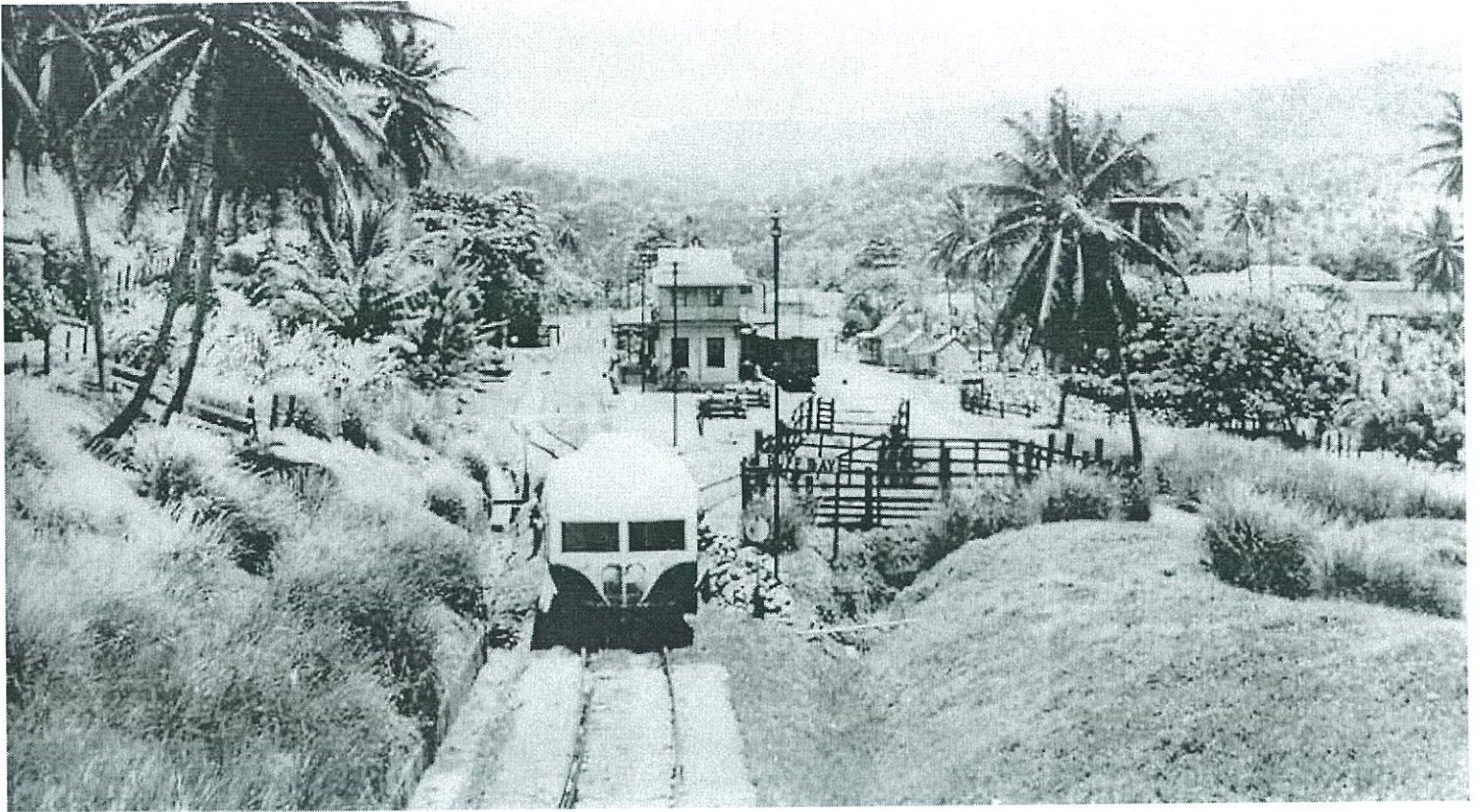
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OKAY

MORE INFO

Thomas Kautzor has been to several Caribbean islands to check out what is left of their railways and industrial heritage.

For the full general index, see [Railway Relics \(and more\) in the Caribbean](#).

Thomas Kautzor reports on his visit with Torsten Schneider to an island where public railways are probably history, with only one steam locomotive left on the island, necessarily there's not much good news in it.

The visit to Kingston station was done in agreement with The Jamaica Railway Cooperation (JRC). Prospective visitors to Kingston Station should contact the JRC (http://www.mtw.gov.jm/dep_agencies/ja_rail.aspx) at +1-876-922-6443 to arrange a visit.

By early 1964, only two steam locomotives remained on the books of the Jamaican Railway Corporation (JRC), 4-8-0 No. 54 and 55 (Canadian Loco. Co. 2123-4/1944). They were among the last of a series of 15 M Class locomotives built by the CLC for Jamaica in 1920 (7), 1929 (2) and 1944 (6). Their design was closely monitored by Mr Dewhurst to avoid problems encountered by earlier 4-8-0 designs. Initially they were coal fired, but converted to oil firing between 1946 and 1950. They lasted up to the end of steam on the island.

Up to 09/1964 the two still saw occasional service on the scenic branch line from May Pen to Frankfield in place of the planned diesel, after which they were used as stationary boilers at a factory in Kingston until that factory purchased its own boiler and they were set aside.

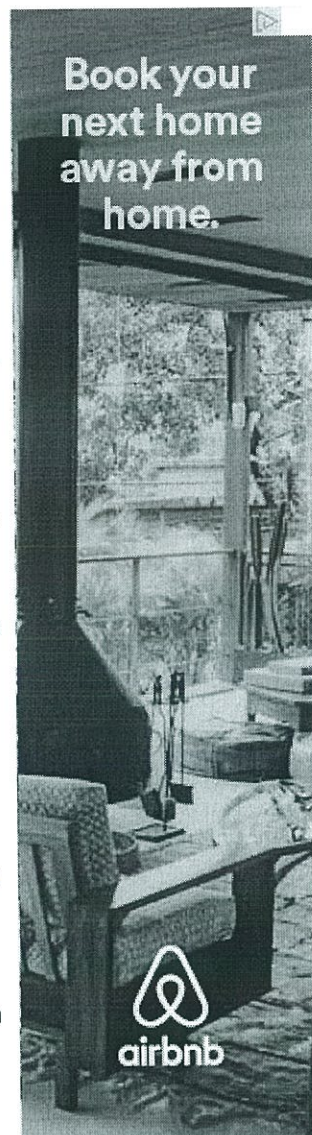
In 1966, Jeremy Browne, a young English resident of Jamaica and railway enthusiast, approached the railway to ask if it would be possible to run a photo charter with either locomotive. Together with Carl Strattmann, another railway enthusiast who worked for the University of the West Indies (UWI), they formed the Jamaican Railway Society, to help restore the locomotive.

It turned out that the boiler of No. 55 was beyond repair, but that No. 54 was in better condition and would only need replacement of the burst main steam pipe. JRC was favourable to the project, but that some financial means should be found to pay for the repairs, so it was agreed that the JRS would organise an excursion and use the funds towards the repair of the locomotive. It turned out that there was quite unexpected support in Jamaica from both the JRC workers and the general public.

On July 17, 1966 "The Banana Boat Steam Train", an excursion with photostops and runpasts between Kingston and Port Antonio, was a complete sellout. The excursion featured in the press and on radio and television, and publicity was worldwide, including an article in the UK's 'Railway Magazine' and another in the US's 'Railroad Magazine', prompting the JRC to fully repaint No. 54 and keep it in operating order. After the initial excursion, a number of others very popular ones followed, including a private charter in which two U.S. railfans flew in specially from California. The JRC was pleasantly surprised and initially cooperated in running the steam excursions.

As a result of all the publicity, the JRC was approached by Metro Goldwyn Mayer for the filming of the 1968 movie "Dark of the Sun" (released in the U.K. as "The Mercenaries", (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_of_the_Sun)). The film's plot involves a train travelling into the interior of the Congo to rescue a group of Europeans and collect some diamonds from advancing rebels. On its return journey the train comes under attack and the locomotive is wrecked after being hit by mortar fire. Locomotive No. 54 was adapted to look like a wood burner for the film. Carl Strattmann of the JRS, who was appointed Technical Consultant to the film crew, had to organize the wreck, which was faked by using No. 55 disguised as No. 54. As No. 55 could not run under its own power anymore, a diesel attached to the rear of the train pushed it onto a piece of undermined track in a siding at Grange Lane, just outside of Spanish Town, where it fell on its side with much special effects of smoke and flames. The film company, which had paid JRC for the privilege of destroying No. 55, later accepted a nominal amount from a scrap merchant who took the locomotive away to scrap it. The film offers the opportunity to see a JRC steam locomotive operate over some of Jamaica's most picturesque line, as it was filmed on the line to Port Antonio. It also offers the opportunity to see No. 54 being turned on the turntable in front of Kingston's roundhouse, which has since been demolished.

Following the filming of "Dark of the Sun", the Jamaica Tourist Board approached JRC with the intention of running a steam-hauled tourist special along the North Coast line, but gave up after it received a very cold response from JRC. The JRS itself operated a few more excursions, but the final

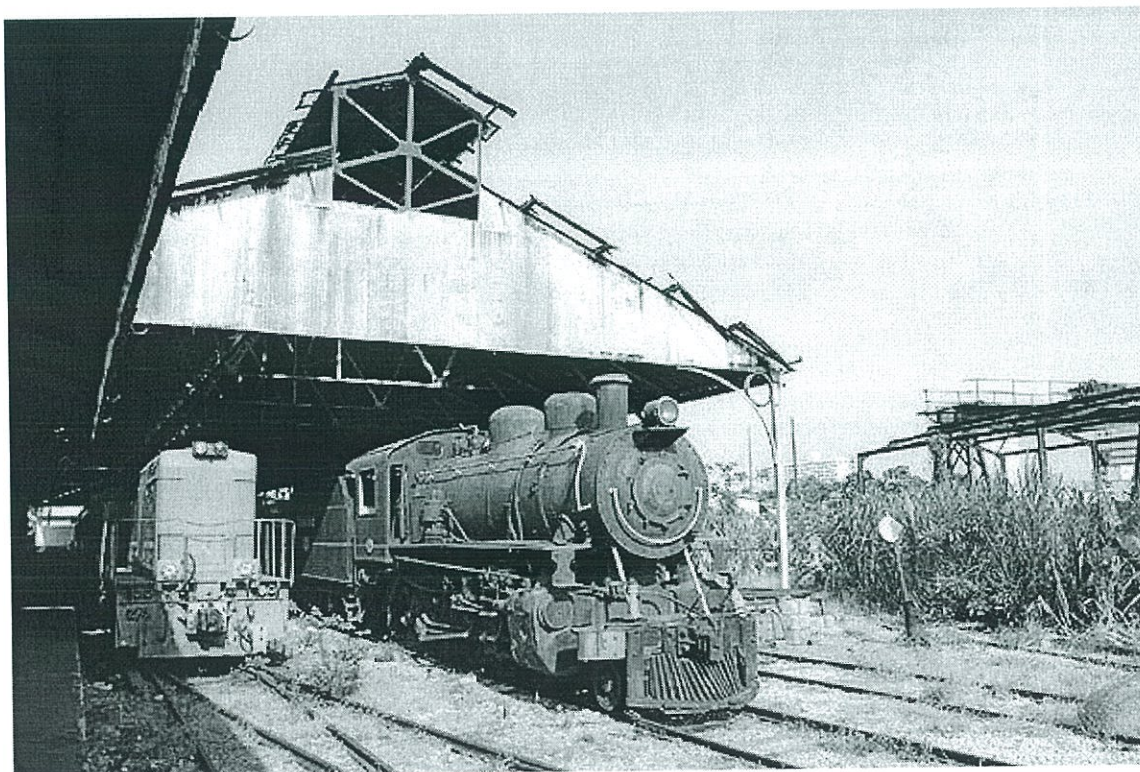


one was a disaster as JRC had organized a diesel-hauled excursion on the same day. Many passengers joined the JRC train by mistake, leaving the JRS almost bankrupt as a result. Shortly thereafter, the JRC decided to use No. 54 as a stationary boiler to run a bank of old Westinghouse air pumps at Kingston workshops. A request by another Hollywood film company to use No. 54 for a major feature movie at around that time was turned down (together with the potential revenue) on the basis that the locomotive could not be spared. After a few weeks as a stationary boiler, 54's firebox was irreparably damaged, while at the same time a number of brand-new spare class M3 boilers which had been in store were scrapped. This was the end of steam in Jamaica and No. 54 was pushed into a corner of the Kingston yard, to be moved around from time to time.

In recent years, No. 54 has stored under cover in the passenger station hall. Luckily, when we visited we found that it had been moved half way out of the hall and could therefore be photographed in good light late in the afternoon. The Kingston station building is a National Historic Site, and a few weeks before our visit it had been rented out to Heineken for a promotional event and the stock stored in the hall moved aside to make space ("Heineken" has been painted on one side of the tender).

Also below are a few photos of the line from Spanish Town (km 18.9 from Kingston on the main line to Montego Bay) via Bog Walk (km 33.4) to Port Antonio (km 120.7), as this scenic line is where the late 1960s steam excursions used to operate over. It featured 1 in 30 gradients between Bog Walk and Albany and had 28 tunnels, as well as Jamaica's highest railway viaduct. On August 6, 1980, Jamaica was struck by Hurricane Allen, which destroyed sections of the Montego Bay and Port Antonio line, with the section along the North Coast between Annotto Bay and Port Antonio especially affected. The hurricane also severely damaged banana plantation in the area, therefore badly affecting one of the major traffic sources of the line. Only the section from Spanish Town to Bog Walk through the Bog Walk gorge (which includes 4 tunnels, including Jamaica's longest at 2194 feet) is still in use with WINDALCO. Elsewhere much of the track is still in place, except along the coast where the road has been extended over the right-of way, and most stations are still in place as well.

This is No. 54 in detail:



GOLF TOWN

BUY MORE. SAVE MORE.

SHOP OUR DIGITAL FLYER ▶

BUY MORE. SAVE MORE.

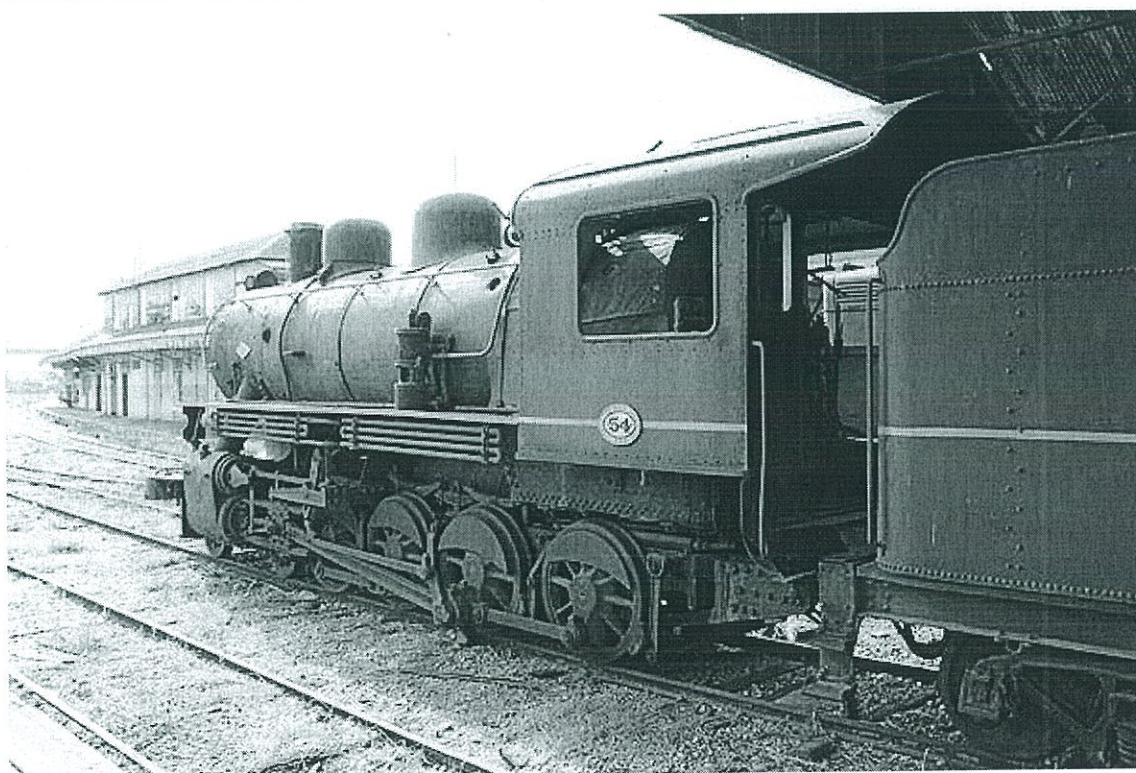
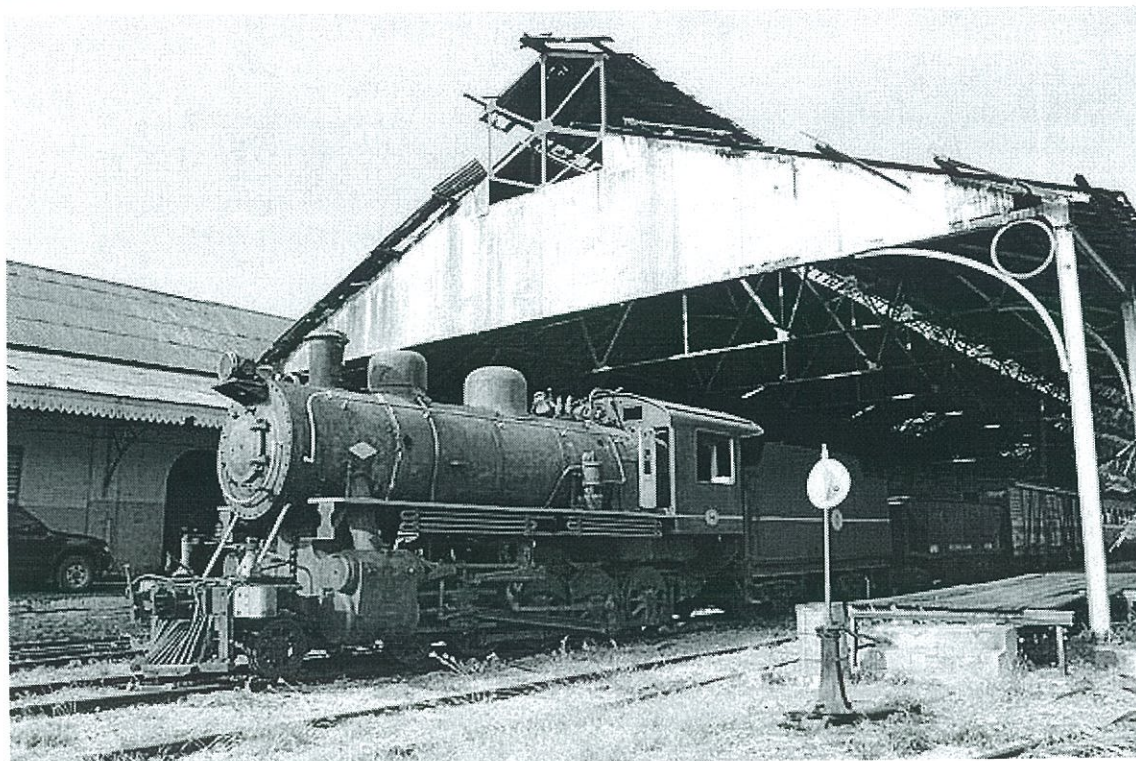
BUY 1 SAVE 10%
BUY 2 SAVE 20%
BUY 3 SAVE 30%

TRADE-IN DAYS

GET 125
GET 150

WIND CLUB OFFERS IMPROVED FLYER CARD

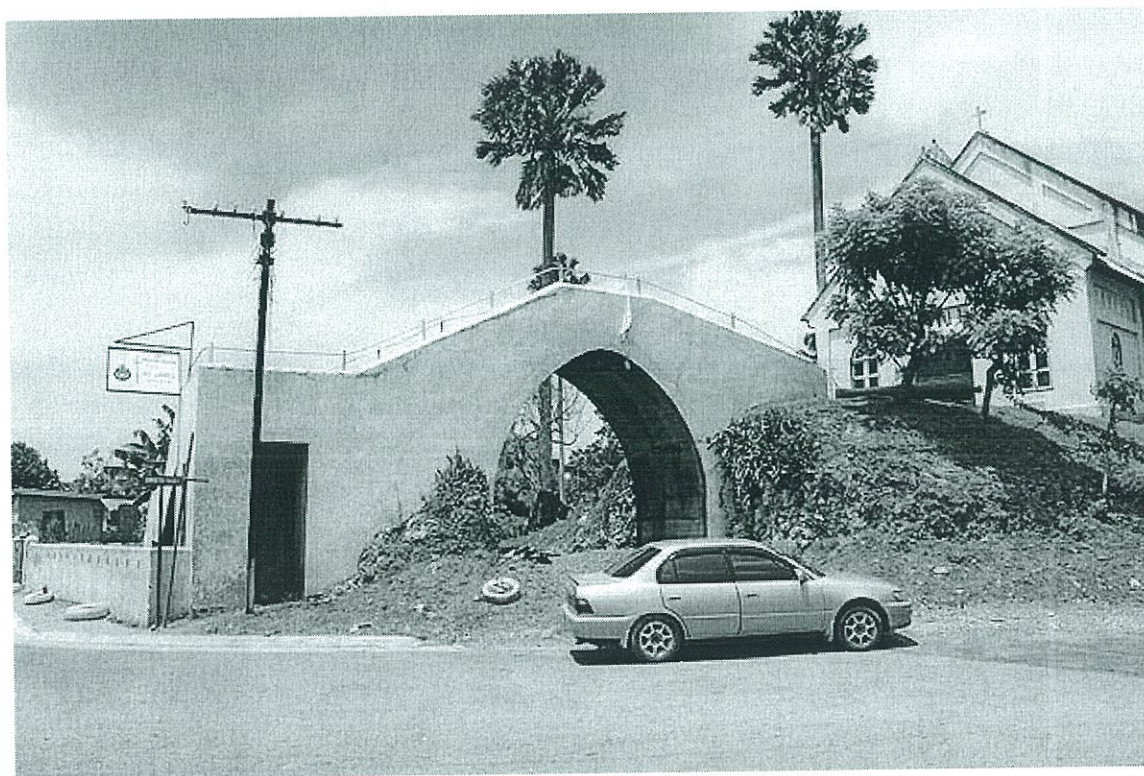




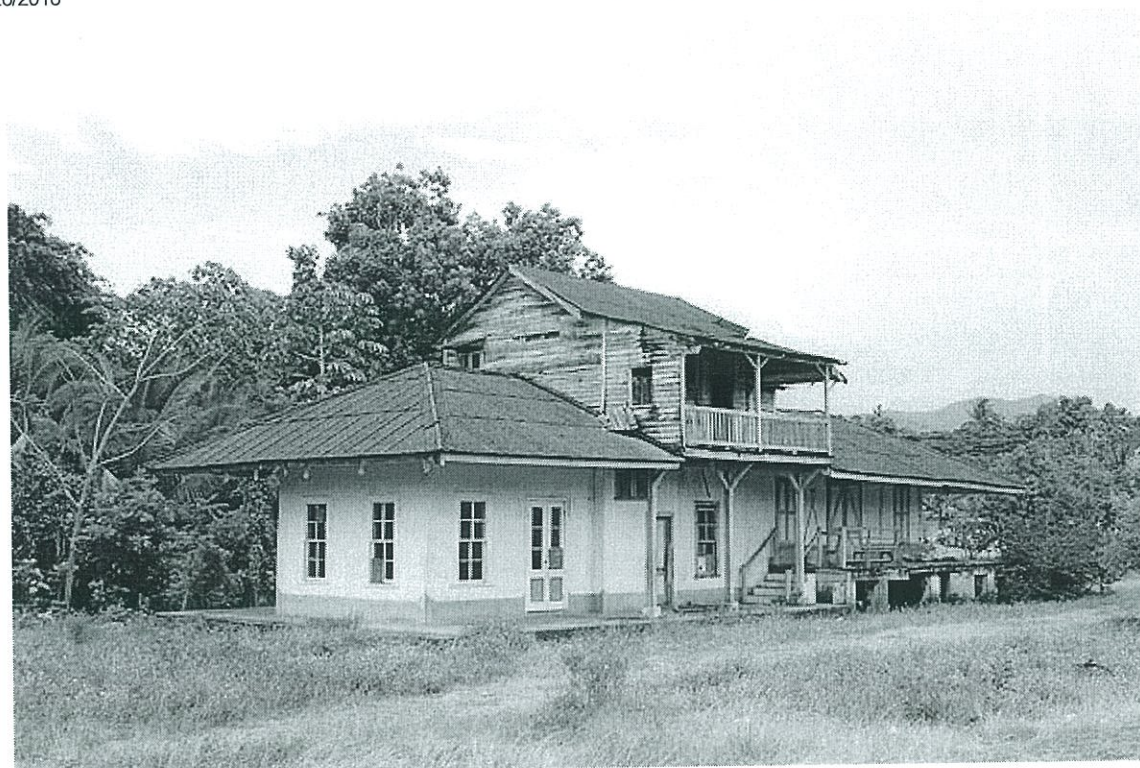
Jamaica's highest viaduct near Darling Spring Halt:



This footbridge over the railway in Annotto Bay gave access to St. James Anglican Church:



Orange Bay station:

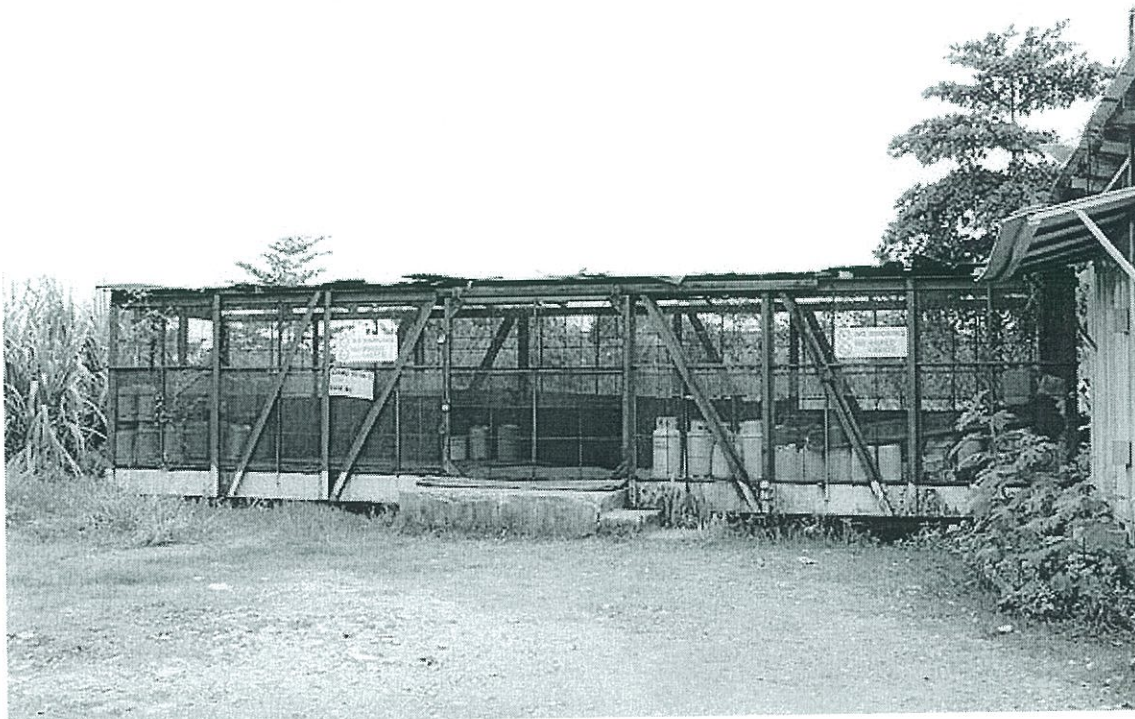


Most of the bridges along the coast are still in place. At Snow Hill, the old railway bridge (right) was converted for road use after the old road bridge (left) was condemned. A new road bridge has since been built further to the right.



At Port Antonio, the turntable is still in place, next to two water tanks, one concrete and the other steel. Next to it are a tank car and a box car, while a stock car is used as to lock away gas containers nearby. The 1896 station building now houses the Portland Youth Information Centre, the Claudia Williams Life Centre, the Portland Art Gallery, the Port Antonio Marching Band and Pauline's Country Garden Flower Shop.





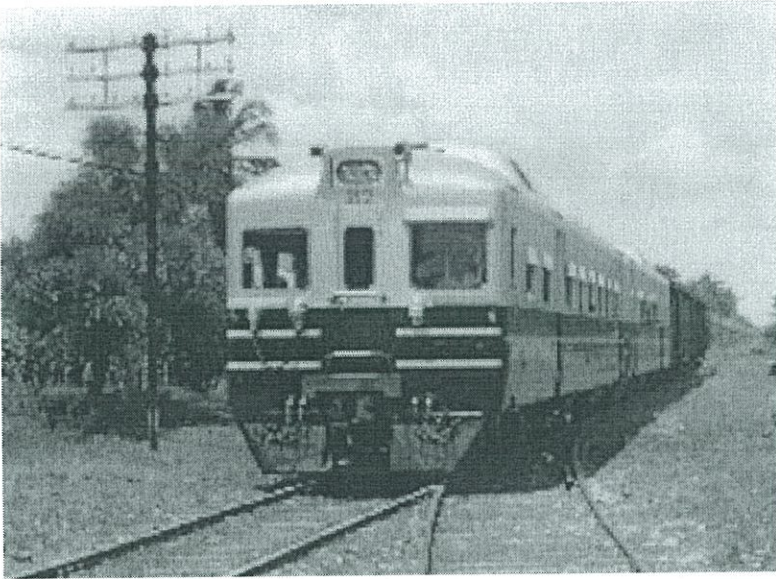
Sources: Jim Horsford, "The Railways of Jamaica – Through the Blue Mountains to the blue Caribbean seas – a History of the Jamaica Government Railway", St. Teath, Cornwall: Locomotives International, 2010 (168 p.).

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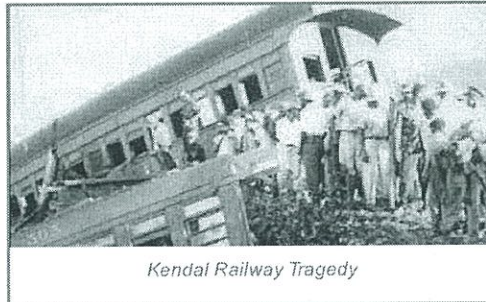
Rob Dickinson



Kendal Railway Tragedy

Parish: *Manchester*

The worst railway disaster in Jamaica's history, happened close to this spot on September 1, 1957. At around 11:30 p.m. a train carrying some 1,600 passengers derailed its tracks. Close to 200 persons lost their lives. Varying accounts indicate that between 400 and 700 persons sustained injuries in what was described as the worst transportation system tragedy in Jamaica's history, and the second worst rail disaster in the world at the time.



Early that day, hundreds of members of the Holy Name Society of the St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church in Kingston, boarded a train at the Kingston Railway Station for an all day excursion to Montego Bay.

On the train's return leg, as the two diesel engines and twelve wooden coaches approached the quiet town of Kendal, three shrill whistle blasts signaled the journey's tragic end. Eight of the twelve wooden coaches were wrecked, with the dead and injured inside, underneath and on top, and bodies and body parts strewn over a wide area. Some persons died on impact, many died from being spiked by splinters from the wooden coaches, and various other injuries. Many of the dead were buried in a mass grave behind the crash site.

The Railway Commission of Enquiry later attributed the cause of the accident to the accidental closure of an angled wheel (brake) cock that had been incorrectly placed. As a consequence of the crash, the railway replaced all wooden coaches with metal coaches, and the Jamaica Government Railways, was reconstituted and renamed the Jamaica Railway Corporation (JRC). The name Kendal, continues to evoke memories of the Kendal Crash.

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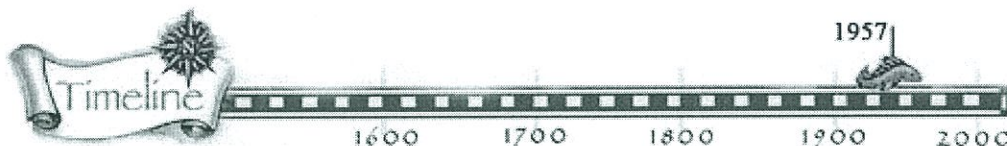
Built in 1885 of masonry and timber, the Simms building exhibits a combination of Gothic and Georgian features; the projecting...

DID YOU KNOW?

- JNHT has produced and distributed a number of brochures
- Our fast facts section about Jamaica is very informative.

Learn more...





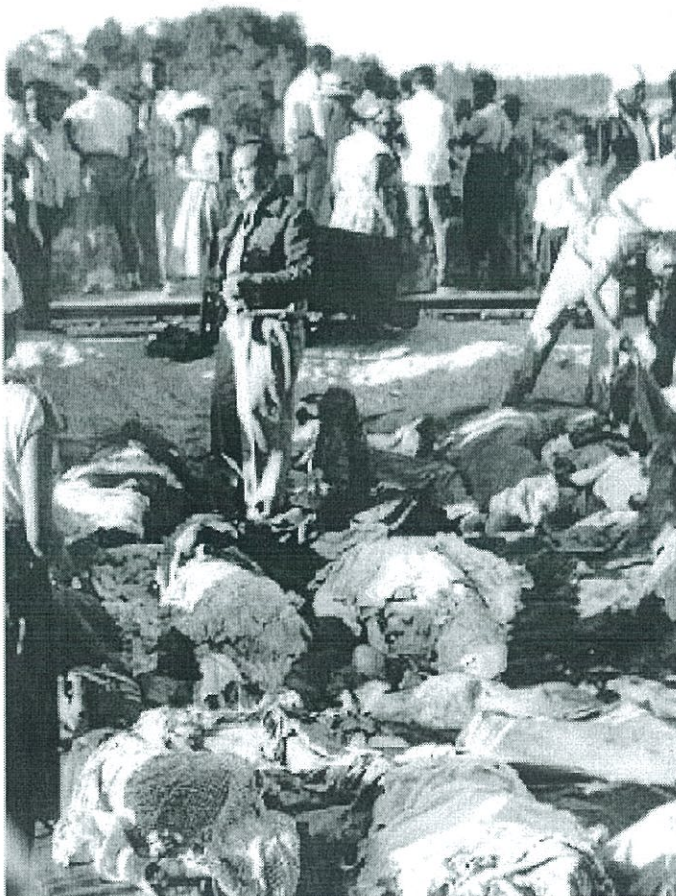
Tragedy at Kendal - 1957

The worst rail disaster in Jamaica's history, and the second worst rail disaster in the world at that time.

On Sunday, September 1, 1957, hundreds of members of the Holy Name Society of St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church boarded a train at the Kingston Railway Station for an all day excursion to Montego Bay under the guidance of their pastor, the Reverend Father Charles Earle.

Also on board were close to 100 known criminals, hooligans and pickpockets. In all the number of passengers totalled 1600 an interesting feat given that the limit for each of the 12 cars was 80. The criminals were said to have caused such a ruckus during the trip that a priest declared that the wrath of God had surely descended on them.

Unknown to him, that statement was prophetic. At around 11:30 p.m. on the train's return leg, as the two diesel engines and dozen wooden cars neared the sleeping town of Kendal, Manchester, three shrill whistle blasts signalled the journey's abrupt and tragic end. Within minutes, the train had picked up speed and derailed. Fragments of human bodies were strewn among scores of twisted metal. Close to 200 persons lost their lives, and 700 sustained injuries in what was described as the worst rail disaster in Jamaica's history, and the second worst rail disaster in the world at that time.



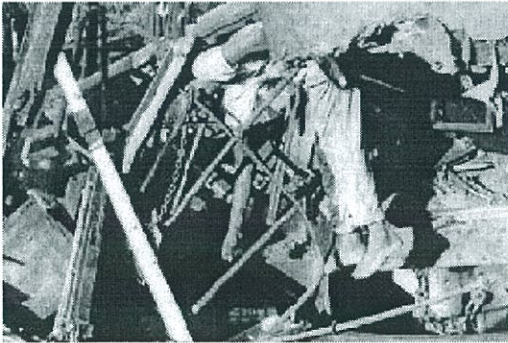
Word travelled fast and hundreds flocked to the scene only to be greeted with the sight of corpse after corpse laid out on an embankment, looking, in the

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- [For Your Listening Pleasure](#)
- [The Road to Freedom](#)
- [Birth of Independence](#)
- [Hurricane of 1780](#)
- [Tragedy at Kendal 1957](#)
- [The Ward Theatre 1912](#)
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words of a survivor, like bundles of dirty clothes.

The cause of the accident was later determined to be the accidental closure of an angled wheel (brake) cock that had been placed incorrectly. Some survivors reported that many of the hooligans had ridden on the platforms and steps and some had tampered with that angle cock while en route to Montego Bay. Others indicated they had seen the wheel in question tightened in Montego Bay. While neither of these accounts could be confirmed, some things were known for sure. The train was overcrowded - there were 130-150 passengers per car. Confidence in the rail service was shaken and much looting and robbing of the dead and injured occurred after the crash. The ensuing investigation found a number of deficiencies among the Jamaica Railway Corporation. Regarding the train in question - the general standard of maintenance of the brake equipment was deemed unsatisfactory.



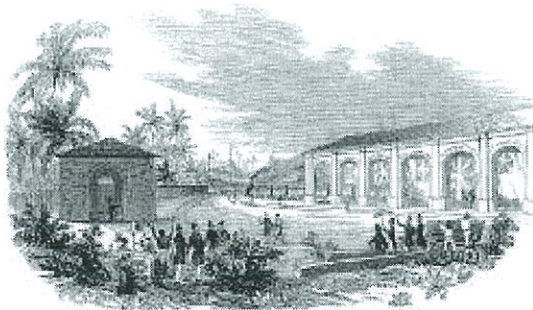
Left photograph:

Survivors and spectators picking their way through and around the wreckage of three telescoped coaches.

Right photograph:

A body hangs limp from the wreckage of a rail car. Police later said this man was on their 'most wanted' list.

Jamaica's Railway History



- In 1845, the Illustrated London News (pictured above) described the

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- [Out Of Many Cultures: The People Who Came - The Jews In Jamaica](#)

JRC's ceremonious opening on November 21 of that year in detail. On that morning, the first leg Kingston to Spanish Town was opened at approximately 11:30 a.m by then colonial governor, the Earl of Elgin and attended by numerous influential colonists as well as members of the general public climbed aboard. The 10 carriage train pulled out of the Kingston terminal to the sounds of the 1st West India Regiment, beginning the first railway excursion in the British West Indies.

- The £222,250 railway, a feat of engineering, was built soon after the first public railway in England, making it one of the first in the world. It owed its development to two pioneers, William and David Smith, merchant/landowner and planter respectively.
- In 1869, the Spanish Town to Old Harbour extension opened, but the greater part of Jamaica's railway was constructed between 1885 and 1896 Spanish Town to Ewarton (1885), Porus to Montego Bay (1894) and Bog Walk to Port Antonio (1896).
- In 1879 the railway system was taken over by the government for a 10 year period before it was sold to an American syndicate for £800,000. By 1900, the American company, having lost money due to low receipts, turned the system back over to the government.
- In the 1920s a one-way train ticket from Spanish Town to Kingston cost a total of 3 shillings, 6 pence. Travel in a 5 seater motor car cost 1 shilling, 6 pence per mile or 21 shillings.
- On July 30, 1938, 32 people lost their lives and over 70 were injured in Balaclava headed from Kingston to Montego Bay. An engine jumped the rails and embedded itself firmly into the mountainside, followed by coaches which when forced on from the rear, piled themselves one on top of the other, orchestrating chaos and death.
- In the 1950s dieselisation occurred, reducing operating costs and increasing passenger comfort. However, the cost of moving freight by rail in Jamaica was still listed as among the highest in the world the system's operating deficit was in the region of £300,000.
- By the 1970s, the railway extended for 333 km (224 1/4 miles) with the principal connections being Kingston and Montego Bay in the north-west, and Kingston and Port Antonio in the north-east, with a junction at Spanish Town.
- Today, the Government is conducting discussions with a team from the Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) regarding the long-delayed resumption of the national rail services. The first phase, commuter services, between Kingston and Spanish Town then Kingston to Linstead, was expected to be up and running by January 2001 but there have been delays. The initial investment required for the first phase is set at US\$8 million. The Government is said to be considering an initial 40 per cent shareholding, to be used for improving infrastructure, loading

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Feedback To the Series

"I have found your articles on the Pieces of the Past most entertaining and interesting to read. For me as a historian these pieces come at a time when Jamaicans need to reconnect themselves with their past and the Gleaner's efforts

stock and the purchase of new trains.

- Having run for over 150 years, the railway ceased operation in 1992 except for sections on which bauxite is drawn.
- Throughout the railway's history it provided a means of transportation for people of many races and classes, it afforded more people the chance to engage in islandwide travel and because of the relatively low rates, more people from lower socio-economic classes were able to participate.

Sources: Clarke, C. G. (1974). Jamaica in Maps. London: Hodder & Staughton Educational, Cundall, F (1923) Handbook of Jamaica. Kingston: Government Printing Office, Johnston J. (1903) Jamaica, the New Riviera. London: Cassell and Co. Ltd, The Jamaica Railway Corporation. The Railway in Jamaica, 1845-1870 - A Short History. Kingston : JRC.

through this medium is quite commendable.

I have found especially today's article on the 1780 hurricane to be quite of interest to me as I am currently involved in bringing to light the role of natural disasters in the development of Jamaica's history, culture, society, economy and politics and the article on the "Hurricane of 1780" has greatly aided in this direction. Keep up the good work and I look forward to more interesting and historically significant pieces from this series." - Kerry-Ann

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The First 500 years in Jamaica

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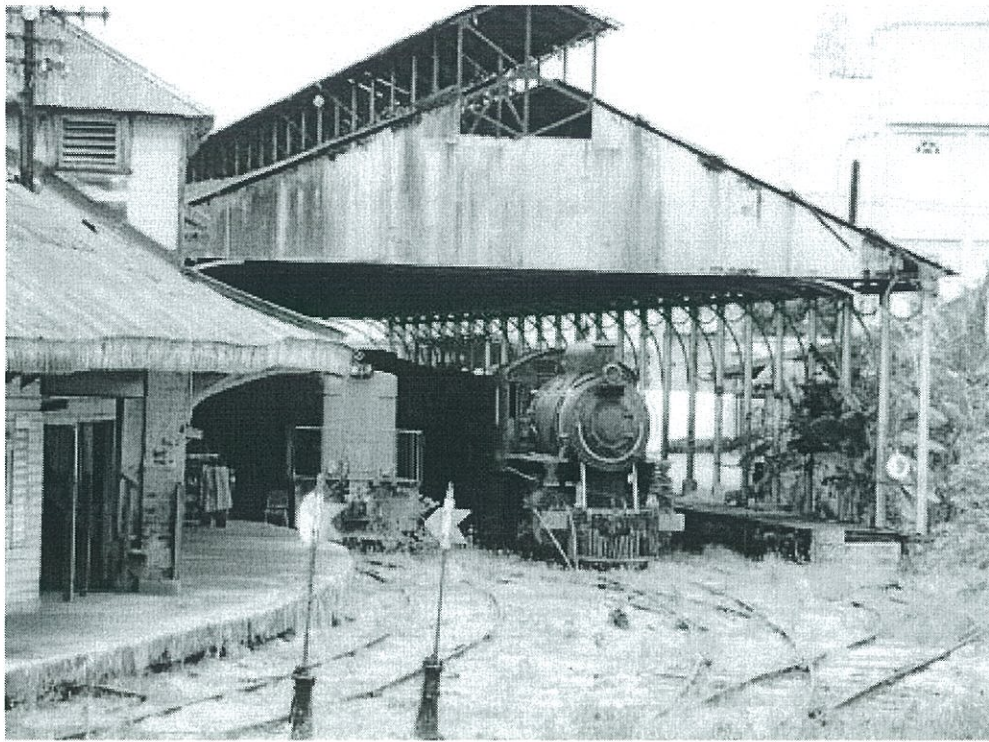
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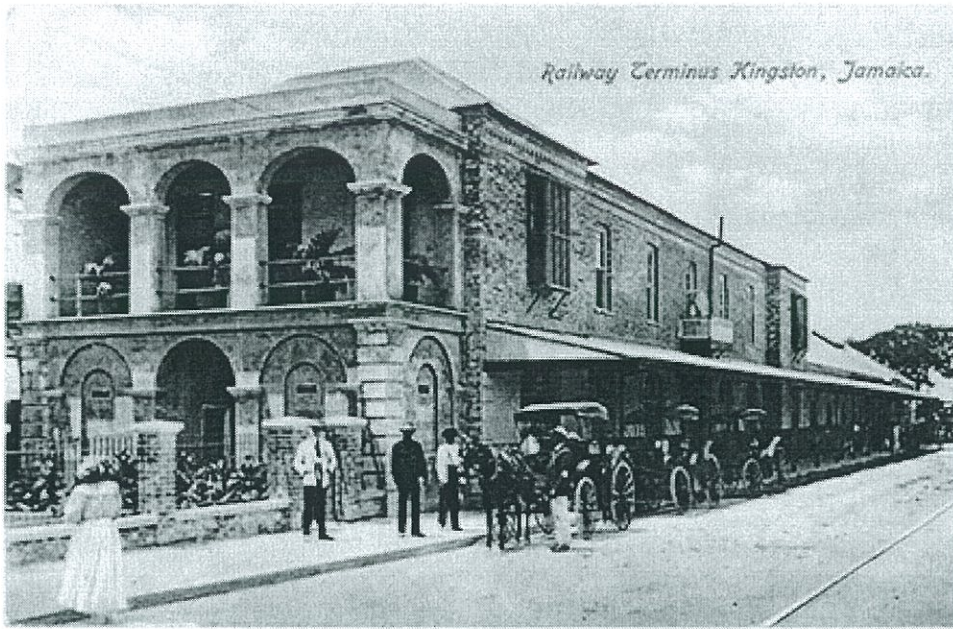
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THE BALDWIN DIESEL ZONE

Jamaica

Kaiser Bauxite



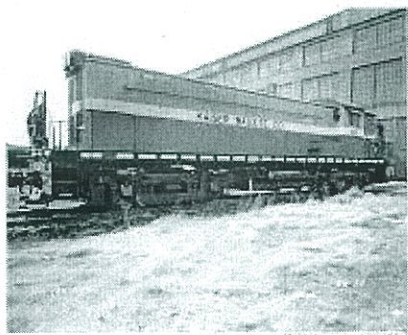
102

RS12
c/n 75487, b/d 4/1952

- built for Kaiser Bauxite as #102
- to Alumina Partners as 17868

photo by: Robert Lambrecht

Port Kaiser, South coast of Jamaica - Oct. 1, 1993

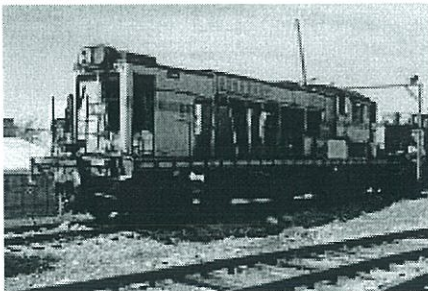
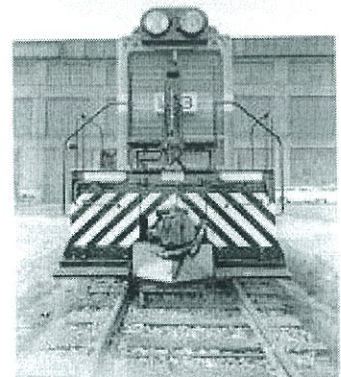


103

RS12
c/n 76133, b/d
5/1956

- built for Kaiser Bauxite as #103
- to Alumina Partners as 17869

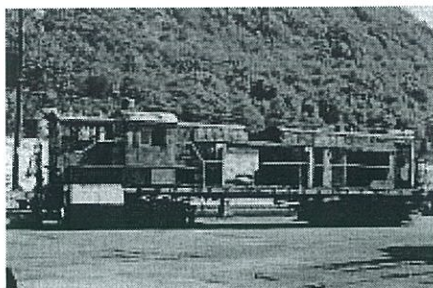
*Baldwin photos - collection of
Chuck Brewster*



Alumina Partners as 17869

photo by: Robert Lambrecht

Port Kaiser, South coast of Jamaica - Oct. 1, 1993



104

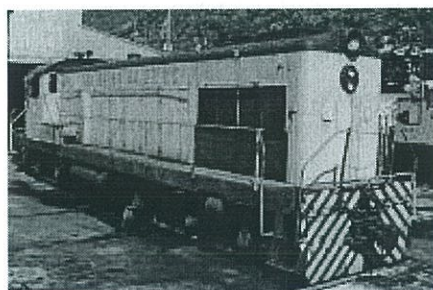
RS12

c/n 76134, b/d 5/1956

- built for Kaiser Bauxite as #104
- to Alumina Partners as 17870

photo by: Robert Lambrecht

Port Kaiser, South coast of Jamaica - Oct. 1, 1993

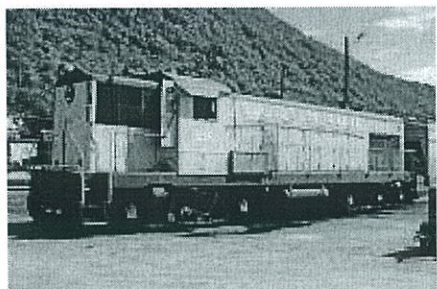


5105

AS616

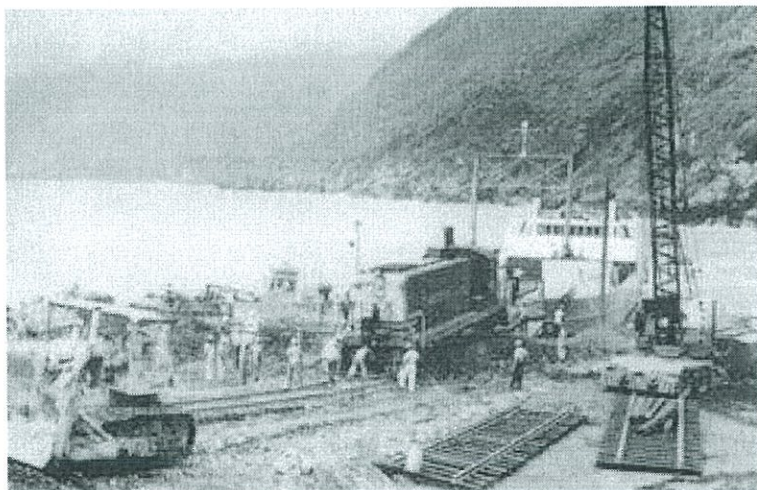
c/n 75227, b/d 10/1951

- built as SP 5251
- acquired in 1961 by Kaiser Bauxite as #105(5105)
- to Alumina Partners as #17871



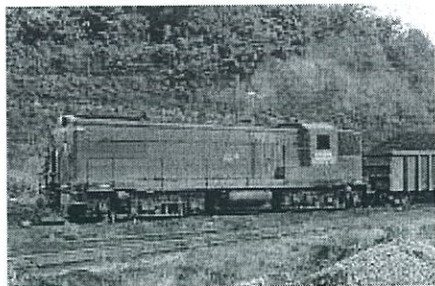
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Port Kaiser, South coast of Jamaica - Oct. 1, 1993



SP 5251 at Port Kaiser Jamaica

Photo: Railway Gazette Feb 1962



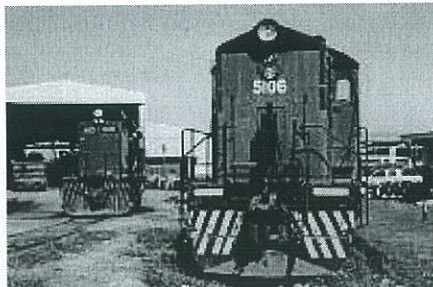
5106

AS616

c/n 75226, b/d 10/1951

- built as SP 5250
- acquired in 1961 by Kaiser Bauxite as #106(5106)

photo by: Tom Trencansky
Tobolski, Jamaica - Nov. 8, 1989



photos by: Robert Lambrecht
Discovery Bay, North coast of Jamaica - Sept. 27, 1993



photo by: Tom Trencansky
Nain, Jamaica - Nov. 9, 1989

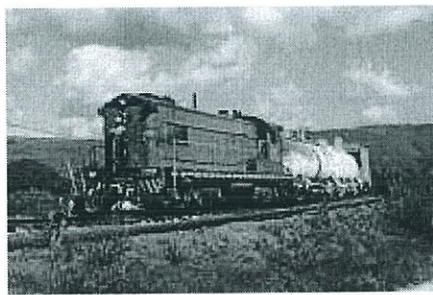


photo by: Tom Trencansky
Tobolski, Jamaica - Nov. 8, 1989

"Alpart (Alumina Partners) unit in Nain, Jamaica. Former Kaiser Bauxite locomotive was transferred to Alpart (Kaiser owned 65%) for use on a short line on the south side of the island, Kaiser is on the north side. Photo shows Alpart train running from port to plant. 11/9/89. Company bought GP35's years ago and presume the Baldwins are long out of service but probably just pushed into the jungle to rust like most Jamaica junk."

Kaiser Jamaica Roster

1952

#101, RS12, built for Kaiser Bauxite, c/n 75486, b/d 4/1952 - later Alumina Partners 17867
#102, RS12, built for Kaiser Bauxite, c/n 75487, b/d 4/1952 - later Alumina Partners 17868

1956

#103, RS12, built for Kaiser Alum. & Chem., c/n 76133, b/d 5/1956 - later Alumina Partners 17869
#104, RS12, built for Kaiser Alum. & Chem., c/n 76134, b/d 5/1956 - later Alumina Partners 17870

1961 - SP 5251 & 5250 acquired by Kaiser Steel then shipped to Jamaica

#105(5105), AS616, built as SP 5251, c/n 75227, b/d 10/1951 - later Alumina Partners 17871

#106(5106), AS616, built as SP 5250, c/n 75226, b/d 10/1951

1971 - Kaiser Steel units shipped to Jamaica

#5107, AS616, built as C&O 5533, c/n 74917, b/d 11/1950 - acquired 1958 as Kaiser Steel 1029

#5108, AS616, built as Kaiser Steel 1012A(1027), c/n 75356, b/d 6/1952

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Jamaica

Three series of 6 standard gauge RS-8's each were acquired by the Jamaica Railway Corporation (JRC) in 1975 and 1976. They're numbered 111-116 (MLW 6053-01/-06), 121-126 (MLW 6082-01/-06) and 127-132 (MLW 6091-01/-06).



#114 at Montego, Jamaica, February 1990
Jackie McNeil photo

The last one delivered to Jamaica was the 132, seen here with a much more fitting color scheme as seen above on #114.

MLW-
Worthington
photo



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