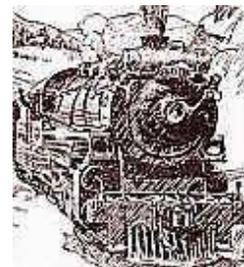


Presented by
Erlanger Historical Society

CITY of ERLANGER, KENTUCKY & CINCINNATI SOUTHERN RAILROAD



Dixie Hwy Erlanger, KY early 1900s



“THE COMIN’ OF THE RAILWAY”

Over the years, the various modes of transportation have contributed immensely to the good and welfare of the Citizens of Erlanger, KY. Whether it means going back to the Buffalo Trails and the Lexington (Georgetown) Pike, or the connection with the Cincinnati Southern Railway, the Greater Cincinnati International Airport, or the modern day Interstates, all have in some way made Erlanger a better place in which to live, work and enjoy life.

No one could have envisioned the mammoth obstacles, both political and geographic, which faced the builders of this Railroad. From the elevation challenge that existed between Ludlow and Erlanger; to the bridge across the KY. River, which was the first cantilever built in America and was the highest span in the western hemisphere at that time; to the bridge over the Ohio River at Ludlow which turned out to be the longest truss span in existence, when completed. . Yet, amidst many challenges, along with numerous novel accomplishments, the Railways keep rollin’ along.

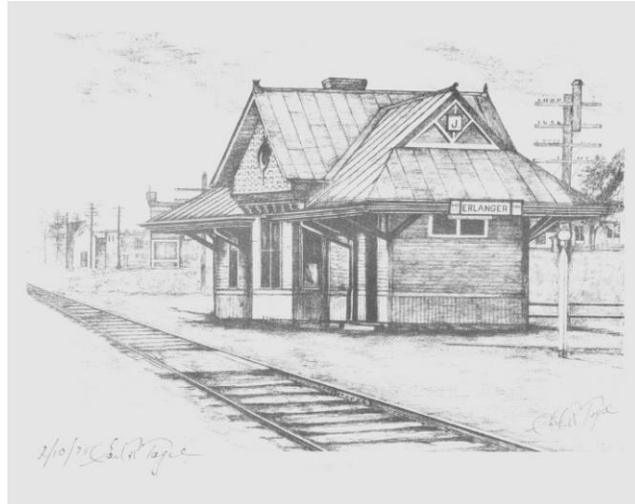
This is an abbreviated time-line history of the coming of the Cincinnati Southern Railway to Erlanger^{1,2}:

- 1836-Edward A. Ferguson, a mere boy at the time, witnessed the KY. Legislature's Incorporation of the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad Company. Unfortunately, the Depression of 1837 halted development of these plans.
- 1847-plans for a railway (Licking and Lexington Railroad Company) stretching south from Cincinnati were resurrected, but once again the excitement diminished when only 20 shares of stock were sold. One reason for its failure was the Lexington Citizens were supporting the Lexington and Frankfort Railroad construction at that time. Another, was the indecision to determine if Newport or Covington was to be the Northern terminus.
- 1849-A charter for the Covington and Lexington Railroad Company was granted by the KY. General Assembly. Now financial assistance came from Covington and Lexington as well as the counties along the route; even Cincinnati chipped-in \$100,000.00 to demonstrate their interest.
- 1850-Construction began.
- 1850-Ohio Legislatures drafted a new Constitution forbidding Ohio Cities, Townships and Counties from making loans or subscribing to stock purchases in railroads, canals and other private companies.
- 1853-Looking ahead, the Railroad hires John A. Roebling to design/engineer the railroad crossing at Dixville over the KY. River gorge.
- 1854-Anchorage for the Dixville span were laid, the stone towers erected, and most of the superstructure material was on site but then suddenly all work was suspended indefinitely for financial reasons.
- 1854-By December the entire road from Covington to Lexington was now fully operational.
- 1859-Louisville and Nashville Railroad opened to Tennessee. Louisville is Cincinnati's main competitor for southern trade.
- 1859-Covington and Lexington Railroad Company becomes The Kentucky Central Railroad and now extends to Nicholasville.
- 1861-Civil War & President Lincoln reaffirm Cincinnati's goal and necessity to extend the KY. Central to the Tennessee border. However, the lack of funds once again hindered these plans.
- 1867-Louisville, Cincinnati & Lexington Railroad begins construction of a branch between Louisville and Covington.
- 1868-L & N requires the Louisville, Cincinnati and Lexington to convert its track gauge from 5' to 4' 8 & 1/2" thus forcing trains to "break freight" at Louisville, slowing overall operations and increasing costs.
- 1868-Edward A. Ferguson, now 42 years old and a lawyer and still interested in a Railroad Route to New Orleans. Proposes a bill for Ohio Legislature that would allow Cincinnati to construct her own Railway.
- 1869-General Assembly of Ohio grants approval of the Ferguson Bill.
- 1869-L & N branch line to Covington completed.
- 1869-Cincinnati City Council proposes a Railroad be built to Chattanooga, held an election, which voters approved, and appointed a board of five trustees of the Cincinnati Southern Railway, CSR.
- 1870-CSR obtains a charter from the State of Tennessee to extend its railroad to Chattanooga.

- 1872-L & N branch line extended to Cincinnati via the Newport and Cincinnati Bridge.
- 1872-KY. General Assembly grants CSR a KY. charter after two years of battling a denial influenced by the Louisville interests. A condition was attached with this charter, the CSR had to settle on the route by February 13, 1874.
- 1877-Baron Frederick Emile d'Erlanger purchased the fledgling 295 mile Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad. D'Erlanger's first American railroad was reorganized and renamed Alabama Great Southern Railroad with plans to build a network of Southern railroads.
- 1878-Edward A. Ferguson talking before an investigative commission charged with examining the activities of the Trustees of the Cincinnati Southern Railway, requisite to issuing additional municipal bonds on their behalf: "In my judgment, without a Southern railway, Cincinnati, comparatively speaking, would be a pleasant, educational, cultured town, a good place for a man and family to retire to. Without it, as a commercial city, relatively, Cincinnati would be nothing".
- 1881-L & N had obtained through leases and acquisitions control of over 3,000 miles of southern rails. Now the L & N reached as far south as New Orleans, LA. and Pensacola, FL.
- 1881-Frederick Wolfe and Associates of New York proposed a bid to the Southern Railway that incorporated the CSR into the Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Texas Pacific Railroad (CNO&TP). Fifty-one percent of the stock was in turn owned by the Alabama, New Orleans, Texas & Pacific Railroad Co., Ltd. Controlling interest in this lease was an English syndicate controlled by Baron Frederick Emile d'Erlanger of Emile Erlanger and Company, Bankers, Paris.
- 1881-By this time d'Erlanger had purchased controlling interest in the New Orleans and Northeastern Railway System, then constructed a direct 196 mile link to his Alabama Great Southern Railroad affording a connection between Chattanooga and New Orleans. Then, by adding two spur lines, the Vicksburg-Schreveport and Pacific Railroad along with the Texas Pacific Railroad, connections to the west were established. Now d'Erlanger had controlling interest in 1,165 miles of American rails linking Cincinnati with New Orleans and Schreveport.
- With Cincinnati often called the Queen City and New Orleans the Crescent City, the d'Erlanger System was designated the Queen and Crescent Route. Having a direct connection to the South with its agricultural and basic raw material supplies; Cincinnati could not only enjoy additional monies for its coffers, but area businesses readily prospered.
- 1887-Railroad establishes commuter service between Central Union Station in Cincinnati and Richwood, KY. The commuter service ran round trip on a regular three times a day schedule and cost \$3.00/mo., or \$0.25/day.
- Erlanger rapidly transforms from a rural farming community to an early suburb, and the Erlanger Land Syndicate begins promoting the area as the "Queen & Crescent Suburb". (see reference #2 for further information about this growth).
- 1990-After an extensive service period of 130 years, the Norfolk-Southern Railroad decided to close the depot and eventually remove it
- 1992-Norfolk-Southern Railroad donates the depot to the City of Erlanger if they move it about 100' from the tracks into the adjacent RR Park. Mission accomplished, the last remaining original wooden depot between Cincinnati and Chattanooga was moved, the Erlanger Historical Society was formed, a Railroad Museum established, and it is now open to the public.

- 2007-Although the commuter and passenger trains are now just fond memories to some, the freight trains continue to rumble through the Old Queen & Crescent Suburb called Erlanger carrying everything imaginable to anywhere and everywhere.

THE TIMBERLAKE (ERLANGER) RAILROAD DEPOT
c 1920 by Earl Tayce



In early 1874 the Trustees of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad announced that they would build a bridge over the Ohio River into Ludlow and that the new railroad would follow the Lexington Pike to Florence. By mid year crews were busy laying out the line and putting down stakes for the first eight miles. Most of the right-of-way for the track in Timberlake (Erlanger) was acquired in the latter part of 1874. The northern section, 21 acres, of the railroad yard was purchased from William Langmoor, while the southern part, where the depot was to be built, was acquired from Mrs. Sara Bedinger. Construction of a roundhouse and railroad shops in the northern section of the yard was indicated on early drawings, e.g. 1893 CSR³ map; however, these two items were built in Ludlow, while Erlanger ended up with a coal yard in that place.

Cochran, Brown, & Company constructed the railway yards in Erlanger as well as 14 other depots between Ludlow and Somerset. The depot was built of wood and consisted of a fairly large waiting room lined with benches, an area with a bay window for the station-master, a restroom and a baggage room. Cost for construction was reported as \$1,411.00.

Near the depot in the northern section was a water tower (~ 18,000 gal.) and adjacent stock pens. Water was fed via gravity thru a 10" pipe from the water tower to two water chutes, one on each end of the depot. Animals waiting to be shipped to the packing houses in Covington and Cincinnati were held in the stock pens. Large Maple trees abounded in the area around the depot and it became known as the Railroad Park.

Between the Ohio River and the top of the 454' grade, Erlanger, trains had to climb about 60' for every mile. This meant that a reliable source of water had to be available at the top of the grade. In 1876 Joshua Bates constructed a water reservoir about ½ mile from the railroad yard; now, water could be pumped (initially a steam engine driven pump) from Silver Lake to the water tower in the park, via a 10" pipe. Cost=\$1,745.34.

References:

1. The "Chronic Want" of Cincinnati & Southern Railroad; Northern KY. , Vol. VI, #1, pg. 24, 1998, Dr. Paul A. Tenkotte.
2. From Buffalo Trails to the Twenty-First Century, A Centennial History of Erlanger, KY., 1996, Wayne Onkst._
3. Map Archives at Erlanger Railroad Depot.
Lookin' Back, Heritage Day 9/9/07, Erl. Historical Society, J.Scheben

Today

