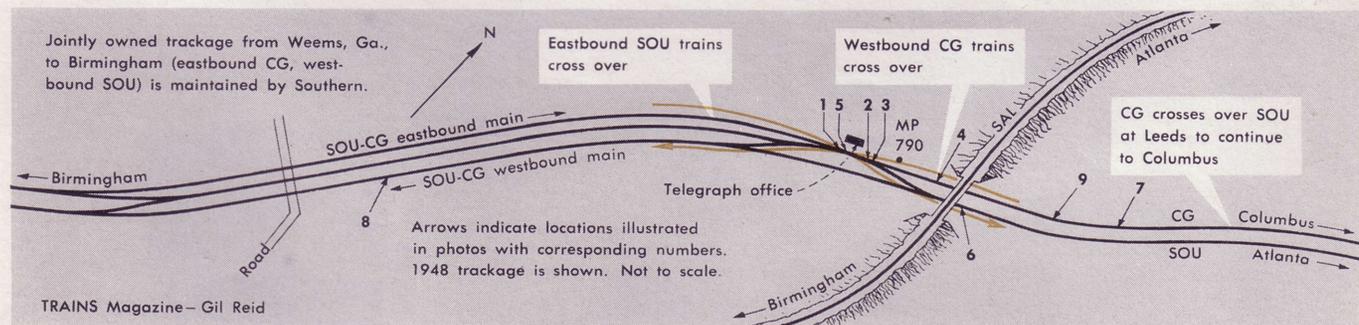


1 WEEMS was a name, not a town—a place of no population 8.9 miles east of Birmingham, Ala., where the rails of Southern (from Atlanta) and Central of Georgia (from Columbus) joined for the run into the steel city while the trains of Seaboard Air Line (bound for Birmingham, too) ran overhead. But Weems, especially in steam-and-diesel days when it possessed a train-order office, was a place to watch trains. Mixed FT's and F3's lead off with SR 58 in 1948.

TRAIN-WATCHING IN WEEMS

photography/F. E. ARDREY JR.



Following pages

2 CAP-STACKED 708—a 2-10-2—chomps past Weems with Central of Georgia Extra 708 East, the Winburn turn. Although Central was never a large carrier (1743 route-miles today), it found good use for Santa Fe-type locomotives on its hill-and-dale routes and employed more than 75 of the 2-10-2's. Once upon a time CofG even stabled 2-6-6-2's on its roster.







5 THE OPERATOR carries his order hoops back inside after delivery of "19" flimsies to the engine and train crews of Southern 48, the Southerner (when it boasted an observation).

6 THAT big-as-a-Mallet diesel unit leading an F3 on Seaboard train 28 across SR-CofG tracks at Weems is appropriately a 3000 h.p. Baldwin Centipede — what else? And to think that an industry which once considered 3000 h.p. too much in one package is buying U33B's!



4 IF you're thinking CofG 706 is of familiar stamp, you're right. She was one of 10 J-1 class 2-10-2's built by Baldwin in 1926 to heavy USRA Santa Fe-type standards but subtly modified with a Delta trailing truck and spoked pony wheels. The result: handsome bigness.

3 ONE of Southern's original Mikes — Ms-class 4553 — crosses over to SR's main line in 1948 as she heads east with No. 68, the "East local" (Birmingham-Anniston). The veteran 2-8-2, albeit elderly, has been modernized with a feedwater heater, Laird crossheads, and in all probability, a mechanical stoker to belie an age that can be traced to pre-World War I days.





7 CENTRAL'S Lima-built 450-series 4-8-4's of World War II were patterned after Espee's GS-2's and known locally as the "Big Apples." No. 453 approaches Weems on August 1, 1948, with No. 9, the joint IC-CofG Chicago-Florida Seminole — varnish that's still in the Guide.

8 HELLO, what's this? It's the every-third-day Pennsy-owned coach-streamliner South Wind between Chicago and Miami — detouring over Central of Georgia behind 4-8-2 488 because floods have affected the train's usual ACL routing through south Georgia into Florida.



9 ONCE upon a time every limited worth its name was trailed by a heavyweight brass-railed Pullman observation-lounge . . . and on April 4, 1948, CofG's Seminole still was. The High Rock brings up the markers of No. 9 as the flagman catches the air at Weems.

