



TWEETSIE
RAILROAD

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TWEETSIE RAILROAD TIMELINE

- 1866** The Tennessee legislature grants a charter to the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNC).
- 1882** ET&WNC begins operation with 32-mile narrow-gauge service from Johnson City, Tenn. to the iron mines at Cranberry, N.C. The railroad and its trains came to be nicknamed "Tweetsie" by its Blue Ridge Mountain customers.
- 1917** Engine No. 12 was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, Pa., at a cost of \$14,000. It is one of 13 narrow-gauge steam locomotives operated by the ET&WNC.
- 1919** ET&WNC extends tracks for service to Boone, N.C.
- August 1940** Torrential rains wash away large sections of ET&WNC track, forcing the company to end service to Boone.
- July 13, 1950** The ET&WNC discontinues all narrow-gauge rail service, marking the end of an era. All of its steam locomotives are scrapped or destroyed, except for locomotive No. 12.
- 1952** Engine No. 12 is bought by three railroad enthusiasts and moved to Harrisonburg, Va. as the "Shenandoah Central Railroad" tourist attraction.
- 1954** Hurricane Hazel washes away the Shenandoah Central tracks. Cowboy singer and actor Gene Autry purchases the rights to buy the No. 12 locomotive and cars, intending to move them to California. After determining it was too costly to ship the engine to the West Coast, he sells his purchase option to Grover C. Robbins, Jr., of Blowing Rock, N.C., for \$1.
- May 20, 1956** N.C. Governor Luther Hodges proclaims "Tweetsie Homecoming Day" as the 60-ton locomotive returns to North Carolina for refurbishing in the Hickory shops of Carolina & Northwestern Railway Company.
- May 1957** Locomotive No. 12 is moved up the mountain from Hickory to its new home near Blowing Rock, not far from its old railroad stop in Boone.
- July 4, 1957** Tweetsie Railroad opens as No. 12 makes its first run on a one-mile track carrying passengers to a picnic area, then backs up to the station.
- 1958** The remainder of the three-mile track is completed. An authentic western town is added to Tweetsie Railroad, and the park adopts a Wild West theme.



1959 Charlotte television station WBTV rents Tweetsie Railroad for a birthday party for TV Cowboy Fred Kirby, beginning a nearly 30-year career for Kirby as Tweetsie Railroad's marshal.

1960 Another narrow-gauge locomotive, the Baldwin-built No. 190 "Yukon Queen" is acquired from Alaska, and brought to Tweetsie Railroad to be rebuilt and placed in operation.

1962 A chair lift is erected to the top of "Magic Mountain," expanding the park with additional rides and other family entertainment.

1976 Tweetsie Railroad opens its own Steam Locomotive Shop to handle maintenance on its vintage steam trains and to service other steam engines across the country.

1977 Magic Mountain is re-themed to become "Miner's Mountain," recreating a frontier mining town. The Deer Park is also added, along with a new section of the park designated as Country Fair.

1990 Tweetsie Railroad's Ghost Train® debuts with a spooky nighttime train ride and a haunted house.

1992 Engine No. 12 celebrates its 75th birthday with a new coat of paint to match its original colors. The U.S. Department of the Interior lists No.12 in the National Register of Historic Places.

1998 The Tweetsie Railroad Steam Locomotive Shop is expanded to a larger facility to better serve an expanding array of customers. Historic engine No. 12 is completely overhauled to its original condition.

1999 Rebuilt historic engine No. 12 is unveiled at Tweetsie Railroad. Bachmann Train Company introduces a G-scale-model replica of the locomotive.

2000 Tweetsie Railroad celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Ghost Train®, which has grown to be one of the "Top 20 Events in the Southeast" by the Southeast Tourism Association. Engine No. 190, the "Yukon Queen," is completely overhauled to its original condition.

2001 Tweetsie Railroad is voted by the readers of Blue Ridge Country magazine as the "Best Place to Take the Kids in the Blue Ridge Mountains."

2002 Tweetsie Railroad celebrates its 45th season with a new album titled "Ridin' the Tweetsie Railroad" by the Grammy-award winning band Riders In The Sky. It contains some classic American railroad songs, plus original songs written about Tweetsie Railroad. Thomas the Tank Engine™ makes his first appearance at Tweetsie Railroad, starting a very popular annual event.



- 2003** Tweetsie Railroad commences its season with the debut of the Tweetsie Twister ride on Miner's Mountain and the opening of an entertainment stage for its new Hopper and Porter™ mascot characters.
- 2004** The K-9s in Flight Frisbee ® Dog Team performs for the first time at Tweetsie Railroad in a nine-day-long event. Tweetsie Railroad acquires Crown Locomotive Works, which manufactured steam locomotives during the late 20th century. These operations are added to Tweetsie Railroad's renowned Steam Locomotive Shop, which supplies parts and complete rebuilding services to owners of steam locomotives at parks, attractions and museums in North America.
- 2006** Railroad Heritage Weekend is introduced. Railroad enthusiasts have the opportunity to see the lost art of steam locomotive restoration during tours of the famous Tweetsie Railroad Locomotive shop and take an exclusive train ride in an 1870's vintage coach car.
- 2007** Tweetsie Railroad's 2007 season marks the 50th anniversary of the park. New park rides are unveiled, and the Hacienda section of the park opens. Other highlights of the season include a first time visit from Bob the Builder™.
- 2009** Tweetsie Railroad welcomes Letterland®, the popular reading program which has helped raise literacy standards among children in North Carolina and around the world, creating a re-themed park during special days in May.
- 2010** Tweetsie Railroad launches its on-line 3-D paper train series featuring the park's historic engine No. 12, No. 190, passenger car 14, and specially designed Ghost Train®, Railfan and Holiday trains.
- 2011** "Cool Summer Nights" event is unveiled on Saturday nights in July.
- 2013** Tweetsie Railroad welcomes Sponge Bob SquarePants™ and his best friend Patrick Star to the park to meet and greet guests.
- 2014** The park's 58th season includes two new special events: David Holt and the Lightning Bolts welcome guests in May, while Scooby-Doo™ and Shaggy™ make an appearance in July.
- 2015** High Gravity Adventures, a new aerial adventure park located next to Tweetsie Railroad, opens in the spring. The Ghost Train® celebrates its 25th anniversary.
- 2017** The park commemorates its 60th anniversary, along with the 100th birthday of Engine No. 12, and announces Tweetsie Christmas, a new event, on Friday and Saturday evenings from late November through December.
- 2018** Historic Engine No. 190, the "Yukon Queen," celebrated her 75th Birthday during Railroad Heritage Weekend.

