

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12
other names/site number Tweetsie Locomotive #12

2. Location

street & number Tweetsie Railroad theme park, Tweetsie RR Rd. at US 321 N/A for publication
city, town Blowing Rock vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Watauga code 189 zip code 28605

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 50. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

William S. Price, Jr.
Signature of certifying official 2-4-92
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related
RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other Steel

Iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The former East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12 is located on the track of the Tweetsie Railroad theme park in the mountains of western North Carolina between Blowing Rock and Boone. Except for routine maintenance and the change of insignia from ET&WNC to Tweetsie R.R., the locomotive is essentially unaltered.

Built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia in February 1917, Locomotive #12 was designed for both passenger and freight service. It is a narrow-gauge steam locomotive of the ten-wheeled 4-6-0 type. The "4-6-0" type signifies the wheel arrangement of the locomotive. At the front are four small pilot, or guide, wheels which turn with the track. Next are the six large driving wheels that do the pulling. They have a 45-inch outside diameter, a 38-inch center diameter, tires of hard steel, and a relatively short rigid (does not turn from side to side) wheel base of 10 feet. There are 16-inch cylinders with a 22-inch stroke. Finally, there are no wheels beneath the rear of the cab. This wheel arrangement (especially with the short rigid wheel base) in combination with the 36-inch narrow-gauge track, enabled the locomotive to handle 30-degree curves and grades of 4 1/2 percent--a definite advantage over larger locomotives and wider tracks in mountainous terrain.

The engine with the tender measures 54 feet long, 9 feet wide, and 12 feet 6 inches high to the top of the smoke stack. The combined weight of the engine with tender is 165,000 pounds. The maximum tractive power is 19,100 pounds.

The tender has eight wheels, each with a 28-inch diameter. The tender's U-shaped tank holds 3,000 gallons of water, and the fuel (soft coal) capacity is 4 tons.

The steel firebox has a heating surface of 116 square feet, and with the boiler tubes, the total heated surface--that which creates the steam--is 1,303 square feet. The steel boiler is 54 inches in diameter and runs under 180 pounds pressure.

In front of the steel cab are the dome, which is 29 inches in diameter, the 85-pound bell, the sand box, the 15-inch straight stack, and the incandescent headlight. The front bumper, to which the pilot is attached, is an oak beam. The

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Baldwin Locomotive Works plate on the front of the locomotive boldly proclaims this to be #12. On the side, another plate provides the manufacturer's number for the locomotive, 45069, and the date of manufacture, February 1917.

The handsome paint scheme--dark green with red and gold trim--was developed for the ET & WNC Railroad in the 1930s. It is similar to the original painting specifications, which called for olive green with lettering in gold leaf.

(The description is based on a combination of field observations and the written specifications for the locomotive.)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation

Period of Significance
1917-1941

Significant Dates
1917

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Baldwin Locomotive Works

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY:

Locomotive #12 of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNCRR) is locally significant for its historical association with rail transportation in the mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee from 1917--when it was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia--to 1941, the last year in which it meets the fifty-year criterion for listing in the National Register. The ET&WNCRR, affectionately known as the Tweetsie Railroad for its shrill whistle, was chartered in 1866 and eventually ran from Johnson City, Tennessee to Boone, North Carolina. Designed to facilitate the mining and lumber operations in the area, the railroad provided the crucial transportation link between the isolated mountain region and the outside world. The ET&WNCRR ceased operations in 1950, and Locomotive #12 is the only one of the railroad's narrow gauge engines still in existence. The well maintained locomotive now operates at the Tweetsie Railroad theme park located between Blowing Rock and Boone. Locomotive #12 is no longer located on its original site--the tracks of the ET&WNCRR--because that railroad no longer exists. However, its present location at the Tweetsie Railroad theme park has ensured its preservation on a site located approximately three miles from the eastern end of the former railroad.

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TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT:

Until the late nineteenth century, the mountainous regions of western North Carolina were largely isolated from the mainstream of the outside world. The geography of the area, though beautiful, created a barrier to communication and development because it made transportation so difficult. The introduction of railroads like the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNCRR) did much to alter this situation, and in so doing greatly affected the everyday lives of the mountain people. The railroad brought jobs, a glimpse of the outside world, and an opportunity to ease a hardscrabble existence (Campbell, 1).

Many small mountain lines began to appear during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but most were not around long enough to appear on maps. They were built to transport virgin timber from the mountainsides to sawmills and to move various mineral ores to processing facilities. Almost all of this rail activity was financed by businessmen and entrepreneurs from the North and Midwest, but many of those who actually worked on the railroads were area farmers or loggers who needed additional employment and learned by doing (Peek, A-15, A-18). Even more "paper railroads" were started, but were never actually built (Ferrell, 15).

The East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad was chartered by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1866 at Johnson City, Tennessee to seventy-five original investors who were all local men (Ferrell, 2). Five miles of standard-gauge track were laid, but money ran out and the railroad was acquired by the Cranberry (North Carolina) Iron and Coal Company, which was owned by Ario Pardee of Philadelphia and others. The standard-gauge tracks were soon removed, and a narrow-gauge line was completed to Cranberry, Avery County, in 1882. With a three-foot-wide track (rather than the standard four feet eight inches) and smaller locomotives and cars, the train was ideally suited to the limited right-of-way, narrow tunnels, cliff-hugging mountainsides, and hills and curves of the mountain terrain (Campbell, 2, 5). The arrival of the narrow-gauge railroad facilitated systematic and large-scale mining at the Cranberry mine (Ferrell, 12).

The railroad also made the mountains more accessible to the burgeoning lumber industry. In the late 1890s the Linville River Railway (owned by the ET&WNCRR after 1913) extended a rail line from Cranberry to Pineola, Avery County, and when resources along that extension were exhausted, a line was run to Shulls Mills in

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Watauga County. Multiple smaller lines snaked through the mountains to connect with the Linville River Railway and the ET&WNCRR. In 1918 the line reached Boone, sixty-six miles from Johnson City (Ferrell, 25-26; Campbell, 2).

The beginning of rail service in the mountains opened up that vast and beautiful country to the outside world. In 1885 General John T. Wilder built a huge 166-room hotel atop Roan Mountain on the Tennessee-North Carolina border and called the resort "Cloudland" (Ferrell, 14). Over time other hotels followed. From its earliest days, the ET&WNCRR ran excursion trains for those living along its tracks. During the 1910s several excursion cars were added to ET&WNCRR's collection of cars. Tourism became an economic factor in the operations of the line, as mountain estates and resorts were built along the Linville River Railway (Ferrell, 56). Tourism eventually became a major part of the mountain economy.

Mining, lumbering, tourism, communications--the railroad facilitated all these things in the mountains. But to the people along the route of the ET&WNCRR, the railroad meant much more, in ways that were not as tangible. It became a part of their lives, something that they affectionately called "Tweetsie" due to its shrill whistle (Ferrell, 86). They claimed that it was the railroad with a heart. The facts that conductors sometimes let needy passengers ride free during hard times and that the train would stop anywhere along the line to pick up or drop off passengers suggest some of the reasons for this sentiment (Ferrell, 87). The railroad men were well known to the local people.

After World War I, the fortunes of the ET&WNCRR and the Linville River Railway began to decline slowly. During the 1930s the railroad lines operated with mixed trains (freight, passengers, and mail) and hauled whatever merchandise they could find (Ferrell, 83, 84). The final demise of the ET&WNCRR was brought on by a combination of factors. The mountains in the area had been largely stripped of their minerals and timber. In August of 1940 a severe flood washed out the track of the Linville River Railway section of the line, and it was not replaced. Paved roads brought transport trucking and busses which created serious competition for the railroad. Revenues continued to decline until the decision was made to shut down the ET&WNCRR (Ferrell, 159, 161). In September, 1950 the last passenger train rolled over the tracks, and in October came the final run of the freight train (Ferrell, 159, 161).

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The mainstay motive power for the ET&WNCRR was a small fleet of ten-wheeled locomotives manufactured by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia. The first of these 4-6-0s arrived at the railroad in 1907, and by 1919 six more had been added. Locomotive #12 was built in February, 1917 during the railroad's most prosperous years. The 4-6-0 locomotives were well-suited to the operating conditions of the ET&WNCRR because they could more easily handle the mountain curves than could the larger engines (Ferrell, 64, 190). Like the other locomotives, #12 transported freight, passengers, and mail.

The "Tweetsie Railroad," as the ET&WNCRR was affectionately called, continued to operate until the fall of 1950, when first passenger service and then freight service ceased (Ferrell, 160-161). The tracks were subsequently taken up.

In 1952 rail fans C. Gratten Price, Jr., Paul S. Hill, and Wade W. Menefee, Jr. purchased Locomotive #12 and two cars and moved them to a farm near Harrisonburg, Virginia. There they built a one-mile loop of track for the Shenandoah Central Railroad. The former ET&WNCRR equipment operated on weekends from Memorial Day, 1953 until October, when Hurricane Hazel washed away most of the trackage (Ferrell, 181).

For a brief time after that, cowboy movie star Gene Autry held an option on the equipment of the Shenandoah Central Railroad. He planned to move the locomotive and cars to his California "Melody Ranch" (Ferrell, 181).

In 1955 Grover C. Robbins, Jr. of Lenoir purchased the former ET&WNCRR Locomotive #12 and three cars and brought them back to North Carolina, where on a mountain between Blowing Rock and Boone he built his reincarnated Tweetsie Railroad as a tourist attraction. Governor Luther Hodges declared May 20, 1956 "Tweetsie Home Coming Day," and a big celebration was held on May 24th when "Tweetsie" arrived in Hickory aboard a standard-gauge flat car. Following a year of restoration in the shops of the Carolina & Northwestern Railroad (a branch of Southern Railway) in Hickory, the equipment was moved by flat-bed trailers to Blowing Rock on May 23, 1957. Locomotive #12 went into service at the new Tweetsie Railroad on July 4, 1957. It continues to operate on the circular track around Roundhouse Mountain, and in 1992 its 75th anniversary will be celebrated (Ferrell, 181-182).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Campbell, E. C. Tweetsie Tales: A Collection of Reminiscences, Vol. I. Blowing Rock, North Carolina: New River Publishing Co., 1989.

Ferrell, Mallory Hope. Tweetsie Country. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1976.

Peek, Charlie. "Engines That Could." Winston-Salem Journal, October 27, 1991.

The Baldwin Locomotive Works. "Specifications for Locomotives 10 26 D 332 for East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Co." January 1917.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Tweetsie Railroad, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property LESS THAN 1

UTM References

A 17 441770 4002870
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property consists of the dimensions of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12, measuring 54' x 12'6" x 9', located at Tweetsie Railroad theme park.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the structure being nominated, defined as the physical dimensions of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12.

See continuation sheet

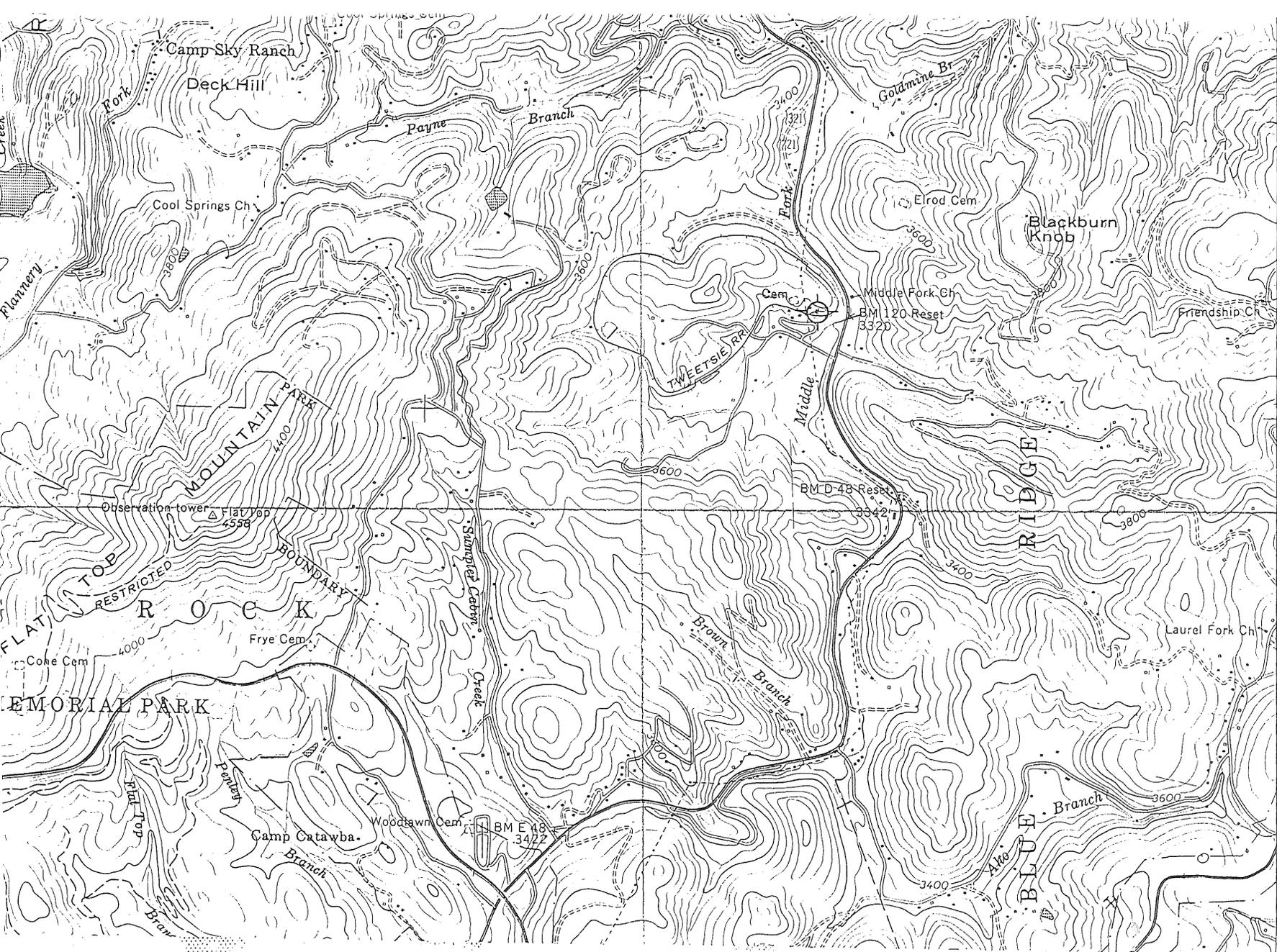
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date October 30, 1991

street & number 637 N. Spring Street telephone 919/727-1968

city or town Winston-Salem state North Carolina zip code 27101



EAST TENNESSEE +
 WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
 RAILROAD LOCOMOTIVE
 #12
 WATAUGA CO., NC
 BOONE, NC QUAD
 1:24,000
 ZONE 17
 N-4002870
 E-441790

8.2 MI. TO U.S. 221 AND 421

