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RESTORED 1856 TEXAS LOCOMOTIVE RETURNING TO ATLANTA

**-After farewell event at North Carolina Transportation Museum, famed engine
is to be installed in new Atlanta History Center home on May 3, 2017-**

ATLANTA, GA -- The restored 1856 *Texas* locomotive, an important relic of Atlanta's early railroading days and well-known for its pivotal role in 1862's Great Locomotive Chase, will return to Atlanta and its new home at the Atlanta History Center soon.

Plans call for the steam engine, a key part of the Cyclorama attraction at Grant Park for nine decades, to be delivered to the History Center's Buckhead campus on May 3, 2017, from the N.C. Transportation Museum, where it has been undergoing an extensive restoration since late 2015.

The locomotive is expected to open to the public in fall 2017, inside a specially designed glass-fronted hallway-gallery connected to the new Lloyd and Mary Ann Whitaker Cyclorama Building. The 2,000-square-foot gallery, accessed through the Atlanta History Museum's Fentener van Vlissingen Family Wing (off the Allen Atrium), will be completed around the *Texas* following its return from North Carolina.

The *Texas* will be delivered on a lowboy tractor trailer, with its tender arriving on a flatbed tractor trailer. They will be lifted off of the trucks by a 110-ton crane, and placed on the same tracks that held them since 1927 at Grant Park. The tracks themselves are historic, believed to date to 1880s Atlanta, when the railroad was helping build the city into the commercial capital it is today.

"After many years of limited view in the basement of the Cyclorama building in Grant Park, we are putting the *Texas* in a place where it is going to be front and center," History Center Vice President of Properties Jackson McQuigg said of the locomotive, which will be illuminated at night and clearly visible from West Paces Ferry Road at all hours. "This engine that has been at times forgotten in its long lifetime is going to become a focal point."

Birmingham, Alabama-based Steam Operations Corporation, experts in restoration of steam locomotives and other historic rail equipment, is nearing completion of the first major restoration ever of the 161-year-old *Texas* at the museum in Spencer, N.C.

Steam Operations Corporation has addressed extensive rust (such as under the boiler jacket and ash pan) and rot (including the tender frame). The locomotive has been blasted with baking soda (instead of more-abrasive sand), and extensive paint research was conducted.

The vivid hues the *Texas* sported when it departed Grant Park in December 2015 – including bright red wheel inserts and gold and red trim – will be replaced by a black paint scheme typical of the 1880s.

At Grant Park, the engine sported those vivid details since a 1930s cosmetic restoration intended to depict it as it appeared during the Great Locomotive Chase.

Atlanta History Center leaders, believing the *Texas* has even greater importance as an artifact that speaks eloquently and authentically of Atlanta's beginnings, decided to return the locomotive to how it appeared in the late 1880s.

"Talking about how the railroads built Atlanta is what we felt was our charge," McQuigg said. "There are many stories we're going to tell with the *Texas*, including the Great Locomotive Chase."

The *Texas* pulled passenger and freight trains in Atlanta and around North Georgia for 51 of the region's most formative years, retiring from service in 1907.

"As railroads are Atlanta's reason for being, this steam engine is an icon of Atlanta's founding and growth as the Gate City of the South – the commercial center of the Southeast," Atlanta History Center President and CEO Sheffield Hale said.

"The *Texas* locomotive symbolizes Atlanta's longtime relationship with railroads and the city's importance as a hub for people, commerce, and ideas. No artifact can be more important for telling the story of Atlanta's beginnings than this Western & Atlantic locomotive."

While the new color scheme is dominated by black, it will boast other secondary hues of 1880s locomotives, including brass details, a Russia-iron (blue-tinted) boiler jacket, a red cab interior, and the Western & Atlantic (W&A RR) lettering on its side in yellow-gold – all choices that research indicated were true to the 1880s.

Other aspects of the restoration include:

- Construction and installation of a new pilot/cow catcher on the front of the engine.
- Construction and installation of a new smokestack.
- Construction and installation of the Russia-iron boiler jacket, to be set off by brass bands that have been treated to lend them the patina of weathered metal.
- The gloss-black smoke box also was "weathered" with flat black paint.

- The locomotive's wooden cab was stripped and repainted.
- Rusted out sections of the tender were replaced with new steel.
- A new number plate was cast.

After arriving at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, the *Texas* was for the first time examined and treated not as an element in an attraction, but as an irreplaceable historic artifact, part by part and inch by inch.

The Atlanta History Center dedicated \$500,000 to *Texas* conservation. The nonprofit cultural institution assumed responsibility for the engine in 2014 as part of a 75-year license agreement with the City of Atlanta that included *The Battle of Atlanta* cyclorama painting.

Major funding for the new gallery showcasing the *Texas* was provided by the Gary W. Rollins Foundation. CSX Corporation is major sponsor for the exhibition that will interpret the *Texas*' remarkable history.

The *Texas* and the *General*, the star attraction at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, Georgia, are the sole surviving locomotives that once served the Western & Atlantic Railroad, a company key in Atlanta's early development.

Atlanta was established in 1837 as the terminus of the new railroad line that ran from what was then known as Terminus northwest to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The city grew up as a railroad town and mushroomed to become one of the nation's busiest transportation centers.

Steam engines such as the *Texas*, a muscular machine that nonetheless boasts elegant lines, helped extend the Industrial Revolution in the U.S. The engine is a sizable object at 26-feet-2-inches long (without its cow catcher on front), 12-feet-4-inches tall (at top of steam dome), 8-feet-2-inches wide (at cab), and weighing 53,000 pounds. Its tender measures 19-feet-2-inches long, 7-feet-8-inches tall, 8-feet-6-inches wide, and weighs 20,000 pounds.

A workhorse from the end of the Civil War through the early 1900s, the *Texas* was rescued from the W&A yard in Atlanta where it was heading for scrap in 1907. The engine was donated to the City of Atlanta in 1908, and put on outdoor display in Grant Park in 1911. It was placed in the Cyclorama building there in 1927, paired with *The Battle of Atlanta* painting as monumental reminders of America's bloodiest conflict.

Like any locomotive of long service, it has been significantly altered over the years and features many replacement parts, including its wheels, tender, cab, and boiler. Along the way it was converted from a wood-burner to coal-fired. Even its name was changed, to the *Cincinnati*, after the war.

In 1936, as part of a Works Progress Administration-funded conservation of the cyclorama painting, Atlanta historian and artist Wilbur G. Kurtz gave the *Texas* a cosmetic restoration, replacing the smokestack and pilot with reproduction parts and re-

painting the entire engine, to give it an 1862 appearance. It was painted again in the same colors between 1979 and 1982 during renovations to the Cyclorama.

The Atlanta History Center also selected the new 1880s paint scheme so that the Texas better dovetails with the 359-foot-circumference *Battle of Atlanta* painting, which was created in Milwaukee by German artists in 1886.

Parts from Kurtz's 1936 restoration (including the smokestack and cow catcher) that were removed from the engine during the current restoration will be preserved in the Atlanta History Center's permanent collection.

Before its return to Atlanta, the locomotive will be spotlighted in a special farewell event at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, *The Texas Returns: Featuring 100 Years of Steam*. Planned April 28-30, the event also will feature former *Norfolk & Western No. 611* and the former *Lehigh Valley No. 126*.

Another steam engine with strong Atlanta connections also will be featured: the CSX 2702, named *The Spirit of Atlanta/Franklin M. Garrett* in 1980 by the Georgia Railroad for the late Atlanta Historical Society/Atlanta History Center historian who was a serious train enthusiast. Famous in its own right, the 2702 also pulled the last passenger (mixed) train on the Georgia Railroad in 1983.

The 57-acre North Carolina Transportation Museum occupies the historic Spencer Shops, once Southern Railway's largest steam locomotive repair facility, halfway along the busy route between Atlanta and Washington, D.C. Spencer is roughly 50 minutes northeast of Charlotte.

Hundreds of locomotives serviced the W&A RR and its successors, yet all but the *Texas* and *General* were scrapped over the decades. Both engines were saved because of their Great Locomotive Chase roles.

In the incident, Union Army loyalists commandeered the *General* from the town of Big Shanty (now Kennesaw) and drove it north toward Chattanooga, wreaking destruction to the W&A line, until finally being caught by Confederate forces who had pursued aboard the *Texas*.

The Great Locomotive Chase lives large in pop culture as the subject of a 1926 Buster Keaton film and a popular 1956 Disney movie of the same name, as well as in dozens of books.

The *Texas* was produced in a classic 4-4-0 design (indicating an engine with 4 leading wheels, 4 driving wheels and 0 trailing wheels) – a type so popular it was called “American” -- by New Jersey locomotive maker Danforth, Cooke & Co. The 4-4-0s were so ubiquitous here that they were placed on Atlanta's first official seal in 1854, two years before the *Texas* was put into service.

“The *Texas* locomotive symbolizes Atlanta's longtime relationship with railroads and the city's importance as a hub for people, commerce, and ideas,” History Center President

and CEO Hale said. "No artifact can be more important for telling the story of Atlanta's beginnings than this Western & Atlantic locomotive."

ABOUT THE ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER:

Founded in 1926, the Atlanta History Center is an all-inclusive, 33-acre destination featuring the Atlanta History Museum, one of the nation's largest history museums; three historic houses (the 1928 Swan House, the Civil War-era Smith Family Farm, and the frontier-era Wood Family Cabin); Kenan Research Center; the Grand Overlook event space; the Atlanta History Center bookstore (sharing space with a Souper Jenny café); and Goizueta Gardens. In addition, the History Center operates the Margaret Mitchell House located in Midtown Atlanta.

For information on Atlanta History Center offerings, hours of operation and admission, call [404.814.4000](tel:404.814.4000) or visit <http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com>.