

# The Piedmont and Northern Railroad



The Piedmont and Northern Railroad was the brainchild of William States Lee, vice-president of Southern Power and Utilities Company. In 1909 he proposed to James B. Duke, president of Southern Power, that the company construct an "electrically powered interurban railway system linking the major cities of the Piedmont Carolinas." Duke supported the project because he believed it would stimulate the industrialization of the Piedmont. The railroad would create "a mill a mile," proclaimed its supporters.



**William States Lee**

**James B. Duke**

Stock was sold in 1911, and construction of a series of distinctive interurban depots and terminals and grading for the line began in April of that year. Southern Power hired Charlotte architect Charles Christian Hook to design the buildings.



**Architect Charles Christian Hook**

The plan called for two lines in the initial stage: a twenty-one-mile route linking Charlotte and Gastonia, and one in South Carolina connecting Greenwood to Spartanburg. The final link (which was never completed because of a successful challenge brought before the I.C.C. by the Southern Railway) was to join Gastonia and Spartanburg, thus completing the network. The first trains ran on the North Carolina line on April 3, 1912. The name Piedmont and Northern was adopted for both the North Carolina line and the South Carolina line in 1914. The railroad operated streetcar service in Gastonia on Franklin Blvd. from 1911 to 1948. Passenger and freight trains operated on both sections of the P&N. The railroad was absorbed into Seaboard Coast Line Railroad in 1969, now CSX.



**Gastonia Piedmont and Northern Streetcar (Destroyed)**



**Piedmont and Northern Track in Wesley Heights**

**FREE**  
Pick-Up and Delivery Service  
On Less Than Carload Shipments  
Between All Points

OFFERING COMPLETE

**S**AFE  
URE  
WIFT  
ERVICE


"SHIPPER TO CUSTOMER  
TRANSPORTATION"

ROUTE YOUR FREIGHT  
and  
TRAVEL

**"VIA P. & N."**

**PIEDMONT & NORTHERN  
Railway Company**

Passenger Schedule  
Effective December 4, 1938



Clean—Economic—Safe  
Transportation

Constructive Criticism Solicited

W. I. RANKIN, Traffic Manager  
Charlotte, N. C.



## **Piedmont and Northern Literature**

Two P&N stations and one terminal survive in North Carolina. The Thrift Depot in Mecklenburg County and the Mount Holly Station and the Belmont Terminal in Gaston County. The Piedmont and Northern Pinoca Shops still stands in the Pinoca Yard near Rozzelles Ferry Road in Charlotte. All are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A P&N trestle survives between Bank of America Stadium and Cedar Street. The P&N bridge spans the South Fork River in Gaston County. A P&N Electric Power Station survives on North Modena St. in Gastonia. Finally, Piedmont and Northern rolling stock is displayed at the Railroad Historical Center in Greenwood, S.C. and at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, N.C.



**Thrift Piedmont and Northern Depot**



**Mount Holly Piedmont and Northern Depot**



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**Belmont Piedmont and Northern Terminal**



**Piedmont and Northern Electric Power Station, Gastonia, N.C.**





**Piedmont and Northern Pinoca Shops, Charlotte, N.C.**



**Piedmont and Northern Railroad Trestle Charlotte, N.C.**



**Piedmont and Northern Railroad Bridge over South Fork River, Gaston County**



**Piedmont and Northern caboose,  
Greenwood, S.C.**



**Piedmont and Northern Boxcar Electric  
Engine at North Carolina Transportation  
Museum**

Many Piedmont and Northern buildings are badly deteriorated or have been destroyed, such as the former P&N Freight Terminal in Charlotte and the P&N Depot in Pelzer, S.C.





**Piedmont and Northern Freight Depot,  
Charlotte, N.C. (Destroyed)**



**Piedmont and Northern Depot, Pelzer, S.C.**