



The Lawndale Railway & Industrial Company

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On November 11, 1899, the first regular train of the Lawndale Railway & Industrial Company ran on newly laid narrow gauge tracks from Lawndale to Shelby, NC. Major H.F. Schenck's dream of a railroad to circumvent the muddy wagon roads to his mill had finally been realized.

Hauling lumber, raw materials, fertilizer, and finished mill products as well as passengers, the "Lawndale Dummy" connected the isolated Carolina foothills to the rest of the world.

The road followed the First Broad River valley for less than 12 miles and became a legend in the area as much for the people involved as for the diminutive cars and locomotives. Farmers in their fields grew used to the chugging of the engines, the whistles and bells, and the thick smoke and cinders.

By 1943, the line was truly history, its work taken over by cars and trucks. But memories remain, stories become embellished, details forgotten. For those who let the coal smoke get in their blood, the Lawndale Railway will always be an important part of North Carolina heritage

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