

# Central Virginia Railroad Locations

**AM Junction / Amtrak Connection** - In the late 1980's a connection track was constructed to facilitate the movement of Richmond-Newport News Amtrak passenger trains specifically between the Bellwood and Peninsula Subdivisions in downtown Richmond. At the time the connection was built, both 17th Street and Brown Street Yard were in their waning years of operation, thus the connection has undergone some realignment and classification since it was originally built. With the closure of 17th Street Yard, the No. 2 mainline of the Bellwood Subdivision was rerouted to serve as the connection track. Today's AM Junction (CA85.5) is the interlocking at which the Bellwood No. 2 main connects with the Peninsula Subdivision. The junction is very near the site of C&O's AR Cabin which marked the west end of double track leaving 17th Street Yard westbound.

**AY** - Telegraph call letters for Acca Yard. The signals that flank the I-195 and Westwood Avenue bridges are today called AY. On occasion some crews will refer to the northbound signal for #2 track coming off the wye as "AY Tower" because the signal is located on the site where AY Tower stood until being demolished in the late 1980's.

**Bellwood** - A community in northeast Chesterfield County named for James Bellwood who purchased 2,000 acres of property in 1882. Mr. Bellwood and his wife were heavily involved in the development of the surrounding community and ran an award-winning farm. Mr. Bellwood died in 1924 and his son sold much of the property to the U.S. Army in 1941 on which they constructed the Richmond Quartermaster Depot. This name is also synonymous with the Seaboard Air Line in that the railroad established Bellwood Yard in the area. The yard continues to see minimal use today by CSX.

**BG Tower** - Once located at the ACL-N&W crossing on the east side of Petersburg Union Station at Third and River Streets. The tower was staffed by operators from each railroad. Two from the N&W and one from the ACL. It's estimated the tower stood at this site for perhaps close to 100 years, in one form or another, before being destroyed by a pre-dawn derailment on May 6, 1952. BG Tower was not rebuilt and the BG operator was relocated to the nearby N&W yard office under the new call letters of RS.

**Blue Shingles** - A one-lane overhead bridge that spans the CSX North End Subdivision between Douglasdale Road and the James River. The bridge, located at the end of Blue Singles Lane, once carried vehicle traffic to the Blue Shingles Mansion that was located on a bluff overlooking the James River approximately where the Powhite Parkway is today. After many years of neglect, the mansion was demolished in 1968.

**Bone Dry** - This is the area near the connection track between Brown Street and AM Junction. The name is derived from the Bone Dry Fertilizer Company that once occupied the land on the north side of Brown Street between the C&O and SAL mainlines. The building was burned in April 1968 following the civil unrest that resulted from the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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**Bootleggers** - The name for the southbound signals at the Lincoln Street grade crossing in Petersburg. Also called "Bootlegger's Crossing", the name stems from a nearby residence which had a small shed in the backyard that was used by the owner to peddle illegal (at the time) alcohol.

**Browns Island** - While Brown's Island proper parallels the north bank of the James River between 5th and 12th Streets, it has a different meaning on the railroad. CSX crews refer to the area under the Robert E. Lee Bridge as Brown's Island. This is used as a holdout point for eastbound trains waiting to enter Fulton Yard. Many coal trains will purposely recrew here so that the train can gain ample speed to conquer the grade just east of Fulton Yard without the assistance of pushers. Positioning the lead locomotive under the bridge also offers the crews shade which is very beneficial during the summer months.

**BX** - There have been two locations for BX Tower, near Petersburg. The first was at the junction of the ACL's original mainline into downtown Petersburg and the 1895 beltline, approximately where Interstate 85 crosses the tracks today. The old mainline from BX to downtown was abandoned in 1992 while the beltline trackage continues to serve as part of CSX's North End Subdivision. The second structure was located 1,000' south of the Interstate 85 bridges on the east side of the mainline. This single story, brick building was demolished in April 2002. During it's years of operation it housed an operator who controlled the mainline between the south end of Collier Yard and Dunlop, along with the two miles of the old mainline between BX and downtown Petersburg.

**Coal Wharf Track**- This track runs parallel to the Bryan Park Terminal Lead on the west side of Acca Yard and often is used to park maintenance of way equipment. It once led to the RF&P's paint shop located at 2260 Dabney Road. The name is a throwback to the original 1924 Acca engine terminal which had a coaling tower in the immediate vicinity. Incidentally the paint shop is the only surviving structure from the original engine terminal. CSX frequently parks maintenance of way equipment on this track which briefly parallels Tomlynn Street.

**Clopton** - Located on the ACL's original mainline from FA into downtown Richmond. Clopton Yard is located between Cofer Road and Terminal Avenue just west of US Route 1 in South Richmond. The yard still hosts a small amount of rail traffic. Acca Yard based local Y122 uses Clopton to serve the remaining customers along the old mainline between FA and North Hopkins Road. Clopton was the southern terminus of the ACL's 1891 beltline that extended north from here to Acca Yard.

**Coney Island** - Interrupting the nearly three mile long C&O Viaduct along Richmond's riverfront is a small patch of land between East Main and Pear Street. Over time railroad crews nicknamed the interlocking (CA84.0) Coney Island.

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**Dog Pond** - Perhaps one of the most debated names in Richmond railroading. Is it Dog Pond or Dog Pound? Located on the Bellwood Subdivision just south of the Chamberlayne Avenue overpass, the signals have been the subject of much debate. Dog Pond, the more accepted name, stems from the pooling of rainwater near the track which would attract the neighborhood dogs for a drink or a dip. The dog pound name is in reference to the Richmond Office of Animal Control located just a few blocks away.

**Dunlop** - The junction between the original ACL mainline through downtown Petersburg and the belt line was located at Dunlop, a community on the northern fringes of Colonial Heights. The tower operator controlled movements through the interlocking and also the wye that was located here. During the early part of the 20th Century, Dunlop rated a small yard and scale track to accommodate a large volume of cars that were used to serve four different sand and gravel businesses located between Walthall and Pocahontas.

**DX** - DX Cabin was the junction of the C&O's yard lead to their 2nd Street Yard and the Rivanna Subdivision mainline. The switch was located west of the Robert E. Lee Bridge and approximately 200' west of the current DX signals. While DX was the telegraph call letters for this location, it is believed that the name somehow references the fact that the tracks left the mainline here and meandered into downtown Richmond.

**Egypt** - Signal (CA81.5) located at the east end of Fulton Yard. The location earned its name from C&O conductors who were riding the caboose of westbound empty hopper trains. When the head end would stop at the yard office, the rear of the train would be in \*\*\*\*\* Egypt.

**FA** - At the Wamsley Boulevard grade crossing on the southside of Richmond was the junction of the Atlantic Coast Line's mainline into downtown Richmond and their beltline built in 19xx. Regulating movements through this busy junction were the operators at FA Tower who also controlled the interlocking at Meadow. FA is telegraph call letters for Falling Creek which flowed nearby. The original two story wooden tower stood on the east side of the tracks next to the grade crossing. Its replacement, a modern single story brick structure, was located 500' to the south until it was torn down in the early 1990's.

**Fort Lee** - When hearing of Fort Lee most people immediately think of the U.S. Army facility located between Petersburg and Hopewell. In eastern Henrico County the area along Charles City Road near the Richmond International Airport is also known as Fort Lee. Named for General Robert E. Lee, this area was the location of a Confederate Army stronghold designed to thwart any surprise attacks on Richmond from the east. To the C&O and CSX, the eastbound struggle up the grade at Fort Lee presents a challenge for eastbound coal trains enroute to Newport News. The grade often warrants the use of pushers on eastbound trains leaving from Fulton Yard. The Charles City Road grade crossing crosses the Peninsula Subdivision in between the Fort Lee signals (CA78.3) which protect a crossover.

**GN** - Telegraph call letters for Greendale, a neighborhood in north central Henrico County. The northern yard limits for Acca Yard and site of RF&P's GN Tower. Since 1975 this location has been home to Richmond's Staples Mill Road Amtrak Station (RVR).

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**Louisiana Street** - If you search a modern street map of Richmond for Louisiana Street, you'll be looking for a long time because there isn't one. That wasn't the case during the thriving years of the Fulton Bottom neighborhood. Louisiana Street ran in a east-west orientation and ran parallel between Orleans and Nicholson Street and passed under the C&O mainline just west of R Cabin. The underpass is still visible amongst the overgrowth that has reclaimed this once thriving street.

**Marlboro** - Signals located at the S4 milepost on the CSX Bellwood Subdivision. They are located just north of the Bells Road grade crossing next to the Richmond Manufacturing Center of Phillip Morris USA which produces the Marlboro brand cigarette.

**Meadow** - While it might not resemble anything of significance today, Meadow was once an important junction. The Atlantic Coast Line constructed the James River Branch or belt line between Acca Yard and Clopton in 1891. In conjunction with the opening of Broad Street Station and the completion of a new bridge across the James River in 1919, the ACL built a new alignment from Meadow to FA. This right of way is in use today as part of the CSX North End Subdivision. Meadow, located one mile south of the James River, was the point at which the two beltlines joined together on the north end. ACL passenger trains and many manifest trains used the new route to bypass Clopton while locals and some freights continued down the old beltline to switch Clopton Yard. The trackage between Meadow and Clopton was used into the early 1980's but was abandoned shortly thereafter. A very short segment north of Clopton remains intact today as a switching lead. Meadow is now the location of a crossover.

**NA** - Telegraph call letters for North Acca. This name is still in use today to identify the interlocking at North Acca which is located between the Dumbarton Road and Interstate 64 bridges. NA Tower once stood on the west side of the tracks just north of where I-64 crosses today.

**Peekaboo Track** - Railroad employees refer to the track leading onto the Science Museum of Virginia (formerly Broad Street Station) property as the Peekaboo Track. The origin of the name is unknown.

**Pump House** - Several miles west of downtown Richmond alongside the CSX Rivanna Subdivision sits the Byrd Park Pump House. Built in 1882, the facility was used to pump water from the James River and Kanawha Canal uphill to the Byrd Park Reservoir until it was closed in 1924. In terms of today's railroad operations, this is the location of the Pump House signals and is also frequently used as a holdout for eastbound coal trains awaiting clearance to enter Fulton Yard. The signals can easily be seen from the Nickel Bridge.

**Quartermaster** - Signals located between FA and Centralia on the CSX North End Subdivision adjacent to the Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR). The DSCR was formerly the Richmond Quartermaster Depot, hence the name. The facility was once a major customer of the Atlantic Coast Line. It boasted over 17 miles of trackage including a 400 car capacity classification yard and a four stall engine house.

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**Solite** - Located on the northwest side of Acca Yard where Racrete Road terminates at the tracks. The property adjacent to Acca Yard is now occupied by the Ready Mix Concrete Company. I believe this facility was originally owned by the Solite Concrete Company for which the location is named after.

**South AY** - South leg of the Acca Wye located at the end of Mactavish Avenue.

**R Cabin** - Former C&O interlocking tower (C&O called them cabins instead of towers) at the west end of Fulton Yard (CA83.1). The tower has been out of service for many years but still stands at the intersection of East Main and Orleans Street and appears to be in fairly good condition.

**Rockets** - Rockets is a name that dates back over 250 years. In railroad terms it refers to the signals just south of the James River Bridge on the Bellwood Subdivision. It was along the banks of the James River in this area where Mr. Robert Rockett operated a ferry service in the 1730's. More commonly known as Rockets Landing, the area was home to the Navy Yard of the Confederate States during the Civil War. During the SAL era, Rockets was the north end of a passing siding that extended from here south to Commerce Road. Today the siding is long gone and the Rockets signals serve only as intermediates in each direction.

**Rivanna Junction** - Origin of the CSX Rivanna Subdivision (CAB0.0) and it's junction with the Peninsula Subdivision (CA84.5). The junction itself is elevated above street level as part of C&O Viaduct built in 1901 to raise the C&O's mainline above the frequent floodwaters of the James River.

**Thoroughfare** - The stretch of CSX's Bellwood Subdivision between South AY and the Boulevard Bridge.

**Waterworks** - Approximately 1-1/2 miles west of the Powhite Parkway Bridge on CSX's Rivanna Subdivision are a set of signals called "Waterworks". The name comes from their proximity to the City of Richmond's water treatment/filtration plant.

**West AY** - Junction of the north and south legs of the Acca Wye situated between N. Hamilton Street and Belleville Street. The south leg of the wye was double track until shortly before the closing of Broad Street Station in late 1975.

**Westham** - West end of double track on the CSX Rivanna Subdivision at mile CAB7.5 The name comes from the adjacent neighborhoods that comprise the Westham community of Henrico County.