



Lexington Division Train No. 93 (4 units) is leaving Ashland after picking up at 6th Street Yard track connecting Lexington Division with NC cabin. No. 7030 is in the lead. Photo by Gene Huddleston. (C&OHS Collection, COHS 23828)

Ashland, Kentucky, 1956

Abandonment of C&O's Lexington Division in the 1980's changed completely the scene in this 1956 photo featuring scheduled Lexington-Louisville manifest No. 93 headed out of the Ohio Valley via Ashland Tunnel (located about one-third mile ahead of the train). The westbound freight had left Russell's eastbound yard about an hour earlier with a short train and had picked up cars at Ashland's Sixth Street Yard. It had then left the main freight line through Ashland via the Sixth Street Wye and proceeded south across the main passenger line (the crossing identified by wooden operator's tower, AX Cabin, at extreme left of photo). The switch for the turnout to the lead to the Ashland depot is out of sight just behind the fourth diesel unit. At this time Lexington Division passenger trains still operated out of Ashland's large station, later converted to a bank building.

Structures prominent in this photo from left to right include AX Cabin and near it twin smokestacks for the boiler house at the old AC&I engine terminal. The large dark building with peaked roof showing above the third and fourth diesel units is the machine shop for the old engine terminal. All these were demolished long ago. To the right of the locomotive cab are excavations for city water and sewage improvements. Just right of the engine cab is the tall downtown Ventura Hotel, torn down after passenger rail service ended at the depot.

Behind the photographer and extending from near Ashland Tunnel against the base of the hill west to NC Cabin is the only track left in 2008 as a connection for the Lexington division with the main line. NC Cabin was at the junction of the freight and passenger

mains through Ashland. When the Lexington Division was abandoned, the east end of the line was left in service from Ashland to Coalton, nine miles out in the hills, where a steel fabrication plant was still in service. Later this industry was supplemented by a siding about seven miles out of Ashland for waste disposal shipments. A "switcher" from Russell handles these industries.

One has to look carefully to discover that there are four units as motive power for this train. This was standard procedure for scheduled freights and extra freights running to Lexington.

"Corey Hill" near Olive Hill was a 2.67 grade westbound (and 2.68 eastbound) and in steam days required a helper engine to surmount the hill in both directions.