

EPILOGUE: THEN AND NOW

Since the close of the “last golden era,” many changes have reshaped the Birmingham landscape. The following “then and now” photographs dramatically illustrate some of the more significant alterations to the face of railroading in the Birmingham District over the past 50 years.

32ND STREET YARD (SAL)



One of the most obvious consequences of railroad mergers in recent decades has been the abandonment of “redundant” yards and facilities. Beginning in the 1950’s, many railroad yards in Birmingham were downgraded and eventually abandoned in favor of newer or consolidated facilities. One of the last yards to close was Seaboard Coast Line’s 32nd Street Yard just south of Sloss Furnace (seen on the left). For years the yard was used to store “bad ordered” railroad cars, then little by little the tracks were removed until eventually nothing was left. Today, new buildings dot the site, including a new condominium development appropriately named — would you believe? — “Seaboard Yard.” (Top photo, Jim Thorington; bottom photo, Ron Mele)

