

John Henry in Leeds

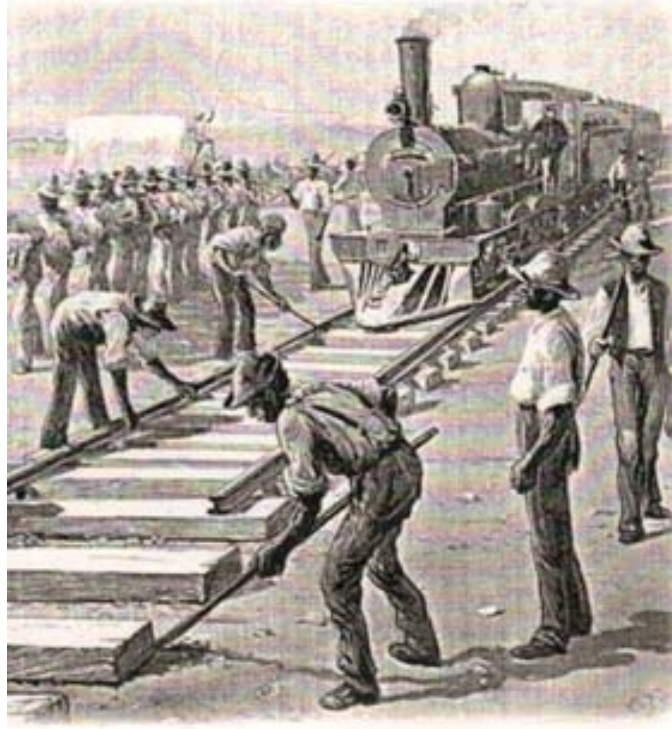
Local oral history and documentation show that John Henry won a contest with a steam drill near Leeds at Oak Mountain Tunnel on Sept. 20, 1887, but collapsed and died from physical exertion and the heat. Dr. John Garst, professor of chemistry, emeritus, at the University of Georgia, researched the historical background of Henry in his article, "Chasing John Henry through Alabama and Mississippi," in the Alabama Folklife Association's journal, *Tributaries*. The research showed that Henry was born on a farm in Mississippi and worked in Alabama south of Leeds when railroad tunnels were built through Oak and Coosa mountains, and that his contest with the steam drill occurred at the Coosa or Oak Mountain tunnel of the Columbus and Western Railway. Because of these findings, the Leeds City Council issued a proclamation in 2007 to call attention to Henry and the contest and to establish an annual John Henry event on the third weekend in September.

Festival Sponsors

The Alabama Humanities Foundation, state affiliate of the National Foundation for the Humanities, which co-sponsors this event, along with sponsors Alabama Power, City of Leeds, C&B Piping Inc., Daniel Foundation, Dixie Home Crafters, Leeds Arts Council, Leeds Historical Society, Leeds Scenic Byway, the Pants Store and Regions Bank.

Be sure to visit the John Henry Art Exhibit inside the Livery, across the street from the Depot.
LISTEN TO THAT COLD STEEL RING

Written by Marie Cromer
Directed by Nell Richardson



September 17 & 18, 2011

**Leeds Historic Depot
Leeds, Alabama**

LISTEN TO THAT COLD STEEL RING

Introduction by Dr. John Garst

A One-Act Play

Scenes 1-5: The Dabney Plantation, Mississippi

Scene 6: John Henry's wedding, Louisiana

Scenes 7-14: Oak Mountain Tunnel, Leeds, Ala.

CREW

Nell RichardsonDirector
Carol Phillips..... Producer
Carolyn HallAssistant Producer
Carl Marbury Ph.D. Script Advisor
Bill Richardson Stage Manager
Jeff Falletta.....Stage Designer
Harold and Nelda Faulkner Sound Technicians

Special Thanks to

Nell Richardson and the cast and crew for all their hard work, Dr. John Garst, Dr. Carl Marbury, John Saddler, Leeds Historical Society, Gudrin Romminger and Beverly's Dance Unlimited. Choreography by Carla Leslie. Dancers: Mackenzie Brownlow, age 9; Belle Fulton, 9; Rachel Garrett, 10; Haylee Hopper, 14, Erica Melville, 10; Mora Sheppard, 13; Darcy Stell, 13, and Jessica Tidwell, 14.
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CAST

(in order of appearance)

Donna Thornton Troubairitz
Carolyn HallAunt Mandy
Marie McDaniel Maggie
Aaron MoyanaLittle John Henry
Gregory Moore.....Lonzo
Priscilla Moyana Henrietta
Aniah Mathews Daisy
Jarvis McDanielYoung John Henry
Jerry Noell Mr. Dabney
Mike Chattman Teenage John Henry
Whitney HallPolly Ann

Vince LunsfordMartin Silverman
Ed Potts Gordon Shea
Kenneth Washington John Henry
Nick MarburyShaker-in-Training
Tim Jennings William Stevens
Patricia Noell.....Mrs. Stevens
Sarah Lunsford Sarah Jane Stevens
Dan Marbury Rubin
Priscilla Moyana Suzanna, the Farm Girl
Aniya Mathews Farm Girl
Aaron Moyana Farm Boy
James Bush Sarah Jane's Beau
Anna & Aaron Moyana Sr.Spectator Couple
Beverly's Dance UnlimitedDancers