

The story of the railroads of Johnson City begins with the building of the landmark East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad from Knoxville to Bristol in the 1850s. The ET&V was a short line railroad like most of the other lines of the time, connecting with other railroads to form a link in the chain of Southern railroads. After braving the trials of construction, the ET&V then had to face the agony that was the Civil War in East Tennessee. This is the first work to examine in detail the early years of one of the most important railroads in the Southern Confederacy.

The end of the war brought reconstruction and the possibility of further railroad growth. The East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad was founded by local businessmen, and attempted to build a broad gauge railroad to the Cranberry Mines in North Carolina. Using a lot of government credit instead of stock subscriptions to pay for construction, the company failed long before the job was completed. Northern industrialists completed the line, which later became nationally known as "The Tweetsie".

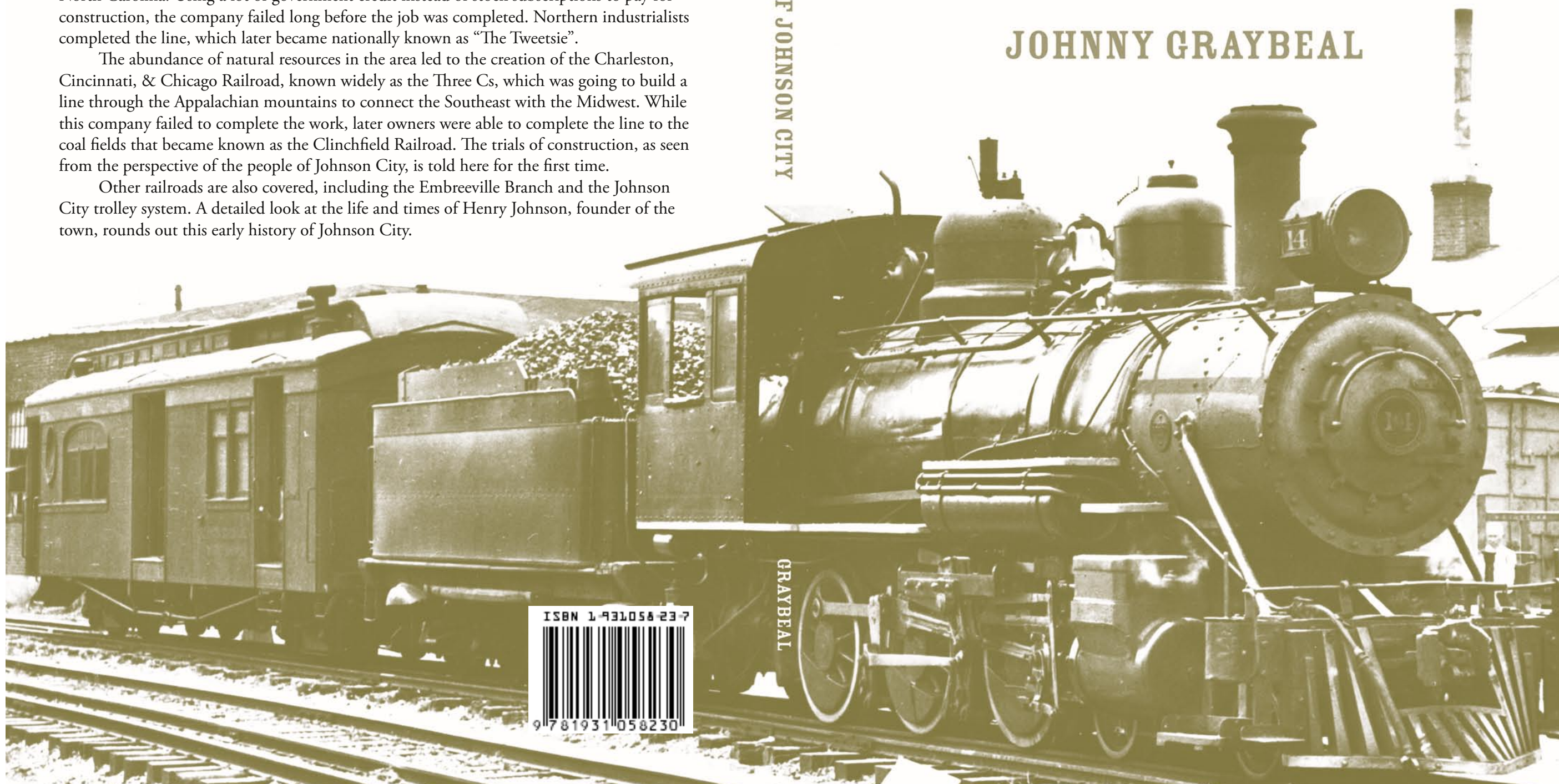
The abundance of natural resources in the area led to the creation of the Charleston, Cincinnati, & Chicago Railroad, known widely as the Three Cs, which was going to build a line through the Appalachian mountains to connect the Southeast with the Midwest. While this company failed to complete the work, later owners were able to complete the line to the coal fields that became known as the Clinchfield Railroad. The trials of construction, as seen from the perspective of the people of Johnson City, is told here for the first time.

Other railroads are also covered, including the Embreeville Branch and the Johnson City trolley system. A detailed look at the life and times of Henry Johnson, founder of the town, rounds out this early history of Johnson City.

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