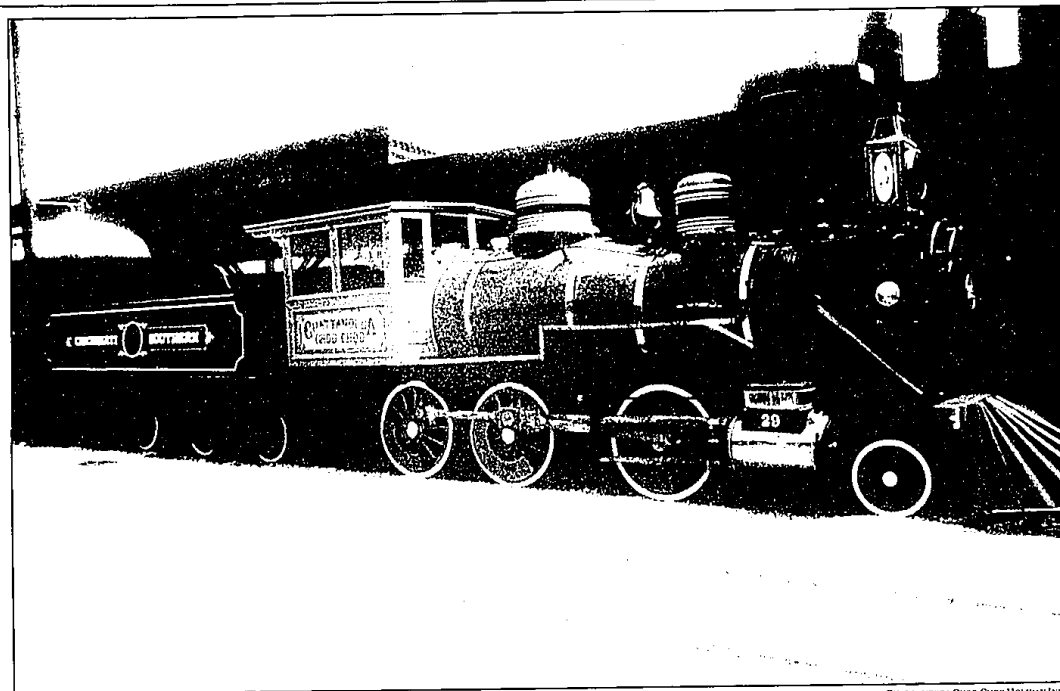


TRAVEL



On track: Although Tennessee's Chattanooga Choo-Choo stopped rolling in 1970, the old railroad station has been converted into a hotel and repository of railroad lore.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHATTANOOGA CHOO-CHOO HOLIDAY INN

CHOOSE CHATTANOOGA

All aboard for Tennessee city's many attractions

By PETER APPELOM
New York Times Syndicate

Mention Chattanooga and everyone thinks of one thing, but there's much more to this surprising city in the hills of southern Tennessee than the Chattanooga Choo-choo.

In fact, the last passenger train stopped rolling in 1970 and the old railroad station has been turned into a rather remarkable hotel and repository of railroad lore. But from its enormously successful new \$45 million aquarium to its Civil War landmarks to some venerable natural attractions in and around the city, Chattanooga is becoming an increasingly popular destination.

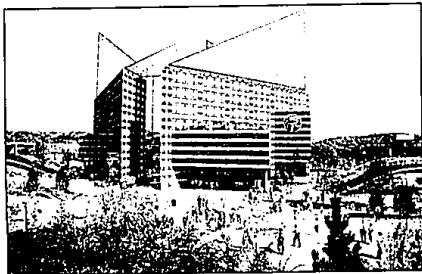
The biggest new draw is the Tennessee Aquarium, billed as the world's largest aquarium to focus on freshwater habitats. On

the banks of the Tennessee River, the aquarium with its environmentally sensitive setting has helped draw attention to the city's efforts to clean up its air and water. The main problem has been accommodating the crowds, and peak periods bring lengthy waits.

But fall, when the heat cools down and the lush hills are covered in dazzling colors, is always a good time to visit either the city or the mountains, caverns and scenic roads a short drive away.

Events

Events in town include the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Association, which performs works by Mozart and Saint-Saens on Nov. 19 and 20 at the beautifully restored Tivoli Theater, 709 Broad St. The concerts begin at 8



COURTESY OF THE TENNESSEE AQUARIUM

Tanked up: The 130,000-square-foot Tennessee Aquarium, in Chattanooga, is home to 4,000 fish — 300 species — which are held in seven major freshwater tanks.

p.m., and admission ranges from \$10 to \$34. For more information, call 615-267-8583 or 615-756-8687.

Until Nov. 14, the Chattanooga Little Theater will be performing "The Diary of Anne Frank" at the Little Theater, 400 River St. Tickets cost \$10, \$8 for students and \$6 for children; performances start at 8 p.m. with a 2:30 matinee Sunday. For information, call 615-267-8534 or 615-756-8687.

Sightseeing

The Tennessee Aquarium, 1 Broad St., 615-265-0695, has really put Chattanooga on the map as a tourist destination, and with good reason.

Beginning with a soaring re-creation of the Tennessee River's source in the Appalachian high country forest and tracing its path

through the Mississippi Delta, the 130,000-square-foot aquarium includes 4,000 fish and 300 species in seven major freshwater tanks and two terrestrial environments. Open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is \$9.75; \$4.75 for children 3 to 12, and free for children under 3.

Another popular destination is the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, 10 miles south of Chattanooga in Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., on U.S. Highway 27, 706-866-9241.

There are 1,400 monuments along the 7-mile park drive, and in the summer park rangers give exhibitions and talks. In the visitors center a truly first-rate film chronicles the 1863 Civil War battle and the men who fought it. The film costs \$2.25 for adults, \$1

for senior citizens and children under 16. Open daily except Christmas; winter, 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; summer 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Admission is free.

More dedicated Civil War buffs might also want to take in the Confederama-Hall of History, 3742 Tennessee Ave., 615-821-2812, a more modest but still intriguing re-creation of the local Civil War history. Like the military park, it sells a large assortment of Civil War books, documents and related items. Open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; June 1 to Labor Day, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$4; \$2 for children 6 to 12.

Perhaps the most famous of Chattanooga's scenic attractions is Rock City, 1400 Patton Road on Lookout Mountain just outside town, 706-820-2531. The 60-year-old 10-acre attraction features unusual rock formations, exhibits for children and a lover's leap with a dazzling view that on a clear day is said to look out over seven states. Open every day except Christmas from 8:30 until sundown. Admission is \$7.50; \$3.75 for children 3 to 12 and free for children under 3.

Not far away on Lookout Mountain is Ruby Falls on State Highway 148, 615-821-2544, a remarkable cavern and 145-foot, multicolored underground waterfall with lots of activities for children. Open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. April through October; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from November through March. Admission is \$7.25; \$3.25 for children 6 to 12.

Also nearby is the Lookout Mountain Incline Railway, 3917 St. Elmo Ave., with a ride up Lookout Mountain that's billed as the world's steepest passenger

railway — a grade of 72.7 percent near the top). The mile-long ride up and down the mountain takes about 10 minutes. Round trip: \$6, \$3 for children 3 to 12.

Attractions indoors include the Houston Museum of Decorative Arts, 201 High St., 615-267-7176, which houses the collection of the local antiques dealer Anna Suley Houston and includes furniture, porcelain, glass and textile pieces from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Admission is free. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

The city's main art museum is the Hunter Museum of Art, 10 Bluff View, 615-267-0968, part of which is housed in a lovely mansion once the home of the Coca-Cola magnate and philanthropist George Thomas Hunter.

In addition to the collection, which is particularly strong on art of the Southeast, there's a lovely sculpture garden with a view overlooking the Tennessee River and Maclean Island Wildlife Sanctuary. Open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sunday 1 to 4:30 p.m. An admission donation of \$2 is suggested for adults; \$1 for children.

A popular shopping spot downtown is Warehouse Row, 1110 Market St., 615-267-1111, converted turn-of-the-century railroad warehouses that have been transformed into more than 30 designer outlet stores featuring merchandise 20 percent to 75 percent below retail for labels such as Albert Niponi, Perry Ellis, Adrienne Vittadini and Ralph Lauren. Open Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

Don't shutter when trying to focus on new cameras

By EVERETT POTTER
Special Writer

Trying to keep up with changes in today's camera technology is a bit like attempting to stay on top of the airfares.

They change quickly, with little rhyme or reason. It seems yesterday's model is obsolete today.

What's a buyer to do? One answer is to turn to an expert, such as Robert Rattner, a professional photojournalist who specializes in travel and nature photography for magazines such as Audubon, Smithsonian, Time and the late European Travel & Life. He also writes a photo column for Events U.S.A.

"There are basically three types of cameras now," says Rattner.

"There are simple point-and-shoot models that have a fixed focus. These are really one step removed from an instant camera or even the old box Brownie.

"Then there are the point-and-shoot cameras with auto focus and a variety of other features. These have become so sophisticated that camera owners who have SLRs (single-lens reflex

Shopping Around

cameras) are trading in their cameras for the SLRs.

"The SLRs have gotten very fancy — but they've also gotten more expensive."

The biggest market is for the second group, the point-and-shoot cameras with automatic focus. They've gotten sophisticated enough to satisfy most amateur photographers, Rattner says.

The only problem with them is choice. There are about a dozen manufacturers each offering about half a dozen models. To the untrained eye these cameras all look like variations on the same function.

But Rattner points out they can be very different.

"You should look for a number of things when you go to buy a point-and-shoot camera. First of all, make sure the lens is protected when you're not using it. Secondly, look at the camera's specifications to find out what film

speeds it will take.

"Most film has DX or digital coding, which allows the camera to read the film speed off the film canister. The simpler cameras may only have two actual settings — say, ISO 100 and 400."

"So if you intend to use film that's ISO 64 or 1000, you're out of luck."

The automatic-focus option also differs among camera models, he says.

"Active auto focus means the camera shoots out an infrared beam that hits the subject and returns to the camera. It means you must center your subject in the viewfinder. Put the subject to the side and the camera focuses on the background."

"Some cameras have 'focus lock' that allows you to focus on the subject and then move the camera. There are others with 'multibeam focus,' which means the camera focuses on five or more large spots in the picture and makes 'focus lock,' unnecessary."

When it comes to the flash mode, Rattner says it's important

to choose a camera that allows you to turn the flash on manually in order to use a "fill-in flash" for illuminating outdoor subjects in daylight.

Another feature he mentions is "red-eye reduction."

"A tiny beam is flashed moments before the camera's flash goes off. This causes the human pupil to close down and consequently greatly reduces the chance of your subject looking red-eyed in the photograph. It's a good feature to look for."

The zoom lens is also found on many models, he says.

"It's a wonderful feature. Generally speaking, the 35mm to 70mm and the 35mm to 90mm range are good. There are good 35mm to 105mm (models) around as well, but you'll pay a lot more to jump from 90mm to 105mm and I don't think it's worth it."

So what particular models does Rattner recommend — and for whom?

He enjoys the Pentax IQZoom series, in which the model 60-X lists for \$230. The model 90-WR is "a very good camera, which is

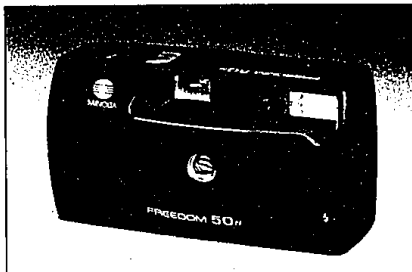


PHOTO COURTESY OF MINOLTA

In focus: The Minolta Freedom is one of the most popular point-and-shoot cameras on the market today.

weather-resistant as well. It's a good feature to have." It lists for \$350.

The Olympus Infinity series also "has always been extremely reliable and is known for its good metering." The Infinity Tole has two lenses: a 35mm and a 70mm, allowing for both wide-angle and telephoto shots. It's \$240.

The Olympus Stylus is a "wonderful" camera, with a fixed 35mm lens, red-eye reduction and a compact size. It's \$225.

Rattner also likes Minolta's Freedom series. The Freedom Escort, with a fixed 34mm lens, priced at \$188, is "a good, simple camera."