

Midlothian Narrow Gauge Railroad

The Midlothian narrow gauge railroad was a logging rail line that began operating in 1908 on the forest-covered flanks of Big Savage Mountain located in western Allegany County and adjacent Garrett County of Maryland. This logging railroad was operated by the Juniata Lumber Company, owned by H. C. Hower and Cummings McNitt, both from Juniata County in Pennsylvania.

The base of operation was set up in Midlothian MD, a small mining community just two miles southwest of Frostburg. This base location was already served by the 1.8-mile long Midlothian Branch of the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad, which had been put in place to haul coal from the nearby coal mines. The lumber company constructed a log pond and erected several houses in Midlothian. Here also was built a circular saw mill which had an average daily capacity of 25,000 feet, with a record production of 40,000 feet per day. The produced building lumber, railroad ties, mine props, tanbark, and dimensional wood for furniture.

The narrow gauge logging railroad left the saw mill heading in a northwesterly direction, following Winebrenner Run and its tributaries for the first two miles, climbing over 600 feet in elevation as the 36-inch wide track went up the side of Big Savage Mountain. Near the mountain's crest, the rail line then turned to the southwest, going parallel to the ridge line. The logging railroad was ultimately about twelve miles in length.

Motive power was provided by a 25-ton Climax B steam locomotive built in 1901 with the number 265. This locomotive, along with its engineer, Harvey "Bucky" Yohn, and the rails, were all moved from Juniata County PA to Midlothian MD in 1908. After the Midlothian operation closed around 1912, the Climax locomotive was sold to the HD&W Railroad that would begin operating at Cooks Mills in nearby Bedford County PA.