

Lexington & Ohio Railroad

The L&O was chartered on January 27, 1830, in an attempt to circumvent commercial traffic that was being diverted to Louisville. Lexington, being the largest city founded on a non-navigable waterway, was beginning to be superseded by the river towns of Cincinnati, Louisville, and Saint Louis.

Construction began in 1831. By 1834, the line reached Frankfort. It was not until 1851 that it finally connected to Louisville.

No contemporary illustration exists of the type of locomotive and cars. Shown here is a scale model of the DeWitt Clinton that first ran in 1831 and features the upright boiler described as used on the L&O. The cars are, in fact, converted stagecoach bodies of the period. Hence, the modern use of “coach” for passenger rail, bus, and air accommodations.

The L&O became part of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1880. In 1972, the L&N was absorbed by a consortium called “The Family Lines,” later the Seaboard System Railroad, which itself merged with the Chessie System to form CSX.