



# ARKANSAS RAILROADER

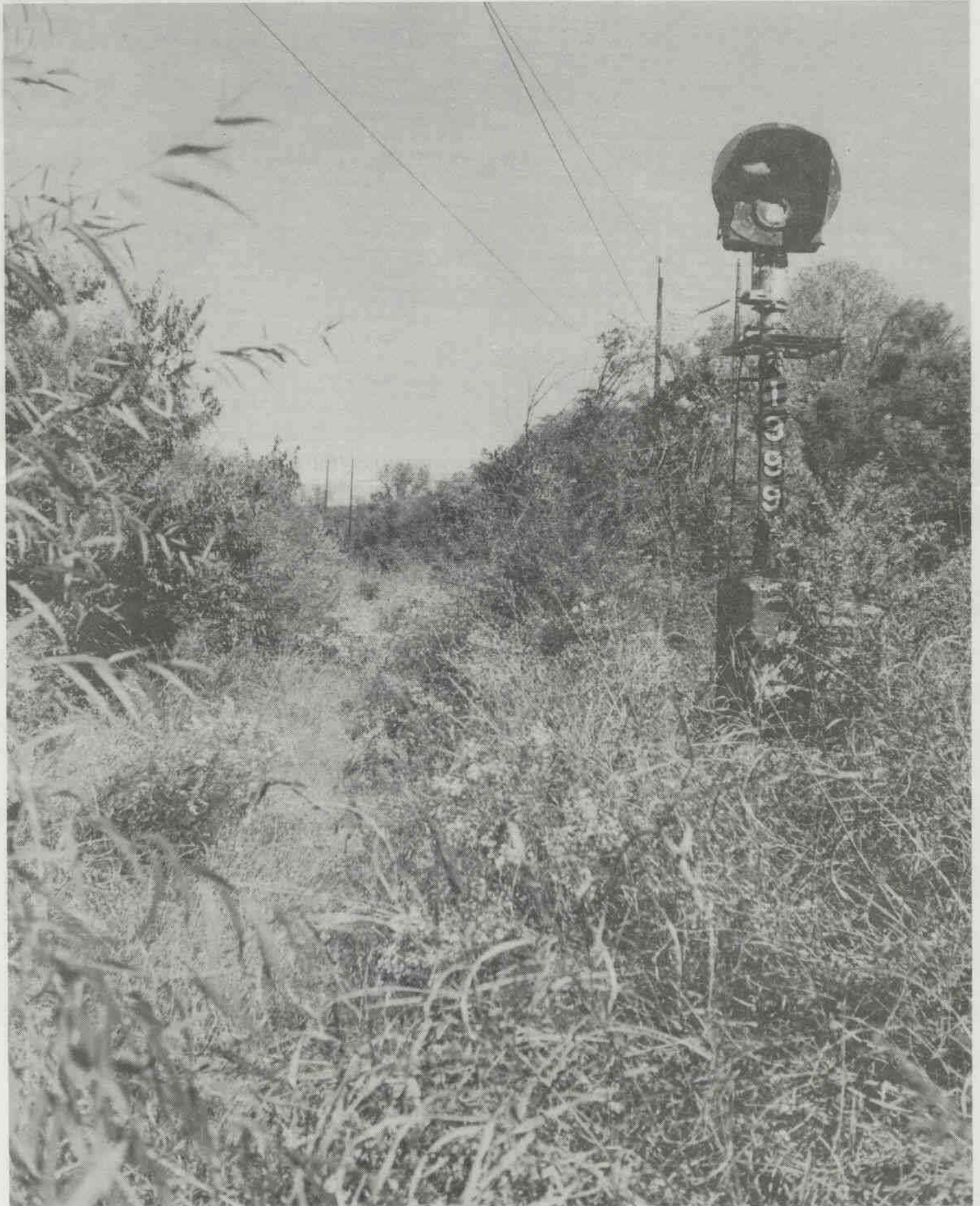


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LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The abandoned Rock Island "Sunbelt" line is about to curve west, just after crossing the Union Pacific main near Union Station in Little Rock. The signal will have a long wait. (October 17, 1991 photo by Ken Ziegenbein)



*A Rock Island post-accident photo taken 1-2 PM, January 19, 1950 at Butterfield, Arkansas. Fatal injury occurred on January 18 to W.B. Bailey at this crossing. Rock Island engine #2652 was backing from west to east across Highway 270 in this photo, approximately the same position as it was when the auto approached from about the same position as camera the day before. The photo noted the crossing bell and flasher were in good condition. (J.R. Scott Commercial photo from the G.A. Inman collection given your editor by L.T. Walker)*

### HEAD END COLLISION ON THE ROCK ISLAND AT BUTTERFIELD

by: L.T. Walker, retired Rock Island conductor

It was a dark night at Butterfield, Arkansas in 1956 when Rock Island No. 87 hit No. 88.

Back in the fifties, the Rock Island Railroad was almost all in diesel power and they were putting Alco units together trying to do away with several trains. But it did not work out to the best if you had to stop much and do local work with a long train.

The Rock Island had a road foreman of equipment who was trying anything the superintendent would let him do to eliminate some of the local freight trains. So he got permission from the superintendent to make No. 87 and No. 88 do all the local work between Biddle and Hot Springs, Arkansas. So, they pulled off 697 and 698 that worked between Biddle and Camden, which were hour long jobs at their best. They also pulled off the Bauxite Turn. The Bauxite Turn did all the switching between Biddle and Bauxite, including Bauxite. No. 697 and 698 did some work at Bauxite, Benton and Haskell, then on to Butterfield, except at wood spurs along the line.

No. 87 did switching at Bauxite by picking up ore for Jones Mill Aluminum Plant, also setting out cars for Reynolds and Alco plants. The road foreman was doing away with three trains and was running a train in turnaround between Malvern and Camden, leaving Malvern at 1201 AM, which was a 16-hour run and they would have to be towed in sometimes or run

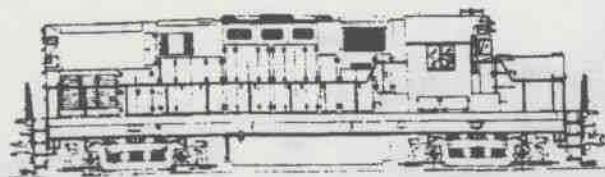
the work. But he did not pull off the two Malvern road switchers for they had the Malvern work and the National Lead mills on the hill out of Butterfield.

So, the new runs were started, No. 87 coming out of Biddle, No. 88 coming out of Hot Springs, with around a hundred and fifty cars on No. 87. No. 88 out of Hot Springs had around 20 cars or more, doing the northbound pickup at Jones Mill leaving there with around 40 cars and sometimes 75.

No. 87 started working just three miles out of Biddle yard, having to cut one or two crossings, working three ore mills then on the Vimy Ridge to pick up pulp wood on to Bauxite, spending several hours there switching and picking up ore for Jones Mill. On the Benton, where the train was so long it had to cut three crossings. Then on the Haskell to pick up the LA setout. After pumping up the air and trying to get the train started without pulling a drawbar or breaking a knuckle, we were on our way.

This night they ran into No. 88. They had a meeting point at Butterfield. No. 87 arrived at Butterfield with 155 cars, loaded and empties, with 45 cars of alumina ore for Jones Mill Alumina plant. Back then we only had radios on the engines and a small radio on cabooses, not like they use now.

No. 88 was coming into Butterfield with 43 cars which this writer was the head brakeman. No. 87 told us to stop because they had to make a setout up the national lead track with 55 cars, so we stopped while they made their first setout. No. 88 pulled up toward Butterfield when they called again and told us they had to make another setout, so we stopped again. As they had a hundred cars, the come around the curve, the headlight shining, they called to No. 88 to back up.



We started backing up. My crew was Conductor D. Gallagher, rear brakeman Harvey Ray, swing brakeman Red Rogers, fireman Bill Harp, engineer Dick Easterly. Conductor Gallagher was on the caboose. We were moving around 10 or 15 mph. We were all in the cab of No. 88's lead engine

(we had two Alco units). No. 88 had three total units. The head end crew on No. 87 was Luther Brakebill, engineer; Pat Murry, fireman; Jimmie Roberts head brakeman.

Engineer Easterly said, "Boys, he is going to hit us!" I looked up, and the headlight was shining in my face almost ready to hit us headon. I run out the front door, engineer Easterly telling me not to jump because I would get hurt, but I looked down and could see the white ballast from the ground lights, so I got hold of the railing and swung under it, but to my surprise I had jumped off a trestle around eight feet high. I did not try to get up. I crawled as fast as I could away from the bridge. I went through the briars and weeds like a rabbit.



The engines hit on the bridge where I jumped off. I looked up on our engine and I saw a flash of light. They told me they were only shaken up a little. No. 87's crew jumped off just before they hit us, but they said head brakeman Roberts had jumped off before they did.

Somehow the two units coupled up, which the officials said would have turned them over. Then we went back to find brakeman Roberts, and found eight loads of pulp wood turned over and had wood scattered all around, but could not find brakeman Roberts. Engineer Brakebill said he was afraid he was under the pulp wood. I walked around the wrecked cars and I heard someone hollering from up on side of a hill. I knew it was Roberts. He said, "Come up here with your light so I can see how to get out of here," and he had his pants tore up and coat but said otherwise he was all right (might have to change his pants when he got a chance).

It broke 13 train lines behind No. 88. Engines knocked the radio off the brackets, headlight bulbs out. The Road Foreman was on No. 87. He had us to back up to Jones Mill and leave our train and take the engine and caboose back to Hot Springs. So, with the

conductor on the caboose and the three brakemen on the hand brakes we backed up to Jones Mill. Having to back over Highway 270 (see photo on page 2) was our biggest concern which did not have a crossing light then.

Us brakemen got to where we could be on the end of cars with two brakes each for all the air we had was the engine's air and that would not hold the tonnage we had, but we made it fine, except one of my cars got a flat wheel before we made it to Jones Mill, which was about five miles downhill. We were fortunate no one was hurt.

We swapped off the next day and went back to Hot Springs. When we got back to Biddle, our jobs had been abolished and put back like they were. The Road Foreman said long trains are just too much for a local freight.

Of the twelve men on the jobs that night, all are deceased except engineer Easterly, Harvey Ray and this writer, L.T. Walker.

It was determined that No. 87's fireman was running the engine and he used up too much of his air and could not stop. No. 87's engineer and fireman was given 20 demerit marks each. The superintendent said he would have fired them but the Road Foreman was on the train and had gotten off at the depot when they came into Butterfield. Anyone who has been at the depot at Butterfield can see it is sitting on a hilltop and downhill on both sides.

CRISP DEPOT BUTTERFIELD, ARK. 1954



## CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1992 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

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Board - Stanley Wozencraft '95  
PO Box 1938  
Little Rock AR 72203

Board - Peter Smykla '97  
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Pine Bluff AR 71603

Board - Clifton E. Hull '94  
3507 E Washington, #31  
N Little Rock AR 72114

Board - William Church '93  
5619 Bel Caro Place  
N Little Rock AR 72118

Board - Robin Thomas '96  
10980 Rivercrest DR #26  
Little Rock AR 72212-1412

Hon. Board - Barton Jennings '92  
1600 Capitol Ln  
Knoxville TN 37931-4505



## P R O G R A M

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held on Sunday APRIL 12 at PINE BLUFF! We will meet at the old Union Station downtown (now the Jefferson County/Pine Bluff Historical Museum) at 2 PM. Please note that this is NOT the museum where the 819 is stored. The meeting starts at 2 PM. Should you wish to carpool, we will be leaving the Twin City Bank parking lot in North Little Rock at 12:45 PM to carpool to Pine Bluff.

To get to Pine Bluff's Union Station, take the Walnut Street exit from Highway 65 (right on Walnut), then turn left on 3rd Street (the old Cotton Belt right-of-way), then right on State Street to the depot. Park in their parking lot behind the depot. The depot is located at 4th & State Streets.

PETER SMYKLA will give the program about his rail adventures of 1991. Refreshments will be provided. The Smykla's have invited us to their home after the meeting. And some of us may want to see the 819 while in town and could go to the Arkansas Railroad Museum to see the engine after the meeting, then go to the Smykla's home. This will be worked out at the meeting as to who wants to do what.

Thanks to ELIZABETH GAINES for reserving the depot/museum for our meeting. If you haven't been there, it is a GOOD train-watching place, with BOTH the U.P. and Cotton Belt tracks just outside the depot.

Let's have a good turnout. Remember South Arkansas members, this meeting is for YOU, since we know you can't always drive up to North Little Rock for the monthly meetings. See you there!

# IT'S OFFICIAL!!



**3985 TRIP!** - The Arkansas Railroad Club, thanks in good part to ROBIN THOMAS, will be sponsoring a public excursion behind Union Pacific's famous #3985 steam engine (known as the Challenger) around **SEPTEMBER 1** of this year. Our segment will be from Little Rock to Van Buren. Most of you should have already



received the announcement in a separate mailing. We will have more details at the April 12 meeting in Pine Bluff.

This trip will be over former Missouri Pacific's Central Division and includes a trip through the famous Conway Tunnel. The train, which will be on its return trip from Houston and the Republican National Convention, reportedly will be 18-cars long and contain two dome cars!

**CAR HOSTS/HELPERS NEEDED** - We will be in need of carhosts for this trip. That means a **FREE RIDE** for those who become the hosts. However...not just anyone can become a carhost. Here are the conditions for becoming one:

- 1) **MUST BE A CLUB MEMBER** - You will have to have your \$15 dues paid to the Arkansas Railroad Club.
- 2) **MUST BE ACTIVE IN THE CLUB** - This means you must either attend meetings on a somewhat regular basis or do other work around the club from time to time.
- 3) **MUST WORK AT OUR SHOW & SALE MAY 2-3** - In order to be a carhost on this trip, you **MUST** help out at our May 2-3 Show & Sale in Little Rock. Workers there will have a **FIRST PRIORITY** in becoming hosts.
- 4) **MUST BE ABLE TO HELP CLEAN UP/GET PEOPLE ON-OFF THE TRAIN.** Also, you **MUST BE ABLE TO BE ON YOUR FEET FOR A FEW HOURS.** Carhosts rarely have time to sit down.
- 5) **SHOULD HELP OUT WITH THE TRIP'S TICKET SALES**, if possible. Contact Robin Thomas if you can help in this respect.

These rules must be followed, a reason being to prevent someone who is not active from getting a free ride. And...it makes sense that active members be considered for the carhost jobs before anyone who just joins to become a host.

**HILLE SALE** - Eakles Hille will once again have a sale of some of the many railroad items he has collected over the years (Mr. Hille was once a Missouri Pacific engineer, steam and diesel). There will be some **NEW** items in this sale, not just the same things that were in his November sale.

This sale will be held on **SATURDAY, APRIL 25**, from 9 to 4 PM at Eakle's home at 224 Denison in Little Rock. You can call him at 225-5476 if you need any more information.

**THANKS FOR EXTRA** - Thanks to R. W. TOLER and P. B. WOOLDRIDGE for sending in a little extra to cover newsletter costs. It is appreciated.

## **HELP STILL NEEDED!!**

We still need help for our Show & Sale on May 2-3. This will be held at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds in the Hall of Industry, much easier to get to than last year's event. Remember, too, that helping out means you will have a chance to be a carhost on the upcoming 3985 trip!

**R. JEFF TILLMAN**, a longtime club member, has left the Grand Canyon Railway in Arizona (where he was employed as an engineer/mechanic) to work for the Central Railroad of Indiana, running on the newly purchased (ex-New York Central) line through Southeastern Indiana's beautiful hill country. This section runs for 81 miles from Cincinnati, Ohio to Shelbyville, Indiana. The freight is varied and includes alcohol for the local distillery and potatoes for a wholesaler.

Mr. Tillman really misses running steam engines, but he and his wife Tina didn't want to live in Arizona. Jeff does have the opportunity to work at the Indiana Transportation Museum in Noblesville (home of the 587) whenever he has time. *(Tina D. Tillman)*

**BOOK RECOMMENDED** - BILL POLLARD of Conway has recommended a paperback book called *The American Telegrapher, A Social History*. It's about the formation of telegraph companies between 1860 and 1900 and has a lot of detail on Western Union, Postal and other minority telegraph operations. No author was given. Some companies are selling it at a good discount.

**DOODLEBUG DAYS** - (Booneville) - L. T. WALKER announced at our March 8th meeting that the Booneville Chamber of Commerce will be having a "Doodlebug Days" festival in July, honoring the Rock Island's famous Doodlebugs that ran through there on Rock Island's Sunbelt Line. They need any photos, information about Rock Island and its passenger trains, especially their Rail Diesel Cars (RDC's). Contact Mr. Walker if you can share any information. His address is 3520 Lakeview Rd, North Little Rock AR 72116-9021.

**BLOW IT DOWN!** - Member RAY TOLER has sent in an observation about the photo on page 2 of the March "Railroader" (the Rock Island football special). The engineer of this train seems to be "blowing" his boiler valve.

**HELP WANTED** - Winnie Baldwin of Bernice, Louisiana called as asked for information on the depot at Bernice. They are trying to have it placed in the National Register of Historic Places. If you know anything about this depot, call her at 318-285-7674.

**SORRY ABOUT THAT** - I put the labels on the last newsletter **BEFORE** I got the updated list of those who paid, so some of you may have gotten an erroneous "Last Issue" notice. However, we will never drop anyone from the list until I personally verify with Dick Byrd about the dues being paid. Never fear. This issue should contain your I.D. cards and a list of paid members.

### ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

**336 ASBESTOS GONE** - Asbestos was removed from the Cotton Belt steam engine #336 in Lewisville the first week of January and the engine awaits movement to the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society's facility in Pine Bluff. The asbestos removal was done at NO EXPENSE to the CBRHS by DODCO of El Dorado. The engine was built by Baldwin in 1909 for the Cotton Belt. In 1947 it was sold to a gravel company in Lewisville and retired in 1963 to a city park in Lewisville, where it has been sitting ever since. Restoration, at least cosmetic, will begin as soon as the engine gets to Pine Bluff. The

International Paper Company Foundation recently gave the CBRHS \$500 to help bring this engine to Pine Bluff in recognition of the outstanding volunteer effort of their co-worker Darrel Cason. (*Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society's "COTTON BELT STAR," February 1992*)

*You can't turn back the clock; but you can wind it up again.*

**CBRHS NEWS** - The museum building itself has been cleaned up and the display area is now level and smooth. Work is underway to fix the large doors, which need to be opened to let the rolling stock in and out. Also, as you've heard before, annual dues are now \$20, which includes membership in the national Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc. Meetings will be held four times a year now, instead of every two months and they are looking for people to present programs.

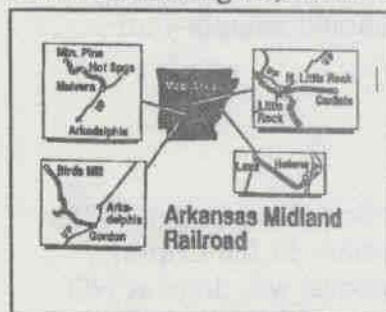
Special thanks to the "Cotton Belt Star" newsletter for mentioning the Arkansas Railroad Club's Show and Sale May 2-3.

**819 FORDYCE TRIP** - (Pine Bluff) - The 819 is scheduled to make its annual trek to Fordyce for the Fordyce-on-the-Cotton Belt festival on April 25, if things go as planned. For more information, and prices, contact the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society at 501-541-1819.

**FORT SMITH RAILROAD LINE** - (Paris) - Discussions are still going on about how or when the 33-mile former Missouri Pacific/Union Pacific line between Fort Smith and Paris, Arkansas will be upgraded to Class II status (25 MPH). As it now stands, the line is run on a "crisis-management" basis, with occasional derailments. Tyson Foods is one of the largest users of the line and currently receives 40 carloads of feed a week. They could use more. Talks were conducted in Omaha between Union Pacific (which owns the line and leases it to the FSRR) and Tyson in late January about what to do with the line. They want to be sure the line will continue to be used if it is upgraded. (*PARIS EXPRESS, January 29 sent in by Doug Harley*)

**WHITE RIVER LINE RUMORS** - Rumors have it that Union Pacific's next abandonment in Arkansas will be the famous Missouri Pacific White River Line through Northwest Arkansas from Diaz (near Newport) northwestward into Missouri through Branson. It is unknown whether the UP will offer the line to a short-line railroad. Only local traffic runs on the line at this time, which is in good shape but no maintenance is being done.

**ARKANSAS MIDLAND STARTS** - (Jones Mill) - On February 23, Pinsly Railroad Company began operations of the Arkansas Midland Railroad in Arkansas. These four former Union Pacific lines, totaling 131 miles, run from Little Rock to Carlisle (Rock Island), the Helena branch (Missouri Pacific), and the Hot Springs and Norman branches. They will operate two days a week to Carlisle, five days a week on the Helena branch and at least six days a week on the Hot Springs and Norman branches. Pinsly's headquarters will be in Jones Mill, formerly served by the Rock Island. Currently, the lines are hauling 25,000 carloads a year.



Arkansas Midland's general manager is former UP employee Richard Chance. The short-line will employ about 30 people in the state. The road has nine GP-9s, painted black, red and yellow with one engine leased from UP. (*ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, March 8, 1992 by Randy Tardy and RAILS, February 7, 1992*)

**NEW TIES** - Union Pacific was installing 51,500 new ties along with 51,000 tons of new ballast along its line between North Little Rock and Morrilton in March and April. The

project costs \$4.8 million. (This will be the line of our 3985 excursion in September) (*ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, February 21*)



**WYNNE DEPOT** - (Wynne) - Although a local group was formed months ago to save the old Missouri Pacific (now UP) depot in Wynne, apparently Union Pacific does not believe the Wynne Depot Association is capable of taking the responsibility of owning and restoring this station. UP is willing to give Wynne the depot but only if the city can restore it and keep it safe. Thus, UP sent a letter to this association, giving them until February 28 to prove they could caretake the depot. If they cannot, UP would recommend the site be cleared (i.e., the depot torn down). The Depot Association has asked Cross County for help. Senator Bumpers has been contacted to help delay the depot's demolition. (*Wynne, Arkansas SHOPPER'S NEWS, February 19 sent in by John Hale*)

### GENERAL RAIL NEWS

**CENTRAL STATION RENOVATION** - (Memphis) - A meeting was held on March 2 between FRA Administrator Gil Carmichael and new Memphis mayor W. W. Herenton to discuss renovating the 79-year old Central Station in Memphis (now used by Amtrak's "City of New Orleans" daily). It will take \$17 million to renovate. Plans are to turn it into a transportation hub serving Amtrak, Greyhound, MATA buses, new trolleys, airline ticket counters. The station is now in dilapidated condition. (*Memphis COMMERCIAL APPEAL, March 2, 1992 by Jerry Markon sent in by ARC member Don Weis*)

From LEON W. ENDERLIN of Manchester, CT comes the following: *A railroad station with one of the world's longest names was on the Worcester & Webster line (an electric line in Massachusetts). The station was known as LAKE*

**CHARGOGGAGOGGMANCHAUGGOGGAGOGGCHAUBUNAGUNGAMAUG.** *It was an Indian name, translated to mean "You fish on your side of the lake, and I will fish on mine."*

**OLD PIG DROPPINGS** - (Fort Worth, Texas) - The Tarantula Railroad's tourist line, the Fort Worth & Western Railroad, began operations January 18. But the tourist train's access to the Fort Worth Stockyards was delayed after construction workers discovered a mother lode of pig manure just south of the terminal. The pig poop apparently was used to fill a gully around 1911.

"You can't lay track across it, because it's like Jell-O. It shakes and quakes," FWW president Ed McLaughlin told the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. The **PIG POOP PIT** is 350 feet long, 45 feet wide and 25 feet deep, or about 19,000 pickups full. "The train comes around a curve and the tracks end in the abyss," he said.

Other than that, the steam tourist train carried about 1,000 passengers a day since it started.

The trains operate seven days a week, 3 or 4 times a day. They use SP ten-wheeler #2248 and two coaches. For more information, contact the Tarantula at 2318 8th Avenue, Fort Worth TX or call 817-763-8394. (*THE MIXED TRAIN and RAILS, February 7*)

**RAILS TO TRAILS** - The March 1992 *SOUTHERN LIVING* Magazine had a nice article on converting old abandoned railroad right-of-ways into trails for public use. As was reported in earlier newsletters, the old Missouri Pacific line in eastern Arkansas south of Helena is a candidate for this conversion. They are like long state parks. (Wouldn't it have been nice to have one along the old Rock Island west of Booneville?) If you would like more information on the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, write to them at 1400 16th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington DC 20036 or call 202-797-5400. They offer a magazine that lists all the trails already in operation or under construction, such as the 60-mile trail between Columbus and McDonough, Georgia which used to carry Franklin Roosevelt to his Little White House in Warm Springs, Georgia.

**1992 NATIONAL CONVENTION** - (San Jose, California) - Steam locomotives SP 4449, SP 2472 and UP 3985 are expected to be used at the national convention in San Jose this summer.

**HIGH-SPEED TRAIN ON TARGET** - (Austin, Texas) - A contract was approved on January 22 that set ground rules for building a high-speed train system in Texas between Houston and Dallas. If \$30 million can be raised this year, the project will start building the system by May 27, 1997, with part operational by the end of 1998. However, some farmers and small towns along the route don't want the train. They don't see any benefits for them for the trains coming through their land, much of it prime farmland.

(*HOUSTON POST*, December 22, 1991 sent in by Jim Johnson and Fort Worth *STAR-TELEGRAM*, January 23, sent in by Jerry Nunn)

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION** - In a survey taken the second quarter of 1991, customers rated trucks highest with a about an 80 percent favorable rating. Among railroads, Union Pacific rated highest among western railroads with 70 percent, BN 60 percent, ATSF with 58 percent and SP with about 40 percent. (*Southern Pacific BULLETIN*, February 1992)

**UP HELPS GM** - (Arlington, Texas) - When General Motors stated it would close several car manufacturing plants in December, many thought the Arlington, Texas plant would be one to go. However, with about \$25 million a year at stake, Union Pacific made a big effort to keep the Arlington plant open. UP ships autos from this plant. The effort paid off, and the Arlington plant was chosen over the Willow Run plant in Michigan to remain open. UP ships 15,000 carloads of auto parts and finished cars from the Arlington Plant. (*DALLAS MORNING NEWS*, March 1, sent in by Jerry Nunn)

**GRADE CROSSING FUNDS** - The new Federal Highway bill signed last December includes \$160 million annually to help reduce grade crossing accidents and eventually do away with crossings along high-speed rail corridors. The legislation also authorizes states and local governments to install stop or yield signs at all unprotected crossings that have at least two trains a day. (*Operation Lifesaver REPORT*, February 1992 sent in by Wayne Porter, Manager, Safety & Rules, Burlington Northern Railroad)

**LAST MANUALLY PROTECTED CROSSING CLOSED** - (St. Louis) - January 15, 1992 was the last day of operation for the flagman-protected crossing at Theresa Avenue in St. Louis. For years the gates have been operated manually. Jesse Hollins was operator the past 24 years, working for the Frisco and Burlington Northern. Theresa Avenue was the last manually protected crossing in Missouri and the last on the BN system. (*GATEWAY RAILLETTER*, St. Louis Chapter NRHS, March 1992)

**END-OF-TRAIN DEVICES** - The United Transportation Union currently is pushing for legislation that would require a two-way end-of-train device on U.S. trains instead of the current one-way device. The two-way device would allow the train to be placed in emergency from the rear of the train by the engineer of the lead engine. Such devices have been used successfully in Canada. An amendment to Senate bill S.1571 would do just that. (*UTU NEWS*, February 1992 via L. T. Walker)

**KCS BUYING LINES?** - Kansas City Southern may buy additional short lines in Texas, according to a report in the *KANSAS CITY STAR* as relayed by *RAILS*. KCS President George W. Edwards also announced a major restructuring of the railroad's management. Meanwhile, nine KCS GP30s have been moved from Pittsburg, Kansas to Coffeyville, Kansas for eventual use on the Southeast Kansas Railroad.

**RARE MILEAGE TRIP** - (Gary, Indiana) - Rail Challenge Ltd, Box 8222-TW, Bartlett, IL 60103-8222 will be offering a rare-mileage tour of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway between Waukegan, Illinois and Gary, Indiana on September 12. This would be the first public passenger trains on this line since 1907, making this a moldy, rare-mileage trip. (*RAILS*, February 28)

**HISTORIC TOWER CLOSES** - (Alexandria Junction, Maryland) - For almost a century, the B&O's JD Tower at Alexandria Junction, Maryland has been active in controlling the

busy lines through this junction. On February 21, 1992, its signal control was suspended and operations taken over from a control center in Jacksonville, Florida. Another end of a railroading era. (*THE BULL SHEET, March 1*)

**INDIA STEAM OUT** - With much of Europe and the East "getting modern fever," it was announced in February that the Indian Railway minister wants all of the current 2,815 steam engines running in India to be phased out by the year 2,000. They only run on branch lines today. (*PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, February 29 via Elizabeth Gaines*)

### AMTRAK NEWS

Amtrak



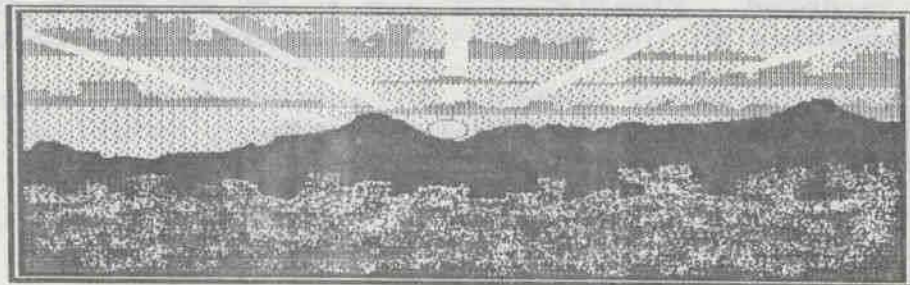
**SUPPORT GROWING** - Congressional support for Amtrak appears to be growing, now that it has been so popular lately. As we all know (who've been reading the *Railroader*), Amtrak's goal is to become self-sufficient by the year 2000 (it now covers 80% of its costs compared with only 46% only a few years ago). In late February, Amtrak President Graham Claytor proposed an ambitious 15-year, \$18 billion capital improvement plan. Among other things, it would replace Amtrak's aging equipment and start new routes, such as New Orleans-Miami, Chicago-Florida and Seattle-Vancouver. (*Thanks to Don Weis for this news article*)

**NEW TRAINS IN OCTOBER** - According to the Heart of Dixie newsletter "Cinders From The Smokestack," Amtrak is tentatively scheduled to begin service between New Orleans and Jacksonville and between Birmingham and Huntsville, Alabama in October of 1992 if state funding and track work come together. A sample schedule has the new Gulf coast train leaving New Orleans on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 9:00 PM, arriving in Jacksonville about noon the next day.

**LITTLE ROCK'S STATION** - Apparently, Little Rock will be getting a new Amtrak station by June 1. According to member Bobby Franklin, plans are to house Amtrak downstairs in the old Track's Inn Restaurant. Work on the old Union Station is progressing very well under owner John Bailey. He has put much effort into improving the station and Amtrak has signed a long-term lease with Bailey for the new track-level ticket counter and waiting room. Mr. Bailey also plans to have a children's museum in the station. (*Part of information from the ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, March 9, by Randy Tardy*)

**FURLOUGH POSSIBLE** - Since Amtrak's revenues for October-December 1991 fell \$11 million below budget and ridership fell 6.1% from last year, Amtrak plans to furlough about 1,000 of its 1,250 workers at its Beech Grove, Indiana heavy maintenance plant for 3 months, starting in July. Amtrak will also freeze management salaries, cut jobs through attrition and "adjust" certain train consists, routes and days of operation. (I remember the last time that days of operation was affected...it cut back the "Eagle" to three times a week). Already, there is talk in Congress about restoring the needed money to keep the furloughs from happening. (*Philadelphia Chapter's CINDERS, March 1992*)

**NEWS UPDATED** through March 15th, mailed at the end of the month. Deadline for the May "Railroader" will be APRIL 12TH, at our meeting.



(Below is a letter received by Barton Jennings, printed as received):

## OVER THE DERAIL

A disorganized collection of thoughts, happenings, and ideas. Published by accident by the unofficial Knoxville Chapter of the Arkansas Railroad Club, NRHS

Dateline Knoxville, Tennessee

February 14, 1992

Celebration continues over the defeat of the Hogs in basketball, the mess that Governor Clinton has gotten himself into, and the number of trains that run in the neighborhood! Yes, CSX's yellow and grey and blue and vermillion and another color blue and black and some more shades of grey and even other colors keep whistling their way through the neighborhood. Even occasionally when this reporter isn't reporting. Train volume is heavy and consistent. Locals are based here in town and power is always around. Tunnels are everywhere north of town starting just five miles from here. And the bridges are great. I can hardly wait for some sun to photograph in. I've used all of the 200 speed film in town. Oh yes, Norfolk Southern puts on a good show in town with two yards, four mainlines, and plenty of trains. Something for everyone, even a few Alco's for Pete. Sorry Fred, no trolleys.

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And now the news.....Railgrinder in town...film at the camera store. Amtrak hospital train came through town the first day of railfanning. Damaged equipment from Silver Meteor derailment at Palatka, Florida. So that's what an Amtrak locomotive looks like without its sides on! By the way, Amtrak doesn't run through here so passenger trains are rare here....Two private business cars are based here. Nice!..Business car "Seminole", until recently at Ruston, Louisiana, now owned by group here in town. It's on its way...Nope, we haven't eaten at the L&N Restaurant in the old L&N station. I have toured the restored Southern station. Haven't visited Hooters either....Six hobby shops in this town and only one carries "O" Scale. What is this world coming to?...For you Passenger Train Journal fans, one of my professors here at Univ. of Tennessee used to be a columnist for PTJ. Look up the name Patton during the Amtrak origination period. We will see who has a collection that old...Relco delivered an Alco this week to Florida Steel here in town. Coming yet Pete?...TVA over near Harriman has lots of locomotives. All it takes is signing in at the gate to get in. And the whole shop and yard area is outside of the gate along the road. Nice action all day...Sorry, Cass Railfan Weekend conflicts with the ARC Show & Sale. Guess which tickets I've already ordered...Finally, PTJ has a lot of stuff on the CRIP across Arkansas in the February issue. Get one while you can!

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New address and phone number. Please don't call late at night, remember the time change. 1600 Capitol Lane, Knoxville, TN 37931. Phone is (615) 531-8040. Nice house, huge basement. Train room with a big attic! Write again soon...Bart and Sarah...

*Bart*

## THE SILK TRAINS

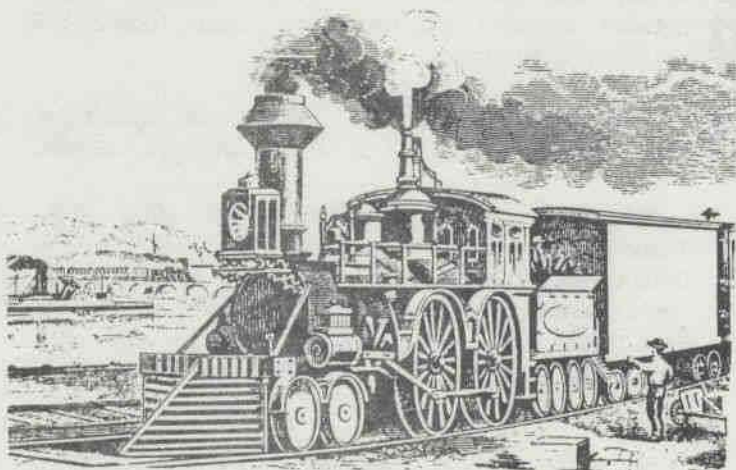
by: Al McCready, via "THE TRAINMASTER" (Pacific NW Chapter NRHS, Feb. 1986)

The end of World War I startled America with the phenomena of the Roaring Twenties: Prohibition, speakeasies, saxophones, raccoon coats, flappers and short skirts.



With the exposure of the female leg to public gaze there came an upsurge in the sale of silk stockings and an accompanying escalation of production and profits for the silk weaving industry centered in New Jersey. This in turn drew attention to a short-lived and now nearly forgotten part of U.S. railroad history: The era of the silk train.

For generations steamers from the Orient had been unloading bales of raw silk at West Coast ports, and with shippers ready to pay \$4 a hundred pounds for the transcontinental trip, the railroads were happy to couple cars loaded with silk onto passenger trains.



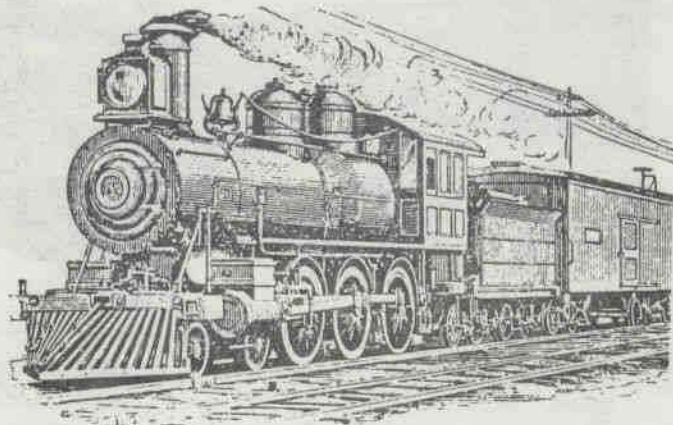
By 1909 the volume had increased to the point that entire trainloads of silk were justified. A Harper's Weekly writer said the silk cars were "dull painted and windowless" but that dispatchers

treated them as "the emperor of trains."

Now in the 1920s the mills were clamoring for more raw silk and bidding up the price. Fast passenger liners filled their holds with bales of silk weighing 135 pounds and worth \$1,000 each. They raced their cargoes to Vancouver, B. C., Seattle, Portland and San Francisco where the major transcontinental railroads were competing briskly for the overland haul.



There were many reasons for the emphasis on speed. The silk market was volatile, and the broker who could deliver a shipment days or even hours ahead of his competitors could get a better price. Also he was operating on borrowed money and the interest cost on a \$5,000,000 trainload could be \$1,000 a day. No wonder he was willing to pay up to \$9 per hundred pounds in express charges.



Money was the incentive for the railroads also. Those that chalked up the fastest coast-to-coast runs attracted the most tonnage. The high cost of insurance and security was another factor. Carriers paid a 6 percent premium on raw silk, at an hourly rate. The multi-million dollar trainloads were a temptation for highjackers. Armed guards were needed on the trains, and squads of special police patrolled the tracks at every stop.

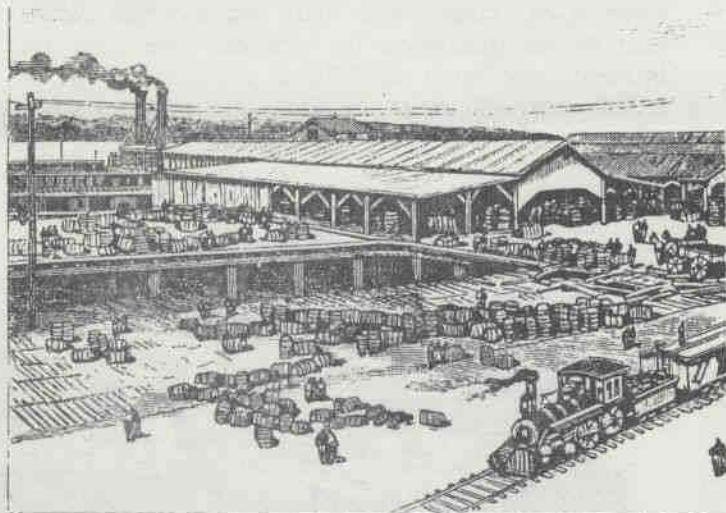
For railroaders a silk train was an exciting

event. At the Union Pacific's Albina Yards in Portland, riptrack workers normally responsible for the inspection and repair of transient freight cars found themselves working instead on the preparation of high speed passenger equipment for the silk runs.

A typical silk train was made up of enough baggage cars to handle the incoming shipment, plus one coach for the train crew and guards. The standard carload was about 30,000 pounds, or 270 bales.

Before the train was made up each car was meticulously inspected. Worn brass wheel bearings were replaced. Couplers, brakes, air cylinders, valves, pipes, and hoses were checked. There could be no dangling brake linkages or hot boxes to cause derailments or delay. The reputation of the railroad was at stake, and woe to the foreman found to be guilty should such an unthinkable mishap occur.

When the ship arrived at the dock, the train already was waiting on an adjoining track, a fast passenger engine puffing impatiently at the head end. Out through the ship's hatches would come the precious cargo in slings. Longshoremen wheeled the bales past the scrutiny of U.S. Customs agents to the cars. When all the cars were loaded and the doors sealed, the conductor waved the highball and the train slid out of the yards on its eastbound run, green lights all the way.



"There never was a signal set against a silk train," *Trains Magazine* editor Freeman Hubbard wrote in an April, 1965 article. Crack passenger trains normally took to sidings to let the silk express roar by. The only stops were to change engines and crews, and this routinely was done in a couple of minutes.

Hubbard tells how Prince George, second son of King George V of Great Britain, learned about the special status of silk trains.

The prince had arrived at Vancouver, B.C. after a visit to Hong-Kong in mid-December, 1919. A special

train was waiting to speed him to Montreal where a trans-Atlantic liner would take him to England to spend Christmas with the Royal Family at Windsor Castle. But despite its top priority, only a few hours out of Vancouver the Royal Passenger Extra was parked on a siding in the frozen wilderness of the Canadian Rockies.



"Why are we stopping here?", the prince asked the gold-braided Canadian Pacific conductor. His Highness was told a silk train was overtaking them and they had gone into the siding to let it pass.

"In this country," said the conductor, "silk has rights over everything."

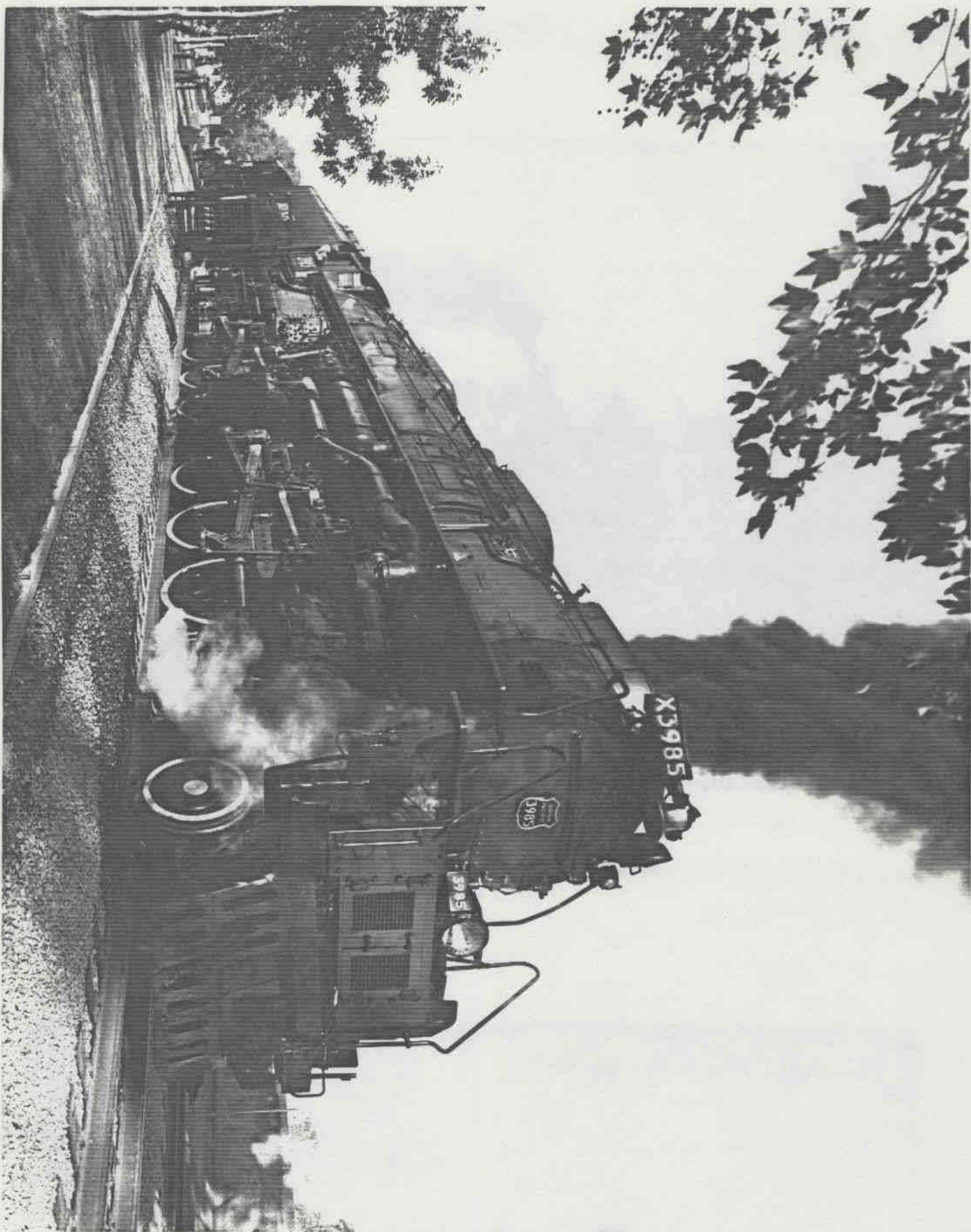
Silk trains set many speed records. In 1929 a Union Pacific silk train ran the 2,259 miles from San Francisco to Chicago in 49 hours, averaging better than 46 miles per hour including stops. Between Cheyenne and Omaha the train logged 102 miles in 92 minutes.

A Northern Pacific silk special was almost as fast between Seattle and St. Paul, averaging 45 MPH.

Silk train traffic declined sharply after 1929. There was an ample supply of raw silk from the Orient, and shippers found it cheaper to send it by the all-water route through the Panama Canal to the East Coast. By 1931, the rail volume was only 230,000 bales, down from more than 500,000 bales in 1929.

The railroads offered drastic rate cuts, but it was too late. All-water shipments continued to grow; by 1935 they topped 90 percent of the total traffic and the last coast-to-coast silk trains in passenger service rolled overland in that year.

- END -

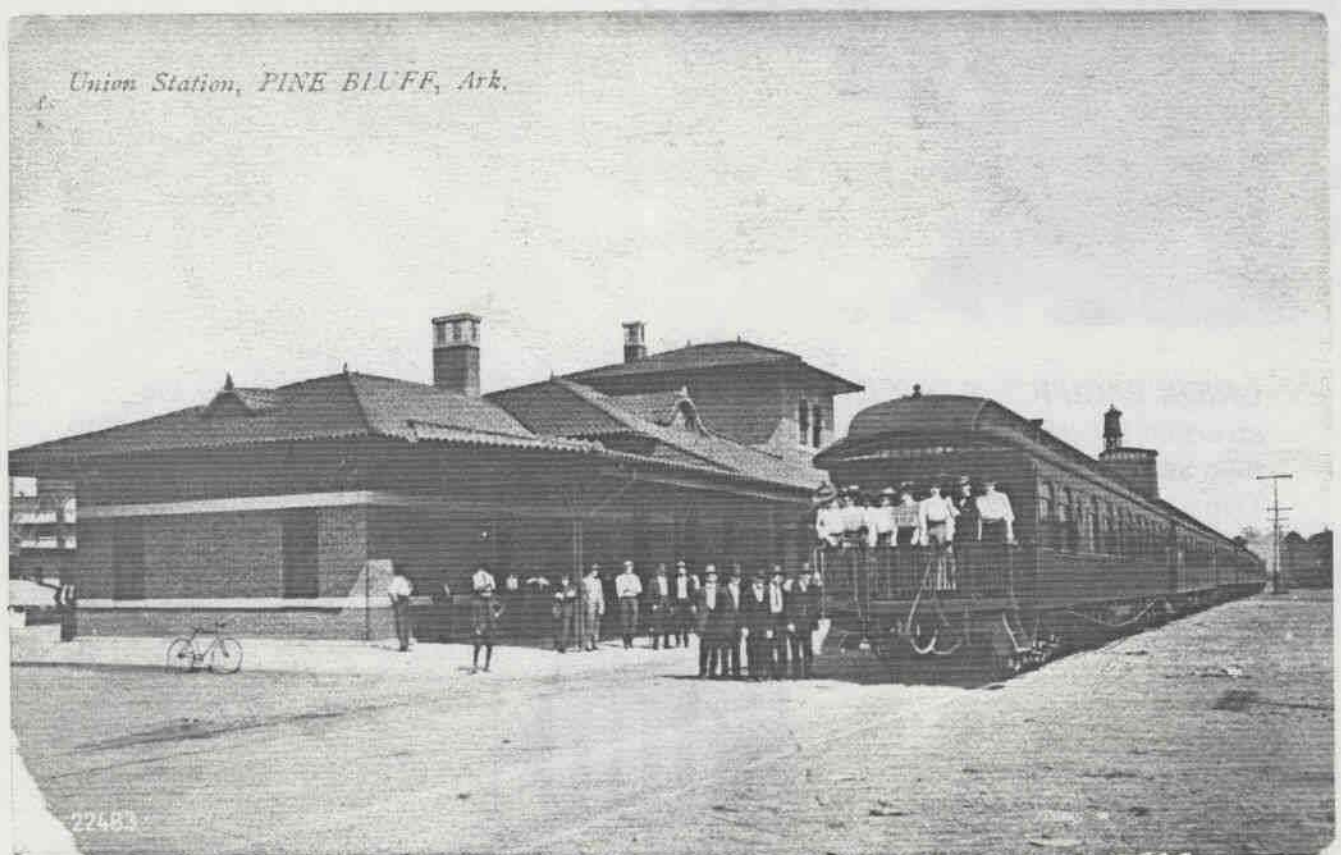


*UNION PACIFIC'S #3985, the 4-6-6-4 Challenger type engine which will power the excursion between Little Rock and Van Buren around September 1. (Union Pacific photo, date and time unknown - gotten several years ago from UP's Public Relation's Department.)*





This postcard was dated November 9, 1910 and shows a train coming through Corning, Arkansas (pre-Missouri Pacific days). (Polly Hamilton collection)



Union Station in Pine Bluff, postmarked in November 1908. It looks the same today. This is where we'll be meeting on April 12 at 2 PM. (Polly Hamilton collection)





### CHARLEY MURPHY AND HIS BICYCLE

by: Gene Hull

Out on Long Island, New York, in 1899, there was a fellow named Charles M. Murphy, and he was crazy about bicycles. He was a slim, blond young man, 29 years old. He was destined to hold seven world records, seventeen American records, and twenty-nine New York State records - all in bicycling.

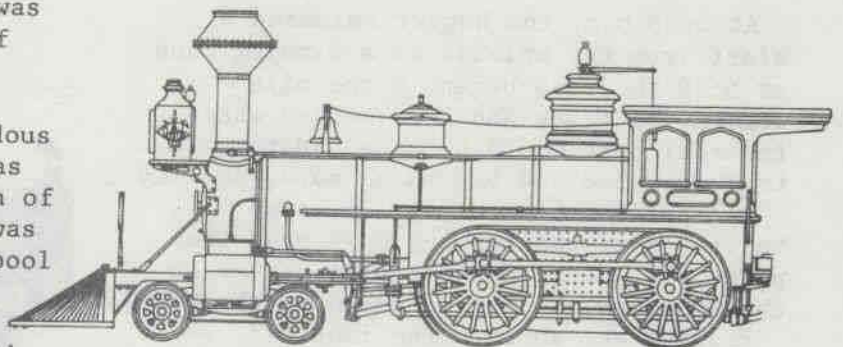
In June 1899, Charley set a record on his bicycle which has never been equalled. For several months he had wanted to test his speed against a fast PASSENGER TRAIN! One railroad after another turned him down. He finally went to the Long Island Railroad, where he got a little help from Special Agent Hal B. Fullerton, who was also a member of the famous League of American Wheelmen.

What he proposed would be a tremendous publicity bonanza for the railroad, as well as for Charley Murphy. A section of the main line was chosen because it was straight as an arrow and level as a pool table.

Beginning a mile west of the Maywood station and extending two and three-

eighths miles to Babylon, a wooden runway was laid between the rails. Planks ten inches wide were planed mirror smooth, and were laid five planks wide, forming a runway fifty inches wide. Murphy and the Long Island officials used one of the early principles of streamlining. A passenger coach was selected for the equipment, and the side and roof were extended about five feet on the rear of the coach to create an open hood to decrease wind resistance.

June 30 was the day selected for the event. Locomotive No. 74, a 4-4-0, was



placed in charge of engineer Samuel E. Booth. Ed Howell was in charge of the scoop shovel, and conductor J. Ousey was in charge of everything. Charley Murphy was ready to see how fast he could pedal his bicycle.



Charley maneuvered his bicycle inside the protective hood. He wore a thin, long-sleeved jersey shirt and blue woolen tights. A long strip of white pine was fastened vertically in the center of the rear platform of the coach. This was a target for Charley to follow closely with the front wheel of his bike. On the platform were Special Agent Hal Fullerton; J. H. Cummings, superintendent of bridges; P. D. Ford, chief engineer; and two newspapermen. Inside the coach were about 50 reporters and representatives of athletic organizations, as well as Charley's family doctor and a bicycle dealer who was financing the stunt.

Everything and everybody was ready!

At 5:00 p.m. the hogger released a blast from the whistle as a warning, and at 5:10 the race began. A one-mile segment of track had been marked where the real test would be made. Just as the train reached the beginning mark, Charley's legs were a blur of motion, some ballast dust was curling up around the protective hood, and the pine marker on the platform had pulled ahead of the bike's front wheel about three feet. If Charley got caught in the blast of wind outside the hood the race was over.

With a strenuous effort he got inside the vacuum of the hood. The front wheel of the bike bumped against the white pine marker. Charley was actually pedalling faster than the train was moving. The speed was increased.

An American flag marked the end of the test mile. When the engine passed the flag the hogger closed the throttle. The train slowed too quickly and the front wheel of the bike hit the coach platform. Charley was thrown forward. Men on the platform leaned far out and grabbed Charley and the bike. A catastrophe was avoided. Charley was the only man who ever boarded a passenger train running a mile a minute. The measured mile was run in 57.8 seconds, or 60.23 miles per hour!

For the rest of his life, Charley was known as "Mile-A-Minute" Murphy.

- END -

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An Italian crew was excavating for a large sewer and had reached a low, mucky place of soft mud.

Suddenly one of the men shouted in desperation.

"C'mear queek! Bringa da shov! Bringa da peek! Peitro's stuck in da mud up to da knees!"

"Tell him to wade out," shouted the foreman.

"He canna no wade - he wrong end up!"

-- submitted by author --



# This didn't have to happen...

There was an empty berth on the train that night. With clean sheets...soft blankets...and the comforts a fighting man deserves.

But he couldn't have it.

Because someone who had reserved that berth didn't cancel the reservation when his plans changed.

Not much of a way to treat a hero is it?

\* \* \*

When you reserve a berth or a room on a train...and suddenly find that you're not going...PLEASE notify us by telephone at once.

**THE New Haven R.R.**

Serving New York, and the Great Industrial States  
of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and  
Connecticut, in War and Peace



*(Above sent in by Leon Enderlin)*

Burlington Northern Inc. --- Problem Solving Aptitude Test

OBJECT:

1. Put the piggyback where the boxcar is now.
2. Put the boxcar where the piggyback is now.
3. Put the engine back where it is now.

RULES:

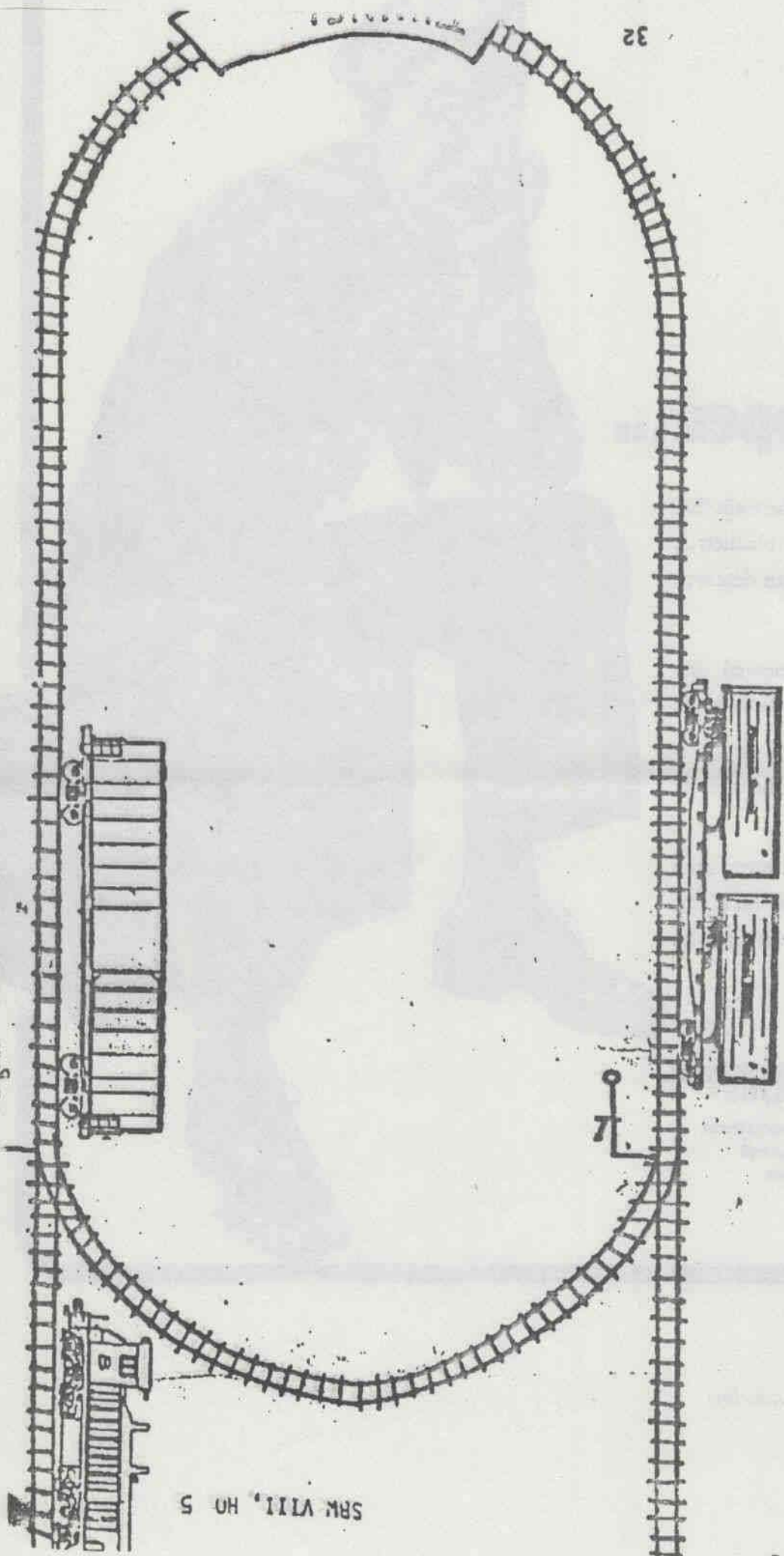
1. Only the engine can go through the tunnel.
2. No running switches - the cars must be stopped to uncouple.
3. Any part of the track is large enough for all 3 cars.

HINT: (Use 3 different coins and move around. Don't cheat.)

Time Limits:

- Superintendents - 20 minutes
- Asst. Supt. - 35 minutes  
(with secretarial help)
- Trainmasters - 5 minutes
- Podmasters - will probably re-construct to make easier.
- Dispatchers - Forget it.
- Outsiders - 1 min 30 sec.

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SBN VII1, HQ 5

The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization that meets on the second Sunday of the month. This month we will meet on Sunday, APRIL 12 at PINE BLUFF in the old Union Station (now the Jefferson County/Pine Bluff Historical Museum). We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Programs are presented.

The ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the monthly publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club and is generally mailed in time to be received before the monthly meetings. In order to receive this publication, you must be a member of the Club. Current dues are \$15/year for Arkansas residents and also \$15/year for out-of-state. The RAILROADER is mailed to all members automatically. Family memberships are \$20, but only one newsletter sent.

If you would like to join, send your check made out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" to: ATTN:Treasurer, ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, P.O. Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our Club by paying \$14/year more.

Editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein. Everything having to do with the ARKANSAS RAILROADER should be sent to the address below, ATTN:Editor. Please let me know if your address changes, as NEWSLETTERS CANNOT BE FORWARDED and back issues are rare.

Arkansas Railroad Club mail should also be sent to the address below.



ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB  
P. O. BOX 9151  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

Newsletter phone: (501)-758-1340  
(Leave message on recorder if I'm not there)

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JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

Dues are \$15/year per individual or \$20/year for family membership (only one newsletter will be sent to a family unless each member pays the individual \$15 fee). Dues are always due JANUARY 1ST of each year and apply to the calendar year. You may also join the National Historical Railway Society through our club by paying \$14/year more (total payment for both club membership and NRHS membership would be \$29 per year).

Membership entitles you to receive the ARKANSAS RAILROADER for the term of your membership. It is published monthly.

RENEWAL       NEW MEMBER       CHANGE OF ADDRESS

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Make your checks out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" and mail to:

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB - Treasurer  
PO BOX 9151  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

**WELCOME ABOARD!!!**

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ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB  
PO BOX 9151  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

UPCOMING CLUB & AREA RAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

<p><u>APRIL 4</u> - Exploring the M&amp;NA from the Kensett area northward. Leave NLR 6 AM.</p>	<p><u>MAY 9</u> - Fayetteville Show &amp; Sale.</p>
<p><u>APRIL 11</u> - Springfield, Missouri NMRA club sponsored Show &amp; Sale.</p>	<p><u>NO REGULAR MEETING IN MAY.</u> Our Show &amp; Sale May 2-3 will take the place of our monthly meeting. <b><u>BE THERE AND HELP!</u></b></p>
<p><u>APRIL 12</u> - Club meets at Pine Bluff for regular meeting instead of North Little Rock. Starts at 2 PM.</p>	<p><u>JUNE 14</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank, North Little Rock.</p>
<p><u>APRIL 25</u> - Memphis Show &amp; Sale NMRA sponsored, Lutheran School.</p>	<p><u>JULY 12</u> - Regular Club meeting at Twin City Bank, 2 PM.</p>
<p><u>MAY 2-3</u> - Our club's annual Show &amp; Sale at Hall of Industry, Fairgrounds, Little Rock. <b><u>HELP NEEDED.</u></b></p>	<p><u>AUGUST 9</u> - Regular Club meeting at Twin City Bank, 2 PM.</p>

See inside for more detailed information on some of these activities. You may also call Matt Ritchie for more information (834-4449). Please keep me informed on what is going on rail-wise in and around Arkansas so I can put it in the table. Please be aware that some of these dates could change. Use as reference only. Thanks.

