



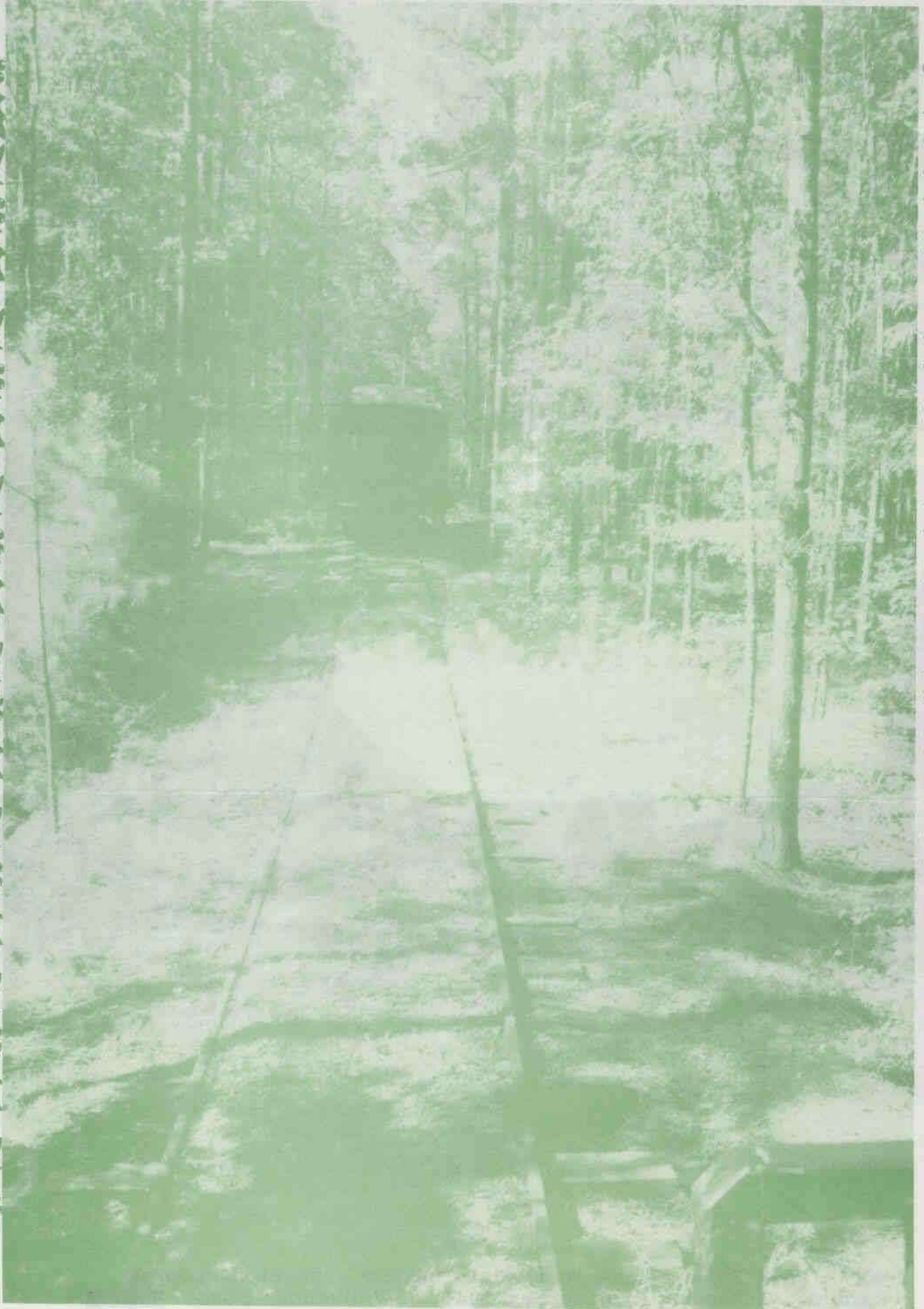
ARKANSAS RAILROADER



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 1992



THROUGH THE WOODS of Southwest Arkansas in the Fall of 1990 aboard a *Reader Railroad* special - Hoping your trips this Christmas season are as enjoyable.



TOP - Rock Island Passenger #631, making a station stop at Fordyce, Arkansas in December 1941. (*P.B. Wooldridge photo*). **BOTTOM** - Rock Island's Choctaw Station in Little Rock, February 4, 1985, then abandoned, but now a Spaghetti Warehouse Restaurant, where our club will have its Christmas party December 12 at 4 PM.

WHENCE CAME THE COMBINE IN THE JESSE JAMES MOVIE

by

William Church

A story in the Spring 1989 issue of "REPORT", the official publication of the Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum Association, by William Schneider on information supplied by Arkansas Railroad Club member Jim Wakefield about the Association's ex D & R coaches that were used in the "Jesse James" movie made me recall a statement made by my father over fifty years ago about another car in the same consist while we were viewing that 1938 movie..

Schneider wrote in the "REPORT" about the two ex D&R coaches owned by the PSRMA:

"Quote: Schneider. "it began 13 years of tales about these "movie stars" that the National Equirer would be proud of and most were untrue!"1.

This story of the origin of the combine in that consist will up the ante of such tales about that now famous train.

My story about the combine used in the movie "Jesse James" , is from a statement made to me by my father, Robert Wendell Church, then a Cotton Belt Railroad Conductor , while we were viewing that movie.

He said, and I quote him: "that coach", pointing to the combine , "was my Dad's (William Henry Church) caboose on a Construction Train on the Houck Lines when we were living in Kennett, Missouri. I rode quite often with him in that coach the summer before we moved to Chaffee, Missouri. Dad would let me make out his Wheel Report and I wrote that number many a time." Evidently there must have been a number showing on the combine that help him recognize it as his Dad's caboose on the Houck Lines.

The Houck Lines mentioned by my father, Robert Wendell Church, were a Rail System of short railroads in Southeast Missouri, that had been constructed by Louis Houck, who later sold his Railroad Empire to the St. Louis San Francisco Railroad, and it became a part of the Frisco's "River Division", now a part of the Burlington Northern.

Like many other small railroads constructed in that day and time, Mr. Houck's railroads were a flimsy affair, usually laid on top of the ground with little or no grading or ballast, and required constant mainteance. As the Houck Lines Treasury was often lacking cash to make improvements and to meet pay rolls, the Houck Lines were often "A Day Late and A Dollar Short" and resorted to a practice resulting in bizzare operations to keep up with the Big Boys in the railroad business.

But money was not the only problem that Mr. Houck had to contend with. The mighty Gould System, which had numerous interchange points with his Railroads, was a constant source of trouble.

Mr Houck's first brush with the Gould System came when Jay Gould sued Mr. Houck for failure to pay for some re-lay rail that he had ordered to build his Cape Girardeau and Southwestern Railroad. The former owner of the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern RR had sold to Mr. Houck sufficient rail to build his railroad from Delta, Missouri, a station on the Iron Mountain's Belmont Branch, to Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Before all of the rail had been delivered, Jay Gould, the famous Railroad Builder from the East, who had much success in

creating a vast Railroad Empire, bought the Iron Mountain Railroad, and much changed for Mr. Houck.

Jay Gould was not satisfied with the operating profile of his Iron Mountain Railroad from St. Louis to Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and he sought to by-pass the mountains on that district.

The Iron Mountain owner found a level route from Poplar Bluff to St. Louis by using the Barney Survey of 1852 from Poplar Bluff to the Mingo Swamps. Then by following the surveys for the proposed Cape Girardeau and State Line Railroad from the Mingo Swamp to Cape Girardeau it would put his proposed railroad to the Mississippi River Valley on a water level grade. By building a railroad from Cape Girardeau up the Mississippi River Valley to his Main Line at Horine, Mo., which was some thirty miles south of St. Louis, he would by-pass the troublesome Mountain Grades.

The only thing that stood in Mr. Gould's way to build such a rail line was Mr. Houck, the owner of the Cape Girardeau and Southwestern Railroad. Mr. Houck had bought the Charter of the defunct Cape Girardeau and State Line Railroad from a group of Cape Girardeau, Mo. business men. The Cape Girardeau and State Line that had been Chartered to build a railroad from Cape Girardeau to the MO-ARK State Line south of Poplar Bluff, Mo. Mr. Houck renamed his railroad the Cape Girardeau and Southwestern and made the destination Hunter, Mo. which was at the East end of Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad's "Current River Branch".

This Charter carried with it a gift of land from the City of Cape Girardeau. This land was the only feasible property in the City on which a Railroad Terminal could be built. The gift of the property was continuous that if the railroad did not operate a train into Cape Girardeau from the Iron Mountain at Delta, Mo. by a 1st January deadline, it would lose it's Charter and the gift of property for the terminal site.

If Jay Gould ever tried to buy Mr. Houck's rights to the Cape Girardeau and Southwestern Railroad, it is not a matter of record. Acting in true Jay Gould fashion he put the squeeze on Houck by delaying the delivery of the rail needed to complete his railroad. This action by Gould brought the construction of the Cape Girardeau and Southwestern Railroad to a halt.

Jay Gould thinking that he had the Cape Girardeau Southwestern and the valuable terminal property in his corporate folds, and a way to go around the mountains into St. Louis, he sat back and waited for Mr. Houck's little railroad to fall into his hands.

When Louis Houck saw that Jay Gould held all of the cards, he was determined to beat him at any price. By taking up the track behind his Construction Train and laying it ahead of the engine, he entered Cape Girardeau by the deadline date and snatched his railroad out of the clutches of the mighty Jay Gould.

But the battle had only started. Houck refused to pay for the rail that had been delivered by the Iron Mountain and Gould sued him for the price of the rail. Houck, a Lawyer, defended his actions on Breach of Contract, using Gould's failure to deliver the rail ordered as his defense. The Court ruled in Louis Houck's favor and the feud started between Gould's Iron Mountain and the Houck Lines which lasted way up into the Twentieth Century.

Skirmish after skirmish followed the Gould vs Houck trial, Houck usually coming out on top. One such skirmish with the Gould System came over Houck's Cape Girardeau and Gulf Railroad expansion from Morley, Mo. to Leachville, Arkansas when trying to cross the Iron Mountain's Belmont Branch at Morley. The Gould Lines, smarting from the defeat over the rail case, decided to block the Houck Line crossing the Belmont Main at Morley. The Iron Mountain constructed a passing track at the exact location where Mr. Houck's Cape Girardeau and Gulf was to cross the Belmont Main, then filled the passing

track with bad order cars. This prevented the the Houck Lines from putting a Crossing Diamond at that location.

But Mr. Houck had a few tricks up his sleeve that the Gould Line did not know about. He approached the city council of Morley, and offered to dedicated his right of way through the town as a public street. The City Council accepted the proposal. Mr. Houck then promptly arrested the local Iron Mountain representative for blocking a public crossing more than the five minutes allowed by State Law. The Gould Lines immediately removed the cars from the path of the Cape Girardeau and Gulf Railroad and Mr. Houck built across the Belmont Line without any further trouble from the Iron Mountain at Morley.

Legend has it, that about the time that my Grandfather took his Construction Train south in the summer or fall of 1904 from Morley, Missouri to the Great Swamps through which the Cape Girardeau and Gulf had been built several years before, many of the original bridges on the initial construction needed replacing. As usual Mr. Houck was short of money and equipment to do the job. The Iron Mountain was the only railroad that he could call upon to borrow or rent the equipment necessary to do the job. But past relations between the two railroads made it impossible for Mr. Houck to call upon his neighbor for a loan of a Pile Driver. Knowing that any request for a loan of the necessary equipment would be turned down, Mr. Houck did it his own way.

As local Historians tell the story, the Iron Mountain had a Pile Driver outfit and a coach, that was to be used as a caboose, sent to a Blind Siding that was also an Interchange point with the Houck Railroad, to drive some piling on a nearby bridge. The Train Crew handling the Pile Driver outfit, instead of setting it out on one of the Iron Mountain tracks, just shoved the outfit on the Houck Line Interchange.

A Houck Line Crew came along later that evening and seeing the Pile Driver and Coach on the Interchange, thinking that Mr. Houck had made arrangements to borrow the Pile Driver and coach from the Iron Mountain, picked up the equipment and took it on to their terminal. Knowing the need for a Pile Driver the Yardmaster promptly dispatched it to a location where a bridge needed rebuilding.

When the Iron Mountain discovered their Pile Driver and the coach were missing, a search was made of all conductor's Wheel and Blind Siding Reports to find what train handled the missing equipment away from the Blind Siding. The search proved fruitless, and the Iron Mountain Officials were at their wits end in trying to find their missing equipment.

For several months the Houck Lines used the Pile Driver. When finished with the Pile Driver it was set out on a Blind Siding near their last work site and the Coach moved to the nearest terminal and was used in Construction Train Service.

By chance an Official of the Iron Mountain discovered the Pile Driver on one of Houck's Lines and notified his superiors, who immediately requested Mr. Houck to return their equipment and presented him with a Bill for a daily rental charge for the use of their equipment .

Upon receipt of the Statement, Mr. Houck promptly sent a Bill to the Iron Mountain for storage of the borrowed equipment on his property, which was more than the combined rental charge and the value of the Pile Driver and coach. The Iron Mountain promptly forgot about the whole matter and the Houck Lines had two more pieces of equipment, thanks to the Gould System.

Shortly after the Frisco bought Mr. Houck's property in Southeast Missouri, my grandfather bid in a passenger run out of Chaffee, Mo. and my dad became a Crew Caller and a Yard Clerk there before moving to Illmo, Missouri with his Dad. The old coach that had been used by his Dad was in and out of

Chaffee many a time while he was employed there as a Clerk. There must have been something special about the Coach in the "Jesse James" movie that made him recognize it as his Dad's old caboose.

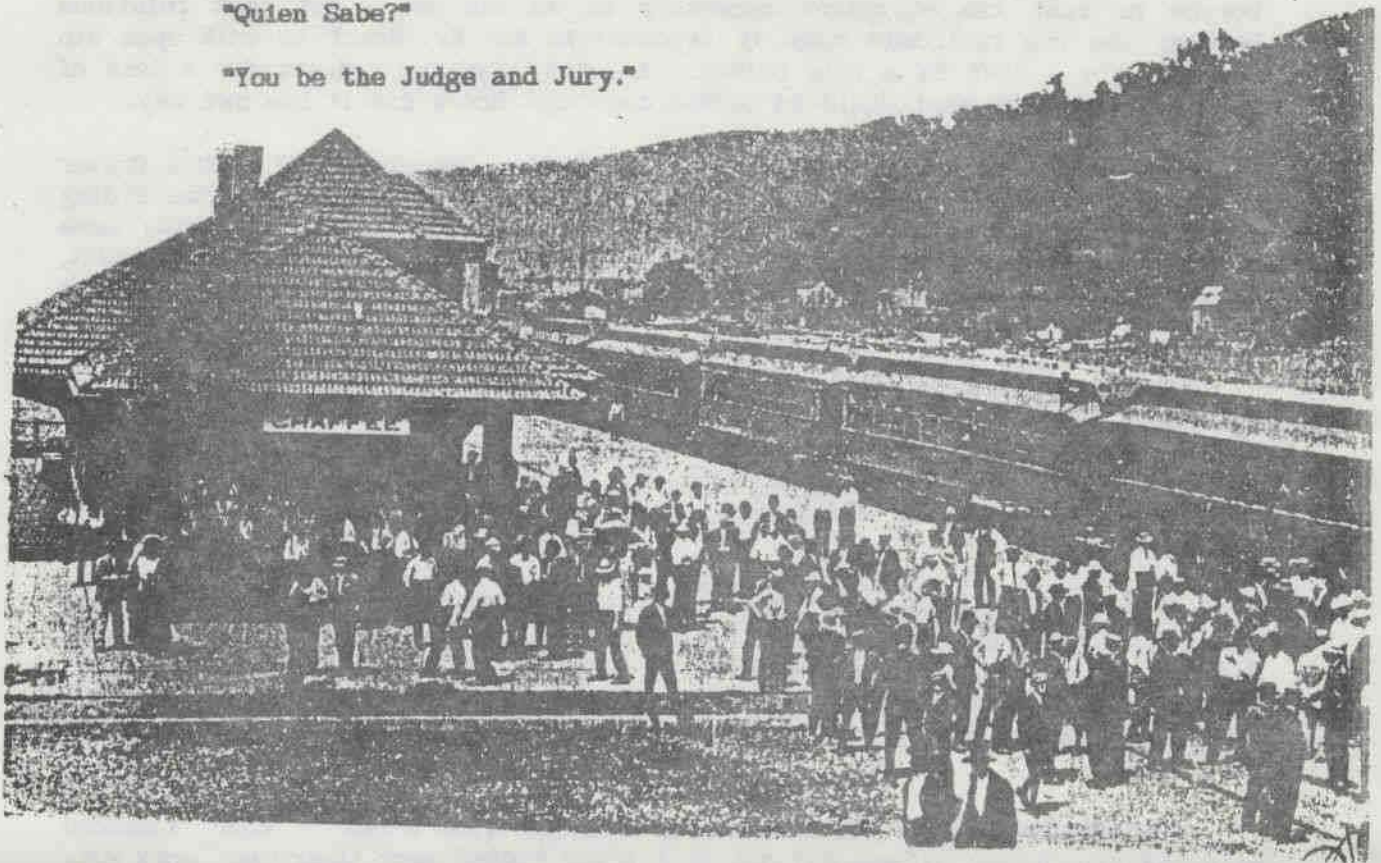
Had this coach been moved to Northwest Arkansas for service at the time that he was working as a Yard Clerk at Chaffee, and at that time knew it's destination and knowing that a part of the movie was filmed on the Frisco's Bentonville Branch, recognized it by it's number when he saw it in the train's consist?

If this is correct, the combine could have been used for years on the Frisco's Bentonville Branch and was added to the train's consist along with the ex- D. & R coaches in the movie "Jesse James" when that part of the film was being made on the Frisco between Hiwasse and Gravette, Arkansas.

Also could the coach that was used by my Grandfather as a caboose on the Houck and recognized by Dad in the movie "Jesse James" be the same one that was borrowed by Mr. Houck from the Iron Mountain and never returned?

"Quien Sabe?"

"You be the Judge and Jury."



Typical Frisco Passenger Train Early 1900's

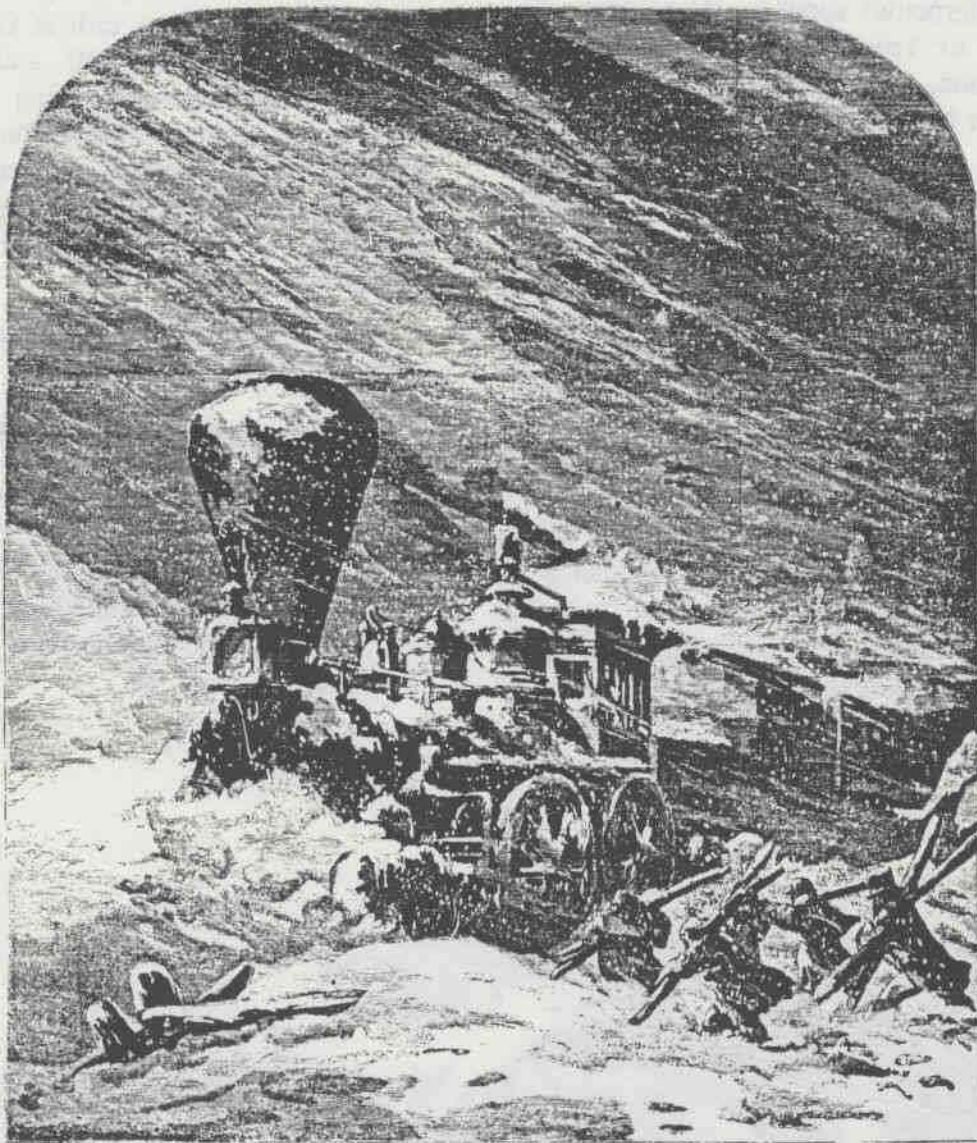
T H E E N D



GOING THROUGH A
TRAIN WHILE IN
MOTION.

DRILLING HOLES IN THE SNOW

by: Gene Hull



During the winter of 1889-90 the Central Pacific railroad was completely snowed in across the Sierra Nevada Mountains between Truckee, California, north of Lake Tahoe, and Sacramento. The railroad had only one rotary snowplow. It couldn't handle all the snow.

J. A. Fillmore was general superintendent, and he was desperate. In the midst of all his troubles he remembered a fellow named E. P. Caldwell of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He had invented and assembled a contraption he called the CYCLONE.

The thing was an experimental snow remover, and Caldwell had spread the word that he would make the machine available free of charge to any railroad which would test it during the winter of 1889-90. Fillmore said the Central Pacific certainly could give it a real test. He told Caldwell to send his machine west.

Caldwell had formed the Cyclone Steam Snow Plow Company to promote and produce his brain-child in Chicago. A boiler was obtained from Baldwin Locomotive Works, Vulcan Iron Works supplied the machined parts, and Wells, French & Company assembled everything. Two large marine steam engines, each with a pair of cylinders 18 inches by 16 inches furnished the power for an auger and blower fan. The screw-type auger had a horizontal shaft and the point of the auger was about six feet above the rails. The machine was approximately 60 feet long, not including the tender for hauling coal and water. It weighed an impressive 85 tons.

The CYCLONE headed west.

Its weight played havoc with the light-weight rails of the Illinois Central between Chicago and Council Bluffs. When it crossed the Mississippi River bridge onto the Union Pacific it fared much better.

The machine rolled onto the Central Pacific at Ogden, Utah, and the battle began in January 1890. The CYCLONE chewed its way through drifting snow fifteen feet deep! It had a ferocious appetite, eating snow all the way to Truckee, California, west of Lake Tahoe, and at the eastern foothills of the Sierra Nevada range.

It was here that the REAL snow was encountered. The snow was packed tightly in deep cuts through the forested hills. Another furious storm came in February, and the strange plow was sent to attempt to clear a track that was used only during the summer.

The CYCLONE stalled!

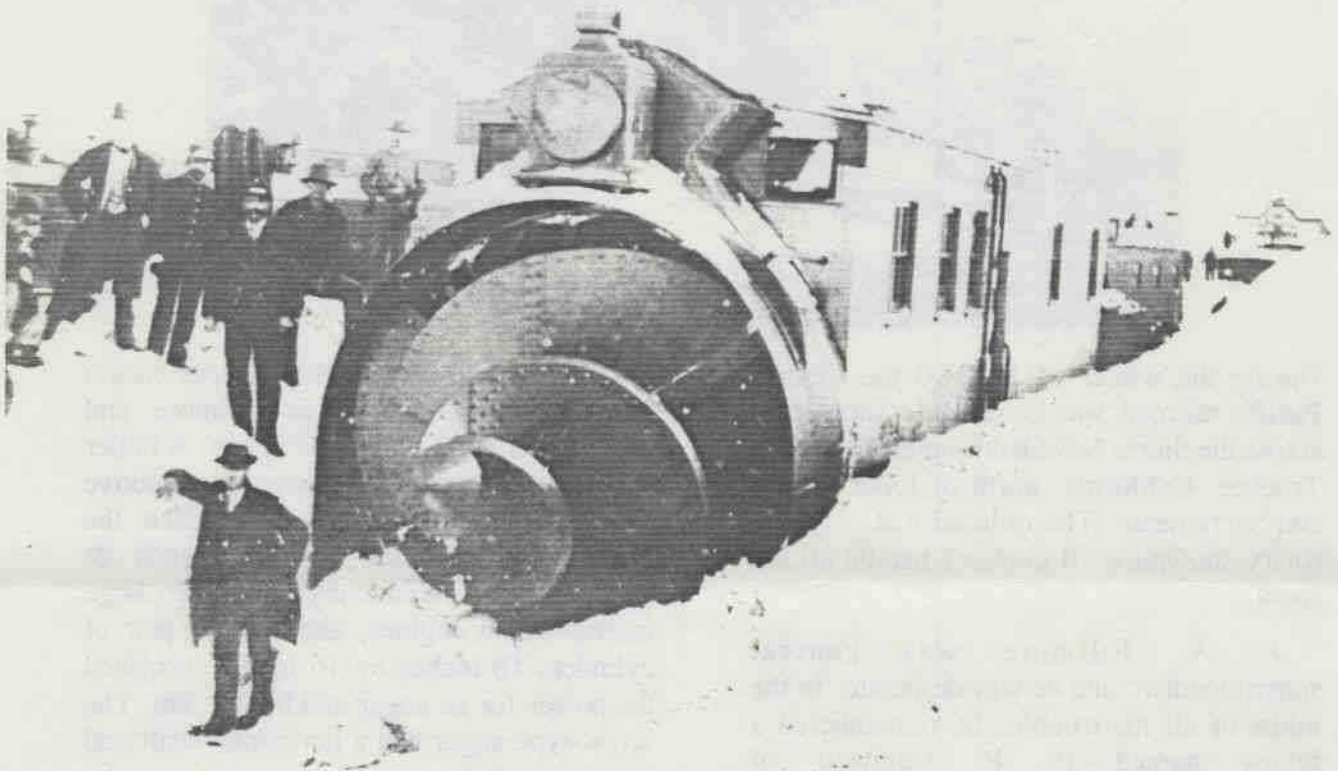
The put four locomotives behind it. The didn't help. Another trial was held the next day. The machine choked up completely. The huge "corkscrew" was sent to the Sacramento shops after other plows cleared the road. A few revisions were made, and it was sent back to Truckee. The performance

that time was as dismal as before.

Many people got the CYCLONE confused with a similar, but really quite different, snow removed developed by Mr. Orange Jull, owner of a flour mill at Orangeville, Ontario. The CYCLONE and the Jull machine both had a revolving screw-type auger to bore into snowbanks, but the center shaft on the Jull slanted downward at about 20 degrees, and the point was slightly above the rails. It had proved to be very successful.

The CYCLONE was sent to the scrap track at Sacramento.

But, it wasn't scrapped. The Central Pacific bought it! Proposals were made to modify it, but to no avail. It seems a CP master mechanic was a close friend of E. P. Caldwell, the inventor of the CYCLONE, and perhaps this had something to do with the purchase. The big machine was really dismantled in 1894. ■



Boring holes in the snow - Jull snowplow on the Central Pacific - 1889. (Gene Hull collection)

CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

1992 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

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Vice-President - Jonathan F. Royce
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Board - Peter Smykla '96
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Pine Bluff AR 71603
(501)-535-4724

Board - Clifton E. Hull '93
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N Little Rock AR 72114
(501)-945-5556

Board - William Church '92
5619 Bel Caro Place
N Little Rock AR 72118
(501)-753-4582

Board - Robin Thomas '95
10980 Rivercrest DR #26
Little Rock AR 72212-1412
(501)-225-1952

Hon. Board - Barton Jennings '92
1600 Capitol Ln
Knoxville TN 37931-4505
(615)-531-8040



P R O G R A M

Although there will be no "regular" meeting in December, we do have a few things planned. Our annual Christmas Party will be held at the Spaghetti Warehouse off Second Street in Little Rock on **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12**, beginning at **4 PM**. This is always our best attended function of the year. Please let our President John Hodkin, Jr. know if you can be there by November 28, if possible, or as soon thereafter as you can, so we can advise the restaurant. All are invited to Carole Sue Schafer's house afterwards.

Also coming in December will be a special meeting on **DECEMBER 20**, at our usual place, the Twin City Bank on Main Street in North Little Rock. Our past president **BART JENNINGS** will be there and give us a show on his various rail-related activities over the past year or so. The time will be **2 PM**, like always.

Another function will be our popular New Years Day get-together at Twin City Bank. This will be a come-and-show time for all of you who want to watch slides, videos, etc. instead of watch boring football games on TV. Someone will be there shortly after 8 AM and we'll stay until everyone leaves that afternoon. Bring a snack.

SAUNDERS SLIDE COLLECTION has been filed by GENE HULL. He also finished, a few months ago, Earl Saunder's negative collection, the file now being in a President's File. If you'd like to see any of these files, please contact our president.

OFFICERS FOR 1993 APPROVED - The following 1993 officers of the Arkansas Railroad club were approved at the November 8th meeting:

President: JOHN HODKIN, Jr. Vice President: MATT RITCHIE
Treasurer: DICK BYRD Secretary: POLLY HAMILTON
NRHS Rep: DICK DAVIS Historian: R. W. McGUIRE
Board of Directors '97 - TOM SHIRCLIFF

NRHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - Our meeting hosting the NRHS Board of Directors in March 1993 is our next big function. We will have a special trip to Pine Bluff on one day to show them the Arkansas Railroad Museum and the 819. A lunch will be provided. There are other activities planned as well, with the meetings themselves being at the Camelot Hotel in Little Rock. (Please give me more details on this).

THANKS TO YOU who have sent me stories, information. I'll use what I can, when I can. Names that come to mind are T.L. WILBORN, P.B. WOOLDRIDGE, TOM SHIRCLIFF, STEPHEN EUDY, WILLIAM HARRIS, JAMES O'NEAL and others who have sent me news stories. Keep them coming. I still need newspaper and other stories from around the state, since I have no way of knowing what goes on unless someone tells me.

I'd especially like to know what the Reader Railroad is up to (see green cover). I can't find any news of this line anywhere, even though the railroad gets this newsletter. Is it still in operation or has it been abandoned? Everyone seems to want to keep Reader RR news a top secret. You know our address.

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

FORT SMITH RAILROAD DISPUTE - (Fort Smith) - According to *RAILS*, October 23, 1992, the dispute between the Fort Smith Railroad and the Union Pacific over the 48-mile branch to Paris, Arkansas has ended up in the courts. Three lawsuits involving the Union Pacific, the Fort Smith Railroad (Pioneer Railcorp) and La Belle Point Railroad, a would-be successor of the Paris branch. UP filed a suit September 14 alleging the Fort Smith Railroad's unlawful detainer of the rail line and breach of contract. UP says its 20-year lease with the FSRR has terminated because the short line failed to maintain and repair damage to the track.

Meanwhile, the FSRR on September 17 filed a lawsuit charging the UP (Missouri Pacific) in making the lease agreement misrepresented the condition of the track and breach its contract agreements by refusing to repair the track.

The third case was filed September 29 by Pioneer Railcorp charging the Dardanelle & Russellville Railroad with violation of a confidentiality agreement and interference with contractual and prospective economic advantage. Arkansas Shortlines, Inc (parent company of the D&R) filed with the ICC September 10 for an exemption to operate the La Belle Point Railroad on the Paris branch. That filing induced the Missouri Pacific to breach its contract with the Fort Smith Railroad, Pioneer alleges.

UP notified the Fort Smith Railroad on September 8 of termination of its lease.

(See the October 23 issue RAILS for a more detailed explanation of this situation. It can't be summarized in every detail. If you'd like a copy, write to your editor).

UNUSUAL ACCIDENT - (Little Rock) - On October 31, a 30-year old man was killed when his 1983 Ford Ranger pickup plunged 30 feet from LaHarpe Boulevard Bridge onto Union Pacific's busy tracks. At 6:40 AM, a UP northbound freight hit the truck, ripping it in half. Apparently, the man was dead before the train hit the truck.

(ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, November 1, with photo by our own Tom Shircliff)

DEPOT RESTORATION - (Wynne) - The fate of the Wynne Missouri Pacific depot is still up in the air, although a group plans to restore it along with the Arkansas Historical Preservation Program. The problem is that Union Pacific wants to give the city of Wynne the depot but lease them the land for \$200 a year. Some don't want to put a lot of money into restoring the depot in case UP someday wants the land back. (*The SHOPPERS NEWS of Wynne, November 11, sent in by John Hale*).

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

FORMER MOPAC SHOP SITE MAY BE AMTRAK STATION - (St. Louis) - The site of the former Jenks passenger car shops at Jefferson Avenue and Scott Streets in St. Louis is the location of the proposed new Amtrak station, light rail stop and bus terminal. (*TRRA Historical & Technical Society bulletin, Summer 1992*)

With the Presidential election over, here are a few facts I came up with about past elections. More than a third of past presidents were elected without a majority of the votes (15 out of 42), including Richard Nixon in 1968 (43%) and Abraham Lincoln (only 40%). Bill Clinton was the 16th not to have more than 50%. Ronald Reagan barely got 50% in 1980.

Besides George Bush's whistle-stop train tours this year, the last president to do this type of campaigning regularly was Dwight Eisenhower in the early 50s.

AMTRAK NEWS

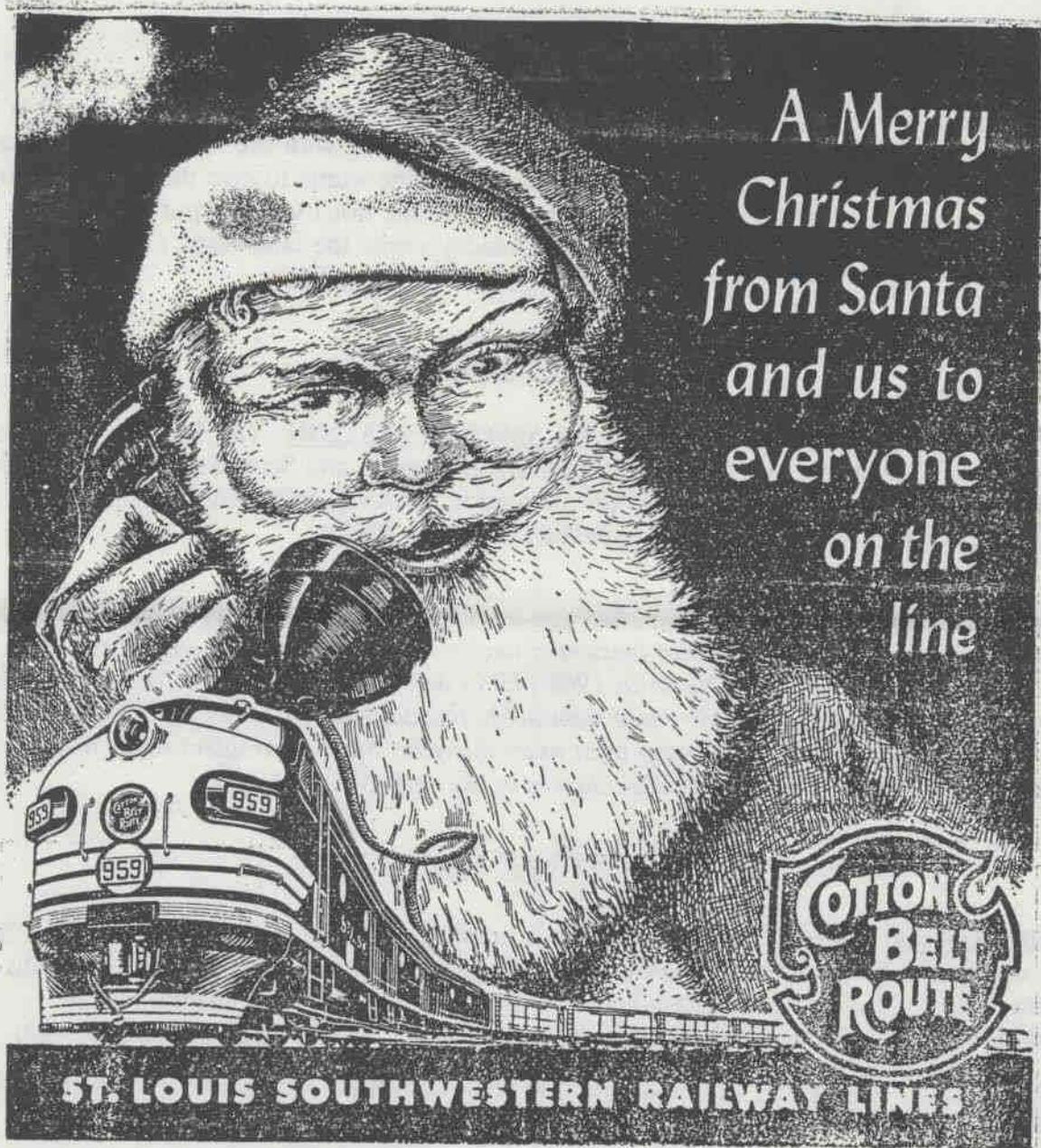
BAD MORALE - A recent survey of Amtrak employees found that most workers felt that the railroad was more concerned with cost control and on-time performance than with safety. The road is also having conflicts with the Food & Drug Administration on sanitation, meaning some trains leave without full diners. (*CINDERS, November 1992*)

CHARLES LUNA DIES - Charles Luna, the last of Amtrak's original board of directors (who really helped secure service in this area), died October 1 in Dallas.

AMTRAK ITEMS FOR SALE - Elsie Vickers Montano wants to sell remaining material from the former Amtrak Historical Society in Arizona (there's now a new society). She has HO and N models, key rings, Amtrak calendars going back to 1970. Write her with your requests at PO Box 27894, Prescott AZ 86312 or call 602-772-9592.

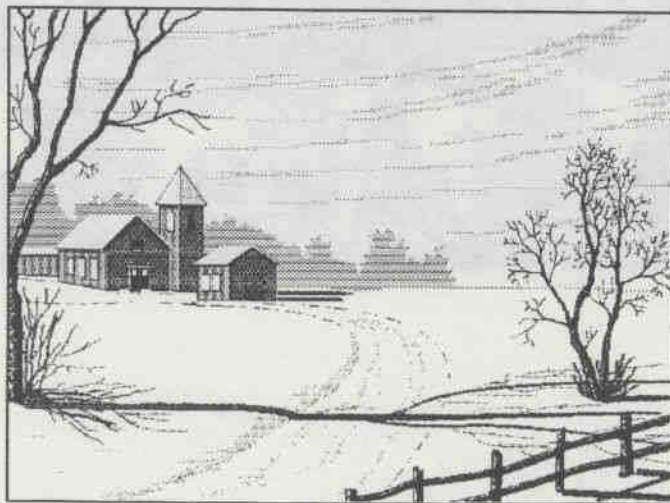
NEWS UPDATED through November 20. Deadline for the January issue is December 15. Please send in news items.





P. D. WOOLDRIDGE, LOCAL AGENT
 Phone 2551, Gideon, Mo.

The above Cotton Belt Christmas ad comes from member P. B. Wooldridge of Lewisville, Arkansas. He was looking through an old album and came across this advertisement from the local newspaper at Gideon, Missouri. The ad dates from 1948. He says that they got his initials wrong, but got his last name right, which was unusual. Apparently, the Southern Pacific never did get his last name right. All his paychecks, issued from San Francisco, were spelled Woolridge.



ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB
PO BOX 9151
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

UPCOMING CLUB & AREA RAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

DECEMBER 12 - Annual Christmas Party, Spaghetti Warehouse, Little Rock, 4 PM.	JANUARY 10 - Regular club meeting, 2 PM, Twin City Bank, North Little Rock.
DECEMBER 20 - Special meeting at Twin City Bank, 2 PM. Bart Jennings will show some special RR slides.	MARCH - NRHS Board of Directors Meeting - Camelot Hotel, Little Rock.
JANUARY 1 - All-day New Years get-together at Twin City Bank, starting about 8 AM. Bring things.	MAY 1 - Arkansas Railroad Club's annual Show & Sale, Hall of Industry, State Fairgrounds.

See inside for more detailed information on some of these activities. Please keep me informed on what is going on rail-wise in and around Arkansas so I can put it in the table. Thanks.



Attn: Ken Ziegenbein, Editor
ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB
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DECEMBER 1992

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NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR

12/92