



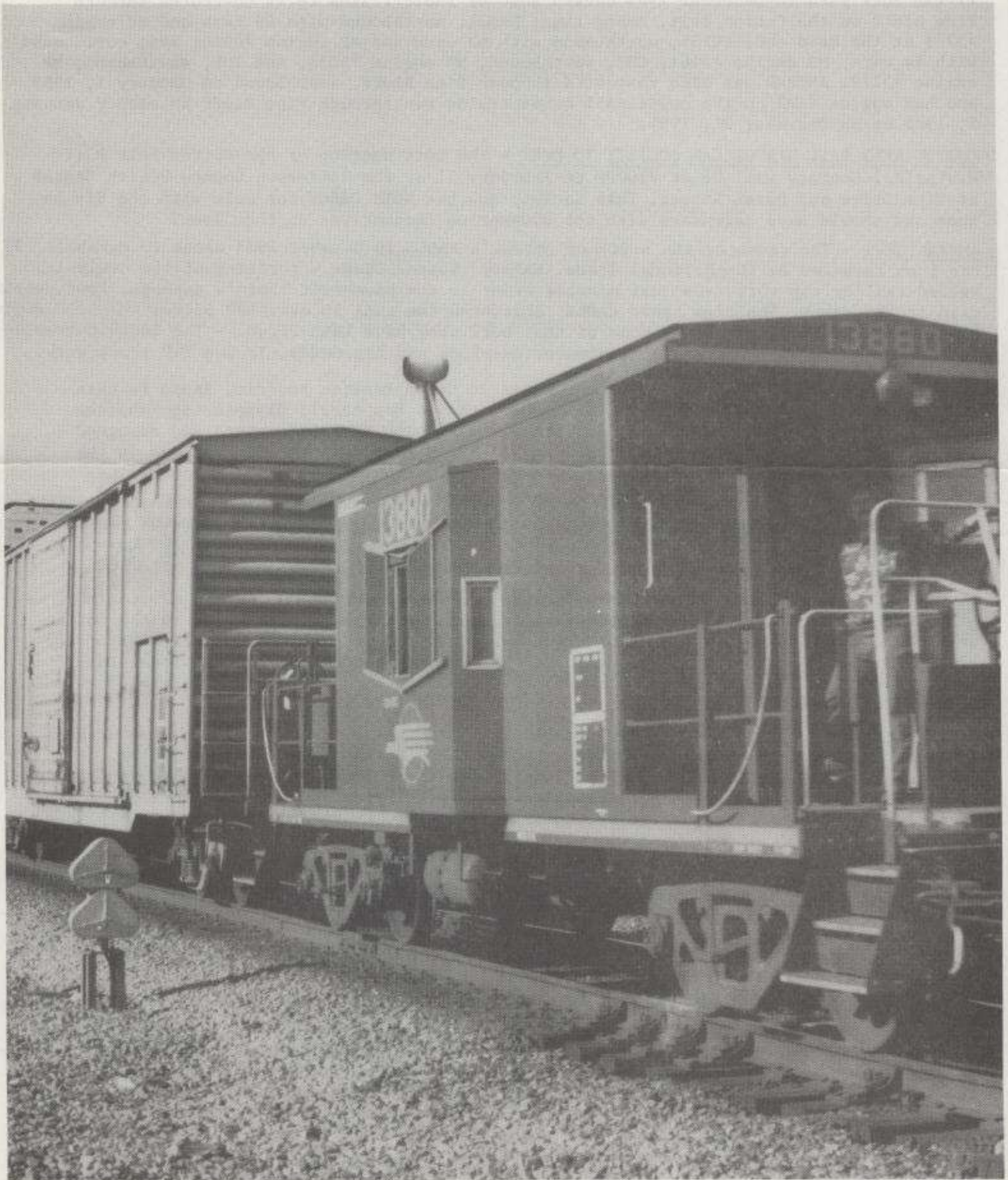
# ARKANSAS RAILROADER



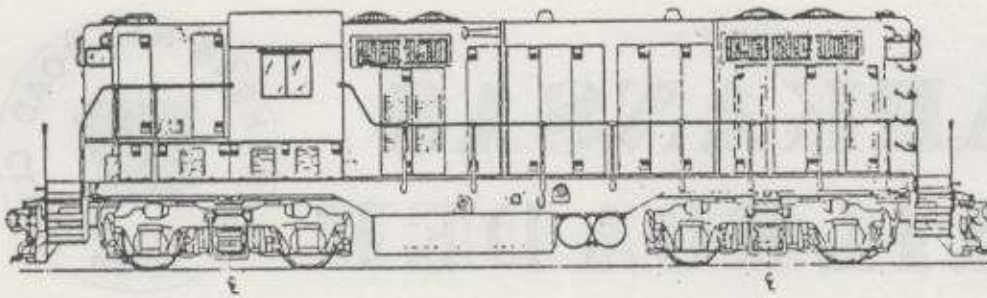
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1985



**SOON TO BE RARE** - This scene of a Missouri Pacific caboose on a freight passing Union Station in Little Rock may soon be a rare sight. If the powers that be have their way, cabooses will be luxuries of the past in the not-so-distant future. (January 14, 1985 picture by Ken Ziegenbein - - see story on cabooses by Mike Adams in this issue).



## GENERAL NEWS

RARE RS-3 BOUGHT - Member Peter Smykla of Pine Bluff recently purchased the last RS-3 locomotive built, #81900, from the MICHIGAN NORTHERN Railroad. This locomotive, which was built in August, 1956, headed the last train of the MICHIGAN NORTHERN out of Reed City, Michigan last September. Mr. Smykla purchased it on September 21, 1984.

CHEMICAL SPILL CAUSES MOPAC DETOUR - The chemical spill in Union Pacific (MoPac)'s North Little Rock yard in December 1984 caused some of their trains to be re-routed through Pine Bluff on the Cotton Belt. Among them: XRM31, northbound with 49 cars and MP engine #3273 at the head end; FCZ31, northbound with 63 cars and MP engine #6026; XRS, northbound with 44 cars, MP engine #3161; CHZ, southbound, MP engine #6033, and INF, southbound, MP engine #3279. AMTRAK was also re-routed through Pine Bluff, southbound on January 1, 1985 and had engine #303 on the point. All other trains ran through Pine Bluff on either January 1, 1985 or on December 31, 1984.

COTTON BELT RAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO MEET - The next meeting of the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society will be at 7:00PM on February 21 at the Jefferson County Health Center at Rike Drive and Hazel Street. This Society now has NOTE CARDS for sale with the 819 on them and should have calendars with the 800-series locomotives on them soon.

AMTRAK NEWS - The cause of the wreck of Amtrak's EAGLE in October 1983 close to Marshall, TX has been revealed by the National Trans. Safety Board. Cause - torching of the newly-laid welded rail by the work crew just minutes prior to the passenger train's passage. Four people died in the wreck. The high speed EAGLE shattered the rail in over 100 pieces when the engine hit the break. Understand that some of that work crew have been fired. - The EAGLE currently is being rerouted via Cotton Belt between Texarkana and Big Sandy, TX due T&P track work.

RECENTLY OBSERVED IN PINE BLUFF - An increase in Union Pacific traffic; Santa Fe cars at the Port of Pine Bluff (a string of new or renewed box cars); Olympic Logo engines have run in and out of Pine Bluff lately; an engine with DAYLIGHT colors was observed in the Cotton Belt Yard the week of January 13-19; Sperry Rail Service car was on the Cotton Belt; Union Pacific Rail Inspection Car was on the MOP.

PRIVATE VARNISH - That's the name of an article in the January 28, 1985 edition of FORBES Magazine. It's a very enlightening piece on private car owners and tells how to get one of your own for as little as \$10,000 (not the owner, the private car). Did you know milage costs vary from \$1 a mile to \$2.60 a mile? (Thanks to Bill Clampit for the article)

1400 - 1500 CARLOADS LOST - Between 1400 and 1500 carloads will be lost in a 9 month period if International Paper Co. of Camden closes next April 1. This loss to the Cotton Belt could have a negative impact on its operations in south Arkansas. Nearly 50% of the time, the local Camden Cotton Belt switcher switches cars from the International Paper plant. Governor Clinton is trying to keep the plant open, as 700 other jobs would be lost in its closing. (COTTON BELT NEWS)

CALL FOR VERTICAL 8x10 PHOTOS - preferably of historical nature, to possibly be used as a cover for future ARKANSAS RAILROADERS. Photos could be black and white or color. Especially would like Arkansas Railroads with some short lines included. Please caption every photo. Thanks. (Your editor probably won't be able to make the next meeting as there is a conflict with a church activity, so if you have any photos or stories, they'll have to be mailed).

ROCK ISLAND NEWS - The former eastbound main of the old Rock Island from Biddle to Little Rock (CO&G station) is now out of service. The RI had double track from east of Biddle down to the bridge, and within the last few weeks, the crossing has been paved over on east 9th St. All of Biddle is being pulled up with most of the RI rails that are still there just lying on the ties after being pulled loose. MOP is really going to redo everything completely there from the ground up! (Thanks to Bill Pollard)

STEAM COMEBACK - After a nationwide absence of nearly 25 years, regular steam-powered locomotive freight service is scheduled to make a comeback on a major U.S. rail line in 1985. Beginning in January, a 36 year-old steam locomotive built for the Chesapeake & Ohio will start a month-long test in which it will haul coal six days a week between Huntington and Hinton, W. Va.

The test is being conducted by American Coal Enterprises and Foster Wheeler Corp. as part of a scheme to gather the information needed to build a new generation of steam locomotives. The project is being conducted under the assumption that the rise in diesel fuel prices since the 1950s may make coal-powered steam locomotives economically viable.

The locomotive being used in the test is owned by Ross Rowland, a member of Amtrak's Board of Directors and a backer of the steam-powered American Freedom Train that ran across the country in the mid-70s. The locomotive, number 614, is among about 50 steam locomotives still in operation in North America.

Information gathered is hoped to provide the key to making new prototype engines, twice as efficient as the 614 in burning fuel. The prototype will have a conventional boiler but is expected to use the power generated to drive a turbine instead of transmitting the power through the driving wheels of the conventional steam engine. (UTU RETIREE NEWS via L.T. Walker)

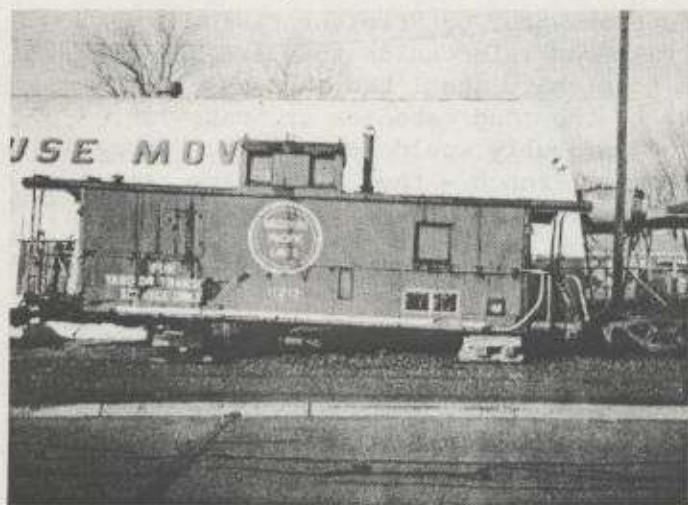


Back in the 1840's a conductor named Nat Williams kept a car in his mixed train filled with tools and materials needed to get over the road. Whether this old box car was given the name caboose is conjectural - probably not. About the same time - or perhaps earlier - the old Camden and Amboy Railroad up in New Jersey built their own tenders for their locomotives. They erected box car like affairs and on the top rear was a built in seat for a brakeman. This gentleman was given a brake lever and was in an excellent position to observe his train and take action when necessary to stop. To protect the brakeman from the weather and cinders, etc., a shelter was erected and promptly dubbed "gig-top" from its resemblance to the small buggy called a gig. Just off hand it would seem to me that this edifice was the direct ancestor of both the caboose cupola and the "dog house" or head brakeman's shelter used by so many roads on the tender deck of steam locomotives.

The MASTER CAR BUILDERS DICTIONARY, first published in 1873, mentioned the word caboose but did not mention the cupola. The second edition in 1884 stated that cabooses were often made with "lookouts for displaying train signals to locomotives and following trains and to give trainmen a view of the train". Folklore give one Conductor T. B. Watson of the Chicago and Northwestern credit for originating the cupola. This was way back in the year 1863. Pictorial evidence reveals that the Union Pacific had embryo cupolas as early as 1869. In any event, the cupola quickly became the prominent feature of the caboose and over the years took some wondrous forms.

My earliest concrete memories of the Missouri Pacific's cabooses goes way back, say three score years, to the little riverside railroad town of Cotter, deep in the Ozark Mountains of North Arkansas. At that time the Missouri Pacific had large numbers of the old side-door cabooses in service and I got it in my head that they were used only on "redball" or through freight trains while the newer, infinitely safer, platform cabooses were all assigned to the local crews. Back in those halcyon days all cabooses were assigned to the conductor and I do know that our neighbor, Mr. McCormack, was in through freight service between Cotter and Newport and had a side-door hack assigned to him. Actually this made some sense as the local crews were always getting on and off and on the side-door jobs this was not as easy and oftentimes risky. In any event, for years I called the side-door cabooses, "redball cabooses". In later years the side-door cages were relegated to yard and transfer service and to work trains. In fact, they were actually "outlawed" in Kansas and some other states back in the 1920's along with the kerosene or "hayburner" lantern.

Around 1932 a work train was in service at Cricket, Arkansas and since my best friends father was agent there I spent a lot of time in those parts. This work train crew had been given an old side-door crummy and left it spotted at night right next to the bunk car my friends lived in (there being no other place to reside in the environs of Cricket!). We used to sleep in the caboose at night - real adventure.....



CABOOSE AT REST - this MoPac yard service caboose now lies on blocks near 15th St. in North Little Rock.

Now I don't remember the number of that old caboose at Cricket but several years later we lived at Carthage, Missouri and the traveling switch engine crew had caboose 112 - another old side-door job. For some they also had engine 112, a spiffy Consolidation. I always wondered if the two numbers were matched up on purpose. Years later, when I was a struggling yard clerk at North Little Rock, I once checked the west local and the caboose and two caboose cars were all carrying the identical number, albeit different reporting marks.

Over the years, the Missouri Pacific had some interesting cabooses. They had a dozen or so drovers cabooses. These were simply elongated cabooses fitted with several bunks to accommodate the cowboys accompanying cattle to market. The MoP went in big for livestock and was one of the few roads that felt the need for such cabooses.

The Mo Pac also built, or had built, some special cabooses to accommodate passengers on local freight trains and also to enable them to handle mail and baggage. When I went to Gurdon in late 1954 as assistant trainmaster we had one of these passenger-mail carrying cabooses on the Norman sub-division locals, Trains 880-881, the "mixed train daily". We used them too - nearly every day we had several passengers and a bit of U.S. Mail and some railroad baggage.

In February, 1955 we were given the EMD BL-2 diesels in exchange for the fine old 2300 series 4-6-0's so ably performing and immediately ran into a minor problem. The local cabooses did not have radios and since the 2300's didn't either, no one missed them. When the diesels arrived and had them, immediately the train crews missed the useful radio and started clamoring for them! The first thing I found out was that the management had absolutely no intention of applying radios to these old cabooses and that was that.

However, I found one of the little 900 series Magor steel cabooses at North Little Rock and had it sent to me at Gurdon. These cabooses were used mostly on the Western District where they had no full crew law as they were not overly roomy. No conductor on the Arkansas Division would accept one so I had no trouble on getting this hack sent to me and just ran two cabooses on this local as long as I was at Gurdon. In fact I have a picture somewhere on one of them turned over just north of PK Junction in March, 1956. The local rattling along towards home on a Saturday afternoon hit a broken rail and dumped the seven rear cars and one caboose!

I went down to Texas in 1956 as trainmaster on the line between Ft. Worth and Houston and found I had a multitude of caboose problems. The worst was due to the fact the track was rough and soon caused excessive wear on the truck side column guides and the caboose became even rougher than ever - so rough they were scary to ride in at high speed. We had about 18 miles of good, heavy steel and good ballast section right out of Fort Worth and the first time I rode a freight out of Fort Worth I thought we had hit the ground when we ran off this good rail to the old bent up 90 pound rail laid on river gravel ballast. I would assume, by this time, these problems have been overcome by the present management.

All our cabooses except for one local caboose operating between Valley Junction and Spring, Texas were the standard steel cabooses built in large numbers by the Missouri Pacific just after World War II. The exception was an old I-GN wooden caboose that even had wooden sills. It was fitted up with cooking facilities and bunks and had electrical connections. Our problem was that at Spring, at that time, there was absolutely NO place fitted for the crew to either eat or sleep. We had bath facilities rigged up on the caboose track at Spring and the crews had some of the comforts of home - certainly much better than the solitary rooming house then at Spring. Spring is now a fine residential area adjacent to Houston and the Missouri Pacific has built a modern office building and extensive yard facilities there - I would like to see it but just can't stomach that Houston traffic. In 1956 it was a good 20 miles to the city limits of Houston but our local crew tied up there as this is where the Mart sub-division intersected the Trinity sub-division of the Palestine Division.

The old I-GN had a trick that I never saw on the big MoP. In their cupolas they had a long cushion that folded on either end and the seats were filled in so that you had a bunk like affair that was not only very comfortable but enabled you to take up some of the slack action with your legs on that roller coaster Texas roadbed. Only problem was that it was also conducive to slumber - a condition frowned on by higher management. Most, but not all, cabooses at Mart also had a cook stove in them. This seemed to be on the whim of the individual conductor and the stoves were those long on hand on the I-GN. I never saw any quite like them on the upper lines. Except for the local job between Valley Junction and Spring, I don't remember any of the crews doing anything other than making coffee and heating sandwiches on these stoves.

The local crew used to fix some pretty good meals - if you like Texas style cooking. One night I had to leave Mart on an extra south - we were called for around 2:00AM and had to pick up the Taylor, Texas relief outfit at Valley Junction. Just as I was leaving the yard office the night yard clerk, actually a mud-hen instead of a mud-hop, handed me a small sack. "Here, Mr. Adams", Annie-Ruth said, "You will probably need this more than I will". I put the sack away in the cupola and about three hours later, after we picked up the wrecker and were headed out of Valley Junction, Slim Jones, the long-legged conductor, handed me a cup of real caboose coffee. I then remembered the sack and found it to contain as tasty a mince-meat pie as ever graced a king's table!

Well - while I had to do a lot of riding on cabooses in my time, I actually made more of my livelihood seeing after cabooses rather than riding them. Really, I was rather glad of this. Riding a caboose, especially on an up and down railroad, was like eating your first K-Ration in the army. Once was enough. But - I still hate to see them go. To me a freight train just won't be the same without a bouncing buggy on the rear-end to tell when it's the trains ALL.....

O - the brake-wheel's old and rusty, the shoes are thin and worn,  
and she's loaded down with link and pin and chain,  
And there's danger all around us as we try to pound our ear,  
in the little red caboose behind the train.

Anonymous

- END -

Thursday 20 Jan 66

### Dixie Flyer Ends Run; Lasted for 81 Years

ATLANTA (AP) — The famed Dixie Flyer made its last run Thursday, ending 81 years of passenger train service between Evansville, Ind., and Atlanta. The Louisville and Nashville railroad said it has been losing money on the run because of a decline in passengers.



DIXIE FLYER - On July 8, 1943, the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis "Dixie Flyer" rolls under the automatic signal bridge, and 4-8-4 No. 578 sends her exhaust shooting skyward beside the cut in Lookout Mountain at Chattanooga, Tennessee. She was carrying the green flags as the first of several sections, carrying the heavy load of wartime traffic in the days of gasoline rationing. On the tender coupling rode coaches from St. Louis, Chicago and Evansville, a dining car, and many Pullman sleepers with sections, compartments and drawing rooms. Bringing up the rear marker lamps was the observation-library car; all were bound for the tropical shores of Florida

Fine southern-flavored meals were served in the plush walnut-lined, 30-seat diners from ACF. On the smoky end resided the proud new "Dixie" series of 4-8-4's from American Locomotive Company in 1942. They had semi-streamlined jackets, 25" x 30" cylinders, 70" drivers, 250 lb. pressure, T.E. 57,000 lbs., and weighed 400,500 lbs. These beautiful locomotives were replaced by stink-buggy diesels in the late 1940's.

(From the collection of Gene Hull).



FEBRUARY 28, 1985 - LAST CHANCE FOR SUNBELT!

Chicago Pacific has set February 28, 1985 as the date to close the case on the old Rock Island trackage between Perry, Arkansas and McAlester, Oklahoma. If a buyer is not found by that date, the line will go up for scrap, more than likely to L. B. Foster Co.

There's still hope, though. A Mr. David Donoley of Wister, Oklahoma, a former Rock Island employee, is trying to organize some sort of coalition to buy the old line. He said that the asking price of the 180 miles (179.62 miles) between milepost 185 and milepost 365 (McAlester to Perry) is only \$3.5 million (payable to Chicago Pacific) and that he already has the ability to get over \$2.6 million from a McAlester bank. HE'S LOOKING FOR INVESTERS - HE HAS UNTIL FEBRUARY 28 TO COME UP WITH THE NEEDED CAPITAL.

If you'd like to aid him in this project, or know of someone who might want to invest in this line to keep it open, you can contact him at:

DAVID DONOLEY  
Rt. 1, Box 13B  
Wister, OK 74966  
Phone: 918-655-3156

Some facts about the line: 1) It's laid with 112 pound rail, much of it welded. If it weren't for the grass, it would be in relatively good shape, except for certain segments.; 2) It's rails consist of 31,697 gross tons. With the current scrap value at about \$140/ton, this would mean a buyer could conceivably buy the line from Chicago Pacific for \$3.5 million then sell it for over \$4 million as scrap, making a neat profit.

At any rate, time is running out as L. B. Foster is waiting eagerly to take up the line. In fact, they ran a Hi-rail car over the line the middle of December. The week of December 21, another company, Railtex of San Antonio, Texas, ran a Hi-rail car over the line to see about possibly purchasing it and running trains on it. However, after talking with Railtex personnel, it appears that chances are pretty slim that they will indeed buy the line.

Meanwhile, Mr. Donoley is trying to get other potential buyers organized to purchase the line. He has a Hi-rail car himself and is the one to see about arranging a Hi-rail tour of the line. He's the person taking the various companies over the line at this time.

MORE GENERAL NEWS

819 UPDATE - According to Bill Bailey, work on the Cotton Belt steam locomotive 819 restoration is ahead of schedule. In fact, it's 60-62% completed so far as restoration is concerned. The tender is 15-18% complete. The inside water tank needs to be cleaned. All calculations have been completed on the boiler for final approval.

A bell has been retrieved for the engine. This bell, from sister engine 810, has been at Wesley Methodist Church. The Cotton Belt Historical Society is still looking for the original 819 bell, however, and anyone knowing where it is is asked to contact a member of the Society.

September of 1985 is the goal date to begin breaking the restored 819 in. This break-in should take about 30 days. The testing will eventually enable the engine to haul 2500-3000 tons (about 20 heavyweight passenger cars).

Bill also said that all the retired Cotton Belt people who have been helping restore this historic engine will definitely be honored and given credit for doing so.

F'S GONE - The historic F units of the KCS are no longer being used on coal trains at Sulphur Springs, Texas. The KCS is using GP-40's instead. (Thanks to Bill Bailey)

NEW INTERMODAL FACILITY FOR SOUTHERN PACIFIC - This facility is being built south of Los Angeles and consists of 137 acres. It is a joint venture between the SP and the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

SP-SF MERGER HEARINGS - Officials of the Kansas City Southern and Tex Mex Railway were cross examined the week of January 17 regarding the proposed Santa Fe and Southern Pacific merger. T.S. Carter, Chairman of the KCS, said his company is opposed to the merger. KCS is seeking substantial trackage rights in Texas and Louisiana should the merger occur.

SP CARLOADINGS DOWN - Southern Pacific's carloadings in December decreased 4 percent from the same month in 1983. Much of the drop was attributed to three fewer working days last December. Forest products continued to decline rather rapidly, registering a 14.2% drop. This is generally due to fewer housing starts and high interest rates.

EMPLOYMENT DROPS - Employment of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company dropped from 33,533 in December of 1983 to 31,384 in December of 1984.

DEADLINE - As a reminder, the deadline for the March ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Monday, February 25. Please have any material, news, etc, you wish published in my hands by that date. Thanks. (Address on outside sheet)

AUSTIN MASS TRANSIT? - Saturday, January 19, 1985 marked the date that Austin, Texas voters voted to approve a measure to create the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority. This paves the way for a possible purchase of 160 miles of Southern Pacific branch lines in central Texas, namely the Giddings, Llano and Marble Falls branches. The city is considering using the lines for a Mass Transit System.

"PINE BLUFF" CAR SEEN - Car "PINE BLUFF" was seen on a Cotton Belt freight between East St. Louis and Pine Bluff on January 28. This car was occupied by Mr. R.R. McClanahan. On January 29, the car continued on its journey, going to Corsicana, Texas.

UP SYSTEM SHOWS INCREASE - Carloadings for 1984 increased on the Union Pacific/Missouri Pacific System by about 6%. Carloadings of coal increased by about 77,000 carloads. UP System hauled more than 387,000 cars of chemicals in 1984 with very few accidents. (INFO NEWS)

NEW ENGINES - UNION PACIFIC SYSTEM recently acquired 60 new 3,600 horsepower SD-50 engines, mainly to haul coal. These engines are more fuel-efficient than previous units with many coal trains needing one fewer engine as a result. The UP System currently has 18 sets of locomotives in coal service between Wyoming and Arkansas.

WANT TO BUY A NEW STEAM ENGINE? - China is still building steam locomotives in volume and if you wish to purchase one, I understand they have them on sale to anyone for only about \$150,000 each. Good Luck!

☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

PETER SMYKLA will present the show at our next Arkansas Railroad Club meeting, slated for Sunday afternoon, February 10 at 2:00PM in the Twin City Bank (TCB) building on Main Street in North Little Rock. He will present a slide show of 2 years of railfanning, covering the years of 1982-1984. This should be an enjoyable program, so bring those friends and lets have as good a turnout as we had in January!

From the Past...

At about 6:30 p.m. December 2, 1977, Cotton Belt Train LAEST derailed 17 loaded piggybacks about 2 pole lengths North of the interlocker at Fair Oaks, with the rear of the train blocking the MoPac main track. The Cotton Belt had a local just behind the LAEST and he pulled the rear of the train off the MoPac crossing. MoPac's main was blocked from 6:30p.m. until 7:30 p.m. dealing:

MP Local 745 arrivied Fair Oaks 6:40 p.m. and tied up there on hours of service at 8:00 p.m.. MoPac Train MLS picked up train and set it out at Bald Knob.

MP LMN train delayed New Augusta 20 mins, Fair Oaks 25" with crossing blocked.

MP SFM train delayed New Augusta 45 mins, LMN ahead and to set out his Southern Ry. piggyback block for LMS.

The Cotton Belt determined the accident was caused by a broken wheel. As a result the Cotton Belt detoured three trains via Paragould to MoPac's Wynne Subdivision to Wynne then to Fair Oaks. They were:

SSW BSMFF Train Engines SP 8989-SP 8611-SP 6627-SP 6529 with 40/1/3237 tons, called to depart Paragould at 9:00pm, departed 12:05 a.m. 12/3 arriving Wynne 2:05am, departing 2:15am, arriving Fair Oaks 2:35 a.m.

SSW BEASK Train Engines L&N 4032-SP 5316-SP 3746-SP 3356-CR 6177, called Fair Oaks 10:15pm, Departed 4:45am, Wynne 5:20 am, JN Jct 7:28am where he met APLAA Train, Arriving Paragould 8:02am.

SSW APLAA Train Engines ICG 6068-ICG 6014-SSW 9617 Called Paragould 2:00am with 60/1/4112, departed at 6:17am, Wynne at 10:10am, Fair Oaks at 10:30 am.

The Cotton Belt had lined up a detour for the HOASK train but track was opened at 9:45 a.m. December 3rd.

\*\*\*\*\*

(Thanks to John Martin for the above)





The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train lovers who meet once a month on the second Sunday of the month. This month's meeting place is listed under the "PROGRAM" notice.

The ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the monthly publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club and is generally mailed first class one or two weeks before the monthly meeting. In order for you to receive this monthly newsletter, you must be a member of the Arkansas Railroad Club. Current dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year for out of state. The publication is mailed automatically to all members. If you would like to join, send your check, made payable to the Arkansas Railroad Club, to Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Dr, Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through the club by paying \$9.00/year more.

Editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein. News items, full-length stories, smaller stories and photos all accepted gladly! Photos can be any size, color or black and white. Please have captions on the pictures. Mail any such contributions to:

Ken Ziegenbein , Editor  
905 Valerie Dr  
North Little Rock, AR 72118  
(501)-758-1340

- - HAPPY RAILROADING!! - -

ARKANSAS RAILROADER  
EDITOR-K. ZIEGENBEIN  
905 VALERIE DR.  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR 72118

FIRST CLASS