



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



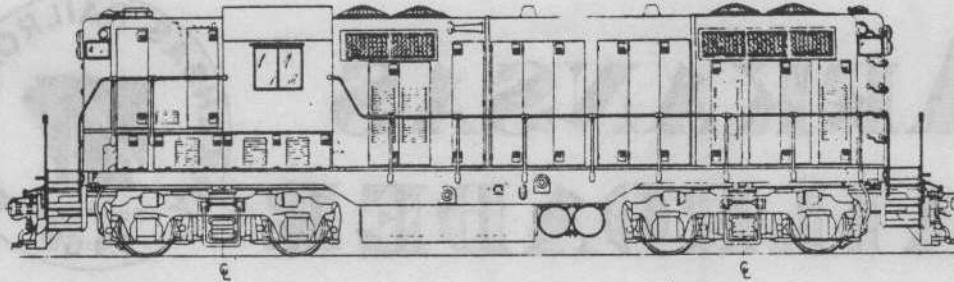
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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UNION PACIFIC's Central Division tracks at a road crossing in North Little Rock (Levy) on January 7, 1988 one day after a 12-inch snow. The I-40 overpass is in the background. A train had recently passed through. Temperature was 15 degrees. (Ken Ziegenbein photo)



GENERAL NEWS

CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

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\$ \$ DUES \$ \$

1988 DUES ARE DUE - Dues are always due on January 1 of each year, so if you haven't yet paid them this year, now is the time. Dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year out of state. Send your check made out to the "Arkansas Railroad

Club" and mail to our treasurer Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. Thanks.

EUREKA SPRINGS CLUB EXCURSION - The trip to Eureka Springs this spring is definitely still planned. The probable date would be April 30, a Saturday. Roughly, we would leave North Little Rock about 7 A.M., getting back to North Little Rock about 7 P.M. that night. Two special train rides would be included, one on the dining car. Cost (if at least 46 of us showed up) would be \$34 per person, including everything. Let's discuss this trip at the February 14 meeting. Bill Church will be in charge of the arrangements.

☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

DON GHENT, former Rock Island Agent and Operator at Camden and past president of the East Camden and Highland Railroad will give a talk on short line railroads at our February 14 meeting. The meeting will be held at 2 P.M. at the Twin City Bank in North Little Rock, as usual. As you all know, the January 10th meeting had to be cancelled due to weather.

BY-LAWS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB will be printed in the March "RAILROADER". Be looking for them.

ANNUAL SHOW & SALE of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held Saturday, March 26, 1988 at North Little Rock, the same weekend as the Annual Convention of the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Participants of that convention will receive tickets to our Show. Also included will be a side trip that Sunday to Pine Bluff to see the restored Cotton Belt steam engine 819. For information, contact Bill Pollard, P.O. box 10222, Conway, AR 72032.

("CLUB HAPPENINGS" continued on Page 15)

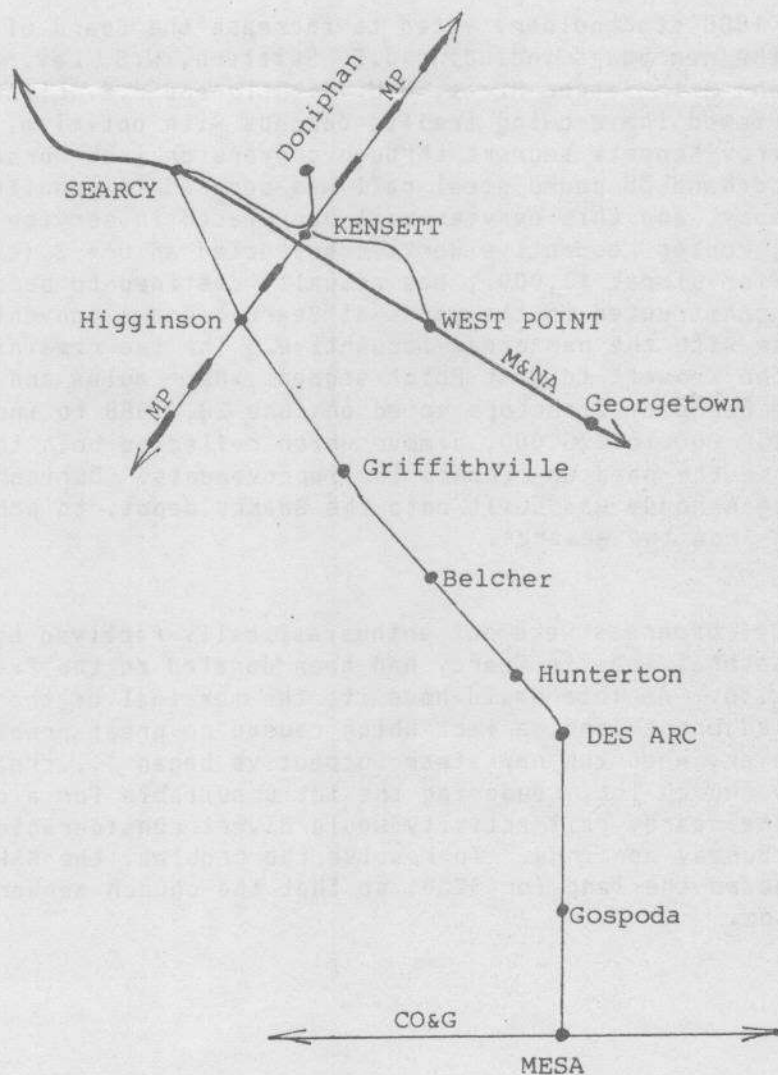
THE SEARCY BRANCH OF THE ROCK ISLAND

by Bill Pollard
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I. DeValls Bluff & Searcy Railroad

Following the Civil War, the availability of railroad service was seen as a matter of life or death for many small towns in Arkansas. When the Cairo & Fulton Railroad constructed their mainline through Kensett rather than Searcy, a number of Searcy businessmen decided to create their own railroad to preserve Searcy's position as a trading center for the region. On January 3, 1872, incorporation papers were filed for the DeValls Bluff & Searcy Railroad. The new route was proposed to operate from Searcy to West Point, to Des Arc, and then to DeValls Bluff, a distance of 40 miles. When completed, connections would be made with both the Cairo & Fulton and the Memphis & Little Rock.

Five stockholders were appointed to the board of directors, including J.C. McCauley, R.J. Rodgers, and John Love of Searcy, B.K. Rodgers of West Point, and Stephen Wheeler of DeValls Bluff. The articles of incorporation provided for 10,000 shares of stock at a total par value of \$1,000,000, an amount which was grossly inflated compared to the stock authorizations of similar sized railroads of that period. During this reconstruction era of Arkansas history, numerous 'paper' railroads were incorporated, and investors soon developed a healthy suspicion of most new railroad proposals. The excessive stock authorization, amounting to \$25,000 per mile, was enough to frighten prudent investors, and no trackage for the DeValls Bluff & Searcy RR was ever built.



II. Searcy Branch Railroad

A more modest proposal to link Searcy with the nation's railroad network was successful in moving past the 'paper' railroad stage. Incorporation papers for the Searcy Branch Railroad had been filed on July 25, 1871, with promoters planning only to construct a rail link from Searcy to the Cairo and Fulton mainline. Although the DeValls Bluff & Searcy proposal briefly diverted the attention of the Searcy business community, it soon became apparent that the Searcy Branch RR offered the most realistic opportunity to connect with a major railroad. Stock subscriptions continued into mid-1872, and on June 19, 1872, a board of directors for the Searcy Branch Railroad was elected. The new board, which included former DeValls Bluff & Searcy director J.C. McCauley, orchestrated the construction of a three-foot gauge, wooden rail tram line from Searcy to Kensett. Mules provided the power over the four mile route, and both passenger and freight service was offered.

In January, 1878, the Searcy Branch Railroad Extension was chartered for the purpose of extending service to West Point, on the Little Red River, paralleling the route proposed by the DeValls Bluff & Searcy six years earlier. The wooden rails on the existing trackage were replaced with 20-pound iron rail, and the line was extended southeast from Kensett to West Point. The railroad was apparently changed from narrow gauge to standard gauge at this time. As a part of the 1878 rehabilitation and expansion, a new 32x80 foot wood frame depot was constructed at Searcy, and a depot was constructed at West Point in 1879. A new 24x42 foot stable was constructed at Searcy in 1880 to house the 'motive power'.

III. Searcy & West Point Railroad

The Searcy & West Point Railroad was incorporated on June 19, 1882, as a successor to the old Searcy Branch Railroad. The new company issued \$50,000 in capital stock, all of which was held by the five members of the Board of Directors. The directors included W.A. Yarnell-president, A.W. Yarnell, Jasper Hicks-treasurer, W.H. Lightle-secretary, and J.E. Lightle. This new company continued to use mule power, and as of March, 1884, boasted an equipment roster of one horse powered streetcar, five platform cars, a transfer wagon, and seven mules. Two more street cars were added to the roster during the following year, and in 1886 the oldest street car was rebuilt into a platform car for freight.

On January 30, 1888 stockholders voted to increase the Board of Directors from five to eight members, with the new board including J.E. Skillern, W.S. Lay, J.S. Sanford, E.A. Robbins, and J.T. Hicks, along with Jasper Hicks, W.H. Lightle and J.E. Lightle from the original board. The new board viewed the growing traffic demands with optimism, and a decision was made to upgrade the Searcy-Kensett segment through conversion from horse power to steam power. A supply of second-hand 35 pound steel rail was secured to rebuild the 4.5 miles of track between Kensett and Searcy, and this heavier rail was placed in service during April and May of 1888. In April, 1888, Porter Locomotive Works constructed an 0-4-2 (c/n 919) which, though sold to J.E. Skillern (for almost \$3,000), was actually destined to become Searcy & West Point #1. A water tank was constructed in the yards at Searcy, and a conventional passenger car was acquired for use with the new steam locomotive. The two remaining street cars were then reassigned to the Kensett to West Point segment where mules and 20-pound iron rails still prevailed. The Board of Directors voted on June 28, 1888 to increase the capital stock of the railroad from \$50,000 to \$75,000, a move which reflected both the increased value of the property and also the need to finance the improvements. During the latter part of 1888, a metal roofed enginehouse was built onto the Searcy depot, to provide the new iron horse with some protection from the weather.

The new sounds of progress were not enthusiastically received by all of the local citizens. Back in 1869, several lots in Searcy had been donated to the Protestant Episcopal Church for a future church site. As fate would have it, the terminal of the Searcy & West Point was later located on the adjacent land, a fact which caused no great problems while mule power was utilized. However, when the new steam locomotive began "...creating loud noises in the vicinity of the church lot, rendering the lot unsuitable for a church site", church leaders realized that the nearby rail activity would divert considerable attention from the matters at hand on sleepy Sunday mornings. To resolve the problem, the S&WP stepped in on September 2, 1889, and purchased the land for \$250, so that the church members could reinvest in a more peaceful location.

The Searcy & West Point acquired a second new locomotive in June, 1890, with the purchase of 0-4-0 #2 (c/n 1182) from Porter Locomotive Works. During this year, a new 30x50 foot brick enginehouse and shop was constructed at Searcy to provide a better site for locomotive maintenance. By 1892, the railroad's car roster had stabilized at one passenger car, one baggage and express car, and one platform car. Virtually all of the freight handled by the line was generated locally and transferred at Kensett, though an occasional through car of freight was received from the Iron Mountain. Throughout this period, the company chose not to appear in the Official Guide of the Railways, giving the impression (to outsiders) that Searcy lacked railroad service.

Searcy and West Point Railroad Co.

W. H. LIGHTLE, President. J. S. SANFORD, Treasurer.
W. S. LAY, Secretary. G. H. PILKINGTON, Agent.
JASPER HICKS, Sup. and Gen. Mgr.

TIME CARD.

NORTH.

LEAVE SEARCY	ARRIVE AT SEARCY
3:00 p. m. to meet . . No. 54	4:30 p. m. from No. 54
8:40 p. m. to meet . . No. 56	9:45 p. m. from No. 56

SOUTH.

LEAVE SEARCY	ARRIVE AT SEARCY
5:50 a. m. to meet . . No. 55	6:45 a. m. from No. 55
11:45 a. m. to meet . . No. 53	1:00 p. m. from No. 53
8:40 p. m. to meet . . No. 51	

We are now furnished with checks for baggage, and will not be responsible for baggage unless checked. Baggage to be checked should be at depot at least 15 minutes before leaving time.

On baggage remaining in depot more than 24 hours, storage will be charged.

GEO. PILKINGTON, Agent.

S&WP advertisement from 1893-1894 Galloway College Catalog

IV. Des Arc & Northern Railway

The Des Arc & Northern Railway was incorporated on August 26, 1897, for the purpose of constructing trackage from Des Arc, through Higginson to Searcy, and then to a point on the Red River near Bee Rock in White County. The president of the line was Geo. B. Griffith of Bald Knob; Fred S. Belcher of Higginson was vice president, and Geo. B. Stine, also of Higginson, was superintendent. These three men held all except two shares of the \$50,000 capital stock issued by the company. (The remaining two shares, at a par value of \$25 each, were held by G.W. Hunter and H.F. Hunter, both of St. Louis.) Although the original plans called for Des Arc to be the headquarters of the new company, the offices were actually located at Higginson, a station on the Iron Mountain two miles south of Kensett. During 1898, this company built 19 miles of track from Higginson to Des Arc, using 54-pound and 56-pound steel rail. At Higginson, a new 20x80 foot wood frame station was constructed by the Iron Mountain, and a joint use agreement was signed with the Des Arc & Northern to allow the short line to become a tenant in the new depot. New 20x40 foot frame depots were also built at Des Arc and at Griffithville, the latter town being named in honor of the railroad's president. On December 6, 1898, the stockholders voted to increase the company's capital stock from \$50,000 to \$250,000, undoubtedly reflecting their opinion of the 'present value' of their new operation.

The equipment of this company included one locomotive, one combination baggage-passenger car, and four flat cars. In handling freight traffic, the line used foreign line cars, supplied by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern. The new railroad served primarily forest industries, carrying 14,000 tons of lumber related products and 2,000 tons of all other commodities during fiscal year 1899. The railroad's top officials owned and operated the Belcher-Stine Lumber Company, and as might be expected, the railroad passed through the timber holdings of that company. Two of the communities which developed along the route (Belcher, White County, and Stineville, Prairie County) were named for the owners of the lumber company.

V. Searcy & Des Arc Railroad

The Searcy & Des Arc Railroad was incorporated on June 29, 1899, for the purpose of consolidating the Searcy & West Point Railroad and the Des Arc & Northern Railway into one new corporation. To effect the consolidation, the stockholders of the S&WP and the DA&N voted to exchange their existing stock for shares in the new company. Each share of S&WP stock was exchanged for 2.3 shares of the new S&DA stock, while approximately 7.85 shares of DA&N stock were required for each new share of S&DA stock. This discrepancy in stock value is not explained in the consolidation agreement, but it presumably reflects the more realistic value of S&WP stock (750 shares - \$75,000) versus the somewhat 'watered' value of DA&N stock (10,000 shares - \$250,000). George C. Griffith continued as president of the new company, and both of the original lines were well represented on the new Board of Directors.

Initially, the company operated two separate lines, the Des Arc Division (formerly the Des Arc & Northern) and the Searcy Division (formerly the Searcy & West Point). Connections were made with the Iron Mountain at both Kensett and Higginson, and with White River steamboats at Des Arc. For the first time, the new company was listed in the Official Guide, an indication that the road's management had decided to participate more fully in interline traffic opportunities.

SCHEDULE -- Des Arc Division

7:30am	Higginson	6:38pm
7:58am	Griffithville	6:10pm
8:13am	Belcher	5:55pm
8:33am	Stineville	5:35pm
8:43am	Hunterton	5:25pm
9:08am	Des Arc	5:00pm

SCHEDULE -- Searcy Division: From Searcy to Kensett, and from West Point to Kensett. Trains run to connect with trains of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Ry. at Kensett.

[from The Official Guide, effective August 21, 1899.]

From July, 1899 until early 1900, S&DA chief engineer W.H. Hipolite supervised construction of the connecting line from Higginson to Searcy, using new 60-pound steel rail for the mainline. A contract for a crossing with the Iron Mountain was signed on November 16, 1899, with the Searcy & Des Arc being responsible for 100% of the crossing construction and maintenance costs. After the completion of this new route into Searcy, the original line from Searcy to Kensett was abandoned in January, 1900. Parts of the old line were gradually dismantled as the need arose for 35-pound rail for sidings and spur tracks along the Des Arc to Searcy line, and the remaining rail was to be used in side tracks along a proposed extension from Des Arc to a connection with the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad.

The Searcy & Des Arc roster as of July, 1900, included three locomotives, two passenger cars, one old street car, a baggage car, and four flat cars. The Belcher-Stine Lumber Company had constructed a telephone line along the railroad right of way between Des Arc and Searcy, and this facility was available to the railroad for communications. Western Union Telegraph Company had previously placed a telegraph line along the right of way between Kensett and Searcy.

The abandonment of the Kensett to Searcy line resulted in an almost immediate reduction in the tonnage handled on the remaining tram road segment between Kensett and West Point. Much of the freight hauled over the West Point line was routed from Searcy to river boats on the Little Red River, and the loss of a Searcy connection effectively halted this traffic. Although the river's course carried it near Searcy, the channel above West Point was considered non-navigable for boats of any consequence.

By 1901, the company's interest in the Kensett-West Point segment was rapidly declining. A note included with the railroad's May, 1901, tax assessment returns indicated that the mule powered tram road had failed to cover operating expenses during the past year. Because of the lack of profits, the property was being allowed to deteriorate, and the limited traffic volume did not justify replacing the old 20-pound iron rails which were becoming increasingly brittle even for tram road service.

The stockholders of the Searcy & Des Arc voted on April 8, 1902 to reduce the size of the Board of Directors from nine members to five. G.W. Hunter of St. Louis had assumed the presidency of the railroad by this time, and it appears that this move was in preparation for the line's purchase by the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf. Hunter, who had been a minority shareholder and board member on the Des Arc & Northern, may have served in that position as a representative of the Rock Island.

VI. CHOCTAW, OKLAHOMA & GULF RAILROAD

In May, 1902, the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf acquired a majority of the stock of the Searcy & Des Arc, and the 23.96 mile line was operated as a CO&G subsidiary even though there was not yet any direct connection with the CO&G. On May 25, 1902, schedules were expanded to provide four daily round trips between Searcy and Higginson, and one daily except Sunday round trip between Searcy and Des Arc. The control by the CO&G brought a new express service to the line, operated by Pacific Express Company, and a contract was also secured for the transportation of U.S. Mail. The West Point Division operated a morning and an evening round trip from West Point to Kensett, although the Official Guide made no mention that this latter service was a tram road using mule power.

During 1903, the remaining abandoned trackage on the Searcy to Kensett segment was dismantled, with most of the material being sold to the Kimball Lumber Company for logging railroad use. The remaining routes, from Searcy to Des Arc, and from Kensett to West Point, continued to operate under the Searcy & Des Arc Railroad name, though as CO&G subsidiaries. On March 8, 1904, the State Board of Railroad Incorporation approved an amendment to the charter of the Searcy & Des Arc, proposed by E.B. Peirce, the CO&G attorney for Arkansas, who also served as president of the S&DA. This change in the charter authorized the line to build two extensions: [1] northwest 35 miles from Searcy to Heber (Cleburne County), and [2] southeast 20 miles from Des Arc to milepost 88 (Mesa) on the CO&G, continuing to the west bank of the White River near the CO&G bridge. Before either of these extensions were undertaken, both the CO&G and the S&DA were leased to the Rock Island on March 24, 1904.

VII. HAZEN & NORTHERN RAILROAD

The Hazen & Northern Railroad, incorporated on November 28, 1902, was from the beginning a subsidiary of the CO&G-Rock Island. Of the seven directors initially appointed, three were RI-CO&G officers in Chicago and four were CO&G officials in Little Rock. The new company was formed to construct a railroad from a connection with the CO&G at or near Hazen, in a north or northeast direction to a connection with the Searcy & Des Arc Railroad at Des Arc, a distance of 18 miles. The new line was also authorized to build a new line from a connection with the S&DA at Searcy, north or northwest to Heber, in Cleburne County.

The preliminary survey map prepared by CO&G/H&N chief engineer F.A. Molitor in November, 1902, showed the line extending from the CO&G at Hazen. However, when actual location surveys were conducted, it was decided that a more advantageous route would be northward from Mesa, and the H&N board of directors on May 7, 1903 passed a resolution shifting the CO&G connection point of the proposed line eastward several miles from Hazen to "milepost 88" (Mesa). Apparently the only construction which took place on the original line was the grading of part of the right of way. As a part of the general consolidation of subsidiaries on March 24, 1904, the CO&G leased the still incomplete Hazen & Northern for 999 years, and on the same day the CO&G was itself acquired by the Rock Island.

VIII. CHICAGO ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY

The Rock Island gained a direct presence in Arkansas on May 1, 1902, through the acquisition of all of the capital stock of the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad. After this purchase, the CO&G was operated as a separate Rock Island subsidiary until March 24, 1904, when the property was leased to the Rock Island for a term of 999 years. At this time, the former Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf lines became the Choctaw District of the Rock Island.

In the months prior to March, 1904, the Rock Island and CO&G legal departments were busy negotiating purchase agreements with a number of semi-independent and/or subsidiary railroads associated with the CO&G, including the Hazen & Northern Railroad and the Searcy & Des Arc Railroad. The sale of the Searcy & Des Arc also included the rights to their proposed extension from Searcy to Heber. This 35 mile extension had been planned to form a connection with the St. Louis & North Arkansas which was then building south from Leslie. Concerning the purchase of the Searcy & Des Arc Railroad, the Rock Island's FY-1904 Stockholders Report stated: "The line is 23.96 miles in length, extending from Des Arc on the White River to Searcy, the latter a town of some three thousand inhabitants, being a general trading and distribution center for the surrounding country. The road has been operated for a number of years and, notwithstanding its limited facilities, has been a paying property. Its value to the system will be increased when the connection with the main line at Devall's Bluff is completed." Even at this time, the S&DA continued to be closely related to the lumber industry, with over 66% of the line's traffic being lumber or forest products.

Immediately after the purchase of these various railroads became final on March 24, 1904, Rock Island officials began planning the construction of the long anticipated connecting link between Mesa and Des Arc. Construction on this 13.63 mile segment utilizing 67-pound steel rails on oak ties, was begun on June 21, 1904, and the line was placed in operation on November 28, 1904. Although a number of official reports refer to this connection as being from DeValls Bluff to Des Arc, this was done largely in the belief that DeValls Bluff would one day become

one of the most important cities in eastern Arkansas, due to the availability of good river, rail, and highway facilities. The actual point where the branch connected with the mainline of the Rock Island was always at Mesa, two miles west of DeValls Bluff. The new construction passed through several settlements between Mesa and Des Arc, including Eureka (milepost 3.7), Watersaw (milepost 7.5), and Letchworth (milepost 9). [Eureka was renamed Yuma and Watersaw was renamed Gospoda about 1918-1919.]

IX. WEST POINT RAILROAD

A horse powered, 4-mile tram railroad hardly fit into the image of "The Great Rock Island Route", and Rock Island officials were eager to either sell or abandon their mule powered branch line. A group of West Point businessmen, along with A.W. Yarnell of Searcy, formed the West Point Railroad to preserve service to West Point, receiving a charter from the State of Arkansas on June 6, 1904. The original plans of the businessmen were to simply acquire the tram road, but by the time the charter had been finalized, their goals had expanded to include acquisition and rebuilding of the old Searcy & West Point line into Searcy. Freight and passenger transportation over the 9 mile route would be conducted with "...horse cars, steam cars, or electric cars." A.W. Yarnell was the first president of the line, and its principal stockholder, holding 159 of the 200 shares of \$100 par capital stock. Immediately after the charter was approved, efforts were begun to secure right of way easements along the now abandoned S&WP route between Searcy and Kensett. Most landowners were persuaded to grant the new railroad a right of way following the original S&WP easements, although the new deeds specified that the West Point RR must have a standard gauge railroad operating within 18 months, or the easements would become void.

On July 2, 1904, the Searcy & Des Arc (now a Rock Island subsidiary) sold the Kensett to West Point tram line to the new company. Included in the sale was the line of railway, the depots at Kensett and West Point, and various real estate used as terminal grounds at each end of the line. The line's motive power and rolling stock -- two mules and two horse cars -- was transferred to the West Point Railroad. Since the line had operated at a loss for three years, Rock Island officials were agreeable to selling the assets for a 'bargain' price of \$1,500. The Board of Directors of the West Point Railroad acquired the funds for this purchase through the issuance of a \$1,500 promissory note. The note, bearing 6% annual interest, was to be repaid in full at the end of 10 years. As security for this note, a first mortgage and deed of trust was executed to transfer the assets of the tram road to a trustee, who would deliver the assets to the note holder in the event of a default in interest payments. E.B. Peirce, of the Rock Island's legal department in Little Rock, was selected as trustee. His selection suggests that the financing of this purchase may well have originated within the Rock Island itself.

The West Point Railroad did not operate as an interstate common carrier, and was never successful in converting from a tram road to a steam powered railroad. The extension and rebuilding from Kensett to Searcy also failed to materialize, perhaps blocked by the Rock Island to prevent competition over traffic into and out of Searcy. In fact, most of the abandoned railroad dump between Kensett and Searcy had been rocked or macadamized after being unofficially appropriated for use as a county road.

In June of 1906, the seven landowners who had provided much of the right of way between Searcy and Kensett began efforts to void their easement deeds. These efforts culminated on June 23, 1906, when the White County sheriff delivered notices of deed cancellations to West Point Railroad agent Ninus Hardy at West Point. The sudden interest of these landowners in a railroad grade which had been abandoned for nearly six years can be explained by the arrival of another new railroad company on the local scene. Beginning in June, 1906, and continuing through March, 1907, the new company--the Doniphan, Kensett & Searcy Railroad--acquired right of way easements to allow use of the old Searcy & West Point embankment. The DK&S, unlike the West Point, was successful in building and operating a railroad between Kensett and Searcy within the 18-month limit on the deeds, and their rail line continues in operation today.

During the latter part of 1908 and early months of 1909, the Missouri & North Arkansas constructed a line from Kensett to West Point enroute to Helena. The new right of way extended in an almost straight line from Kensett to West Point, and was located from 500 to 2000 feet south of the horsecar line. As might be expected, the completion of the M&NA to West Point effectively ended the need for the West Point Railroad. On October 22, 1908, in one of its last official actions, the West Point Railroad sold a town lot in Kensett to the DK&S, as a result of "...a resolution of (WP RR) Board of Directors meeting at the post office at West Point." The holder of the first mortgage bond, attorney Jonathan T. Hicks, had assumed the presidency of the tram road by this time. Within a few years, the financial affairs of the West Point Railroad had been wound up, and the company simply ceased to exist.

X. ROCK ISLAND OPERATIONS

Soon after the completion of the Rock Island line to Mesa, schedules were revised to provide a daily mixed train round trip between Searcy and DeValls Bluff. This train handled U.S. Mail, and railway post office cars on both the Iron Mountain and the Rock Island mainline trains made dispatches to the Searcy & DeValls Bluff C.P. (closed pouch) line. A second mixed train made an evening round trip between Searcy and Higginson to provide another connection with Iron Mountain trains.

Although the Doniphan, Kensett & Searcy Railroad was completed between Kensett and Searcy in 1906, the logging line declined to carry revenue passengers on a regular basis, and responsibilities for passenger transportation to and from Searcy remained with the Rock Island. By March, 1907, Rock Island was operating five daily round trips between Searcy and Higginson, to handle traffic to and from Missouri Pacific passenger trains. In addition to this service, a daily mixed train continued to operate between Searcy and DeValls Bluff.

Citizens along the southern part of the route, particularly at Des Arc, soon became dissatisfied with the mixed train service which the Rock Island was providing to their communities, and a complaint was filed with the Arkansas Railroad Commission. On July 24, 1907, the commission ordered the Rock Island to place in service a passenger train operating a daily round trip between Higginson and DeValls Bluff. This new train, which was to begin no later than August 8, 1907, was to be in addition to existing train service on the branch. The Rock Island was allowed the discretion of substituting a motorcar in lieu of a conventional train, provided the equipment afforded "reasonable and sufficient accommodations." Rock Island had been experimenting with motorcar service for the Searcy-Higginson runs for several years, with marginal success. In December, 1908, however, a steam train consisting of a locomotive, baggage car, and coach, replaced the Searcy-Higginson motorcar, account "unsatisfactory motorcar service."

The Missouri & North Arkansas on November 21, 1907 signed an agreement covering their crossing of the Rock Island at RI milepost 36.77 in Searcy. As the junior railroad, the M&NA was obligated to pay 100% of the crossing costs. In March of 1909, the Missouri & North Arkansas route was opened south of Searcy, through Kensett enroute to Helena, and this service provided the citizens of Searcy with an alternate route to reach the Iron Mountain trains, via Kensett. The Searcy-Kensett Transportation Company was incorporated on October 10, 1910 to provide additional service over the North Arkansas route, using a gasoline motor car. E. A. Robbins of Searcy, a former officer of the Searcy & West Point, was elected president of the new line. Robbins visited St. Louis soon after the new company was formed, for the purpose of acquiring a combination motor car to operate between Searcy and Kensett. The car purchased was a 6-ton, 4-wheel motorcar holding 20 passengers, originally constructed by Stover Manufacturing Company as Rock Island #2553 (later RI #9005-1st). An agreement for trackage rights over the M&NA became effective on November 10, 1910, and additional connections with Iron Mountain trains became available. Although the Searcy-Kensett Transportation Company's service lasted for only several years, their competition along with that from the M&NA was enough to cause the Rock Island to retreat from the Searcy-Higginson market.

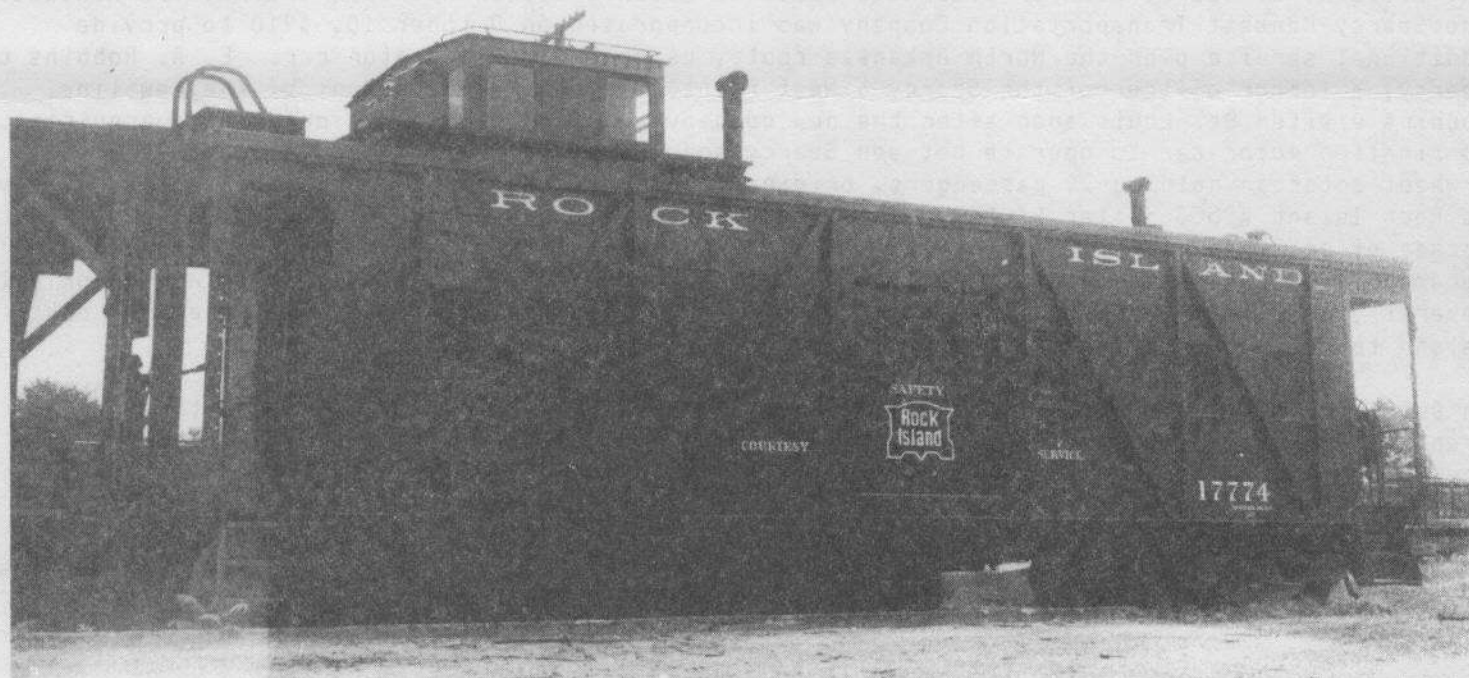
In December, 1911, the attention of the Railroad Commission was again focused on the Searcy branch. Numerous complaints about track conditions caused the commissioners to schedule an inspection of the line on January 5, 1912. Inclement weather and high water resulted in a postponement of the inspection trip, but when it was finally conducted in June, 1912, the commission judged much of the line between Higginson and DeValls Bluff to be defective. "The line needs a large amount of ballasting, ditching of the right of way, and sufficient new ties to allow safe operation. The Rock Island is instructed to correct these defects by October 1, 1912."

Possibly as part of a systemwide station upgrading program, the Rock Island about 1914 constructed a large brick and stucco depot in Searcy. This station, complete with green tile roof, was architecturally similar to stations being constructed in Stuttgart, Hazen, and Carlisle. Rock Island service to Searcy remained at one round trip daily, but by May, 1914, an additional round trip was being operated from DeValls Bluff to Des Arc. This additional service disappeared as a result of USRA austerity measures during World War I. When the Des Arc service reappeared in the early 1920's, it was operated as one leg of a DeValls Bluff to Stuttgart round trip. By 1926, the separate Des Arc run was again gone, and service on the Searcy branch had declined to one mixed train from Searcy to Mesa and return daily except Sunday, with a passenger train operating Sunday only. The Sunday passenger run became an early casualty of the Great Depression, and disappeared early in 1930 following the loss of the closed pouch mail contract. In 1932, the railroad began stopping on flag at the campus of Galloway College in Searcy, but the stop was short lived since the school was combined with Hendrix College in Conway during the following year.

Beginning in the summer of 1933, mixed train service on the branch was restructured to operate from Mesa to Searcy and back to Mesa, with a trip then operated from Mesa to Stuttgart and return. This move eliminated Searcy as a home terminal for the local crews, and allowed the railroad to cut costs by operating over both branches with a single crew. The schedules remained on a daily except Sunday basis until the Summer of 1937, when service to Searcy was reduced to tri-weekly (Monday-Wednesday-Friday). On June 17, 1937, the Higginson crossing contract with the Missouri Pacific was amended to include provisions for electric lights on the gate protecting the crossing. Rock Island was responsible for all crossing expenses, and a monthly charge of \$3.50 was added to the contract to reimburse Missouri Pacific for supplying electricity and maintaining the lights.

In February, 1938, the Searcy local was restructured to operate from the Rock Island's Biddle yards in Little Rock. The eastbound train left Biddle as an extra at 11:00am on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, assumed the schedule of #684 at Mesa at 1:00pm, then operated to Searcy and tied up about 4:00pm. Returning on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, train #683 was scheduled to leave Searcy at 8:00am, and arrive at Mesa at 11:00am. From Mesa, the train operated as an extra back to Biddle. The train was considered a mixed train only between Mesa and Searcy, and may have carried a passenger car only between those two points.

During 1940 and 1941, the Rock Island constructed a series of 40-foot baggage-passenger cabooses for mixed train service (series 17765-17784). These cars, equipped with a center baggage door, were rebuilt from old 40-foot boxcars originally built in 1915. By September, 1940, one of these special cabooses had been assigned to the Searcy local, and the mixed train service was replaced by "caboose service only". Between Mesa and Searcy, the local freight crews handled LCL freight shipments and Railway Express in the caboose, and the caboose was also equipped with a strongbox to transport station receipts from Des Arc and Griffithville to the bank in Searcy. The car provided seating for eight passengers, and that capacity was usually adequate to handle the occasional passengers from Hazen or Mesa who were destined to points on the branch. The less than carload traffic on the line ranged from shipments of cream (in 5 to 20 gallon cans), to express shipments of corn, rye, and sugar which supplied several moonshine stills along the route.



Rock Island passenger-baggage-caboose #17774, at Enid, Oklahoma, 1951. This caboose with older style lettering, was representative of the mixed train cabooses which were used on the Searcy branch in the 1940s and the early 1950s. The car contained seating for 8 passengers in one end, a baggage section in the center, and a bunk, desk, and lockers for train crewmen in the cupola end. Note the presence of two stoves, one in the passenger end, and one in the baggage area of the car. (Photo courtesy of Harold K. Vollrath)

The junction point of Mesa was well equipped to handle traffic on both the Searcy and Stuttgart branches, as well as on the mainline. A large wooden depot (similar to the Perry depot) was the center of activity. Water and oil tanks were located just west of the station to supply steam locomotives. Mesa had been changed from a day office to a night train order office (6pm to 3am) during the 1930's, and the train order office was closed altogether shortly before World War II. However, as a result of the heavy wartime traffic over the Rock Island mainline, the train order office was reopened about 1943 and remained open until the early 1950's. After World War II, the large depot was razed and a small two-room building was erected to serve as a train order office and train register station. Into the early 1950's, train operation on the Searcy branch continued on a tri-weekly basis, with local #684 operating eastbound from Biddle to Searcy on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The same crew operated back from Searcy as #683 on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. An engine watchman at Mesa handled the oil and water pumphouse maintenance at that point. On the days that the local operated to Searcy, the watchman would ride the train to Searcy to take care of the locomotive overnight. The job entailed spending the night in the depot at Searcy, and the watchman frequently brought along a large pan of fried fish and cornbread to share with the train crew.

Like many branchlines across Arkansas, the Searcy branch began to decline during the 1950's. The schedule of the branchline mixed train disappeared from the Rock Island public timetables about November, 1951, and after this time the locals were officially considered freight only. Freight traffic remained stable until the mid-1950's, with much pulpwood and chemical wood being cut and loaded at numerous spur tracks along the branch. Each trip of the local would bring 12 to 15 cars of gasoline into Searcy for an on-line gas distributor, and it was not unusual for the local to bring 20 carloads back to Mesa for movement to Memphis or Biddle.

During June and July, 1956, the west leg of the Searcy branch wye was removed, and the Stuttgart branch connection at Mesa was converted into a wye through the construction of a new west leg. This new arrangement was brought about by the increasing emphasis placed on the Stuttgart branch, which made it desirable for trains to be able to operate between Biddle and Stuttgart without having to run around their train at Mesa. Rock Island management underwent a significant change in corporate philosophy in 1956, following the appointment of D.B. Jenks as president of the railroad. Cost cutting measures were implemented throughout the system, and many services were altered, reduced or discontinued. According to some reports, the railroad deliberately began to discourage business on the Searcy branch, particularly north of Des Arc, in order to be able to present a more solid abandonment case to the ICC. The Searcy local was reduced from tri-weekly to bi-weekly frequency, making a round trip to Searcy on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The job was restructured to originate at Brinkley rather than Biddle, and on other days the crew made a Brinkley-Widner turn tri-weekly and also handled switching at Brinkley. The telegraph line between Des Arc and Searcy had been abandoned in 1954, and Des Arc became the only train order office remaining open on the branch. Agents continued to staff the stations at Griffithville and Searcy until mid-1958, but these stations were considered non-telegraph agency stations.

A train order office and telegraph station was reestablished at Mesa effective May 1, 1957, using telegraph equipment and the train order signal removed from Biscoe. (On the date that Mesa was reopened, DeValls Bluff was permanently closed, and Biscoe became a non-telegraph agency station.) The Rock Island signal maintainer was advised to "... use the old train order signal foundation at Mesa and build it up to present standards requirements." In September, the agent assigned to Mesa requested that the old kerosene lantern atop the train order signal be electrified since the signal was frequently used at night. (The regular office hours were 8:30am to 5:30pm, so the agent apparently earned a considerable amount of overtime.)

Telegraph service between Mesa and Des Arc was discontinued during the latter part of 1957, so that the pole line could be abandoned. This pole line consisted of 30 creosoted yellow pine poles per mile, holding two individual insulator brackets carrying two No. 8 galvanized iron wires. The telegraph line was still servicable, but the 'economy minded' Rock Island management was most anxious to eliminate the possibility of future costs from cutting brush under the pole line. The cost of removing the pole line was deemed to be more than the salvage value, so the railroad attempted to sell the line for any offer which could be obtained. The poles were ultimately sold, but the two wires could be seen along the ground or stringing through the trees 25 years later.

By 1958, the railroad was beginning to make a serious effort to abandon the line between Des Arc and Searcy. Des Arc lost its status as a train order office after the telegraph line was abandoned, though both Des Arc and Searcy remained open to handle clerical and waybilling functions. On February 6, 1959, the Interstate Commerce Commission (Finance Docket #20173) approved the abandonment of the branchline from just north of Des Arc to Searcy. After Rock Island operations north of Des Arc were terminated, former Rock Island trackage in Searcy was purchased by the Doniphan, Kensett & Searcy. With this purchase of industry trackage, the DK&S gained control over all trackage in Searcy, since the line had also purchased former Missouri & Arkansas trackage a decade earlier. The Rock Island depot in Searcy was sold, and was used by a second-hand car dealer for several years before being razed in the early 1960's. At Higginson, Mopac purchased 756 feet of a RI siding, but the RI wye located east of the Mopac mainline was not acquired and was subsequently dismantled.

Beginning in 1959, the remaining local service on the line - now designated as the Des Arc local - began operating on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Additional train service was provided during the fall harvest time, when a considerable volume of rice and soybean traffic was handled over the line. By 1965, all scheduled service had been replaced by 'extra' trains, operating on a more flexible schedule. With this change, Des Arc began to be served by the Stuttgart local, originating at Biddle. With the Hours of Service law still at the 16 hour maximum, the train could operate from Biddle to Mesa, make a round trip up the Des Arc branch and a round trip down the Stuttgart branch, then return to Biddle before the crew hog-lawed. This train usually operated to Des Arc tri-weekly, although it served Stuttgart six days a week. The absence of a wye on the Des Arc line required the local to run around its train at Mesa (and again at Des Arc). On the return trip, the local entered the mainline at Mesa, backed west to clear the switch leading to the west leg of the Stuttgart wye, and then headed down the Stuttgart branch. During the fall harvest each year, a Brinkley road switcher was established to operate between Des Arc and Wheatley Monday through Saturday, and this service would temporarily replace the local service on the branch.

The additional train service during the harvest time was required to serve the Des Arc Grain Drying Cooperative, a 3,000,000 bushel elevator which was a division of Riceland Foods. Rail service to this industry was provided beginning in 1950, and a sizable volume of seasonal traffic was generated over the branch from this source. The grain dryer could handle up to 25 hopper cars at one time, and additional agricultural traffic was derived from several fertilizer plants and farm implement companies at Des Arc. At times, up to 40 cars of fertilizer were waiting to be unloaded at Des Arc, making it necessary to create a makeshift hopper car to truck transfer facility out of a nearby trestle.

In order to accommodate heavier hopper cars, bridge 63, a 36 panel trestle south of Gospoda, was strengthened in early 1970. After this was accomplished, the maximum weight limit on the line was raised to 221,000 pounds. In somewhat of a surprise move, almost three miles of relay welded rail was laid from Mesa northward on the branch in the early 1970's, as a part of a planned upgrading of the line to handle heavier covered hopper cars shipped from the Des Arc Grain Dryer. [In the late 1960's, the typical track renewal allowance for the branch each year was 2,000 second-hand tie plates to be used when ties were replaced.] Unfortunately, only the first three miles of track northward from Mesa were rebuilt before funds for the project disappeared, and the remainder of the branch continued to sink deeper into the mud with each passing train.

The welded rail on the Des Arc branch was frequently utilized as a passing siding for trains meeting at Mesa. The Rock Island dispatcher at El Reno, for reasons unknown, often chose to meet through freights #25 and #26 at Mesa. The real siding at Mesa was always filled with cars -- cars for movement west on the west end of the siding, and cars for movement east on the east end. Because of this, it was necessary for either train #25 or #26 (each with 100 or more cars) to enter the Des Arc branch in order to let the other train pass. If the eastbound train was instructed to take siding, it proceeded east as far as DeValls Bluff, and then backed onto the Des Arc branch. When the westbound train had orders to take siding at Mesa, it was necessary for the train to leave a flagman at DeValls Bluff to protect the train as it backed out of the branch after the meet. To further complicate matters, the meet frequently involved a local freight which was at Mesa at the time, and this train usually backed down the Stuttgart branch to clear up for the two through freights.

The heavy hopper cars rapidly took their toll on the segment of the branchline which had not been rebuilt. Except for 1/2 mile of 80# rail laid in 1916, all of the branch north of milepost 3 was still using 70# relay rail which had been placed on the line when it was first built in 1904. All of this rail had been rolled between 1887 and 1892, and most had long since passed the point of being economically servicable. As track conditions became progressively worse, derailments all along the branch became commonplace, and the Des Arc yard was particularly treacherous. When derailments did not trap the locomotive, the crew simply left the remainder of the train and returned to Biddle running light. Frequently the locomotive was trapped on the branch by the derailment, forcing the train crew to deadhead back to Biddle by taxi. After the wrecking crew had rerailed the cars, a new crew was called to deadhead back from Biddle to Des Arc to pick up the train. On several occasions during this period, the Rock Island pile driver at Biddle was called out to repair the numerous trestles on the branch, with the 507-foot trestle at milepost 6 (bridge 63, south of Gospoda) being particularly troublesome during periods of high water.

Branchline service was temporarily suspended about December 1, 1972, and did not resume until almost September, 1973, when tri-weekly service was restored. The tri-weekly trip to Des Arc was discontinued on June 1, 1974, and was replaced with irregular service on an as-needed basis. Train operating frequencies soon declined to the point where trains were operating to Des Arc only once or twice monthly, except during October, November, and December, when 8 to 10 trips would be made each month. As service declined, so did the traffic levels, and by 1974 it had become evident that abandonment of the branchline was only a matter of time. Probably the last industrial spur to be built on the branch was a 430-foot industrial spur constructed to serve Miller-Patterson Lumber Company at Des Arc, and placed in service on August 28, 1974.

The branchline was again out of service from January until April, 1975, due variously to track conditions and high water. Sporadic service resumed in late spring, but the rice and soybean traffic rush from September through December, 1975, proved to be a disaster, with the heavy grain cars causing an even more rapid deterioration of track. Multiple minor derailments at Des Arc became an expected occurrence with every train operating north of Mesa, despite the slow speed limits of 10 mph or less posted on the line. The costs of rerailing cars and patching up track were consuming more than the line generated in freight revenue. In December, 1975, only two trips of the Des Arc local were operated, and on one of those the crew was forced to tie up at Des Arc and return to Biddle by taxi as a result of derailments and the hog-law. From October through December 1975, 70 carloads of rice and 62 carloads of soybeans were loaded at Des Arc for shipment to Stuttgart. The only other shipments on the branch during this period were two carloads of lumber from Des Arc to Lenoir, North Carolina, and one shipment of agricultural machinery from Canton, Illinois to Des Arc.

Since the Rock Island had been placed in receivership during 1975, the lack of cash precluded any additional track rebuilding, thus more or less forcing the abandonment issue for the Des Arc branch. The Rock Island's general superintendent of transportation, Henry W. Metz, issued embargo #3-76 effective January 21, 1976, embargoing all freight to or from Des Arc account track conditions. Engine 1304 and caboose 17042 were called for 8am on January 21, and left Biddle with no cars. The remaining cars were gathered off of the branch, and the train arrived back in Biddle with two cars at 2:50pm. Soon after this last train operation, the first few miles of the line became a convenient site to store bad-order freight cars, and eventually over 100 cars were stored on the line. The Des Arc station had been dualized with Hazen about 1971, and on January 4, 1977 this operation was consolidated into the Lonoke station. On September 8, 1977, the City of Des Arc Utility Department was advised to discontinue water and gas service to the Des Arc depot after that facility was officially abandoned.

In mid-1979, the Rail Planning Division of the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department examined the Des Arc branch, to determine whether federal funding should be used to restore service on the line. The study concluded that federal funds should not be used for the line, since shippers had been forced to use truck transportation since 1976. There was no evident willingness on the part of former shippers to enter into any agreement with the railroad to share the cost of rehabilitation for the 15 miles of track. The costs of any rehabilitation would have been substantial, since "the roadbed and trackage along this right-of-way are in such a total state of disrepair that a complete rebuilding of the branchline would be called for, with the roadbed, crossties, rails, and bridges all in need of replacement."

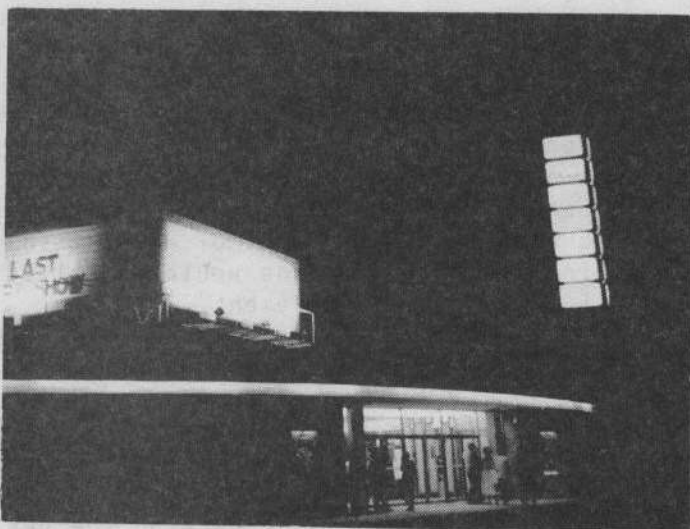
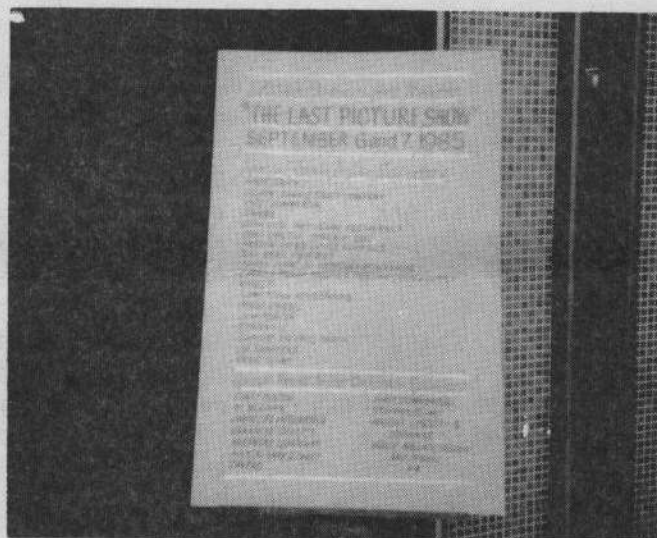
The Des Arc branch continued to serve as a storage site for derelict freight cars until the Rock Island ceased operations east of Little Rock, on March 24, 1980. The Des Arc and Stuttgart branches were the second branchlines in Arkansas to be scrapped by L.B. Foster crews, and this necessitated the removal of all stored cars on the line. Because most of these cars were obsolete and in generally bad condition, they were not considered roadworthy enough even for a short move to Biddle. To clear the two branches for rail removal, the cars on the Des Arc line were pulled out and stored on sidings and the main line at Mesa, where they were

subsequently scrapped on the spot. (Missouri Pacific's Hazen turn made several special movements from Hazen to Mesa to spot gondolas for scrap loading, in what was the easternmost extension of MP service over the former Rock Island.) Both branchlines extending from Mesa were dismantled by salvage crews beginning in March, 1982, with most of the rail from the Des Arc branch being consigned to scrap.

A portion of the right of way north of Mesa was acquired by the State of Arkansas, in order to protect the Wattensaw Game Preserve through which the line passed. The removal of the rail line also allowed two troublesome high fills and overpasses on Interstate-40 to be eliminated. As of mid-1987, some ex-Rock Island industrial trackage at Searcy continues in service, operated by the DK&S. The remainder of the branch, the junction point of Mesa, and even the mainline itself has, like the Rock Island, vanished.

This article could not have been completed without the assistance of club members L.T. Walker, who provided many recollections of his work on this branch, and Jim Bennett, who provided an early profile map of the line.

THE CLOSING OF THE HEIGHTS THEATRE IN 1985



On September 7, 1985 (over two years ago), the famous Heights Theatre in the Heights section of Little Rock had its final movie then closed for good (the building is now an office complex).

This theatre, one of only two large single screen theatres left in Little Rock, opened May 1, 1946 at 7:00 PM, showing "Leave Her To Heaven", starring Gene Tierney, Cornel Wilde, Jeanne Crain and Vincent Price. The cartoon shown then was Bugs Bunny in "The Wild Hare". In 1946 evening ticket prices were 39¢ for adults, 14¢ for children. Harry Truman was President and Ben T. Laney was Arkansas' governor.

HOW TIMES CHANGE! Movie prices in September 1985 for evening shows were \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. The President was Ronald Reagan and Arkansas's governor was Bill Clinton.

The final movie shown was "The Last Picture Show" starring Cybill Shepherd and Ben Johnson. The picture at lower left was taken after the final show. It went dark a few seconds later -- for good. However, memories of it will last.

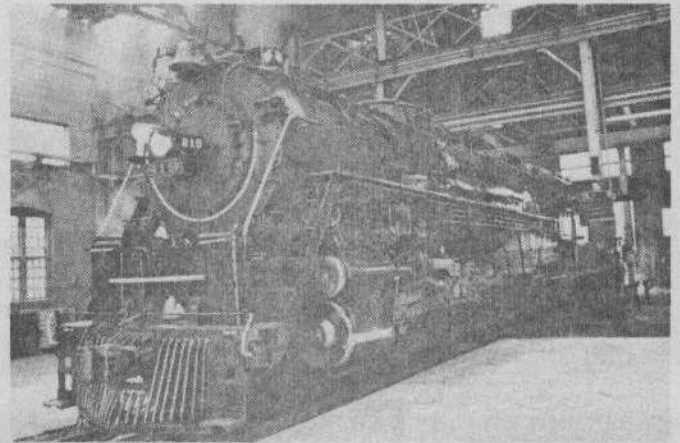
AN INTERESTING OCCURRENCE - The Hille's daughter, Caroline, recently spent four weeks Christmas vacation with them here in Little Rock, leaving back to San Diego January 5th (just missing our 12-inch snowfall). Well, she had been wanting to see the movie "End of the Line" (made in Arkansas) for some time, but could not find it in the San Diego area. It just so happened, however, that while flying on a 747 jet from Dallas to San Diego, they show movies for entertainment. Can you imagine her surprise when the name of the feature that day was "End of the Line"!

819 NEWS - The Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society received a special award of merit from the Historical Preservation Alliance of Arkansas at the Arkansas Preservation Conference held in Fort Smith November 14, 1987. The honor was given the society for its restoration of the 819. The society invested 25,000 man-hours and \$142,000 in the effort, which took 2 years, 4½ months.

Work is progressing on the reroofing project on the old Cotton Belt shop at Pine Bluff. Jake Commer, president of the CBRHS said that about one-fifth of the over-all roofing job will be done in the initial phase with all work done on a pay-as-you-go basis. Donations are always welcome. The building is open weekdays 9-3 and on Sunday afternoons by appointment. Address of the society is P.O. Box 2044, Pine Bluff AR 71613.



Some of the Project 819 crew members honored by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Alliance for the locomotive restoration project included (from left): T. D. Davis, Jake Commer, Jack Stone and Joe McCullough. The award was bestowed upon CBRHS at the Alliance's seventh annual awards session in Fort Smith November 14.



Cotton Belt locomotive 819 steams gradually into place over the service pit at the CBRHS Museum in the old Pine Bluff Cotton Belt locomotive shop building. Rebuilding of the dilapidated roof covering the historic structure began in late October.

(Much of the above information was taken from the Winter 1987 issue of "Cotton Belt News", as were the pictures.)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

ARKANSAS & MISSOURI RR GIVEN WARNING - (Springdale) - According to "The DISPATCHER" of the Central Oklahoma Railfans Club, The Arkansas & Missouri Railroad that runs on the former BN line between Springdale and Fort Smith, was given a stern warning by a Federal Railroad Administration inspector in late November regarding the A&M's lack of a timecard, no general orders being used, the absence of an operating book and the fact that these trains were operating without track clearances or track warrants. The inspector reportedly gave the A&M 60 days (from late November) to get these things straight.

KCS DISCONTINUES CREW CHANGES IN DEQUEEN DECEMBER 1 - Kansas City Southern railroad stopped most of its train crew changes in DeQueen effective 12:01 A.M. Tuesday, December 1, 1987. Trainmaster A. R. Luman of Heavener, Oklahoma said under the new interdivisional service, the same crew will now take trains from Shreveport to Heavener. In the past, trains had stopped at DeQueen to change crews and employees usually spent the night in a local motel before catching a train home the next day. About 12 trains per day go through DeQueen, Luman said. The clerical staff at the DeQueen depot will be reduced from two to one and he will work from 4 P.M. to midnight. Plans to raze the old depot are still indefinite although it will probably be torn down

sometime in 1988. The old depot will be replaced with a smaller building. DeQueen citizens should be aware that trains will not be stopping in town now and should watch crossings more closely. Most people are used to seeing trains moving much slower because they were slowing down to stop or starting up again. (DeQueen BEE, December 3)

U.P. TRAIN HITS CAR; FOUR DEAD - (Little Rock) - Four people en route to a party, three of them teenagers, died early November 29 when a U.P. train struck their car at a crossing at Baseline and Mann Roads in Little Rock. The car's driver apparently tried to beat the 113-car and four engine train across the intersection. "I understand they were trying to beat the train", Pulaski County Coroner Steve Nawojczyk said. "That's a game you can't win." The accident occurred at 2:46 A.M. Police said the car drove around the railroad gate, which was down.

Police said the car had been traveling north, the same direction as the train, on Mann road, which parallels the tracks. The car then turned west onto Baseline Road and into the path of the train.

Over the years in Arkansas, rail-car collisions have claimed as many as seven victims in a single accident. Here are other accidents with a high death toll:

Four passengers in a pickup truck were killed in Hunter, located east of Cotton Plant, in 1955 when a Cotton Belt freight collided with their truck. -- Seven West Helena residents were killed in 1959, 7 miles west of Helena at the Wycamp crossing when a Missouri Pacific passenger train hit their car. -- Five people were killed by a Cotton Belt freight in 1961 in southeast Arkansas. The train struck a truck carrying three passengers in Stuttgart. The same train then later hit and killed a woman and her daughter 20 miles away in Altheimer. -- In 1962, a Cotton Belt freight near Stuttgart at the Ricusky crossing struck a car and killed five DeWitt residents. -- More recently, a Michigan man and three of his Blytheville relatives were killed in May 1985 when their car pulled in front of a Burlington Northern train. -- And on March 25, 1987 a mother and her four children were killed at Trumann when she crossed in front of a BN train. (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, November 30, 1987, by Noel Oman and Judy Gallman)

UNION PACIFIC TO TRANSFER CENTER, DELETE 31 ARKANSAS JOBS - (North Little Rock) - U.P. transferred functions of a customer service center at North Little Rock to a new St. Louis facility, eliminating 31 North Little Rock jobs. The move was part of a sweeping reorganization plan. The reorganization plan, announced in March, 1986, will eventually affect more than 220 jobs at North Little Rock. U.P. is consolidating its 40 existing regional customer service centers, including the North Little Rock facility, into the National Customer Service Center in downtown St. Louis. The new facility is staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day by more than 500 people. Arkansas customers can now call a single toll free number 1-800-272-8777 for a variety of rail and intermodal services such as ordering. The traffic manager of one major manufacturing firm at Little Rock, who asked not to be identified, expressed reservations about a single customer service center serving the entire U.P. system. (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, Randy Tardy, December 3)

SANTA IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS - (Fayetteville) - Santa Claus visited Northwest Arkansas aboard an Arkansas & Missouri train on December 19. The A&M RR, in cooperation with Operation Lifesaver, hosted the train visit by Santa at the train depots in Rogers, Springdale and Fayetteville. (NORTHWEST ARKANSAS TIMES)

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING - (Corning) - Two plans to wreck Missouri Pacific trains in December 1930 were averted by section foreman. Heavy barbed wire was stretched across the railway and right of way on the Cairo branch, presumably for the purpose of injuring or killing section workmen travelling by rail motorcars. The second attempt was made near Whitewater, Missouri on the Belmont Branch of the MOPAC. The method employed by those latter vandals was placing a long row of iron railroad spikes on the rails. This probably would have derailed an engine. (Reprint of a December 1930 article, CLAY COUNTY COURIER)

ENGINE 300 TO MOVE OUT OF PARAGOULD - (Paragould) - Engine 300 is pulling out of Paragould...Destination Jackson, Missouri. The Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Co. of Jackson was the buyer. The loco was built in 1926 by American Locomotive Co. The engine and tender

has been in Harmon Park since 1959. In 1985 the Sunbelt Historical Trust of Tulsa, Oklahoma proposed restoring the engine and putting it in service as an excursion train. The proposal never became a reality. In the same year, Tom McNutt, a Paragould contractor, volunteered to restore the appearance of the train if the city kept it in Harmon Park. That proposal also fell through.

The engine was brought to the city in 1959 by a group of investors organized as the Children's Iron Mountain Railroad. The group raised \$1,500 to bring the train there by selling shares in the company. These shareholders were contacted then, and signed a release turning the train over to the parks department. According to the agreement, the Jackson, Missouri company will restore the engine to working condition and put it in service, pulling a passenger train on a 36-mile round trip between Jackson and Delta, Missouri. Local people can go to Jackson to ride the train, which will carry the name "City of Paragould" on its side. (PARAGOULD DAILY PRESS, December 14, 1987)

PINE BLUFF TO RECEIVE LESS FUNDING FOR RAIL OVERPASSES - (Pine Bluff) - House-Senate negotiators pared \$100,000 from funds earmarked for rail overpass projects in Pine Bluff. The action leaves \$1.9 million for continued work on overpasses at Plum Street and West Sixth Avenue. The same bill includes \$475,000 to study the proposed Great River Bridge between Desha County, Arkansas and Mississippi. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL)

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

SOUTHERN PACIFIC SOLD - On December 28, 1987, Southern Pacific Railroad was sold, pending ICC approval, to Rio Grande Industries. The gross sale price of \$1.8 billion includes \$1.02 billion in cash and the outstanding SP dept. Rio Grande Industries agreed to comply with existing labor contracts for Southern Pacific employees.

William J. Holtman, President of Rio Grande Industries, on December 28 said, among other things, "We anticipate filing an application for merger of the two railroads within the next 60 days. The ICC must approve the merger before we can actually purchase the property. We hope that the ICC will expedite review to allow us to close the purchase before the end of the summer. At that time we will pay the full price and take control of the Southern Pacific." (Wonder what the name and paint scheme will be? Rio Grande Pacific?)

The official press release said that the merger of SP and D&RGW would:

"result in a system with 15,500 miles serving 14 states, one of the five largest rail systems in the United States. Rio Grande's acquisition of the Southern Pacific is an historic moment in American railroading. Both railroads played dramatic roles in the often romantic saga of the early west, helping open up areas of the west to development and aiding in bringing new population and industrialization to the western U.S. While the geography and route structure of both railroads favored this merger into one system over 100 years ago, it was not to be, as both railroads became caught up in the rail wars which raged between competing factions in the late 1800's and early 1900's. By the early years of the twentieth century, the Rio Grande was part of the Jay Gould controlled railroad empire, a rail system that also included the Western Pacific and Missouri Pacific; the E. H. Harriman faction controlled both the Southern Pacific and the Union Pacific. In recent times, however, a role reversal occurred when Union Pacific acquired both Western Pacific and Missouri Pacific, and the Rio Grande has increasingly cooperated with the Southern Pacific.

A merger between the SP and D&RGW marks the concluding chapter in the realignment of two great western railroad systems. This combination will once again restore the historic balance to the western railroad scene, said William J. Holtman, President of Rio Grande. 'We at the Rio Grande have recognized the absolute need for a new and bolder course, one that takes us beyond our Rocky Mountain heritage and creates a strong viable transportation organization able to compete with other western railroads as a separate stand-alone SP/D&RGW Railroad."

On December 31, Santa Fe-Southern Pacific formerly filed its divestiture plan with the ICC, describing the planned sale of SP. The sale was not liked by everyone, however. Kansas City Southern has said it will oppose the sale and the Henley Group says it favors the sale of Santa Fe by SFSP instead of SP.

SFSP Corp., criticized by Kansas City Southern Industries for agreeing to sell Southern Pacific to Rio Grande, said January 7 that the cash portion of the losing KCS bid "was not supported by bank commitments." Meanwhile, KCS President Landon Rowland told the news media he's "outraged by SFSP's misrepresentation of our bid" and vowed to oppose the sale before the ICC. He said that KCS's bid was higher.

SFSP said: "With regard to the value of the bids, the final Rio Grande offer was all cash, was somewhat greater than the cash portion of the bid submitted by the KCS and was supported by a bank commitment.

In arriving at our conclusion to accept the bid from Rio Grande Industries we considered the public interest, the interest of shareholders, expedition in implementing the transaction and feasibility."

How will the sale affect Cotton Belt employees in Arkansas? "The sale should enhance all opportunities for the company to provide services to customers and should not have any effect on employment other than to strengthen the system," Jim Johnson, head of public relations for the Cotton Belt said. Cotton Belt operates about 400 miles of track in Arkansas.

Several other firms bidding for SP likely won't end their bitter bidding war. SFSP's largest shareholder, the Henley Group, called the deal "an unwise decision...in what amounts to a bankruptcy auction." Kansas City Southern said, in addition to that stated above, "Our bid for the SP is substantially higher, has fewer regulatory problems." Joele Frank, a spokesman for KCS, said the railroad may file its own bid for the SP with the ICC. ICC spokesman Dennis Watson said any bids sent directly to the ICC would be considered. Jeffrey B. Stone, a railroad analyst in New York for Wertheim & Co. said the \$1.8 billion "strikes me as being a very high price; the company doesn't earn very much money. I'm curious why the Santa Fe would pick the Rio Grande if the KCS says its offering a better price."

At any rate, now's the time to get those photos of SP and Cotton Belt, for this time next year we'll probably begin seeing a new name and paint scheme on SP equipment. (The preceding report came in part from SP UPDATE, DUMAS CLARION, CLEVELAND COUNTY HERALD)

NO SMOKING- Union Pacific adopted a no-smoking policy in the St. Louis General Office building and in the Omaha headquarters January 1, 1988. UP Chairman Mike Walsh said "We are undertaking this policy at this time because of our concern for employee health and welfare and our belief that there is a very strong body of evidence suggesting that smoking is unhealthy for non-smokers as well as smokers." Smoking will be prohibited in all areas of the building, including private offices, restrooms and hallways. There will be a small smoking room set aside initially, however. (November INFO MAGAZINE)

FORMER AMTRAK PRESIDENT ROGER LEWIS DIES - Roger Lewis, the first President of Amtrak, died in Washington on November 12 at the age of 75. It was well thought that President Nixon wanted him to get rid of all passenger trains in the country. Luckily he failed.

BURLINGTON NORTHERN BRIDGE DESIGNATED AS LANDMARK - (Memphis) - "The Memphis Bridge" - the first to span the Mississippi River - was dedicated as a national historic civil engineering landmark in a November 5, 1987 ceremony. The bridge was constructed in 1885 and completed in 1892 for rail traffic with a provision for planking to permit wagons to use the structure. At the time, the bridge was the longest steel truss span bridge in the U.S. and third longest in the world. (December 1987 BN SPRINGFIELD REGION NEWS)

UP-MKT MERGER - The ICC has until April 2, 1988 to issue a decision on this proposed merger. However, a decision is expected sometime in February. There is actually little opposition to the merger. The UP/MKT has offered trackage rights to maintain competition. The MKT cannot remain competitive on a long-term basis as an independent railroad. For example, most of the MKT main line is still laid with 112 and 115-pound jointed rail. The Katy can only afford to replace a small fraction of the track that should be relaid each year. In fact, years of deferred maintenance will dictate that some MKT routes will be downgraded or abandoned. For example, MKT's route between Paola, Kansas and Wagoner, OK is shorter than the parallel UP route, but UP will downgrade the MKT track because it would cost \$50 to upgrade it to modern standards.

Apparently, UP even signed an agreement with the city of Parsons, Kansas, which will be adversely impacted by the merger. The UP will give the city \$1 million, considerable MKT land and the old MKT shop complex if the merger is approved and if the city doesn't object to the merger. (St. Louis Chapter's THE GATEWAY RAILLETTER, Decmeber 1987, by Clyde L. Anderson)

DISTURBED HER VIEW? - A 71-year old woman was taken into custody January 10 after she shot at SP crews cleaning up a 27-car derailment at Talent, Oregon. SP police say the woman, brandishing a .32 caliber automatic, fired eight shots, twice hitting one of two derailed locomotives and putting a hole in the tailgate of a water service truck. The woman opened fire from her house across the road from the derailment. The Jackson County sheriff's office coaxed the woman out of the house and placed her under psychiatric observation. There were no injuries. (SP UPDATE)

UNION PACIFIC SAFETY STATS - UP Chairman Michael Walsh said that in 1987 UP paid out well in excess of \$100 million for personal injury costs, money which otherwise would have been used to increase business. To put in perspective, these injury costs took the profits from 15 to 20 percent of all the carloads UP moved in 1987. He also said that in 1988, just to keep their total wage and benefit bill even with 1987, they would have to eliminate almost 1,700 positions. (UP INFO MAGAZINE)

1987 UP BUSINESS - Union Pacific has reported record traffic levels in 1987. From January 1 through early December, UP hauled more than 3.1 million carloads of the nation's goods, an increase of 7 percent over 1986 (imagine the wait at a railroad crossing for 3.1 million train cars to pass!)

SP'S CAPITAL SPENDING - Southern Pacific has approved a 1988 capital spending program of \$395 million, down from \$434 million in 1987. In 1988, SP plans to acquire 50 more locomotives and send 40 to be refurbished. Truck and freight equipment gotten in 1987 included 40 double-stack cars, 100 container flatcars, 100 fully enclosed tri-levels, 100 flatcars and 16 intermodal transport units. In 1988, SP plans to acquire 50 bulkhead flatcars, 75 fully enclosed tri-levels, 30 double-stack cars and 35 intermodal vehicle transport units. \$197 million has been set aside in 1988 for replacement of rails, ties and ballast; \$3.7 million for expansion of intermodal container facilities; and \$1.9 million for expansion of various auto facilities. (SP UPDATE)

LAW AND THE UNION PACIFIC - Union Pacific was the defendant in over a thousand lawsuits last year. By far the greatest number of suits are for personal injuries under the Federal Employees Liability Act. As a general rule, 85 percent of the payout is for FELA cases and 15 percent for crossing cases. (December 1987 UP INFO)

RAILROAD RETIREES - According to Jim Dolan, UP's Vice President of Law, there is no question that the Railroad Retirement Program is in trouble because one employee is supporting three retirees. He said you have to realize that a number of those retirees come from the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, the Rock Island and other railroads that are no longer on the scene and have left in their wake a number of retired employees who are entitled to full protection of the system. A retirement crisis point is projected to occur at the turn of the century, he said. (December 1987 INFO MAGAZINE)

ADVANTAGE TO GROWING OLD - According to the December 1987 University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, one compensation for growing older is that you have developed immunity to a large number of cold viruses. Thus by age 60 most people have only one cold per year, if any.

NEW TITLES SUMMARIZED - The reorganization of Union Pacific's Operating Department has resulted in title changes for many rail employees. Some of the new titles follow, with the former titles in parenthesis:

SUPERINTENDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES (Division Superintendent); **MANAGER TRAIN OPERATIONS** (Trainmaster); **MANAGER TRACK MAINTENANCE** (Roadmaster); **MANAGER OPERATING PRACTICES** (Road Foreman of Engines); **MANAGER CAR MAINTENANCE** (General Foreman-Car); **DIRECTOR SHOP OPERATIONS** (Superintendent Shops); **SUPERVISOR TRAIN OPERATIONS** (Assistant Trainmaster). (INFO MAGAZINE)

NEWS updated through January 15. Projected mailing date January 22 or before. Deadline for March issue is February 15.



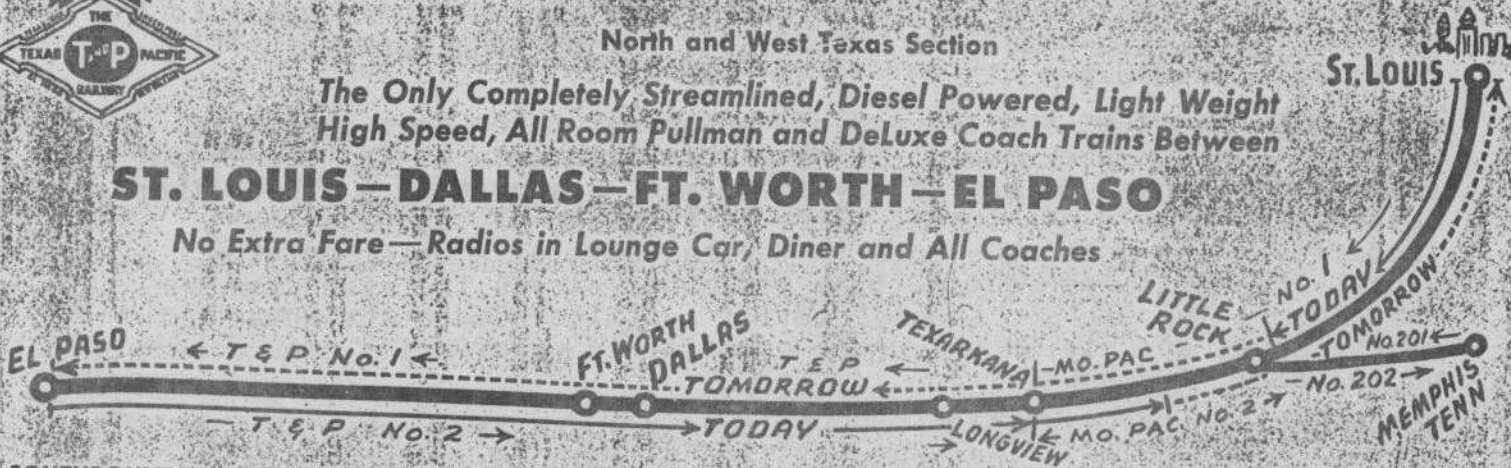
The Texas Eagle

North and West Texas Section

The Only Completely Streamlined, Diesel Powered, Light Weight High Speed, All Room Pullman and DeLuxe Coach Trains Between

ST. LOUIS—DALLAS—FT. WORTH—EL PASO

No Extra Fare—Radios in Lounge Car, Diner and All Coaches



SOUTHBOUND TRAIN No. 1 (Read Down)

5:30 PM	Today	Lv.	El Paso
9:30 PM	Today	Lv.	Ft. Worth
12:40 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Dallas
3:25 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Texarkana
4:35 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Marshall
5:01 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Longview
5:16 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Gladewater
7:30 AM	Tomorrow	Ar.	Dallas
8:30 AM	Tomorrow	Ar.	Ft. Worth
10:15 PM	Tomorrow	Ar.	El Paso

SCHEDULES

NORTHBOUND TRAIN No. 2 (Read Up)

8:10 AM	Tomorrow	Ar.	St. Louis
4:20 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Poplar Bluff
1:30 AM	Tomorrow	Lv.	Little Rock
10:40 PM	Today	Lv.	Texarkana
9:15 PM	Today	Lv.	Marshall
8:45 PM	Today	Lv.	Longview
8:26 PM	Today	Lv.	Gladewater
6:15 PM	Today	Lv.	Dallas
5:15 PM	Today	Lv.	Ft. Worth
12:50 AM	Today	Lv.	El Paso

Through Sleeper and Coach Equipment (MP-201 and 202 Between Memphis and Little Rock)
Lv Memphis, 8:30 PM (No. 201) for Texas. Ar Memphis, 6:30 AM (No. 202) from Texas.

DIRECT CONNECTIONS AT ST. LOUIS

SOUTHBOUND		NORTHBOUND	
ARRIVE	DEPART	ARRIVE	DEPART
The National Limited No. 11	1:00 PM	The National Limited No. 2	10:05 AM
The Diplomat No. 3	4:10 PM	The Diplomat No. 4	1:20 PM
Train No. 12	1:48 PM	Mark Twain Zephyr No. 43	8:30 AM
The Ann Rutledge No. 19	1:45 PM	The Abraham Lincoln No. 2	8:58 AM
The Alton Limited No. 1	4:55 PM	The Alton Limited No. 4	11:55 AM
The Daylight No. 19	4:00 PM	The Green Diamond No. 22	9:00 AM
Dixie Limited No. 92	12:20 PM	Train No. 51	8:30 AM
The Knickerbocker No. 41	11:45 AM	Dixie Limited-Georgian, No. 93	4:35 PM
Southwestern Limited No. 11	3:55 PM	Southwestern Limited No. 12	9:25 AM
The "Spirit of St. Louis" No. 31	12:10 PM	The Knickerbocker No. 24	12:45 PM
The Jeffersonian No. 65	1:40 PM	The American No. 66	9:00 AM
The Penn Texas No. 3	3:00 PM	The Penn Texas No. 4	10:15 AM
The American No. 67	4:15 PM	The "Spirit of St. Louis" No. 30	12:30 PM
Banner Blue No. 11	4:35 PM	The Jeffersonian No. 64	1:00 PM
Wabash Cannonball No. 1	5:05 PM	Bluebird No. 24	8:55 AM
		Wabash Cannonball No. 4	9:00 AM
		Banner Blue No. 10	12:00 PM

THROUGH SLEEPING CARS

Between St. Louis - Ft. Worth, New York - El Paso, Washington - Ft. Worth, Memphis - Ft. Worth.

THROUGH DELUXE COACHES

Modern light-weight, reclining seat coaches between St. Louis-Dallas-Ft. Worth-El Paso, and Memphis-Ft. Worth.

DINING CAR—LOUNGE CAR

Full 44-seat dining car and sleeper-lounge between St. Louis-Ft. Worth, diner-lounge, between Ft. Worth-El Paso.

See reverse side for details of consist, equipment and accommodations.

DIRECT CONNECTIONS AT MEMPHIS


WESTBOUND		EASTBOUND	
ARRIVE	DEPART	ARRIVE	DEPART
Florida Special No. 106	6:45 PM	Florida Special No. 105	10:20 AM
City of New Orleans No. 1	5:15 PM	Northern Express No. 26	7:30 AM
Southern Express No. 25	5:40 PM	City of New Orleans No. 2	1:55 PM
Train No. 103	4:50 PM	Pan-American No. 198	7:55 AM
City of Memphis No. 6	7:15 PM	City of Memphis No. 5	7:45 AM
Train No. 35	4:50 PM	Train No. 36	8:00 AM

This is No. 1 (revised 5-15-52) of a series of information bulletins, concerning principal Missouri Pacific Lines Trains issued for the convenience of traffic representatives, ticket sellers, hotel porters and others.

ONLY ONE COUPON NECESSARY TO ANY POINT SERVED BY THE TEXAS EAGLE
Just Mark the Coupon "Sunshine Route"

The above May 15, 1952 timetable was sent your editor by P. L. Moseley. If anyone else has similar items to share for readers of this newsletter, please send them in. Also, anyone having rail news, mainly in the Arkansas area, that they'd like to share, send that in also. I am also looking for VERTICAL 5x7 or smaller prints to use for cover shots. Send all such material to Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Drive, North Little Rock, AR 72118.

21 Nov 1870



GARDEN STATE IN '88

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1988 NATIONAL CONVENTION

July 27 to July 31, 1988
 with preconvention activities from July 23.

Nine exciting days of railroad history with the Tri-State Chapter in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

IMPORTANT: Pre-registration is open now. Ask your NRHS Director or send S\$AE to:

Tri-State Railway Historical Society
 Post Office Box 2243
 Clifton, New Jersey 07015-2243

TRANSPORTATION

Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad

Time Card

ON and after Monday, November 21, 1870, a passenger and freight train will run as follows:

GOING WEST.

Leave—	
Huntersville	8:30 a. m.
Bartlett	9:00 " "
Palarm	9:35 " "
Gold Creek	10:06 " "
Conway	10:52 " "
Cadron	11:00 " "
Plummers	11:31 " "
Arriving at Lewisburg	12:00 p. m.

GOING EAST.

Leave—	
Lewisburg	1:00 p. m.
Plummers	1:30 " "
Cadron	2:00 " "
Conway	2:30 " "
Gold Creek	3:00 " "
Palarm	3:30 " "
Bartlett	4:00 " "
Arriving at Huntersville	4:30 p. m.

Stage Connection between Lewisburg and Fort Smith.
 Coaches will also leave the principal hotels at Little Rock for transfer of passengers and from the station at Huntersville.

For further information, inquire at the general office of the company, Real Estate Bank Building, corner of Markham and Commerce streets, up stairs.

D. W. C. ARDWIN, Gen'l Sup't.
LORING S. RICHARDSON,
 Gen'l Ticket Agent



Gene Hull sent me the above copy of a November 21, 1870 LR&FS RR timecard. Yes...the good old days when you could get a stagecoach from your hotel!

JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

Dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year for out-of-state. Dues are for calendar years January through December, so if you pay in the middle of the year, please prorate the payments (for instance, if you pay in June, pay only \$5.00 for the rest of that year). Dues are always due January 1st of each year. You may also join National Railway Historical Society through the club by paying \$9.00 additional per year (total payment for Arkansas residents \$19.00).

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 _____

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

Dick Byrd, Treasurer
12 Flintwood Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72207

(NOTE: This address for dues only)

For Change of Address or other concerns about the ARKANSAS RAILROADER, write to this address:

Ken Ziegenbein, Editor
905 Valerie Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118

WELCOME ABOARD!!!

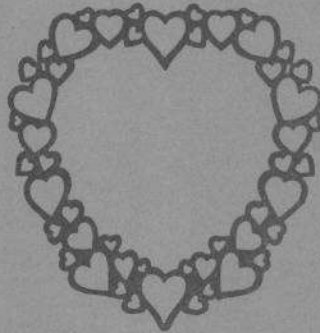
The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization that meets once a month on the second Sunday of the month. This month's meeting place is listed under the "PROGRAM" notice elsewhere in this publication. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

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 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 to all members automatically.

If you'd like to join, send your check made payable to the Arkansas Railroad Club to the club's treasurer: Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our club by paying \$9/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 (including stories, pictures, diagrams, news, address changes, etc.):

KEN ZIEGENBEIN
905 VALERIE DRIVE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR 72118
Phone: (501)-758-1340



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c/o Ken Ziegenbein, Editor
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