



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



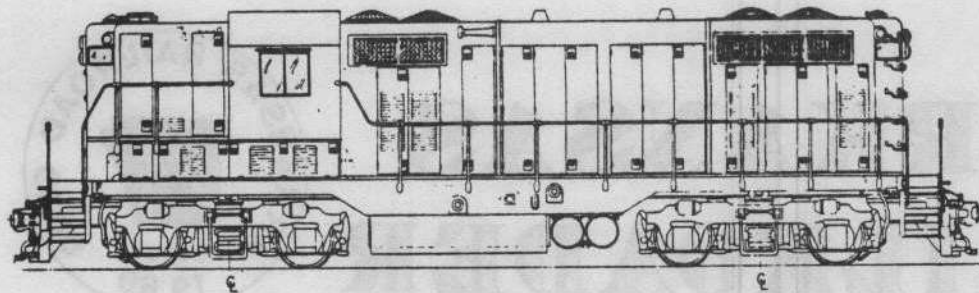
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 6

JUNE 1987



Ex-UP F9-A covered wagon sits awaiting duty; its' plow won't be needed in the hills of western Arkansas. Date unknown. (Photo by John Martin)



GENERAL NEWS

CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

1987 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

President - Peter Smykla
2800 West 37
Pine Bluff, AR 71603
(501)-535-4724

Vice-President - Carole Sue Schafer
103 Thayer
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501)-371-0034

Treasurer - Dick Byrd
12 Flintwood Dr
Little Rock, AR 72207
(501)-225-7354

Secretary - Polly Hamilton
522 South Main
Benton, AR 72015
(501)-778-6221

NRHS Rep - Mike Adams
3609 Lakeshore Dr
N Little Rock, AR 72116
(501)-753-5120

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

WANTED - Rock Island passenger timetables. If you have any for sale, contact J. B. Caulfield, 107 Leland St., Water Valley, Mississippi 38965.

WANTED - Rock Island photos to be used in the newly refurbished Rock Island depot in Lonoke. If you have any, contact L. T. Walker at 3520 Lakeview Road, North Little Rock, AR 72116.

☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

Eakles Hille will be giving the next program of the Arkansas Railroad Club. His show will be on passenger train timetables. The date will be Sunday, June 14 at 2:00 PM in the Twin City Bank building on Main Street in North Little Rock. Everyone is invited to come and bring friends.

THANKS - The size of this newsletter would have to be much smaller were it not for the free offset printing done at Enmar in Southwest Little Rock. Enmar just happens to be where our club treasurer, Dick Byrd, works. If the printing had to be done commercially each month, a 20-page publication like ours would cost \$160 (using customer stock paper).

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

NEW AMTRAK STATION - (Little Rock) - As I was going to press, the decision on where to put the new Amtrak station in the Greater Little Rock area was very near. The announcement was expected before the end of May with Amtrak operating out of the station by October. Although no final decision was made as of this writing, the odds-on favorite site would be North Little Rock just across the Baring Cross bridge from Little Rock. The city of North Little Rock would build the building and lease it to Amtrak, along with other users, possibly a rental car agency.

RESTORED LONOKE DEPOT DEDICATED MAY 10 - (Lonoke) - Over 300 persons gathered at the restored Rock Island depot in Lonoke (on the Sunbelt Route) to dedicate it. Delivering the keynote address was Senator Dale Bumpers, accompanied by his wife Betty (who recently wanted to preserve every house over 50 years old in Senator Bumper's hometown of Charleston). Quoting the senator: "It was not an easy chore to get a \$144,000 grant to restore the depot - for example, there are about 150 depots in Arkansas in a state of disrepair, all needing money if they are to be saved." Club member L. T. Walker attended the dedication and said the depot is worth seeing. (LONOKE DEMOCRAT, May 13)

I N D I A N R I V E R A N D W E S T E R N
RAILWAY

Chicago, Illinois

Office of General Yardmaster, North Yard I R & W Ry.

Chicago, Illinois

September 1, 1894

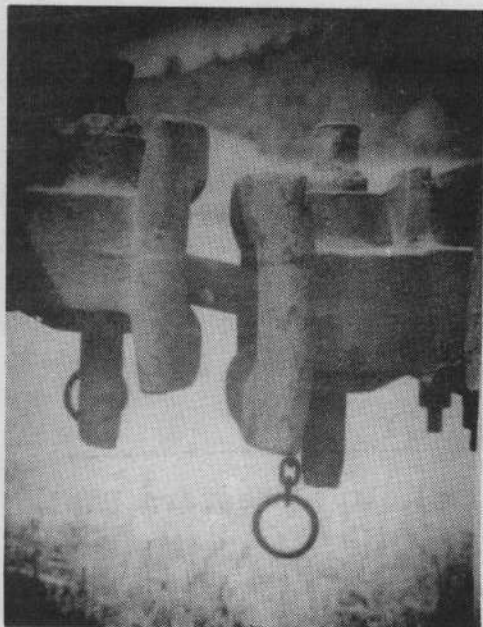
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN . Thomas Williams has been employed by the Indian River and Western Railway in the North Yard as a Switchman from January 2, 1893 to July 10, 1894. Age at last Birthday was 25 years. Reason for leaving employment of the I. R. & W. Ry.....Resigned on own accord.

Tom Clark, GYM, North Yard

CRANE WITH A BROKEN NECK - FACT OR FICTION

by: William Church

By the mid 1880's, the practice of yard masters, conductors and engineers hiring their own crew was rapidly coming to an end on most railroads. This was mostly due to an organization called "The General Manager's Association", a group of officials from various "main line" railroads, who met and discussed the many problems of railroad management.



LINK & PIN COUPLER (LINCOLN PIN)
AT DIERKS FOREST PRODUCTS, MOUNTAIN PINE, ARKANSAS, 1961. (Gene Hull photo)

One of the major concerns was the growing railroad unions, who, once they gained numbers, were now striking for higher pay and better working conditions. The old custom of a show of fingers by a yardmaster (missing fingers were a trademark of "link-pin" switchmen and brakemen), or a conductor or engineer hiring their own crew was no longer acceptable. This system of hiring allowed too many undesireables into the employment that later caused trouble, and G.M.A. wanted to stamp out any growth of unionism that such practice of hiring brought about.

Out of the General Manager's Association came a procedure that lasted until today. This is of requiring each new employee to make out an application for work, stating name, age, place of birth and to furnish references that would prove where he had been working for a least the past three years. This application was followed by a physical examination and all information on the application was kept on file in the Division Superintendent's Office at the place of employment.

When an employee left the service, upon his request, he was presented with a letter of service, or a "service letter", that gave all of the information on his application and included his length of service with this railroad and cause of leaving. Such causes were standard, like violation of rules, reduction of force or on their own accord.

An experienced railroader usually carried several of these letters with him in applying for a job,

his application for employment usually carrying his best of references. As a rule, a new employee could work until his application was approved, as the company had fifty-nine days to turn an applicant on reference, putting the applicant out of a job once again. This method allowed the railroads belonging to the G.M.A. to screen all new employees and warn members of the Association of those who were undesirable when they apply for employment.

For the "boomer", the "service letter" became his trademark, each one carrying a dozen or more. Also, the "service letter" became his meal ticket, for without it he was denied employment. A good reference letter presented to a Trainmaster at a point where switchmen, brakemen or firemen were in need, was a sure ticket to a pay day.

But along with the "service letter" came a sort of misuse of power by the railroad company granting it to an employee. According to some "old timers", there were some "service letters" that had hidden messages in them, especially in the paper's Water Mark. They claim if a man had been too much union or rubbed the official's fur the wrong way, when he "pulled the pin" (or quit in Boomer lingo), he was presented a "service letter" whose Water Mark carried a warning to his next employer.

One old timer of the trade told of a railroad that issued "service letters" containing the Water Mark of a man and a train. If the man was walking away from the train, and the letters H.O.R. (Hire at Own Risk) appeared, this man was found to have been undesirable. But if the Water Mark was of a man walking to a train, he was a good man. It was by this means that potential trouble makers were eliminated. It cut down on paper work in sending to the old employer for information that

would cause the applicant to be terminated.

It is said by some "old timers" that the Gould System of railroads had a "black list." Any employee that was dismissed from service or resigned and his employment was far from satisfactory, his name was sent to every Division Superintendent's office throughout the whole system, with instructions - "Do Not Hire." One boomer told that he had been dismissed as a conductor on a Gould line in Texas for failure to make required running time on a train, only to be replaced the next day by the Trainmaster's brother-in-law. He claimed from then on he was never able to secure employment on any road that was owned or operated by Gould.

While the G.M.A. did their dead level best to rid the railroads of those who would upset the order of things in their circle of authority, the early railroad unions, such as the Order of Railway Conductors, also played a big hand in keeping their ranks clear of those who would not play the game straight.

Unlike today, when a man is forced to join a Union regardless of his desire to be a union man or not, the Order of Railway Conductors would not accept a man for membership unless he met several requirements. One being that he did not use strong drink, had the reputation of being a good citizen, paid his bills and was an extraordinary good conductor, being respected by the Company and men alike. After a man had been in a conductor's position for one year, he was allowed to petition the Order for membership by being vouched for by three other members of his character and work.


A conductor looking for employment who was a member of the Order of Railway Conductors usually had no trouble finding employment, his membership in the organization was sufficient to gain a conductor's position. So highly did the railroads think

INDIAN RIVER AND WESTERN
RAILWAY
Chicago, Illinois

Office of Superintendent, Western Division I R & W Ry.
Chicago, Illinois.

March 1, 1884

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, James W. Hamilton has been employed by the Indian River and Western Railway on the Western Div. as a Conductor from July 15, 1883 to March 1, 1884. Age at last Birthday was 26 years. Reason for leaving employment of the I. R. & W. Ry.Resigned on own accord.



E. E. Smith, Supt. Western Dist.

of ORC membership that in 1891 the Conductor's Contract allowed that a conductor would be hired for every two brakemen promoted from the ranks to conductor. If at the time of a promotion class, if there were no conductors applying for work, a space would be held open for any member of the Order of Railway Conductors who later sought employment at that Division point.

It is told of a trainmaster on the Little Rock and Ft. Smith Railroad, who was also a member of the ORC, found out that he was to be replaced by the Superintendent's brother, resigned his


Boomer railroad men like "Silent Slim" Roach, who wrote various pages about the ARU strike of 1894 in various publications, told how he earned his letter by sassing the L&N yardmaster at the yard where he had been working at the time Deb's called the strike. He tells how he asked for and received a letter from the L&N and thence after, when he showed it to a trainmaster for a job, he was promptly turned down. He later was shown the Water Mark of a Crane with his neck under water; it was a sign that he had been a troublemaker and a striker (see a copy of a "Crane" Water Mark below).

INDIAN RIVER AND WESTERN
RAILWAY
Chicago, Illinois

Office of General Yardmaster, North Yard I R & W Ry.
Chicago, Illinois.

September 1, 1894

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. Timothy Ballard has been employed by the Indian River and Western Railway in the North Yard as a Switchman from March 1, 1893 to July 14, 1894. Age at last Birthday was 23 years. Reason for leaving employment of the I. R. & W. Ry.....Resigned on own accord.


Tom Clark, GYM , North Yard.

position and hired himself as a passenger conductor, using the rule of holding a position open for ORC members looking for employment.

Whether or not it is true of a "Gould System" blacklist, it remains hidden in the pages of history. But my grandfather, "Bill" Church, who was dismissed by the Iron Mountain for Rule 99, was later hired by another Gould line, the Cotton Belt. It could have been his long standing in the ORC opened the door for him, or Gould's lines did not think that a violation of Rull 99 kept a conductor from seeking employment on another of their lines, or maybe there was not a blacklist at all.

The so-called "Deb's Rebellion" or the "ARU/Pullman strike" of 1894, gave birth to a story of a black list by the means of a "service letter" that is still circulated today. This "service letter" spelled doom to its owner when applying for a job and was called the "Crane With A Broken Neck." Although today there is no known letter in a private or public collection to prove it ever existed, the thought of such a letter does excite the mental capacity of the curious.

It is needless to say that the General Manager's Association had blood in their eyes after breaking the ARU strike. They first issued instruction to their members not to issue a "service letter" to those who were strikers. One striker took the case to the Federal court and it was ruled that the railroads had to give a man a "service letter". The G.M.A. instructed their members to comply with the court's order and issue "service letters" to all who requested, those who struck the same as those who resigned on their own accord.

It is said when a "service letter" was issued to an employee of a railroad that was struck by the ARU, that these letters contained a Water Mark that told of the owners affiliation with the ARU, if any.

On applying for a job it was said the employing officer would take the "service letter" into another room and hold it up to the light. If the Water Mark of the Crane was in any other position except feeding, he was OK; hire at their own risk. But if it was of the Crane feeding,

the man was a striker and thus, "Do Not Hire."

Fact or Fiction?? Who knows? So far, not one letter has ever come to light in modern times to prove it. Could it be just so much "Switch Shanty Talk"? Maybe so, except for a small article in a 1947 RAILROAD MAGAZINE that may or may not prove to be the answer.

A Mr. Switzer tells of visiting the Crane Paper Company in Dalton, Mass in search of the question: "Was such a letter ever printed on paper that had a Crane Water Mark?"

The Crane Paper Company answer was "yes". They had processed a special order back in 1894 for numerous 17" x 44" sheets of stationary, each 11" x 8" section bore a Water Mark of a Crane. Each section had the Crane in a different pose. Two cranes in each 8" x 11" section were in different stages of flight, either coming out of the water or flying over the water. One crane in another 8" x 11" section was standing erect in the water with its neck pointing skyward. The remaining crane was feeding in water, its neck hanging down.

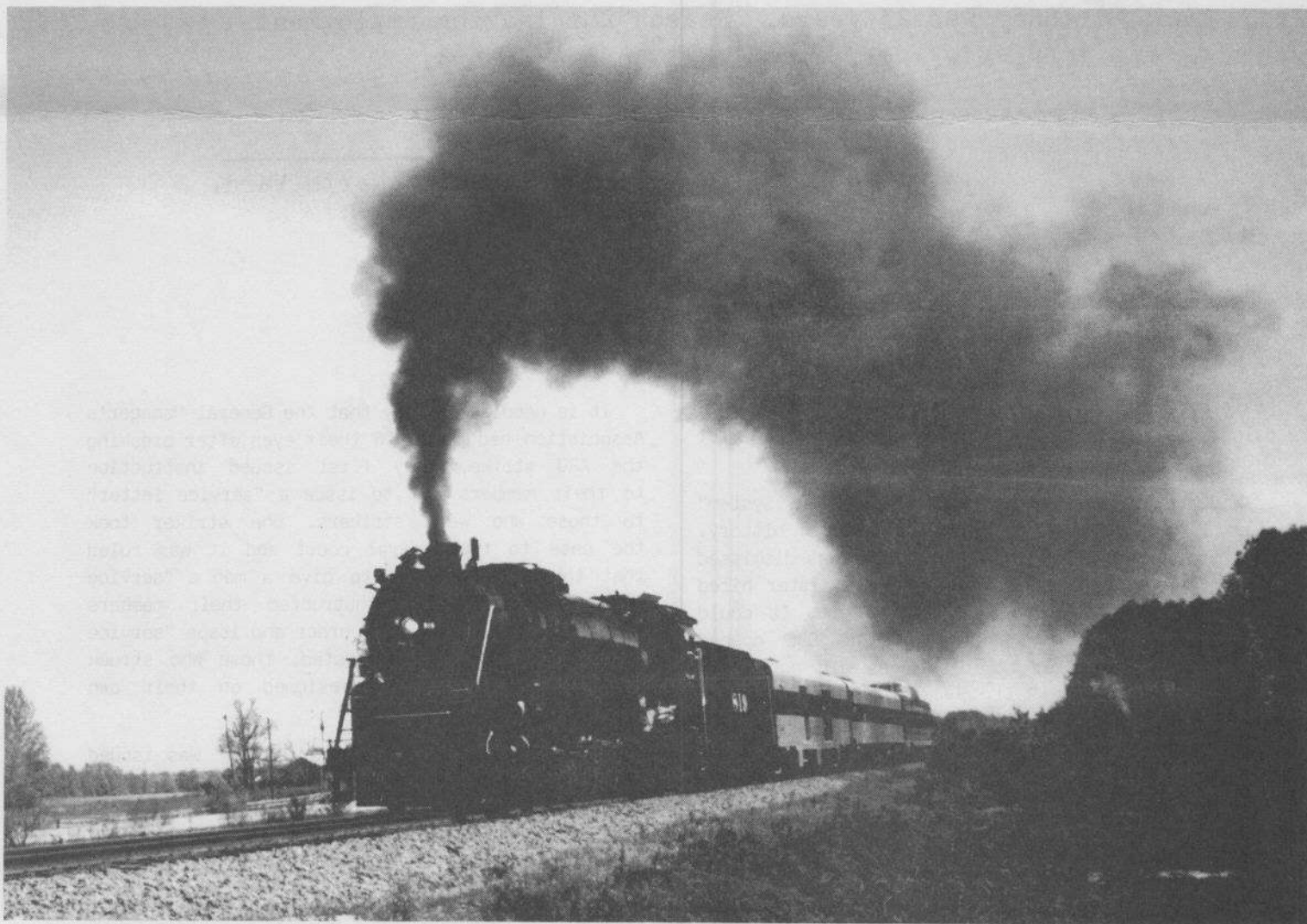
Could this have been the Water Marks on the "service letter" that earned the name, "Crane With a Broken Neck"? Could the other cranes have been the Water Mark in "service letters" covering the dates of the 1984 strike that told the GMA's members that they were OK to hire?

The paper company did not have in their records who had put in this order for this special paper. Unfortunately, the last remaining sheets of paper were destroyed some months before Mr. Switzer's visit to the mill.

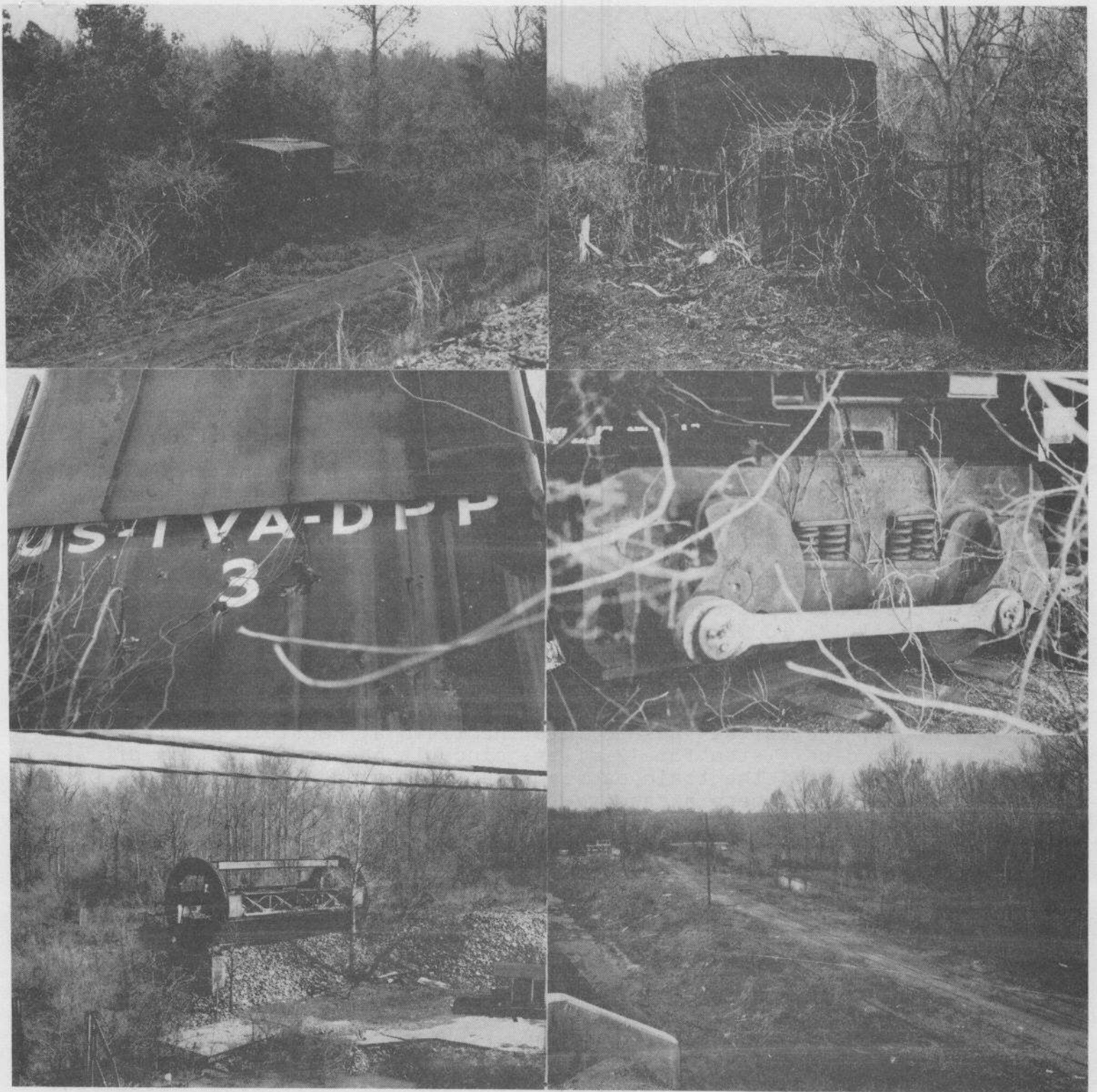
Maybe Mr. Switzer stumbled upon the truth of the GMA's "service letter", the "Crane With a Broken Neck" of 1894. Again, maybe no. But maybe some day a railfan going through discarded papers of some long-departed railroad man will find a 1894 "service letter" that will tell the truth. Or better, someone may find in some discarded office of a rail line that was a member of the General Manager's Association, and find some 17" x 44" sheets of paper with the Crane Water Mark. Then the story of the "Crane With a Broken Neck" will be put to rest as a fact or fiction.

END

(This story is part of a larger article Mr. Church has written on the 1894 strike)



819 DOES IT AGAIN!! - On April 24, 1987, SLSW 4-8-4 #819 again made a picture-perfect run between Pine Bluff and Fordyce, Arkansas to help celebrate the annual Fordyce-On-The-Cotton Belt festival. This shot was taken during a run-by at Saline by Jim Johnson of the Cotton Belt Railway.



ABANDONED SPUR - These pictures are of Vestal Spur on the Missouri Pacific's Wynne Subdivision in Southeast Arkansas. The **TOP FOUR** photos show derailed GE engine #3, a 45-50 ton World War II model built in April 1942. The **BOTTOM TWO** photos show part of the now-abandoned Vestal Yard (Corps of Engineers). The lower-left photo shows a rotary car dump. (Photos taken by Barton Jennings in April, 1987)

Vestal Spur is at Milepost 377.4 on the Wynne Subdivision, Arkansas Division of the old Missouri Pacific. It is just north of the north approach to the White River - Benzal Bridge. The switch and one or two tracks are still used by maintenance forces while working on the bridge. When the north approach was being rebuilt, a contractor used the track quite often.

The yard seems to have had 4 tracks (4 are visible through the dirt), all leading to a rotary car dump on the White River. The purpose of this yard was to transfer riprap (large rock) from rail cars to barges for use on the Arkansas and White River navigation projects. A small slackwater and concrete dock are also still usable for this transfer.

The engine used was a World War II war-period GE 45-50 ton model, GE builders #15243 with a built date of April 1942. The GE is currently derailed with the north axles of both trucks still on the rail. Soils have been pushed up against the engine during a recent construction project in the area. The engine has been used for target practice by local hunters, the motor has been half stripped and the controls have been damaged.

The GE unit is marked US-TVA-DPP and is numbered 3. The exact dates of operation and background of the unit are unknown.

(Thanks to Barton Jennings of McGehee, Arkansas for the above story and photos).

MENA DEPOT OPEN HOUSE HELD MAY 24 - (Mena) - The Kansas City Southern depot in Mena had an open house May 24 to show what's been done to restore it so far. Some question still persists as to who the legal owner is and who is to carry the liability insurance, since the depot remains next to a very active KCS main line. (MENA EVENING STAR, May 12)

FATAL COLLISION - (Mabelvale) - Diana Taylor, 30, was killed when she drove her pickup truck around the crossing gates in Mabelvale. The accident occurred May 12. The Union Pacific freight, traveling 60 MPH when it hit the truck, pushed it a mile before it could stop. Arkansas ranks number one in the nation in the number of fatalities per registered vehicle in railroad related accidents, according to Glen Toler of the Union Pacific. He also said a majority of crossing accident deaths involve teenagers and that many of these deaths happen on the night of high school proms. Arkansas has had 15 crossing fatalities so far this year. (JACKSONVILLE NEWS)

GREAT-GRANDFATHER KILLED BY TRAIN WHILE FISHING - (Hoxie) - a 66-year-old man from Walnut Ridge (George Bush) was killed when he was struck by a Burlington Northern freight while fishing off a railroad trestle two miles west of Hoxie. Engineer L. W. Booth told police he saw the man fishing off the trestle and blew the train whistle to warn him, but Bush ran down the tracks instead of moving off to the side. The accident occurred April 17. (JONESBORO SUN, April 18)

STOLEN CAR FOUND CRUSHED BENEATH TRAIN - (Jefferson) - A flattened car stolen from a used car lot in Little Rock was found beneath the 86th car of a Union Pacific train bound for McGehee from North Little Rock on May 6. Apparently, the car was pushed into the train at Redfield at 4:45 AM but the train didn't stop for 12 miles, since it had no indication of anything wrong until the train passed a heat detector. The train LACKED A CABOOSE. Had there been a caboose, the train would probably have stopped sooner. There were no occupants. (Editor's note - had there BEEN occupants, however, being dragged 12 miles under a train would greatly decrease ones chances of survival. Also, the car was lodged under an empty tank car and an explosion might have occurred. Food for thought).

PINE BLUFF MAN GETS \$1.2 MILLION IN DAMAGES FROM COTTON BELT - (Belleville, Illinois) - A Pine Bluff man was awarded \$1.2 million April by a circuit court after he sued Cotton Belt Railway for injuries he received while working for the company more than five years ago in Pine Bluff. Clarence Brown was a brakeman in the Pine Bluff Yard on April 21, 1982 when he sustained lower-back injuries while aligning a switch. He claimed that his injuries were the result of an improperly maintained switch at the south end of the yard in Pine Bluff. The railroad disagreed. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, May 2, 1987)

ARKANSAS VALLEY MODEL RAILROAD CLUB HELD OPEN HOUSE - (North Little Rock) - This open house was held May 9 and 10 at the club's house on River Road in North Little Rock. As far as is known, the club still meets every Monday night.

COTTON BELT ENDS 3RD AVENUE RUNS IN PINE BLUFF - (Pine Bluff) - The last Cotton Belt train ran on 3rd Avenue in Pine Bluff on April 29, 1987. The end of 3rd Avenue runs was part of the railroad relocation project which began in 1985. The last train over the 3rd Avenue tracks was at 10:30 AM on April 29. Anyone know when this line was initially built? (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, May 2, 1987)

LITTLE ROCK LIGHT RAIL?? - (Little Rock) - The Metroplan Board of Directors approved a resolution April 29 calling for a feasibility study of a light rail system to serve western Pulaski County. The proposed service would use existing Union Pacific and Little Rock & Western tracks along the Arkansas River traveling from Natural Steps to downtown Little Rock and on to the airport. (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, April 30)

LAST OF ROCK ISLAND REMOVED - (Brinkley) - The last Rock Island track was removed by the city of Brinkley the last week in April. The final section to be removed was across Cypress Street in front of Bod's Cleaners. (BRINKLEY ARGUS, April 29)

ARKANSAS RAILROAD MUSEUM? - (Pine Bluff) - The Pine Bluff Historical Railroad Preservation Commission is negotiating a five-year contract with Southern Pacific to lease the building where engine 819 is kept. It is in desperate need of repair. Peter Smykla is chairman of this commission (also Arkansas Railroad Club President). Pine Bluff mayor Carolyn Robinson recently refused to enter into this contract with the SP directly due to uncertainties of funding. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL)

NEW ARKANSAS SHORTLINE SET TO BEGIN - (McGehee) - Arkansas's 21st shortline railroad is set to begin operating June 1, 1987 on the old Missouri Pacific Providence Branch south of McGehee. The new line will be called the Dixie River Railroad, part of the Great Northern Transportation Company. (Thanks to Barton Jennings)

NEW TIES - (Austin) - The Union Pacific has recently laid some new ties on its main north-south line north of North Little Rock. What's the big deal on this, you say? These particular ties are not the usual variety. For one thing, they are UNTREATED African Hardwood AND they weigh 800 pounds each. These experimental ties were laid on a quarter-mile section of the UP through Austin, Arkansas.

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

JOHN L. SCHMIDT RESIGNED AS CHAIRMAN OF SFSP APRIL 19 - John S. Reed, who retired as chairman of Santa Fe Southern Pacific Corporation in April 1983 resumed that job until a permanent replacement for Mr. Schmidt could be found. Mr. Schmidt intends to "pursue other interests.." Reed said the proceedings to re-open the Santa Fe/Southern Pacific merger case would go on as usual. Jim Johnson of Public Relations in the Cotton Belt, said that the resignation was a total surprise for Cotton Belt officials.

Analysts speculated that Schmidt was forced out by a disgruntled board of directors or that he had become discouraged by the roadblocks to merging the SF and SP railroads. Schmidt was the architect of the attempted merger that failed and some blame him when the ICC rejected the merger in July of 1986. Schmidt had been unwilling to cater to competitors' objections with trackage rights and had demanded that the ICC approve the merger as presented or not at all. He got the "not-at-all" answer. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, April 21, 1987)

NET INCOME 1986 - Net Operating Income for the nation's railroads fell to \$513.1 million in 1986 compared with \$1.7 billion in 1985. Meanwhile, the nation's trucks Net Operating Income ROSE to more than \$1.0 billion in 1986, up 46.8 percent from 1985. One reason the railroads had such a drop was the many "buyout" programs inacted in 1986. (SP UPDATE)

SP'S "ADOPT-A-BRANCH PROGRAM WORKS - (Southern California) - A new Southern Pacific program called "Adopt-A-Branch" uses conductors to make contact monthly with all their customers. This has resulted in more than 3400 customers contacted with 1200 problems having been solved since the program began in 1985. (SOUTHERN PACIFIC BULLETIN, April 1987)

FRISCO MUSEUM - (Ash Grove, Missouri) - The Frisco Museum, located in Ash Grove, Missouri on Highway 160 is one of the finest railroad museums in the country, according to the Central Oklahoma Railfan Club. This all-Frisco museum opened in June 1986 and is the only facility in the nation devoted exclusively to the Frisco Railway. The museum has on display over 1,000 Frisco items. Write to it: Frisco Railroad Museum, P. O. Box 276, Ash Grove, MO 65604. (THE DISPATCHER)

SOUTHERN PACIFIC WINS HARRIMAN AWARD - SP on May 12 received the Gold Metal E. H. Harriman award for employee safety in 1986. This is the most prestigious safety award in the railroad industry. The award is based on the lowest casualty rate per 200,000 employee-hours worked. SP was in first place all year. SP also won the award in 1914 and 1971. (SP UPDATE)

LAST RUN OF SP CREWS ON AMTRAK'S SUNSET LIMITED occurred April 28. The next day the crews were Amtrak personnel. (GULF COAST)

SANTA FE'S GRAND CANYON LINE NOT YET UP - Apparently, the city of Williams Arizona physically stopped the dismantling crews from taking up the tracks that ran 63 miles from Williams (connecting with the Santa Fe's main line) to the Grand Canyon. The city marshall confiscated the wrecking crew's spike puller and charged them with not having a city permit. Many people want to keep the line, but no firm offers have been forthcoming. (RAIL TRAVEL NEWS)

FIRST QUARTER EARNINGS (JANUARY-MARCH 1987) - Santa Fe Southern Pacific had net income in the first quarter of \$45.9 million compared with \$29.7 million in 1986. CSX had earnings of \$73 million, down from \$85 million in 1986. Union Pacific had first quarter income of a record \$122 million, up from \$103 million in 1986. Kansas City Southern had income of \$713,000, down from \$4.5 million in 1986. Conrail earned \$86 million compared with \$60 in 1986.

SP BUYS 60 LOCOMOTIVES - Southern Pacific announced in early May that it will purchase 60 new locomotives valued at \$60 million. SP will begin to phase out its older, less efficient engines and reduce the average age of its fleet (which now stands at 10 years, 10 months). SP says it plans to take delivery of 40 new GE B39-8 units later this year. The first 20 EMD GP60s will be delivered in early 1988. The 60 units are the latest in microprocessor-controlled locomotives. Each is at least 7 percent more fuel-efficient than any engine currently in the SP fleet. (SP UPDATE)

SUPREME LAW - The U.S. Supreme Court said that railroads may challenge state property taxes in federal court at any time. Also, the high court ruled that federal courts can't issue injunctions to stop a union engaged in a labor dispute with one railroad from extending its picketing to another railroad not involved in the dispute.

GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENTS ABOUND - The National Transportation Safety Board recently issued a report on grade crossing accidents and here are some of its findings:

- 1) From 1980 through 1985, the number of collisions between trains and cars averaged 7,350 annually. These collisions produced the largest single group of fatalities from railroad operations, an average of 580 deaths a year.
- 2) In 75 accidents studied, these were the findings of the Board:
 - A) More than 50% of the accidents occurred at grade crossings with active warning devices.
 - B) In 54 of the 75 cases, motor vehicle drivers disregarded warning devices or were inattentive.
 - C) In 24 of the cases, obstructions limited the driver's sight. Vegetation was the most common obstruction.
 - D) In 27 of the cases, the audible warning system of the train could not be heard. There are no minimum required sight distance standards at crossings. Trains need better horns.
 - D) Railroads should be required to maintain good sight distance at grade crossings. Consider adopting highway traffic signals at crossings. (The Santa Fe through Brenham at its "blind" crossings have the traffic lights turn red whenever the train approaches, so if the motorist goes through the lights, he not only breaks two laws, he might run into another car. Brenham is in Texas).
 - E) Develop the use of some kind of advance warning system that a grade crossing is ahead.
 - G) Encourage the "Operation Lifesaver" programs in every state.

An observation on your editor's part...most causes of crossing accidents are impatience and daydreaming, not loud horns or lack of adequate signals. This is sometimes fostered by the trains themselves. Haven't we all come up to a railroad crossing, seen the lights flashing and spotted a train stopped a quarter mile up the track? What do you do? Break the law by crossing over the tracks or wait until the train moves again or turns off the signal? Engine crews should always manually stop the signals if the train stops before reaching the crossing. Also, I believe that many signals are activated too far ahead of the train, regardless of the train's speed. In other words, whenever a motorist sees a flashing light at a crossing, he/she should expect a train within 30 seconds or less, then there would be no temptation to cross over (and possibly cross over to another world also).

NEWS UPDATED through May 25, mailed June 1. Deadline for July's RAIL-ROADER is June 22.

TRAGEDY IN THE NIGHT

by: Bill Merck

All forms of transportation have their adversaries and the railroads are no exception. What you read below is from memory. I have no notes. It happened during World War II and was either in 1943 or 1944.

During World War II the Cotton Belt kept a small steam switcher at Camden, Arkansas to do the switching needed at the Camden industries, the biggest being the BAG-PAK Division of a large paper company and many others. The Shumaker Naval Ammunition Depot had their own switcher and picked up and delivered loads to the Cotton Belt and Rock Island. The switcher was kept and serviced in the small Cotton Belt yard close to the freight house.

On this particular night (no date or year available), in the middle of the night the engine started moving slowly out of the yard. It hopped a derail and split a switch and rolled onto the main line. It gained momentum fast and was moving at a fast pace when it crossed the river bridge. Apparently nothing could be done to stop the run-a-way.

Moving toward Camden from Pine Bluff was a big wartime freight with some 80 or 90 cars pulled by one of the big 800s. Do not remember the number but it was a sister to the 819. The engineer spied the darkened outline of the switcher.

The switcher crashed right into the big 800, knocking it off the rails and it rolled down an embankment, killing the engineer. The fireman and first brakeman escaped unhurt. The switcher was nothing but junk. The main line had CTC but apparently the big 800 and the train were between signal lights.

An investigation was started immediately but nothing could be found. The engine could not have moved if someone had not released the brakes. Some say it was sabotage and the fact that the Navy plant was going full blast it could very well been done by a saboteur. The ICC later ruled it was sabotage.

It was a tragedy that the engineer on the 800 went on to glory. We hope and pray nothing like this will ever happen again.

- END -

JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

Dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year for out-of-state. Add \$9.00 additional if you wish to also join the National Railway Historical Society through the Club.

Membership entitles you to a year's subscription to the ARKANSAS RAILROADER.

RENEWAL NEW MEMBER CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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For more information, call ARKANSAS RAILROADER editor Ken Ziegenbein at 501-758-1340. Call this number also if you have questions about your subscription, address, etc.

NOTE -- Dues are normally due January 1st of each year, but you may join anytime. You will be put on the mailing list as soon as possible.

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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