



# ARKANSAS RAILROADER



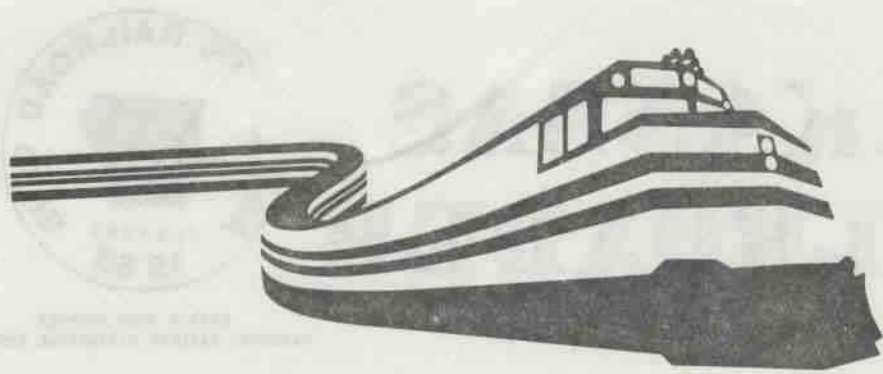
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 21 NUMBER 3

MARCH 1990



AMTRAK'S special train inaugurating daily service between Chicago-Little Rock-Dallas-San Antonio ran on Friday, January 19, 1990. The new daily "TEXAS EAGLE" is shown here waiting to depart with its 16-car Superliner train from Little Rock's Union Station (in the rain). The press was well represented at the event, as were local politicians and supporters. (Ken Ziegenbein, photo)



# GENERAL NEWS

## CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1990 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

<i>President</i> - Matt Ritchie 111 Tenkiller Sherwood AR 72116 (501)-834-4449	<i>Vice-President</i> - Barton Jennings P. O. Box 6695 Springdale AR 72765 (501)-751-8975
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<i>Board</i> - Randy Tardy 226 Englewood Road Little Rock AR 72207	<i>Board Tres</i> - Polly Hamilton 522 South Main Benton AR 72015

### DUES....DUES....DUES....DUES....DUES....DUES

1990 Arkansas Railroad Club dues are PAST DUE!!. Please send your \$10 (Arkansas residents) or \$7.50 (out-of-state) to our treasurer DICK BYRD, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock AR 72207. To join or continue in the National Railway Historical Society at the same time, send in \$12 extra.

For your information...nearly ALL NRHS chapters and the national NRHS itself collects dues on January 1 of each year. If you joined our club in the middle of the year, there is a slight possibility that our records will not show you paid through 1990. Please be patient should you receive a past due notice if this is the case. It all boils down to the fact that we are a hobby-oriented organization and do the record-keeping on an as-time-permits basis...we are VOLUNTEERS.

Also...our dues are the lowest I've seen of any NRHS chapter, and they haven't gone up in many years either. AND...as long as we can keep the costs down...dues won't go up anytime soon. (Most local dues in other chapters average between \$15 and \$20 a year).

SEE IMPORTANT A&M/819 TRIP CHANGE NEWS ON PAGE 16...There are several changes you need to know about.

STORIES TYPED BY: "Locomotive Messenger" - Bill Church; "Demise of the Clarksville Branch" - Bill Pollard; "Early Days of Choctaw Route" - John Martin. Rest typed by your editor.

(CLUB HAPPENINGS continued on Page 16)

## WHY DID THE FRISCO BUILD THROUGH ARKANSAS?

by: Gene Hull

In the early years of the 19th century a great national dream was a railroad from St. Louis to San Francisco on the Pacific Ocean. A national work such as this would give America mastery of the Pacific and the India Seas, and would avert foreign wars, by warning foreign powers to be on friendly terms with such a powerful nation as America.

One of the earliest efforts toward the realization of this dream was in 1849, when the Missouri legislature granted a charter to the PACIFIC RAILROAD to build from St. Louis to the western boundary of the state. It would pass through Jefferson City, Sadalia, and Kansas City. Actual construction began 4 July 1851. The company had authority to build a branch line from Franklin (later Pacific) to Springfield and southwest Missouri. It was called the Southwest Branch. Work on it began in June 1855, reaching Rolla in December 1860.

The Civil War stopped all construction. Raids by Confederate troops severely damaged the branch line. After the war the Pacific Railroad and the Southwest Branch defaulted on their indebtedness to the state of Missouri and were separately sold.



The branch was sold in June 1866 to U.S. Army General John C. Fremont (1813---1890, retired). He organized it as the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC RAILROAD. The general was unable to pay the second installment on his purchase price, and in June 1867 the state repossessed the road. A new road - SOUTH PACIFIC RAILROAD - was formed, and rails were laid to Peirce City, Missouri. This later was changed to Pierce City.

On 26 October 1870 the South Pacific passed under the control of the ATLANTIC & PACIFIC RAILWAY, which had been created by an act of the U.S. Congress on 7 June 1866. This outfit completed the road to Vinita, Indian Territory. Here connection was made with the Missouri, Kansas, Texas (Katy). This gave the Katy a connection to St. Louis, and the A&P a connection to the great area of Texas.

The A&P was bankrupt by 1875.

The ST. LOUIS & SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY was organized on 11 September 1876 to acquire the defunct A&P. On 6 September the A&P had been sold at public auction to Andrew Peirce, Jr., of New York City. He immediately transferred the little branch line to William F. Buckley. On 11 September Buckley conveyed the 361 miles of railroad to the newly formed SL&SF (thereafter known as the Frisco).



With hopes of reaching the fabled Pacific Ocean, the Frisco began to build westward across Kansas. Rails were laid from Peirce City, Missouri through Carthage, Missouri, to Oswego, Kansas, and on to Wichita, Kansas in 1879. The Frisco hoped to connect at Wichita with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, and use the Santa Fe rails to Albuquerque, New Mexico. From there a road could be built westward under the charter of the A&P. This made the Santa Fe nervous.

A newcomer was invading the AT&SF territory in Kansas, and in 1879 rumors were heard that Jay Gould, or Collis P. Huntington (Southern Pacific), was ready to seize the Frisco. Sharks would be in the area. An agreement was reached under which the Frisco would use the Santa Fe rails to Albuquerque, and the two companies would jointly build to California under the old A&P charter.

This did not work satisfactorily for the Frisco, and on 23 May 1890 the Santa Fe gained control of the Frisco. By 1893 the Frisco was in receivership, but was managed by the Santa Fe until a new St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad Company was formed by reorganization on 29 June 1896.

So it was that the Frisco was finagled out of its Pacific Ocean dream. Its probing into Indian Territory, while under Santa Fe control, was agonizingly slow. It was 1898 before the rails were laid through Oklahoma City to Lawton. The great Southwest must be approached from another direction.

The decision was made to begin at Plymouth (now Monett, Missouri) and build south across Arkansas. A new company was chartered to build 32.4 miles to the Missouri-Arkansas border. It was the St. Louis.

Arkansas & Texas Railway, and was absorbed by the Frisco on 1-21-82. Construction began 9 July 1880 and the rails reached the state line in November.

The Lebanon Construction Company was awarded the grading contract from the Missouri-Arkansas border to Ft. Smith. The manager was Edward Burgess, and his partners were Dan Faulkner and Nathan Diffenderfer, the former a lumberman from Bolivar, Missouri, and the other a banker at Lebanon, Missouri. Burgess was from St. Louis.

The typical camp layout was very crude, efficient, and temporary. Tents were supplied for the three partners, the bookkeeper, and the commissary clerk. The commissary was in a long structure of rough lumber. The office was in one end where three bookkeepers worked on the accounts of about 500 men. The commissary occupied most of the building. The opposite end was the tool and powder house filled with tools, cans of black powder, and cases of dynamite and fuses. The brass caps (detonators) were always kept in the company safe.

There were tents scattered at intervals along the right-of-way as boarding houses for the workers. The tents were run independently by the wives of foremen. The commissary carried provisions for the boarding houses, as well as overalls, jumpers, heavy shoes, tobacco, pipes, large red or blue handkerchiefs, knives, bright calicos and ribbons.

There also was plenty of dipping snuff for some of the older women. To enjoy this delicacy properly, a woman would break a slender twig five or six inches long from a sweetgum bush. She would carefully chew one end of the twig until it was well frayed to form a "brush". The "brush" was dipped into a snuff can, or jar, until well coated with the pungent brown dust. A carefully dipped brush could be chewed slowly two or three hours.



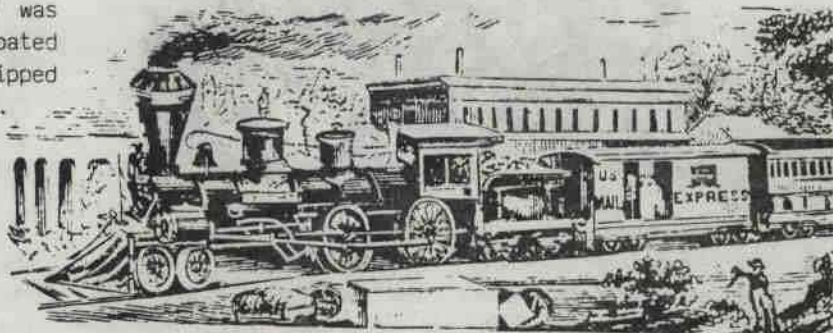
There were three classifications of payment for work performed. Excavation of earth was 10 cents a cubic yard; loose rock, including gravel, 40 cents; solid rock 80 cents. Embankment was paid the same as earth excavation. Some of the local people did not understand the idea of performing work and not being paid until the following month. One fellow was

told payday was the 20th of the next month. The more he thought about this the less he liked it. The next day he returned to the cashiers window at the commissary building and thrust a long rifle through the window, pointing it at the nearest bookkeeper. He received prompt and full payment.

Work progressed steadily, and on 10 May 1881 the first train rolled into Rogers at 12:20 p.m. When the grading crew made camp on a gently rolling wooded area, it was near the two-room-with-a-dog-trot log cabin home of B. F. Sikes. His was the only permanent residence in the area.

The headquarters of grading crews set up camp on the Sikes place, and soon teams of mules, heavy plows, and Fresno scrapers had an earth embankment of sorts ready for rough hewn oak crossties and rails. Rumors were heard that a new town would be built where the camp was located. There supposedly was a bonus of \$600 offered to the Frisco railroad if the town were located there.

Several merchants had set up shop in tents to cater to the needs of the workers. Frame store buildings appeared along both sides of the right-of-way. It was at this conglomeration of tents and frame structures that a banshee screech of a locomotive whistle was heard on a wintry day, 5 December 1881, and a little Baldwin diamond-stack 4-4-0 leading two passenger cars rolled into the crude little settlement. From one car Captain Charles W. Rogers stepped down. He was general manager of the Frisco, and also was on the board of directors. It was on that morning a town was declared to exist in this clearing in the forest, and it was officially named ROGERS.



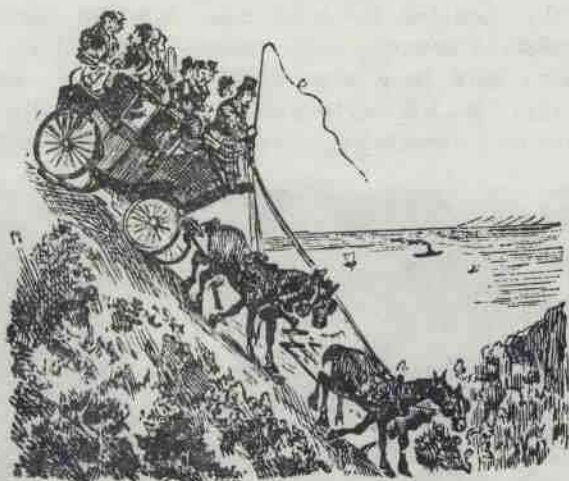
When Capt. Rogers arrived at the Dickson Street depot, at Fayetteville, he was aboard his fine drawing room car, which had been recently built for him at a cost of \$14,000. It truly was a palace on wheels. Rogers called on several businessmen at Fayetteville, since he was very popular with the townspeople.

Next morning the little train proceeded southward on an inspection run. It ran to end-of-track about 400 yards above the mouth of Winn's Creek, near Woolsey's store. This was Rogers first trip over the road, and he was very pleased. He gave orders

to hire more men to lay rails as fast as possible, and to get the track ballasted and in tip-top shape.

A telegraph office had recently been opened at a new town which had sprung up in Tom McKnight's field, a town called West Fork.

At 6:00 p.m. on 31 May 1881 the same shrill engine whistle was heard by a few young fellows in one of the upper rooms of the college at Fayetteville. It was said that the blasting of black powder in Wilsons Gap near town sounded like the Confederate attack against federal troops there in November 1864. People were looking forward to the day when a person could ride from Little Rock to St. Louis via Fayetteville without enduring the rough stagecoach ride across the Boston Mountains.



One fellow said he left Alma on the stage northbound at 11:00 p.m. on 3 December 1881 and arrived at Woolens at 7:00 a.m. the next morning. At 11:00 a.m., 12 hours out of Alma, he was at Woolsey's store on the west bank of White River (near West Fort?). A freight train was ready to head north for Fayetteville, and everyone on the stage gratefully climbed aboard the caboose with a warm stove and comfortable seats. There were five ladies among the passengers, and the conductor made everyone comfortable.

They arrived at the new depot at Dickson Street at 12:30 p.m., just 15 minutes before the train from St. Louis. A few days later passengers and the mail coming north on the stage would meet the train at a new town called Brentwood near the Crawford school house.

It was in the spring of '82 that the Frisco decided to make Rogers a division point. The Lebanon Construction Company was commissioned to do the grading of a 20-acre site which the town had donated to the railroad. The rough terrain was leveled off and on it was built the roundhouse and its radiating fan of tracks.

The grading crews were working their way into the rugged area south of Rogers. Young W. A. Burgess,

17-year old son of the manager of the grading company, was assigned to the crew of Tom McDermott, a nephew of the company manager, and a few years older than young Burgess. The teamsters were young fellows native to the area, and used a dozen teams. The cooking outfit was in a covered wagon, and the drivers wife was to do the cooking. She had two small children, and was the only woman in the outfit of 25 men.

The route passed a place with the unusual name of Cross Hollows. Associated with the place was a well known commodity - Cross Hollow whiskey. After each payday, 20th of the month, workers beat a hasty retreat to the place, and next day inert forms lay scattered on the nearby hillsides.



Cross Hollows was aptly named, since it was a geologic feature created by two narrow valleys crossing at almost right angles, and was a gateway through which the rails had to pass. It was nearer Rogers than Fayetteville. Such a place these young fellows could not resist.

When the crew arrived, they were greatly surprised. The only thing they saw was a small structure of rough boards about 15 by 20 feet sitting beside the trail. Hitching the teams, the men entered and found two men sitting in cane-bottom chairs. No words were spoken, because there was only one reason for any of them being there.

One of the proprietors pointed to a back corner

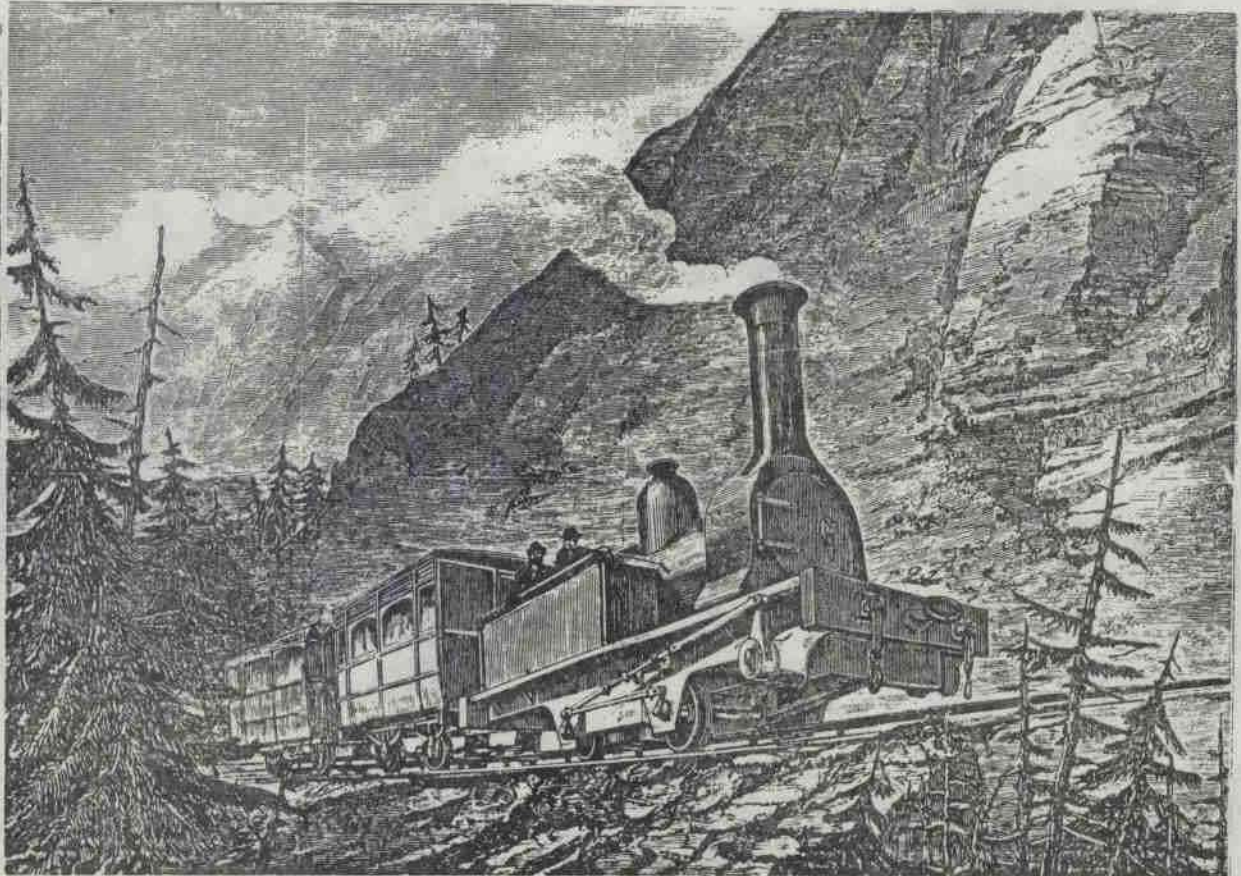
where stood a 50-gallon white oak barrel. It was filled to within about a foot of the open top with colorless, potent moonshine. Hanging from a nail in the wall was a tin cup suspended by a string. Tacked to the wall was a scrap of paper on which someone had scrawled with a pencil - Drink all you want for 5¢.

McDermott and Burgess tried a cup of "Cross Hollow juice" and went out to their horses. They rode over the adjoining hill, across a small valley, and up the next hill. Here they waited for the crew and wagons. These fellows had consumed more than a cup of juice.

As the vehicles crested the hill, the cook wagon was in the lead, animals in a dead run, and utensils hanging from the sides of the wagon rattling a raucous cadence of their own. The driver's wife was screaming and pleading for him to slow down before they were killed. With rough-and-tumble pandemonium, the cavalcade crossed the valley and came up the hill without casualties.

of switchbacks lifted the track across the ridge and down the south side. The crew of men working on the north end of the tunnel were all white men. The crew on the south end were Negroes. There previously had been bloody clashes between the two groups, and they had to be separated. Hughy Loonam had the contract to build the switchbacks across the ridge, which was called Winslow Mountain. The bore through it was known as Winslow Tunnel. The crude, new town formed at the north end of the tunnel was named Winslow. All this was to honor Edward F. Winslow, president of the Frisco between 1880 and 1889.

Early in June 1882 the tunnel had been advanced 400 feet on the north end, and 716 feet on the south end. The headings were to meet in July. While this work progressed, trains crossed the ridge to take supplies to crews busy erecting three high trestles spanning deep, steep-sided valleys. Crews also were busy with almost continuous cuts and fills. On the north side of the tunnel the track lay on a twisting 1 percent grade. To the south



About 25 miles south of Fayetteville an east-west trending ridge lay across the route of the rails. It was heavily forested, and was composed of semi-solid limestone, which was beginning to crack and weather. A tunnel would be needed. The ridge was about 1800-foot elevation, and the track would crest at 1773 feet inside the tunnel, which would be 1702 feet long.

While the crews, three of them, worked day and night excavating the tunnel in early 1882, a series

the grade was 2 percent descending, increasing to 2.3 percent nearing the first bridge. This structure was 780 feet long, and reached 117 feet above the forested valley below. The other bridges were smaller.

A sub-contractor south of the tunnel had found a fine gravel deposit near the alignment. All the earth embankments along here were covered with a layer of gravel, and he charged for the work at 40 cents a cubic yard instead of the normal 10 cents

for earth. It was estimated the fellow made a profit of \$10,000 on the job.

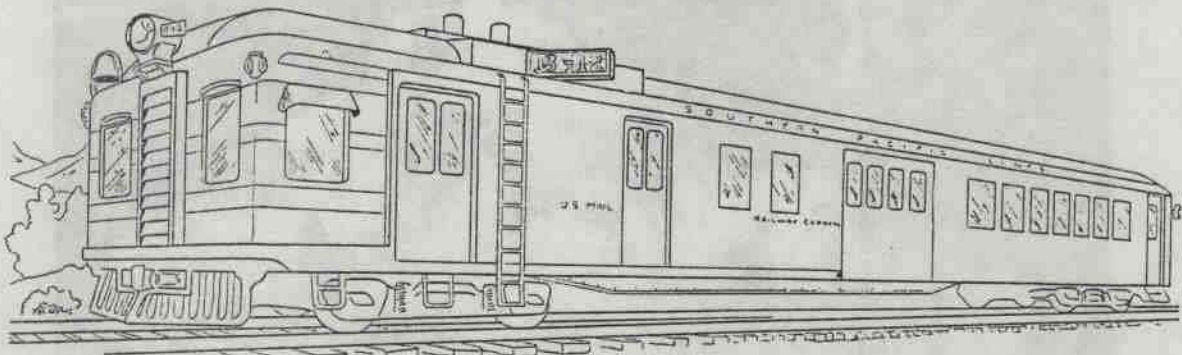
Earth for embankments, requiring a haul of appreciable distance, was moved by wagon. To facilitate loading, a depression was dug in the ground and a wooden bridge was built across it. Teamsters stopped the wagons under this bridge while teams pulling scrapers filled with earth came across the bridge, and the earth was dumped through a hole cut in the structure.

The irregular walls of the tunnel were covered with brick laid carefully to a thickness of as much as four feet. The bore was 19 feet above the rails and 14 feet wide. (In later years the larger trains required the tunnel to be enlarged. In 1969 it became

24 feet high and 18 feet wide.)

The involved construction companies formed to build the Frisco through Arkansas ended with the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas. It was formed in Arkansas on 28 June 1881, and was absorbed by the Frisco on 21 January 1882, after laying rails into Fort Smith.

- END -



#### ROCK ISLAND RAIL DIESEL CAR TRIP 1959

by: Jerry Moore, via "THE SEMAPHORE", Tulsa Chapter NRHS, February 1985

Easter weekend 1959 our family made a trip to Little Rock, Arkansas. My dad told me we were going to take Arkansas Highway 10 to Little Rock, I thought if we could get to Booneville, Arkansas by 12:15 I could ride train 24, the Choctaw rail diesel car, to Little Rock and my dad could pick me up there. We got to Booneville in plenty of time and I bought my ticket and the rest of the family left in the car. Train 24 was on time and I boarded RDC #9003.

I will try to explain what a Rail diesel car is. An RDC is like a self-powered coach. It is about the length of a rail coach, having a small railway post office compartment and the rest is seating for passengers. It has the same size diesel engine as a city bus. It has an automatic transmission similar to a bus. It is well suited to the short haul passenger trade on a line like the Rock Island Memphis-Tucumcari line. The cars were built by the Budd Company for the Rock Island in 1950.

The part of the Rock Island from Booneville to Little Rock has the best scenery of any of the Rock Island. We left Booneville on time and began moving east by Magazine Mountain, the highest point in Arkansas. At Danville we stopped to pick up a passenger. Also near Danville we crossed the Petit Jean River. The scenery seems much closer from a train because the railroad goes away from the highway and you see new country that you have not seen from the highway.

The RDC rides very smooth and is able to pick up speed very quickly. The only noise you hear is the transmission shifting, which is located under the floor of the passenger compartment. We stopped at Perry for a passenger to get off. At Houston, we passed the other RDC, train 23, in siding for this meet.

Between Roland and Pinnacle, the line follows the Arkansas River and goes around a sharp peaked hill known

as the Pinnacle. The line also goes through the Ozark National Forest with beautiful scenery. At this point we are near Little Rock.

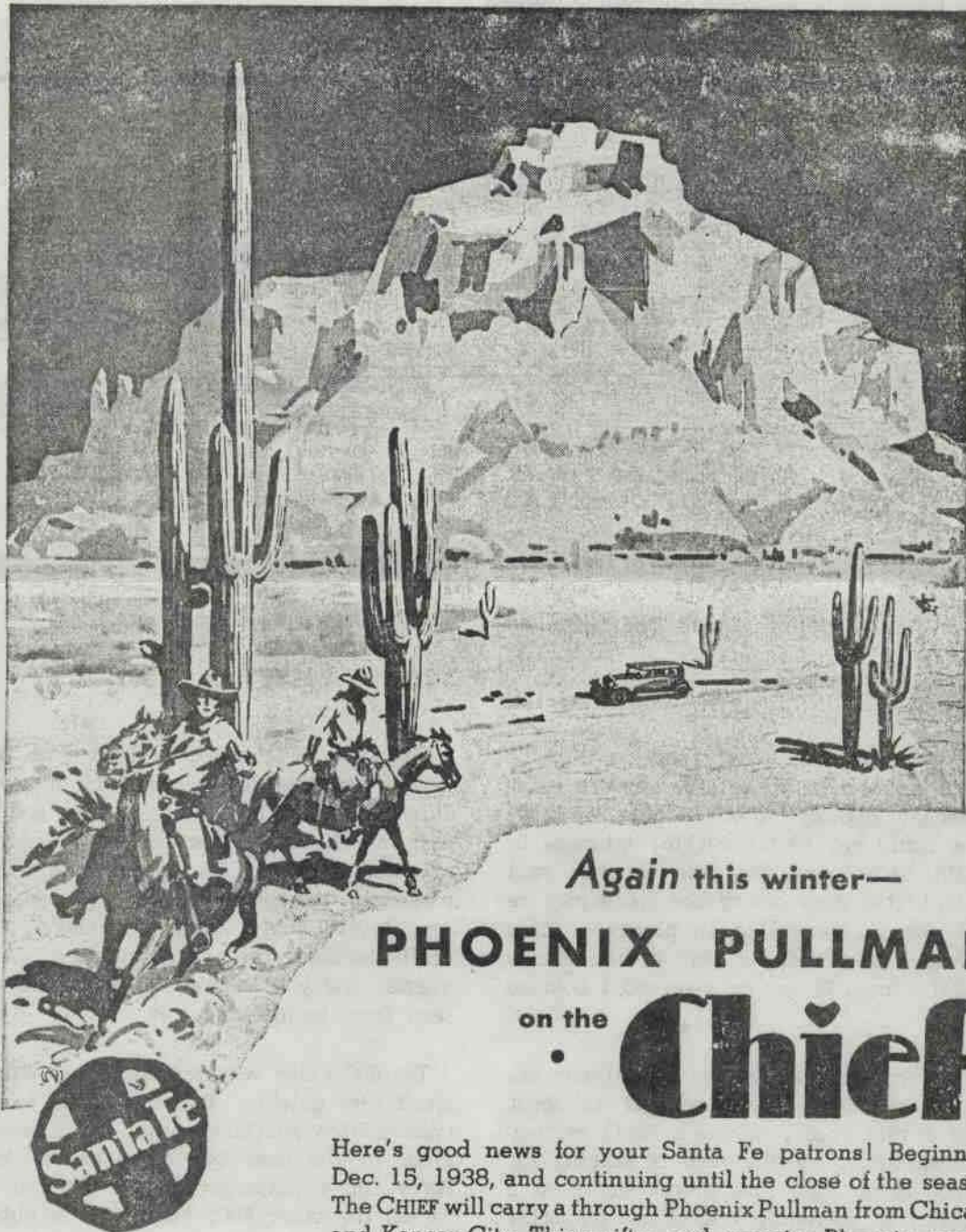
As the train got to Little Rock, we crossed the Missouri Pacific at HH Junction. I looked down the track and I could see the Missouri Pacific station. I thought we were just about into the station. The train passed HH Junction and went around Little Rock and about ten minutes later we came into the Rock Island station.

My dad was there to meet me. They had been there almost an hour ahead of us. The trip had taken two hours and fifty-five minutes on the RDC. I had time

to get a picture of the depot which was a large brick building with the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf on front of the building. It had been a very nice trip.

Later, on the way back, we were following the Rock Island tracks and my mother asked me: "Did that RDC car ride smooth?" I said yes, it rides very smooth and quiet. Then my mother said, "I should have known better than to ask, that's like asking a pig if it likes a mud puddle."

- END -



Again this winter—

**PHOENIX PULLMAN**

on the **Chief**

Here's good news for your Santa Fe patrons! Beginning Dec. 15, 1938, and continuing until the close of the season, The CHIEF will carry a through Phoenix Pullman from Chicago and Kansas City. This swifter and superior Phoenix service offers patrons their choice of section, compartment, drawing room and bedroom accommodations.

● Each winter The Chief carries vast numbers to Phoenix and round about, with last winter's travel setting a new high record. In view of the Chief's well deserved popularity, we suggest early reservations.

T. B. GALLAHER, Passenger Traffic Manager  
Santa Fe System Lines  
Chicago, Ill.

Also to **PALM SPRINGS**  
The same fine, fast, convenient train service as prevailed last winter.

● THE GRAND CANYON - INDIAN - DETOURS LINE ●



## LOCOMOTIVE MESSENGER

by

William Church

Today's oil shortage recalls a story told to me by a retired Missouri Pacific conductor, Larry Mathis, of Fisk, Missouri, who once had an energy problem of his own long ago, and solved it by using his head instead of his feet.

In the late 1920's, Larry was not a railroad man, but a construction worker employed by a contractor who had a contract to reduce the grades on an Illinois branch between Chester and Pickneyville, formerly the Wabash, Chester and Western Railroad, that had an operating profile of an amusement park roller coaster.

The job required quite a bit of rail equipment since the dirt from the cuts was to be hauled by trains to be put in fills. This job called for numerous steam locomotives and other heavy equipment.

Larry was assigned as a messenger on an ex-DRGW steam locomotive from the storage yard in Pacific, Missouri to a spur on the construction site at Jamestown, Illinois.

As you know, such a messenger had to see that the engine was handled according to instructions and that none of her bearings ran hot. So he stayed with her for a solid week of rides on slow-moving local way-freights. The MoPac had put a 20-MPH slow order on this engine because she was running backward with all side rods in place. At length, on a Saturday morning the end of the trip drew near.

Larry and his former Rio Grande Tea Kettle were in the Missouri Pacific's yard in Chester, Illinois ready to be put in the Chester-Pickneyville local that day.

"What time will you set me out at Jamestown?" he asked conductor Euge.

"Cant do it today," Euge said.

"Why not?" Larry Shot back.

"Jamestown is a spur open on this end, we'd have to drop you in if we set you out there today, which is against the rules, so we will have to take you to Coulter and bring you back Monday evening."

Larry's spirits dropped. He had already spent a lot of time of nursing this rusty old scrap heap and now it looked as if he'd put in a week end sitting on her in a dull tank town in southern Illinois. The more Larry thought about it, the more he was determined to do something about it. Larry Mathis was not one to give up easily. Putting his mind to work, he came up with an answer to his problem.

"Mr. Euge," he said hopefully, "I can put my engine in that spur at Jamestown without dropping her in."

" Cant be done," said the conductor.

"Oh yes I can. Just tell your hogger to stop at Jamestown and have the head shack to cut me off. I'll put this baby in the clear for you."

Larry mounted his cab as they were leaving Chester. When he got about ten miles from Jamestown spur, he moved the engine's Johnson Bar down into the reverse position. Then he opened the throttle and let the pistons do the rest as Larry sat back and waited.

Soon the boiler was full of compressed air: 175 pounds to be exact. More than enough to move the engine the distance she had to go. Larry promptly moved the reverse lever back on center, shut off the throttle and waited.

At Jamestown, the head shack cut Larry's little pet off on the main line and bent the iron for the spur. Larry moved his Johnson Bar into

reverse position, opened the throttle, and the old gal took off under her own power and he stopped her in the clear of the main line. For a good measure he yanked the cord with a whistled signal of victory.

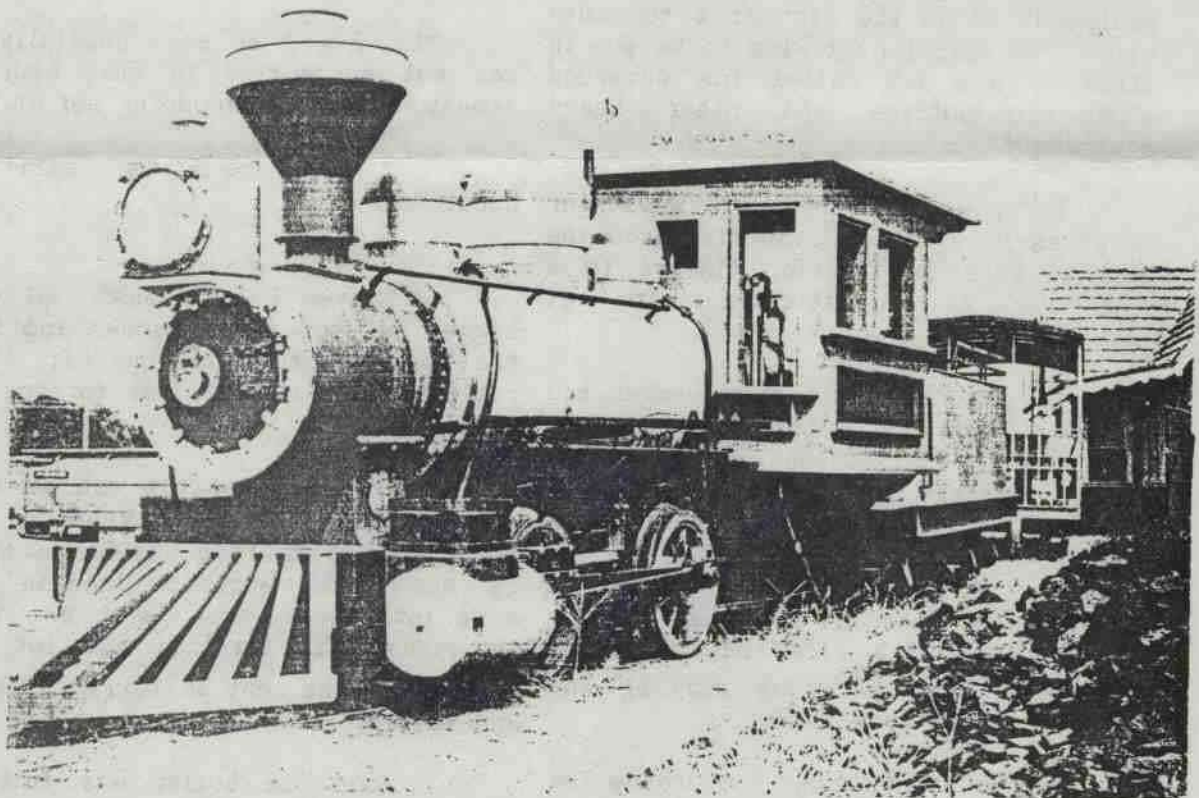
"Well I be damned!" muttered the confused Euge as Larry caught the caboose when the local left Jamestown. "You did it kid, but how in the hell can I convince the Trainmaster that I didn't drop that engine in at Jamestown.

"That is your problem, Euge," he chortled. "I solved mine, now you solve yours. I am laying off for the week as soon as we hit Pickneyville.

Having had Larry Mathis as my brakeman in the past, I know enough about him to believe this story. Anyway it is a good way to move a dead engine on her own energy. Maybe some bright guy today can do as well in dealing with the present energy situation. (LOCOMOTIVE MESSENGER is reprinted from the April 1974 issue of RAILROAD MAGAZINE (Copyright Carsten Publications) and is submitted to the ARKANSAS RAILROADER by its Author who has permission from Carsten Publications.

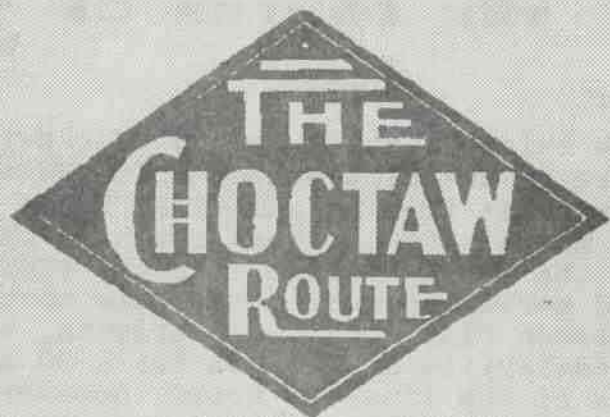
Authors note(Larry Mathis was well known to members of the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB who were MoPac RR employees running into Poplar Bluff, Mo.) (From: "My Love Affair With The Blue and Gold," by William Church

THE END



Wilbur T. Gholson Photo (Ex Argent Lbr. 2-6-0)  
Type used by in railroad construction in the 1920's

# EARLY DAYS OF



## RESEARCH BY JOHN M. MARTIN

*The following represents an overview of several years of research done in the early 1970's on the beginnings of the Rock Islands Railroad in Arkansas. The following is an excerpt from that research and is presented verbatim from the newspaper because it presents such a unique narrative picture of these significant events in railroad history during the transition of the short-lived Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad before its absorption by the Rock Island.*

*From the Arkansas Gazette, Wednesday, August 22, 1902:*

### Locomotive Stolen from Choctaw

### Locomotive Lost from Shawnee Yards

### TWO MEN ARE SUSPECTED

### Passenger Narrowly Escapes Collision Robbery Said to be Motive of Peculiar Theft

Bloodhounds are on the trail of two men charged with stealing locomotive #34 from the yards here, running it two miles west, abandoning it at a sharp curve, says a Shawnee special.

The engine was mysteriously stolen Friday night. Thieves were apparently railroad men, as they passed the switches with ease, and did their work so quickly, that the big engine was not missed for several hours. Hurried telegraphic inquiry indicated that it had not passed east, as the employees at the passenger depot would have seen it, so the only inference was that it had gone west. McLoud was notified by wire to look out for engine #34, as it was on the main line west of Shawnee, either running wild or with someone at the throttle with evil intent. The switch engine here was sent out and found #34 standing on the

main line two and one half miles west from the city with no one about it.

The spot where #34 was left is at the west end of a short curve and is at the mouth of a cut. This curve is on an embankment and on a trestle twelve or fifteen feet high near the cut. If No. 8 had not been laid out about 8 minutes by the freight train at Dublin it would have passed the McLoud before the warning of the obstruction on the main line there and would have run into engine 34 with tremendous force and the result may well be

## PART 3

## INVESTIGATE

The New Towns  
on the

## CHOCTAW LINE

And take advantage of the  
SPLENDID BUSINESS OP-  
PORTUNITIES and CHEAP  
LAND INVESTMENTS.

Good Country, Immense Tim-  
ber Resources, Large Coal and  
Mineral Deposits, Excellent  
Water.

Some of the Towns Already Establish-  
ed:

Hartford—The big coal town.  
Booneville—The railroad dividing town.  
Magazine—The natural mountain re-  
sort.

Ola—The cotton metropolis.  
Greenville—Great timber center.  
Cass—Richly land and timber.  
Adrian—The garden spot.  
Houston—Fine farming region.

Detailed information given cheerfully  
by addressing undersigned, or, better  
still, visit the country yourself and see  
local townsite agent at each point.

Be ready for next year's big rush and  
business.

Choctaw, Oklahoma & Memphis

TOWNSITE CO.,

O. M. ELLSWORTH, Manager,  
Booneville, Ark.

imagined as a large number of passengers were on board. The loss of life would have been awful to contemplate.

Bloodhounds were soon on the trail and were soon on to two men who were chased a mile or more, but finally escaped.

# THE CHOCTAW ROUTE.

# THE DEMISE OF THE CLARKSVILLE BRANCH

by Bill Pollard

The railroad which served Clarksville until late 1988 was originally built as part of the Little Rock & Ft. Smith Railroad. Construction of the line northwest from Russellville began in late 1872, and rails reached Clarksville in March, 1873. After reaching Clarksville, railroad construction was stalled by the Panic of 1873, and the town became an endpoint terminal. A turntable and servicing facilities were installed, and passenger service was operated between Clarksville and Argenta, with the trains scheduled to meet at Russellville at 12:20pm for a 30 minute meal stop. Clarksville's status as the end of the line was brief, however, since construction towards Ft. Smith resumed in 1875. The coal mining town of Spadra was reached in March, 1875, and the rails had been extended to Van Buren by July, 1876. Bridge and track construction between Argenta and Clarksville had been rushed, in order to secure the maximum available land grants, and as a result of this haste the engineering standards left much to be desired. In 1879, and again in 1882, extensive bridge rebuilding programs were undertaken to upgrade the original construction on the line.

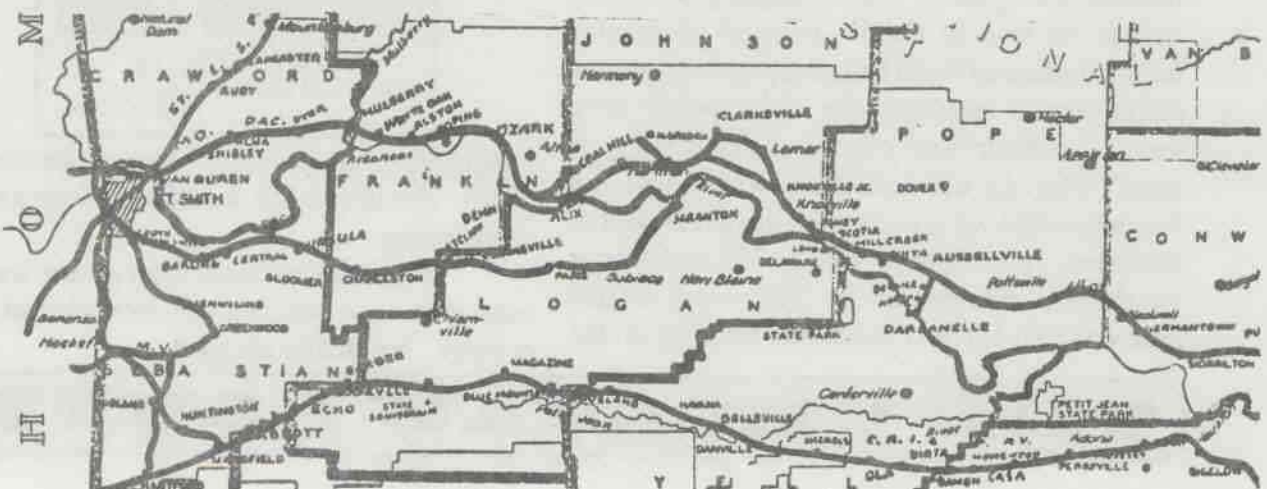
In the spring of 1887, Jay Gould was elected president of the Little Rock & Ft. Smith, and in 1888 twice daily passenger train service was established between Little Rock, Clarksville, and Ft. Smith. Pullman cars were added in 1894, when through service was extended to Kansas City.

In January, 1902, an extensive line relocation and rebuilding program was started between Little Rock and Ozark. This program included several major line changes, including the Conway tunnel, a bypass of Altus, and - perhaps most important - the replacement of much of the original rail between North Little Rock and Clarksville. A new mainline track alignment, bypassing Clarksville, was constructed about 1925 to save about 5 miles for through freights, although all passenger trains except the fast Rainbow Special continued to operate through (and stop at) Clarksville.

Passenger service through Clarksville reached its peak in the late 1920's, with four passenger trains in each direction. In addition to the Kansas City-New Orleans Southerner and a Little Rock-Ft. Smith local passenger train, both Russellville to Ft. Smith local passenger trains and Spadra/Clarksville to Little Rock local passenger trains were in operation. The train originating at Spadra was later restructured to originate at Russellville, and all of the local passenger trains were replaced by Missouri Pacific Transportation Company buses in the early 1930's. At that time, the Rainbow Special was rerouted back through Clarksville, and a flagstop at Clarksville replaced this train's previous stop at Spadra to accommodate Clarksville passengers.

The Clarksville bypass began at a point designated as BB Junction (two miles north of Knoxville), and rejoined the original route at AA Junction, near Spadra. Block signals were installed on the Central Division mainline in 1945, being placed in operation in December, but the original Clarksville line continued to be "dark railroad" -- train orders and timetable operation only -- between BB Junction, Clarksville, and Spadra.

The town of Lamar, about three miles east of Clarksville, was originally known as Cabin Creek. When the railroad survey crews passed through in 1872, local citizens petitioned to have the trading post renamed Lamar, in honor of L.C.Q. Lamar, Confederate army officer and later U.S. Senator. The post office was named Lamar, but the railroad continued to use the name Cabin Creek in the timetables until approximately 1925.



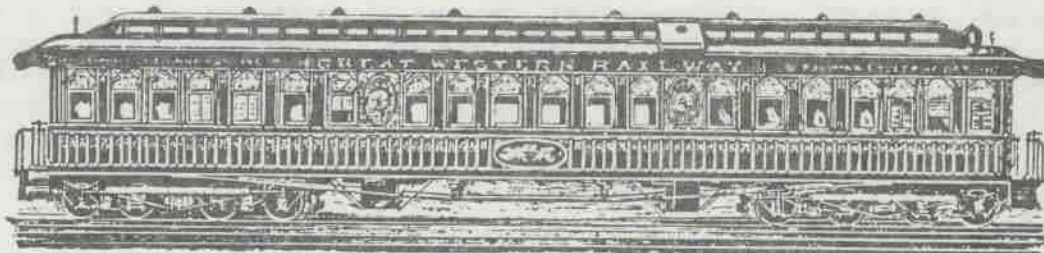
During the waning years of Central Division passenger service in the late 1950's, trains #125 and #126 operated between Little Rock, Clarksville, Ft. Smith, and Kansas City. These trains operated during the day in each direction, and usually carried an all heavyweight consist of a grill-coach, coach, combination coach-baggage, and a railway post office car, pulled by a single E-7 or Alco PA locomotive. The grill-coaches were removed in January, 1959, and Missouri Pacific was successful in discontinuing these trains on March 28, 1960. After the end of passenger service, a freight agent continued to work at Clarksville, and the passenger waiting rooms were leased out for use by Continental Trailways. When the freight agency was closed in the 1970's, the depot was acquired for use by the Chamber of Commerce. The vintage 1916 station has been restored by the Chamber, and a portion of the baggage area has been leased out for private offices. This station was the site of one of the last lower quadrant, cable operated train order signals on the Missouri Pacific in Arkansas. During the mid to late 1960's, when upper quadrant, rod operated semaphores were still quite common at train order offices on the MP, this signal was a forgotten reminder of an even earlier era. The semaphore was removed soon after the train order office was closed.

Along much of the Central Division, mainline switches were rebuilt in the 1930's with 'spring frogs', which gave a much smoother ride to passenger trains. Because of their higher maintenance costs, these special frogs were removed from most mainline switches beginning in the 1960's, but on the Clarksville branch these switches continued in service until the end of train operations -- a reminder of days when a comfortable ride for passengers was an important concern of rail officials. In the late 1950's, passenger trains were allowed a maximum speed of 59mph and freights 40mph on the Clarksville line.

During the mid-1960's, Missouri Pacific embarked on a track "rationalization" program designed to eliminate little used trackage. One such segment targeted was the approximately 3.5 mile segment from Clarksville to AA Junction. This line abandonment, effective about 1965, placed Clarksville at the end of an 8 mile branch beginning at BB Junction. One must question the wisdom of this abandonment, since the operation of the line became much more time consuming once the through route was cut. It is possible that construction of Interstate 40 (and the desire of highway commissioners to eliminate a bridge from their budget) gave the railroad an excuse to eliminate this trackage, but the operational changes ultimately placed the remainder of the branch in jeopardy. After this line abandonment, BB Junction was renamed Clarksville Junction.

At various times since the late 1960's, local freights have operated to Clarksville, originally using run around tracks at Clarksville Junction and Clarksville, and later just backing up in one direction. This type of operation was cumbersome and time consuming, and operation in recent years was handled by the Russellville traveling switch engine.

Early in 1988, the Union Pacific petitioned the ICC for authority to abandon this line, and what was supposed to be the "last train" operated on August 10, 1988, when the Russellville switcher picked up the remaining freight cars on line. Apparently some shippers either ignored or didn't receive word of the line's embargo, however, and once or twice a month, a carload for Clarksville would be set out in the Russellville yards. These cars were moved into Clarksville by the Russellville switcher as previously. Finally, U.P. officials served notice that service would be stopped, and the final train move on the branch was the outbound movement of the private car Sunflower from its home siding in Clarksville.





103	105	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
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To enforce the abandonment, two rails were removed at Clarksville Junction in January, 1989, finally severing the line. The line was placed up for bid sale or salvage, with bids due April 6, 1989. A number of bids were received by U.P., including at least one bid from an organization proposing to continue freight operations and operate a tourist train on the line. Unfortunately, an out of state scrapper submitted a higher bid, and the line was sold for salvage.

On a final track inspection April 22, 1989, it was obvious that the line had been relatively well maintained. Most of the curves retained their superelevation from passenger train days, and the line was much more reminiscent of a lightly used mainline than an abandoned branchline. Extensive reballasting had been done south of Lamar where the line parallels and crosses Cabin Creek at several points. The telegraph line, located on the north side of the track, had apparently been abandoned 15-20 years ago, but in isolated areas poles and insulators were still visible. Although the line was primarily laid with 85# rail, about a mile segment passing under I-40 had been relaid with 90# rail when it had been moved as a result of Dardanelle Lake construction in the mid-1960's. Surprisingly, much of the former mainline in Clarksville and west of the depot was still using 75# rail, and this light rail was also in surprisingly good condition. Had the line remained in operation, a major crosstie program would have been needed within a year or so, as it appeared that only spotty tie replacement had taken place along most segments of the branch in recent years. (Union Pacific's current rail standards reportedly call for the eventual rebuilding, abandonment, or sale of lines with rail lighter than 112#.)

In early May, 1989, scrapping operations began on the Clarksville branch. Within about three days, the entire branch had been "sledged" from Clarksville to Clarksville Junction, to separate the rail from the crossties. Rail pick-up and salvage then began from the Clarksville end of the line, using bulldozers and trucks. Rail was trucked to Spadra where it was reloaded on gondolas for shipment. As a part of the salvage operation, the scrapping company was to dismantle a large bridge over Spadra Creek in Clarksville for the U.P.'s use elsewhere. The ballast was purchased by the Dardanelle & Russellville, and is being used in the rebuilding of that line. The D&R also purchased one bridge, an open deck girder located in Clarksville, for future use in industrial expansion along the D&R.

The demise of the Clarksville branch makes one wonder when (or if) the State of Arkansas will finally join with a majority of other state governments across the country in railbanking unused trackage or right of way for future use. The loss of rail service to Clarksville largely precludes the future development of any sizable industry in the town. With the growth of the poultry industry in this region, and the demand of industry giants like Tyson Foods for rail access for inbound shipments of grain, feed, etc., it is unfortunate to see the dismantling of yet another segment of potentially viable Arkansas railroad trackage.



On January 19, 1990, Amtrak ran a special train to startup daily "TEXAS EAGLE" service from Chicago to San Antonio. The above scenes were all taken in Little Rock, Arkansas about 8 that morning. **TOP** - Little Rock's Union Station is to the right as the special prepares to leave in the rain. **MIDDLE LEFT** - Engines 395-204-215. **MIDDLE RIGHT** - Part of the crowd inside the station. **BOTTOM LEFT** - North Little Rock Mayor Pat Hays, an Arkansas Railroad Club member, was one of the speechmakers. **BOTTOM RIGHT** - Former Little Rock Amtrak agent, Randy Cookus (now in Kansas City) had a lot to do with setting up this event as well as getting the daily service. (Ken Ziegenbein photos)

A&M TRIP POSTPONED

Due to a lack of response, the March 17 trip planned on the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad between Springdale, Arkansas and Monett, Missouri has been put off until the Fall. We only had 40 sign up by the deadline, and 60 were needed to break even. This low sign-up rate was a little disappointing since many who sent in the recent club survey said they wanted more train rides/excursions. Also, Bart-Jennings worked hard on getting it together, and we thank him for the effort.

It's got to be recognized that the free rides on various railroads around here are over. There will be no more free lunches, so on future excursions we're going to have to pay, at least for the insurance.

FORDYCE TO PINE BLUFF 819 TRIP DATE CHANGED

Our club's trip to Fordyce to ride behind the 819 from Fordyce to Pine Bluff has been moved to APRIL 29, a Sunday. (The SP, as of February 18, still had not officially said they would run, but it is assumed they will). There will be a cost to ride the train...it won't be free as stated previously. The cost will range between \$25 to \$35 each, in addition to the \$10 bus ride between North Little Rock and Fordyce. Contact BILL CHURCH, 5619 Bel Caro Place, North Little Rock AR 72118 for more details. His number is 501-753-4582.

"COTTON BELT STAR" (819) TO RUN TO ST LOUIS

S.P. has authorized the operation of Cotton Belt steam engine 819 from Pine Bluff to St. Louis in June, 1990 for the national convention of the National Railway Historical Society. The 819, along with 12 vintage passenger cars, will run a paying excursion, leaving Pine Bluff June 12...returning from St. Louis June 17. The public is invited to ride. The trip is sponsored by the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society.

This will be the first trip for the famous engine on the north end of the Cotton Belt since it was restored in 1986. There should be lots of people interested in riding, as this trip was recently in almost every newspaper in the state.

Present plans (as of February 19) are for the "Cotton Belt Star" to leave Pine Bluff June 12, running to Illmo, Missouri where the train will stop overnight. Lodging for passengers is available at Cape Girardeau, about 10 miles away. All passengers will be responsible for their own lodging; however, transportation will be provided to the Cape Girardeau motels from Illmo.

The following day, June 13, the train will proceed to St. Louis, crossing the Mississippi River over the Thebes Bridge into Illinois and operate over the joint tracks of the Union Pacific following the river into East St. Louis. On arrival in East St. Louis, all passengers must detrain. Transportation will be provided to St. Louis Union Station, where you can get rides to other hotels.

While in St. Louis, the train will be parked in Cotton Belt's Valley Junction Yard, and the steam engine will be on display at Union Station in St. Louis June 14, 15 and 16.

The "Star" will depart East St. Louis June 17, returning to Pine Bluff the same day.

The train ride will be open to the general public on all portions of the trip in both directions. Stops are planned at Stuttgart, Brinkley, Hickory Ridge, Jonesboro, Paragould, Malden, MO, Dexter, MO and Illmo, MO for on and off passenger loading. Tickets will be available for riding any segments of the trip between any of the



above named points, including one-way and round-trip tickets over the entire trip. Tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis with priority being given to those wanting to ride the entire trip.

The schedule of the "COTTON BELT STAR" is as follows:

<u>TUESDAY, JUNE 12</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13</u>	<u>SUNDAY, JUNE 17</u>
Lv. PBluff 8:00 AM	Lv. Illmo 8:00 AM	Lv. Valley Jct 8:00 AM
Ar. Stuttgart 8:50 AM	Ar. Chester 9:45 AM	Ar. Chester 9:40 AM
Lv. Stuttgart 9:01 AM	Lv. Chester 10:15 AM	Lv. Chester 10:10 AM
Ar. Brinkley 9:50 AM	Ar. Valley Jct 12:01 PM	Ar. Illmo 12:01 PM
Lv. Brinkley 10:20 AM		Lv. Illmo 12:30 PM
Ar. Hkory Rdg 11:15 AM		Ar. Dexter 1:40 PM
Lv. Hkory Rdg 11:25 AM		Lv. Dexter 1:50 PM
Ar. Jonesboro 12:15 PM		Ar. Malden 2:20 PM
Lv. Jonesboro 12:45 PM		Lv. Malden 3:00 PM
Ar. Paragould 1:35 PM		Ar. Paragould 4:01 PM
Lv. Paragould 1:45 PM		Lv. Paragould 4:10 PM
Ar. Malden 2:45 PM		Ar. Jonesboro 4:40 PM
Lv. Malden 3:15 PM		Lv. Jonesboro 5:10 PM
Ar. Dexter 3:42 PM		Ar. Hkory Rdg 6:01 PM
Lv. Dexter 3:50 PM		Lv. Hkory Rdg 6:10 PM
Ar. Illmo 5:00 PM		Ar. Brinkley 7:05 PM
		Lv. Brinkley 7:35 PM
		Ar. Stuttgart 8:20 PM
		Lv. Stuttgart 8:30 PM
		Ar. PBluff 9:30 PM

"THE COTTON BELT STAR"

TABLE OF FARES

FROM	TO=	PBLUFF	STUTT	BRINK	HRRIDGE	JBORO	PGOULD	MALDEN	DEXTER	ILLMO	ESTL
PINE BLUFF		-	15	30	45	60	75	90	105	120	125
STUTTGART		15	-	15	30	45	60	75	90	105	125
BRINKLEY		30	15	-	15	30	45	60	75	90	125
HICKORY RIDGE		45	30	15	-	15	30	45	60	75	125
JONESBORO		60	45	30	15	-	15	30	45	60	120
PARAGOULD		75	60	45	30	15	-	15	30	45	105
MALDEN		90	75	60	45	30	15	-	15	30	90
DEXTER		105	90	75	60	45	30	15	-	15	75
ILLMO		120	105	90	75	60	45	30	15	-	60
ESTLOUIS		125	125	125	125	120	105	90	75	Note	-

Fares shown are between stations where stops are planned. To find fare, locate origin station in left hand column, and destination station across top. Where they intersect will be the fare between the two stations.

One-Way fare over the entire trip is \$125 (264 miles).  
Round trip fare over the entire trip both ways is \$200.

Note..Tickets from E. St.Louis to Illmo are not available, except to those passengers holding round trip or full one-way tickets from E.St.Louis to Pine Bluff. This portion of the trip is reserved for NRHS members.

For more information/tickets contact:

COTTON BELT RAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2044

Pine Bluff AR 71613

Phone: (501)-541-1819

SHOW AND SALE - The Arkansas Railroad Club annual Show and Sale will be held JUNE 2 at the Fisher Armory in North Little Rock, the same place as last year. The Show will run from 8 AM until 3:30 PM with setup on the Friday before from 3 to 8 PM. Contact Bill Bailey at 8318 Reymere Drive, Little Rock AR 72207 for more details.

Also...on MARCH 10, the Saturday before the March 11 club meeting, there will be a pre-Show & Sale get-together at Matt Ritchie's house, 111 Tenkiller, Sherwood. This meeting will plan the show's events, who will help out, etc. Be there if you can. Call Matt at 834-4449 for more information.

SHURFINE LABELS continue to earn money for the club. Collect these labels and turn them in to the club at our Sunday meetings. They earn 2 cents each for the club.

"RAILROADER" INDEX FOR SALE - James Fair, Jr., club member from Austin, Texas, has put together a 17-page index of ALL "ARKANSAS RAILROADERS" (1970 through 1989). The index is of stories only, and is arranged alphabetically by author. It includes story title, railroad in the story, volume, number and year of issue. If you'd like one of these, the cost will be \$2.00 for all 17 pages, which includes postage. Send your \$2.00 (check made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club) to:

KEN ZIEGENBEIN - index  
"ARKANSAS RAILROADER"  
905 VALERIE DRIVE  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72118

AN ENJOYABLE TRIP was taken February 9 by myself and L.T. Walker from North Little Rock to DeValls Bluff in eastern Arkansas to survey the abandoned right-of-way of the Rock Island. L.T. is a walking history book on the Rock Island, having been a Rock Island conductor, and told lots of stories about events on the line most people would have forgotten long ago. There will be pictures in a future newsletter. Walking down to the old Rock Island White River bridge was quite an adventure.

BILL CHURCH RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED - Bill Church, who has written many stories that we enjoyed, was hospitalized in late January for a small stroke. He did attend the February 11 meeting and will continue to be contact for various rail trips. KEEP WELL!!

ROCK ISLAND COACH "PIKES PEAK" is still for sale by Bruce Nelson, 1141 North Magnolia, El Dorado AR 72730. He says it has been inspected and is ready to run.

REA TRUCK INFORMATION NEEDED - The Greenville South Carolina Chapter NRHS needs some information on Railway Express Agency trucks in the late 1940s. Specifically, they have obtained a 1948 REA truck and want to know how to restore it. Contact the REA Truck - Greenville Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 5481, Greenville SC 29606.

## ☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

The next program/meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held Sunday, MARCH 11 at the usual place, the Twin City Bank Building in North Little Rock on Main Street, 3rd floor. Time will be 2 PM.

The program this month will be given by BILL BAILEY on KCS passenger service, steam and diesel. Bill is not only active in the Kansas City Southern Historical Society, he is also the Chairman of the Board of the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society and has worked

with the 819 forever. (He also collects insulators!) Refreshments will be served.

THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB SURVEY RESULTS

by: Barton Jennings, vice president

First, I want to thank all who took the time to complete your survey and get them to me. Second, I have written a few of those who said they could write articles, etc. For those of you who have not heard from me, this is your invitation to help the club by sending in an article, short story, or just a little bit of news. Everything is appreciated. (Editors note...you do not have to type stories or news...hand-written is fine. Formality is not a requirement)

Now, as the ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT likes to say, this is not a scientific survey, but the opinions of those mad enough, or just interested enough, to respond. A total of 22 members sent in the survey, about 10 percent of the club. Ten of those have attended meetings during the past year, at an average of 8 meetings each. Eleven responses were from Arkansas. Missouri was next with three, then came Illinois and Louisiana each with two responses. Oklahoma, Texas, Iowa and New York (Mia, you win the long distance award) each had one. Surprisingly, these figures all pretty well follow the patterns of the clubs membership roster.

Now for the numbers. The following table shows the numbers and percentages of the various activities that our membership partakes in. Reading about trains and riding them are certainly favorite pastimes of our membership.

	<u>NUMBERS</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
<u>RIDES AMTRAK/VIA</u> - - - - -	14	64
<u>RIDES PASSENGER EXCURSIONS</u> - -	18	82
<u>RIDES TOURIST LINES</u> - - - - -	16	73
<u>RIDES FREIGHT TRAINS</u> - - - - -	8	36
<u>CHASES TRAINS</u> - - - - -	11	50
<u>READS RAIL BOOKS</u> - - - - -	20	91
<u>READS RAIL MAGAZINES</u> - - - - -	22	100
<u>COLLECTS RAIL ARTIFACTS</u> - - -	17	77
<u>BUYS VIDEOS</u> - - - - -	10	45
<u>COLLECTS PHOTOS</u> - - - - -	14	64
<u>SHOOTS SLIDES</u> - - - - -	13	59
<u>SHOOTS PRINTS</u> - - - - -	14	64
<u>SHOOTS VIDEO</u> - - - - -	5	23
<u>SHOOTS MOVIES</u> - - - - -	1	5

It is really surprising how many members have access to freight trains. It must be related to the fact that our membership includes a number of past or present railroad employees.

It is interesting that with the heavy emphasis in slides for both shows and publications, print film is actually used more often. (Editors note...should you ever send in photos for publication, they need to be prints, not slides for the "Railroader".) I really do not know what this means. Maybe there are still enough users of black and white film, along with those who like the larger format films, to create this stat.

Video is also making a sizeable presence, but I have never seen a trip or chase where 25 percent of the people present have video equipment. Maybe video users are selective in their use of the medium or at least have decided that the extra weight is too much for some locations. And finally, its easy to see that motion film is on the way out.

Another surprise is the number of other clubs we all belong to. Nearly 30 other clubs were mentioned by name and some people just said many. Favorites were the historical societies for the Cotton Belt, CRI&P, MP, and the M&NA.

The articles in the Arkansas Railroader were all well received. It would be very hard to find one that was not mentioned in a survey. There were many requests for more rail stories and railroad news. Our mix of today and yesterday really seems to be working. Bill Church stories lead in popularity, but just barely over those of Gene Hull and Barton Jennings. Right behind, each being mentioned several

times, were those by Fair, Walker, Gray, Adams, Ziegenbein, Hillie and Pollard. Behind this group is another one just as large. (Editors note...we have EXCELLENT writers. Perhaps one reason some got more mentions than others was the frequency that some people write more often than others and thus can be remembered quicker.)

As mentioned earlier, I cannot think of any article that did not get mentioned as a favorite. Congratulations everyone who has written for the "Railroader."

Our programs were just as widely mentioned. The talks by various railroad officials all received strong voting along with the meetings on the more historical nature of the railroads. However, the two most often mentioned programs were those by Smykla and Jennings. It seems that the photos of a couple of crazies in the wilds of North America are able to stick in peoples minds. But, hey, who can forget the sight of the midnight sun over a train in Alaska? I predict that several new names will appear here next year as several of our newer members begin to show their pictures of adventures around the globe.

What club activities would you like to see in the future? Forty-five percent of those responding said excursions. Combined with the fact that 82 percent said that they ride excursions, it seems that the club should do just that. By the time that you are reading this, you should also have read about a few of the trips we hope to run this year. Remember, for us to run them, WE MUST HAVE RIDERS (editors underline).

And now, some comments from the surveys:

-- Enjoy (Arkansas) Railroader best.

-- I cannot say enough about the fine job Ken Ziegenbein does on the Arkansas Railroader month after month.

-- This club is tops.

-- I belong to quite a few railroad clubs but I love the Arkansas Railroader best...I pass the Railroader around because everyone wants to read it.

-- Arkansas Railroader is one of my favorite.

-- I feel Ken Z. produces the best newsletter I have ever read. In the numerous members...you have a gold mine of history of the railroad.

-- (The other clubs) programs are longer which I like.

Anyway, thats the results of the survey. Hopefully, a few new writers and speakers will have been found through this action. So, thats all folks!

#### ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

HOGTRAIN SCHEDULE SET - Hogtrain, Inc., which runs specials to Arkansas Razorback football games hooked onto regular Amtrak trains, has set its 1990 fall schedule. Here it is:

TRIP 1 -- OCTOBER 19-21, Texas at Austin

TRIP 2 -- OCTOBER 26-28, Houston at Houston

TRIP 3 -- NOVEMBER 9-11, Baylor at Waco

TRIP 4 -- NOVEMBER 24-25, SMU at Dallas

All trips depart Little Rock on AMTRAK #21 on Friday mornings and return on Sunday evening. Call William Eldridge (an Arkansas Railroad Club member) at 501-565-6656 for information and reservations or write him at 8615 Chicot Road, Little Rock AR 72209.

OLD MISSOURI PACIFIC HOSPITAL SOLD - (Little Rock) - The old Missouri Pacific employees hospital in Little Rock was sold to Dillard's Department Stores February 13. It will be demolished so that a new Dillard's office building next to it can be built. It is located at 1310 Cantrell Road and has been abandoned since 1988. (ARKANSAS GAZETTE, February 14 and 15, 1990)

ROCK ISLAND SPAGHETTI COMING TO LITTLE ROCK - (Little Rock) - A pasta chain is planning to open a spaghetti restaurant in the historic old

Choctaw Route Station in east Little Rock. The Old Spaghetti Warehouse, Inc. is negotiating for the site (now owned by the Arkansas Gazette), it was confirmed February 5 by James Aitken, vice president of the company.

"It's a beautiful building," he said. "Historically, we go into old buildings downtown that are derelict."

The Choctaw Route Station, at East Second and Byrd Streets, is in a warehouse district on the east side of downtown Little Rock. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places. Although it was empty more than 25 years, it has been sealed and is in comparatively good condition. There was never anything in it except a station.

The building has 8,000 square feet on the first floor and 3,000 square feet on the second. It was built in 1899 by the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad and even had a restaurant in it at one time. The railroad was sold in 1902 to the Rock Island and the building remained a station until the mid 60s.

The Old Spaghetti Warehouse is like stepping back 100 years in time and is a family oriented restaurant. (Editors note...they are good, as I've eaten in the one in New Orleans). (ARKANSAS GAZETTE, February 6, 1990 by Leroy Donald).

*PET PEEVE #4 - Badly smoking exhausts from cars. Not only does this do damage to the environment...it does damage to my eyes and nose! If someone can afford to buy gasoline to drive around in, they can also afford a tune-up once in a while.*

U.P.'S 844 TO COME THROUGH LITTLE ROCK in the first week in June on its way to the NRHS convention in St. Louis. No details are yet available as to how long it will be here. Supposedly, it will arrive via the Van Buren/Fort Smith line from the west.

ABANDONED RAILWAY EYED AS RECREATIONAL TRAIL - (Bentonville) - An abandoned stretch of the Arkansas & Missouri Railway (ne. Frisco) in Bentonville could become a recreation trail under the program called "Rails to Trails." In a petition filed with the ICC, AMR explained it is abandoning the stretch due to unprofitable conditions.

Mayo Building Supply, Triangle Home Center and Bentonville Casting utilized the track in receiving shipments. AMR has initiated a reload operation for Mayo and Triangle by having their materials driven in from the Springdale station. (Rogers NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MORNING NEWS, January 15, 1990 by Kim Cannon)

UNION PACIFIC CREW NEARLY GETS HIT BY AIRCRAFT - (Little Rock) - At 5:10 PM Friday, January 19, U.P. conductor Teddy Hefley saw a corporate jet owned by Kodak coming down to land at Little Rock's Adams Field just 100 feet or so in front of his engine on a U.P. freight (the tracks run very close to the approach to the runways). "We felt the heat from the plane when it blew up," he said. The Gulfstream jet crashed in rain and fog, killing all seven aboard.

Had the jet hit the locomotive, with its full load of fuel, the train would probably have exploded and all four crew members would also have been killed. The plane hit six of the approach towers to the airport, and also was so low that it hit the railroad embankment, bending one rail into the other.

COTTON BELT LAYS OFF 123 MORE PINE BLUFF WORKERS - (Pine Bluff) - About 123 Cotton Belt employees were laid off January 29 from the Pine Bluff repair facility for auto-rack cars. The union is quite upset over the layoffs, saying that they had assurances that no layoffs would occur. "We have definitely been misled by the company," said John Sturdivant, general chairman of the Transportation and

Communication Union. He also believes that the money the company will get as a result of the layoffs will help in its effort to purchase new railroad lines between St. Louis and Chicago and between Kansas City and Chicago. Sturdivant compared these latest layoffs with those that occurred in 1980 when the company was buying the Rock Island between New Mexico and Kansas City.

The Southern Pacific powers that be in San Francisco apparently have proposed to phase out redundant facilities across its large system, including possibly the following at Pine Bluff:

- 1) Wheel shop phased out by June 1, 1990
- 2) Running maintenance phased out by April 1, 1992
- 3) Heavy maintenance phased out by October 1, 1993

Jim Johnson, public relations chairman for the railroad, said in a worst case scenario, at most 300 of the 1,300 jobs in Pine Bluff would be affected. He also said that this proposal is not definite. He said nobody is talking about phasing out the entire operation.

State senators Jay Bradford and Knox Nelson from Pine Bluff have gotten together to talk to Arkansas governor Bill Clinton to have him contact Rio Grande Industries CEO Philip Anschutz to try to ensure that the whole Pine Bluff facility won't be shut down. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, Jan. 13; ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, Jan. 24 by Randy Tardy; ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, Jan. 26 by Thomas Sissom; PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, January 24 by David S. Robinson)

UNION PACIFIC CABOOSE ARRIVES AT HAZEN - (Hazen) - On January 17, the city of Hazen finally got its caboose from the Union Pacific. It was parked next to the restored Hazen Rock Island depot.

CORNING MOP DEPOT TORN DOWN - (Corning) - The Union Pacific began tearing down the train station in Corning the last week in January. This depot was located at the East end of Vine Street at First Street for the past 65 years. (CLAY COUNTY COURIER, February 1, 1990)

READER RAILROAD TO HOT SPRINGS? - (Hot Springs) - News stories keep surfacing that the famous "Possum Trot" Reader Railroad located in the woods at Reader, Arkansas will be moving to Hot Springs at some point. Richard Grigsby, owner, recently presented a program to the Hot Springs Rotary Club about possibly moving his train there. Preliminary plans have the train traveling from the corner of Grand Avenue and Valley Street eastward along a path near parallel to U.S. Highway 70. "We are doing everything we can to move this historic railroad to Hot Springs," Grigsby said. The Reader carried 10,000 passenger last year. (Hot Springs THE SENTINEL RECORD, Jan. 26)

RAILROAD AGENTS ARREST MAYFLOWER DEVELOPER - (Mayflower) - Developer Dan Davis was arrested by Union Pacific special agents February 2 for trespassing. That was the 18th day of a battle over a crossing he was building near a development. Davis was arrested at the crossing in northern Mayflower. A road that would cross the tracks is being built to connect Arkansas 365 and the Pine Village subdivision, which was developed by Davis. A showdown occurred January 16 over the crossing when railroad officials arrived with a bulldozer to destroy Davis' work.

The railroad said the crossing would be unsafe because it is located on a curve and on an incline. The railroad argues that Federal law overrides state law letting communities build crossings anywhere they want.

The Union Pacific said its agents are certified state law enforcement officials and can enforce public law on railroad property. (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, Feb. 3, by John Haman)

#### GENERAL RAIL NEWS

UNION PACIFIC BUYS NEW LOCOMOTIVES - Union Pacific is taking delivery

of 50 new 4,000 HP GE DASH-8 units, part of a \$500 million program to acquire 418 new engines.

NRHS CONVENTION SPECIAL will be operated out of Houston, sponsored by the Gulf Coast Chapter of the NRHS, on June 12. This special, consisting of Pullman "Cimarron River" and Observation "Good Cheer" attached to the "Texas Eagle", will leave Houston at 9:00 AM. It will return June 17, leaving St. Louis that night at 11:05 PM (as you know, the national convention will be held in St. Louis). Should anyone want to board this special in Little Rock, contact Jim Lueders of the Gulf Coast Chapter at 713-468-3331.

*"You (SP employees) know what we need to do to make our railroad profitable in 1990, and we are confident that you will do what is necessary. The real estate department has provided critical funds (in 1989). Next year, its the railroad's turn." -- from SP Vice Chairman Bob Starzel*

SANTA FE RAILROAD ELIMINATES JOBS - Santa Fe Railroad plans to reduce its work force by 2,700 jobs during the next 5 years. Santa Fe currently has about 18,000 employees.

SP'S CAPITAL SPENDING REVISED DOWNWARD - Southern Pacific's 1990 capital spending program has been revised downward. The new program calls for a \$381 million spending plan this year, \$77 million less than originally proposed in December. The revised budget calls for \$171 million for rails, ties and ballast and \$7 million for technology. (SP UPDATE, Feb 14)

FRISCO 1522 TO GRAND CANYON? - Rumors have it that the Grand Canyon Railway is negotiating with the National Museum of Transport in St. Louis for use of restored Frisco 1522 steam engine. The Grand Canyon Railway needs larger power to operate their service between Williams, Arizona and the Grand Canyon along the old Santa Fe tracks. They are looking for other steam engines to use. (Southwest Railroad Historical Society's CLEARANCE CARD, Vol. 27 - No. 5)

UP CARLOADINGS DOWN - Union Pacific's carloadings in the fourth quarter of 1989 totaled 984,000, falling 6 percent from the same period in 1988. (INFO MAGAZINE, January 1990)

CRANE CONSULTS WITH SP - L. Stanley Crane, retired chief executive of Conrail and a nationally regarded railroad expert, completed a week as a consultant to Southern Pacific, reviewing various phases of SP's operations with an eye to making recommendations to help improve the company's financial position. This was done the first week in February. (SP UPDATE, February 7)

MANDATORY DRUG TESTING on the nation's Class I railroads began January 16. The program requires at least 25 percent of a railroad's employees involved with train movements be tested this year. Implementation of testing on Class II railroads is July 2 and Class III November 1.

MORE STEAM ENGINES REVIVED - (Austin, Texas) - For 33 years, Southern Pacific 2-8-2 steam locomotive 786 sat in a city park near the Texas state capitol. The first week in February, the 1916-built Mikado engine was moved to a shop facility on the nearby Georgetown Railroad for restoration. The Austin Steam Train Association plans to use this engine for excursion service over the former SP branch that runs 163 miles from Giddings to Llano, Texas.

Another SP steam engine, from SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, #2472, a 1921 Baldwin which was originally acquired to power the old Overland Limited, was moved February 10 to a shop in San Francisco, where restoration work will begin. (SP UPDATE)

AMTRAK NEWS

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP BY ROUTE/AREAS

	OCT 88	OCT 89	% CHANGE
NE CORRIDOR	958,249	965,211	+0.7%
SHORT DISTANCE	381,616	371,170	-2.7%
LONG DISTANCE	402,960	425,961	+5.7%
"Eagle"	8,422	10,557	+25.4%
"Sunset"	8,387	8,203	-2.2%
"City N Orleans"	15,877	14,847	-6.5%
SPECIAL TRAINS	8,894	5,465	-38.6%
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,751,719	1,767,807	+0.9%
	<u>NOV 88</u>	<u>NOV 89</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>
NE CORRIDOR	990,912	992,740	+0.2%
SHORT DISTANCE	392,305	394,320	+0.5%
LONG DISTANCE	412,031	432,478	+5.0%
"Eagle"	9,856	9,378	-4.8%
"Sunset"	8,181	8,118	-0.8%
"City N Orleans"	17,533	16,333	-6.8%
SPECIAL TRAINS	1,165	4,682	+301.9%
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,796,413	1,824,220	+1.5%

Amtrak had an average of 173.3 passengers on its trains at any one time in NOV 1989. (The "Eagle"/"Sunset" had an average of 218.6 passengers on board).

Amtrak was on time 74.4 percent of the time in November 1989 (The "Eagle" was on time 58.3 percent of the time, up from only 23.1 percent on time in Nov. 1988).

**DAILY TEXAS EAGLE** - As you know, on January 19, the TEXAS EAGLE began daily service between Chicago, Little Rock, San Antonio and Houston. The southbound train departs Chicago daily at 4:15 PM, arrives in Little Rock 6:13 AM, Dallas 1:34 PM, Ft. Worth 3:22 PM, Austin 7:57 PM and San Antonio 10:30 PM. Stops on the Houston section include College Station 5:40 PM and Houston 8:15 PM.

Northbound the trains leave San Antonio at 7:05 AM and Houston at 9:00 AM, arriving College Station 11:00 AM, Austin 9:35 AM, Ft. Worth 2:35 PM, Dallas 4:10 PM, Little Rock 11:42 PM, St. Louis 7:30 AM and Chicago 1:45 PM. (Editor's note...this means that the two EAGLES pass between Dallas and Fort Worth and somewhere in either north Arkansas or southern Missouri around Poplar Bluff). See page 15 for photos. Also, see the January 28, 1990 ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT for a great article on the entire trip written by club member Randy Tardy.

**AMTRAK CONTINUES RECORD-BREAKING PERFORMANCE IN 1989** - Amtrak continued to break records in revenues (\$1.27 billion, up 14.7% over 1988), passenger miles (5.9 billion, up 3.2%) and costs covered by revenues (72%, compared with 69% in 1988) during the fiscal year that ended September 30, 1989.

The average distance traveled by Amtrak passengers during the fiscal year was up from 264 miles in FY88 to 274 miles in FY89. There was a one-half percent drop in the number of passengers carried, 21.4 million compared with 21.5 million in 1988.

Amtrak's costs covered by revenue was 72 percent, a larger percentage of Amtrak's costs than at any time in the company's history. As recently as 1981, Amtrak covered only 48 percent of its



costs. Grayham Clayton, Amtrak's president, said that next year they plan to cover 75 percent, better than any passenger railroad in the world.

**AMTRAK GOALS FOR THE 1990S - ELIMINATE OPERATING SUBSIDY** - Amtrak's goal is to continue to cover larger and larger portions of costs in the hope that the need for operating subsidies would be eliminated by the end of the year 2000. If that goal is reached, Amtrak would become the ONLY major national rail passenger carrier in the world to do so.

In order to achieve this ambitious goal, Amtrak will continue to require federal capital grants to modernize and expand its facilities and equipment fleet, realize cost savings and increase revenues. In many markets, Amtrak has reached virtual passenger saturation and more cars are needed.

*"Finally, Amtrak looks like a way to run a business."  
-- NEW YORK TIMES, Sunday, January 14, 1990 --*

**AMTRAK PLANS REROUTE OF BROADWAY AND CAPITOL LIMITEDS** - Amtrak will reroute the BROADWAY LIMITED and CAPITOL LIMITED through Ohio and Indiana within a year. The new route for the BROADWAY would take the train from Pittsburgh through Youngstown and Akron, Ohio and Auburn, Indiana over CSX tracks. The CAPITOL will be rerouted from Pittsburgh through Alliance, Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio and South Bend, Indiana using Conrail tracks. Now west of Pittsburgh both trains operate over Conrail tracks through Canton, Crestline and Lima, Ohio and Fort Wayne and Valparaiso, Indiana. Dedicated bus service will continue to Fort Wayne.

The route changes remove the trains from a little-used freight track and place them both on main line tracks which will be maintained for higher freight and passenger speeds. Conrail had notified Amtrak of the declining need for freight service on the existing route.

It is anticipated that many of these changes may take place by next summer.

NEWS UPDATED through February 19...mailed February 26.

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### 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 \$12 additional per year (total payment for Arkansas residents \$22.00.)

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

RENEWAL

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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 on the second Sunday of the month. This month the meeting will be held on MAR 11 at the Twin City Bank Building on Main Street in North Little Rock. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Programs are presented.

The ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the monthly publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club and is generally mailed in time to be received before the monthly meetings. In order to receive this publication, you must be a member of the Club. Current dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year for out-of-state. The RAILROADER is mailed to all members automatically.

If you would like to join, send your check made out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" to: DICK BYRD, Treasurer, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our Club by paying \$12/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 left, such as stories, pictures (prints only, any size), diagrams, ADDRESS CHANGES, etc.:

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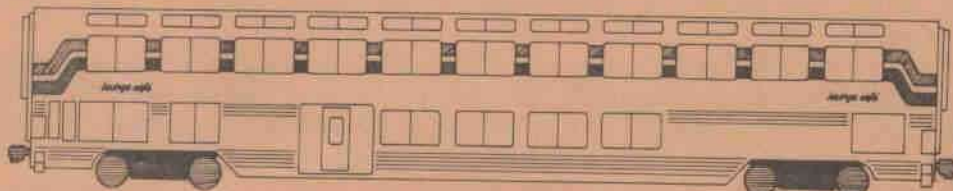
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