



ARKANSAS RAILROADER

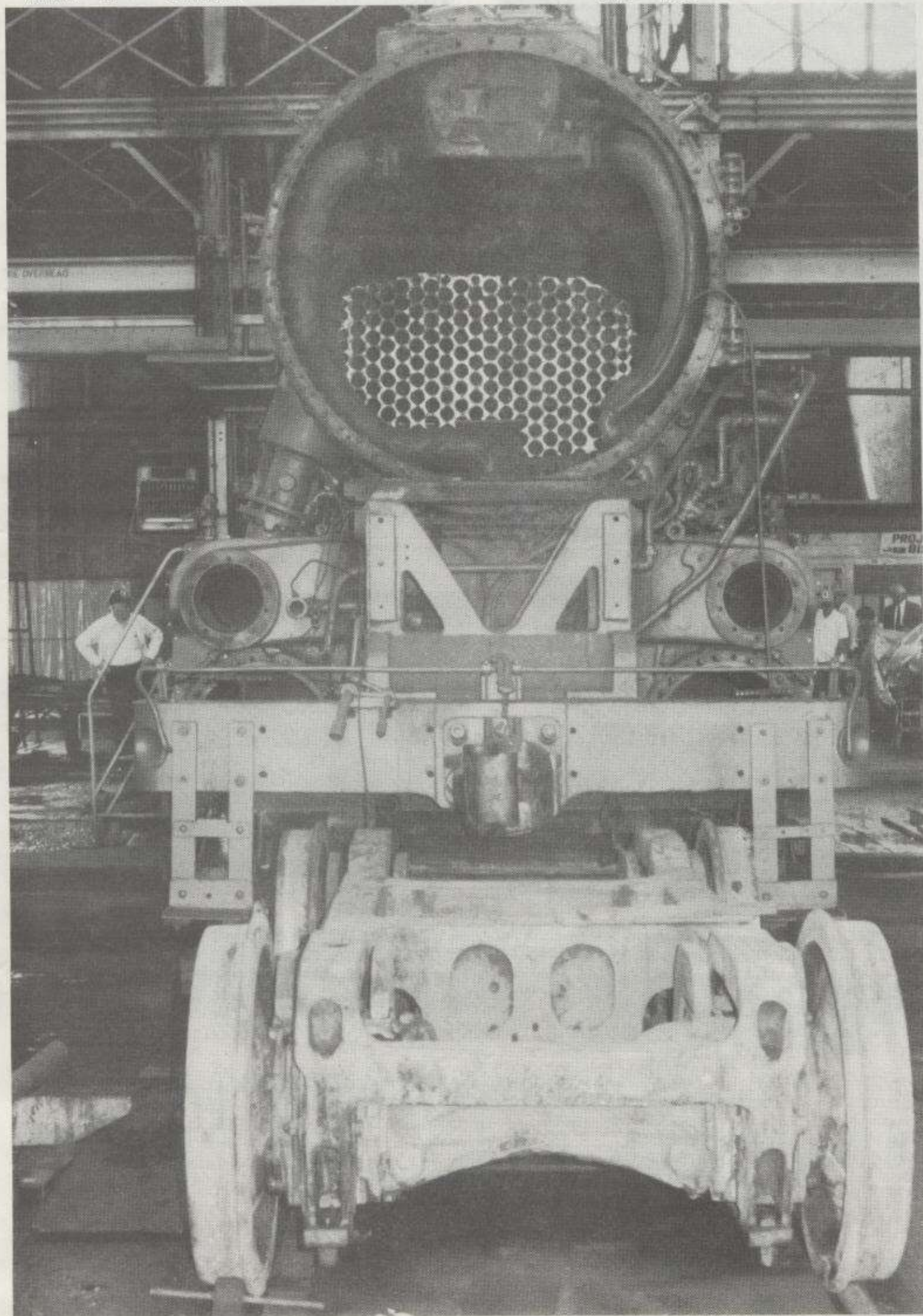


LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

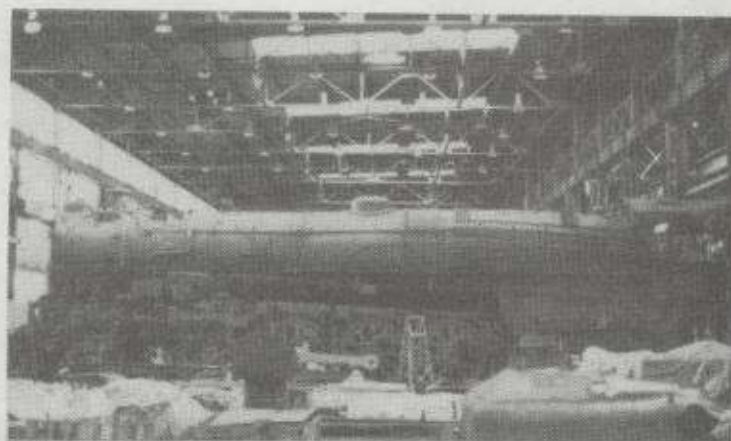
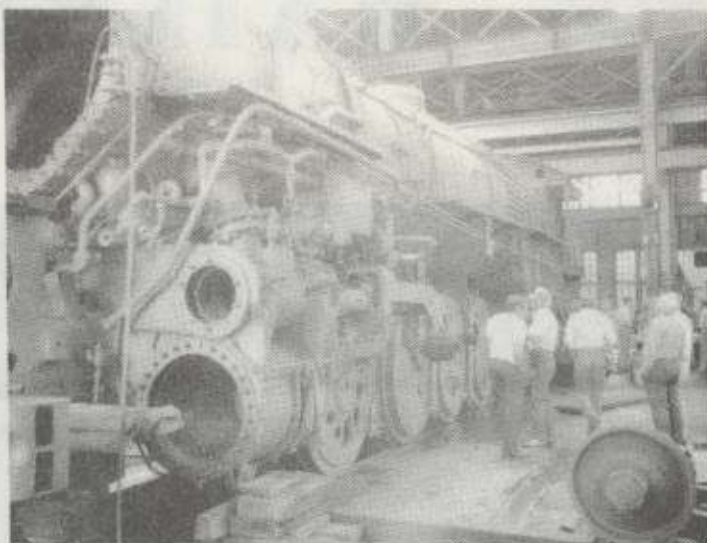
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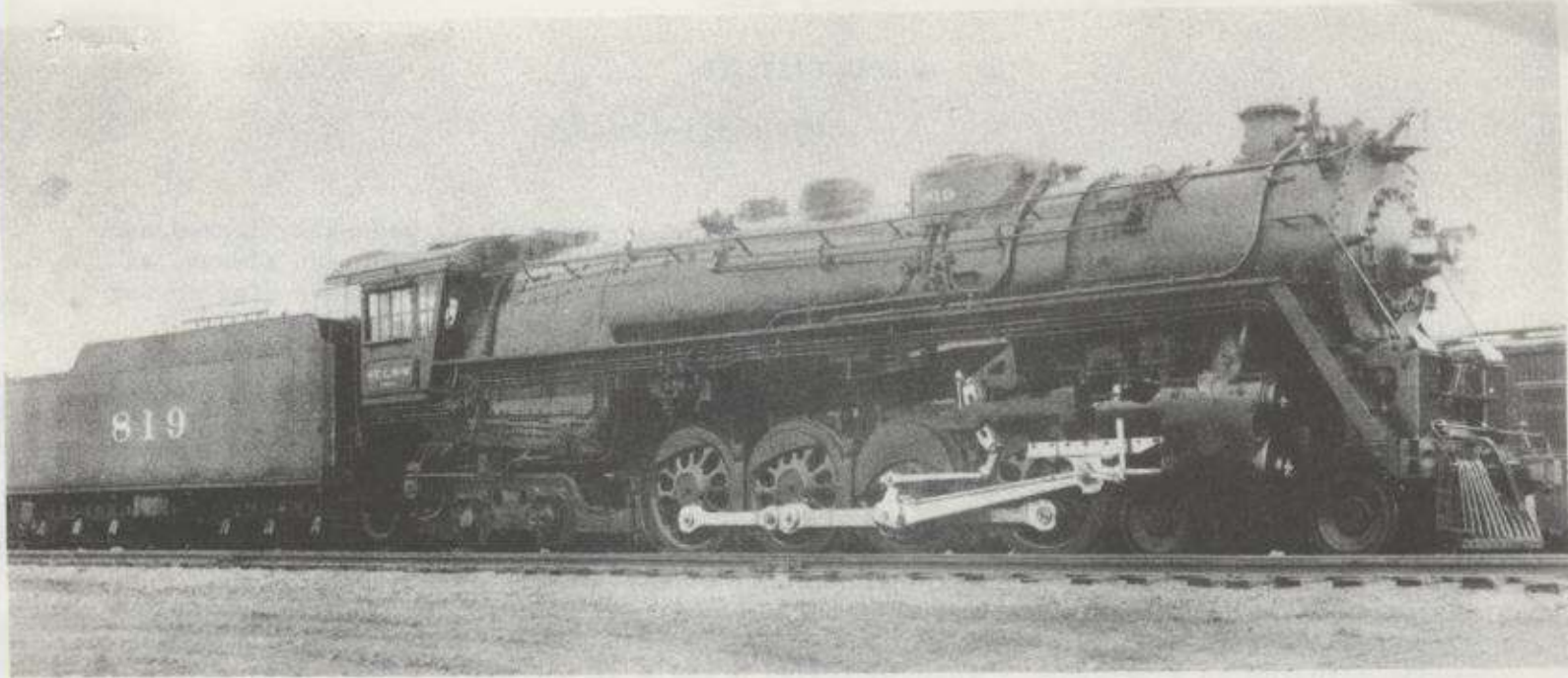


COVER PHOTO - Locomotive 819 sits awaiting renovation at the Cotton Belt Shops in Pine Bluff on Sunday, April 14, 1985.



On April 14, 1985, the Arkansas Railroad Club met at the Cotton Belt Shops in Pine Bluff to see the progress being made on the 4-8-4 Locomotive 819. TOP TWO PHOTOS - the 819 in its red primer paint, sitting on the same tracks on which it was built originally in 1942; MIDDLE LEFT - Former engineer for MoPac, Mr. Hille stands next to the huge driving wheels; MIDDLE RIGHT - a panoramic view from the north; ABOVE LEFT - view from the cab of the 819 looking out the right side; ABOVE RIGHT - club members in the cab - recognize them? (all photos by Ken Ziegenbein)

If all goes well, the Cotton Belt Locomotive 819 will be steamed in September or October of this year. This locomotive was built in 1942 at these same shops (see top of next page). It was donated to the citizens of Pine Bluff in 1955 and sat in Oakland Park there until 1983 when the Cotton Belt brought it out of the park for restoration to service as a volunteer project of the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society. If you would like to join this group, write to the Society at P.O. Box 2044, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71613.



SLSW 819 as it came out of the Pine Bluff Cotton Belt Shops new in 1942. (Courtesy St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company)



A SALUTE TO 819

*A whale of a jack, the last of twenty,
Power & speed, your class had plenty,
You & your kin rattled the windows in the shack,
Where I lived along the tracks.*

*I loved the sound of your whistle hoarse,
Mourning for crossings along your course,
Yes 819 you gave me a dream,
Your stacatto exhaust & whistle's scream.*

*I determined in my early years,
To one day be a locomotive engineer,
In the early fifties I left the farm & you behind,
Police action took me far, but not you from my mind.*

*Back home in Oct '53 were you there?
I could hope & say a prayer,
Sleepless nights I waited in vain,
For the sounds, I've never heard again.*

*I never became a railroad engineer,
Steam had died, I chose another career,
My youthful dreams, had died with you,
The world was poorer to more than a few.*

*After all these years hope is not dead,
They've pulled you from that park shed,
Valiant volunteers are laboring to erase the idle years,
To those I give thanks & three Cheers.*

*Not a lot more for this old fan to say,
But much younger I'll feel on the special day,
When I'll see you & hear you under steam,
Again, perhaps I'll dream my youthful dream.*

E. Harris, December 1984

(Given your editor by William Church)



A NEAR DISASTER

By: William Church

Usually when the conductor "pulls the air" on the engineer it is generally looked upon by the head-end that that conductor is meddling with their business. But not always, as I would like to relate to you one such incident that almost made an engineer kiss me for doing it.

Who knows what would have been the outcome of this incident, I do not mean the kissing part, but the incident, to the train in my charge back in the 1970s if it had been in the 1980s and the train had been equipped by the modern "Trainlinks" as the UP-MP calls it or "ET's" as it is known on the ESPEE.

This bizarre incident occurred on the Hoxie Sub of the MoPac's Arkansas Division and involved the Chicago-Ft. Worth Expedited train that was powered by three six-axled engines and luckily for all concerned it had a little Red Caboose on the rear. We were running the authorized sixty-miles-per-hour as allowed and were approaching a Yellow signal actuated by a Red Signal that indicated a train in the block ahead, when our engineer found himself helpless to control the speed of his train account of a unique air brake failure.

As I said, it was on the C.F.Z. connection and I had taken charge of the train at Poplar Bluff, Missouri for the 179 mile run to North Little Rock, Arkansas. I and my rear brakeman, Bill Bailey and engineer Jessie Johnson were in the lead unit of the three unit lash-up. Enroute Jessie had set and released the brakes numerous times and we had no indications that we might have air brake failure.

It was shortly after we had passed the drag-hot box detector half-way between Tuckerman, AR and D.O.D. Jct. that I felt slack action in the train, mainly the caboose slamming up against the car ahead. I gave the caboose air gauge a quick glance for some indication that the engineer was setting the air brakes, but according to the air gauge, he was not making a brake reduction, so I dismissed it from my mind.

Seconds later the engineer came in on the radio with a message that may sound perplexing to out-siders, but well understood to Hoxie Sub Trainmen.

"Let me know when the caboose stops, Bill!"

I gave the caboose air gauge a quick glance, it was sitting on 80 pounds and I did not feel the brakes setting up on the train. A request like this is usually asked when the engineer knows his train has made an emergency application of the air brakes, and I had no indication this had happened.

"Are you in emergency?", I asked Jessie.

"Have been for the past half mile and we are not slowing down," came the reply.

Years of training took over, I pulled the conductor's valve open and dumped the air in the train line, then braced myself for slack action as I felt the brakes take hold on the train.

After the train stopped, the rear man and I walked over to the head end, inspecting every car as we went along. Up ahead I could see the engineer and head brakeman standing at the rear of the third unit.

"What's wrong?', I inquired of the head end crew.

"Our units went into emergency just before we reached the approach signal but we were not slowing down," the badly shaken engineer said.

I told him of the slack action and the amount of air we had on the caboose gauge.

"Did you pull the air on us?", the head brakie asked me.

"Yes," I replied.

"And a good thing you did," brakeman Bailey said at the same time pointing to the space between the rear unit and the head car. "See what happened?"

A spine chilling sight appeared before our eyes. The train line on the head car next to the engine had broke away from its bracket and had fallen low enough that it had struck a crosstie and bent double. This caused the air hoses to part, putting the three six-axled units into emergency, but bent so quickly that the air did not escape from the train line, thus allowing the brakes to stay free.

Jessie, feeling his units go into emergency thinking the rest of the train was into an emergency application of the air brakes, bailed off the engine brakes to prevent the wheels sliding on the units, thus causing flat spots. But when he realized that the train was not reducing speed as it should, and seeing the red signal coming up with the train ahead, he called me on his radio to inform me the train was in emergency.

If my caboose radio had not been working, which sometimes was the case, or if the engineer had not called me, we would have had a first class rear-ender at about sixty miles-per-hour. As the case was, we stopped short of the caboose ahead.

I never knew what the Missouri Pacific thought of this incident as no comments were ever made on my report. But I wonder now if a \$4,000 Train Monitor that replaces a new \$80,000 caboose would pull the air and stop a near disaster in the making like I did that day from the caboose of the C.F.Z. on the MoPac Arkansas Division.

- END -

(William Church is a retired MoPac Conductor and this short story is from his book "My Love Affair With The Blue and Gold". Mr. Church adds the comment that the story above was true and that one can expect major wrecks in the future because of cabooseless trains that will cost more than a whole fleet of modern cabooses. Does anyone else agree?)



THE LAST RUN

Tomorrow, then, another engineer
Will take my place and pull the throttle
here.
Somehow, I hate to blow the whistle now,
And know the final station's drawing near.
This engine never seemed to rush so fast
As she does not cross the level land;
Funny - how miles grow shorter at the last!
(Slim says they'll be at the station with a
band.)

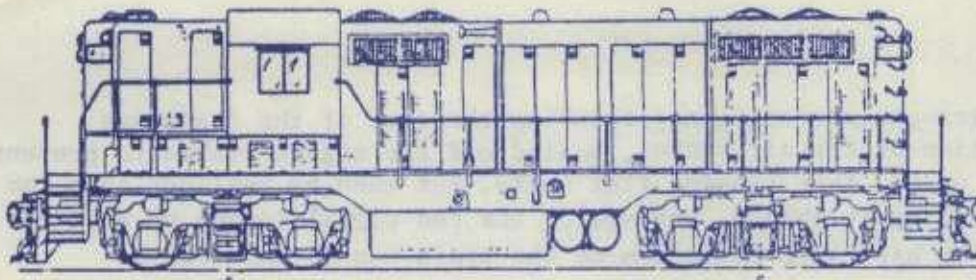
I'm sure, of course, the other man will know
Just how to treat her. Still, it takes a while
To get the hang of things. If I could go
On just one trip with him - (Lord, that last
mile
Went like a flash!) I think that he would
learn
To humor her a bit. If so, she'll run
Like a racer rounding the final turn.
(Slim says they'll celebrate when I am done!)

I've never had her go as smooth as this,
Nor have I seen the rails look quite so bright;
Well, other guys have quit - why should I
miss
The sound of drivers pounding in the night?
I wonder if that other man will take
Good care of her? There - that's the depot
now.
It seems they've come to greet me; for their
sake
I'll try to grin and stand it all, somehow.

By: B. Y. Mosler

(Given your editor by Gene Hull)





GENERAL NEWS

DIRECT TRAIN CONTROL TO BEGIN - The Cotton Belt plans to begin Direct Train Control (D.T.C) soon in non-centralized traffic control areas. Under this system, train dispatchers will give clocking time to trains, work gangs, etc. to work in designated "blocks" verbally. This system will take the place of train order movements and will be the first time the Cotton Belt will use this system.

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM REOPENED - After undergoing extensive renovation since November 1984, the Union Pacific's Railroad Museum was reopened to the public Monday, April 1, 1985 in the railroad's headquarters building in downtown Omaha. This museum includes such exhibits as a recreation of Lincoln's funeral car, a working "O" Gauge model railroad, etc. It is open to the public free. (Thanks to Randy Tardy for the above. He just got back from a rail excursion via the "EAGLE", "SOUTHWEST CHIEF", "COAST STARLIGHT", "EMPIRE BUILDER", AND "EAGLE" again, covering 15 states and 7100 miles).

NET INCOME FALLS - The net income of Santa Fe Southern Pacific Corporation for the first quarter of 1985 fell from \$107 million in 1984 to \$61.6 million in 1985. Chairman John L. Schmidt said the lower results were due primarily to an operating loss of \$4.3 million from rail operations, most coming from losses on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Santa Fe Railway had operating income of \$22.0 million while the Southern Pacific had an operating loss of \$26.3 million (compared with a profit of \$8.6 million last year). Carloadings were down 7.6% on the SP alone. Further cost reductions have been initiated on both railroads.

GRAVITY YARD QUIET - The gravity yard of the Cotton Belt in Pine Bluff has been virtually shut down during the daytime due to a slack in business.

AMTRAK'S LAST YEAR? - The Reagan Administration seems bent on killing Amtrak, regardless of the long and short-term harm done to this country. Sure, trains aren't as common as automobiles, but to the 20 million of us that use the system, it is essential and worthwhile. Indeed, this may be the last year of the passenger train. Write your congressmen.

AMTRAK'S FLEET SIZE - In 1984, the number of cars owned by Amtrak fell to a five-year low at 1,379. The average age of Amtrak's cars is now 13.2 years. Of Amtrak's 284 locomotives, their average age is 6.0 years.

SUNBELT '85 - The Mid-Continent Region of the National Model Railroad Association will meet in North Little Rock, Arkansas June 6-9, 1985 at the Community Center Complex, Pershing and Willow. Many activities are planned during the three days. For more information and prices, contact the convention chairman, Thomas Shook, 1716 Alberta Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207 (501-225-8955 after 7PM).

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TO SELL BUILDING - The Pacific Electric building will be sold by Southern Pacific Transportation Company in Los Angeles for \$9.28 million. This building was built in 1906 and originally housed the offices of the Pacific Electric Railway, once the world's largest electric interurban passenger system with 1,164 miles of track.

SP-SANTA FE MERGER NEWS - Fifteen local, state and federal government agencies filed evidence in late March with the Interstate Commerce Commission in support or opposition of the merger. The public hearings will continue through May 3 with the SP and Santa Fe submitting rebuttals on July 1.

NEW RULES BOOK - The Union Pacific/Missouri Pacific and the Cotton Belt Railroads adopted a new General Code of Operating Rules book on April 28. This will be the first time major western lines have cooperated on a single set of rules. One reason the railroads want this standard set of rules is because they are operating on one another's tracks more often than ever before.

"SUN PIG" BEGINS OPERATION - Southern Pacific's "Sun Pig" began service between City of Industry, California and Phoenix, Arizona in March. The "Sun Pig" is SP's second sprint train, similar to the one now operating between Houston and Dallas. These sprint trains reduce costs by operating without a caboose and with a two-person crew instead of four. Also, the two-person crew operates longer distances than two four-man crews once did.

COACHES FOR THE 819? - Southern Pacific's 27 single-level suburban coaches, used on the San Francisco-San Jose commuter trains, will be phased out starting in May, being replaced by double-decker coaches. Could these coaches, which began service when Calvin Coolidge was President, be obtained for possible excursion service behind the Cotton Belt 819 out of Pine Bluff?

NBC TODAY SHOW SPECIAL TRAIN TO ORIGINATE AT HOUSTON UNION STATION MAY 20 - The early morning "Today" show on NBC will have a 5-day whistle stop tour starting in Houston, Texas on May 20. It will end up in Cincinnati. No doubt, Amtrak will be discussed during this week, as NBC is generally a very pro-Amtrak network, what with its "Real People" shows of a few back and pro-Amtrak editorials. Could be interesting.

(GENERAL NEWS cont.):

PINE BLUFF RAIL RELOCATION MOVING AHEAD - Missouri Pacific and Cotton Belt have each agreed to contribute \$133,000 toward the first phase of the rail relocation project in Pine Bluff, which calls for consolidation of SSW tracks with MP tracks along 4th avenue. The city and county are also contributing. The relocation work should begin in June and may take up to 18 months. For years, residents of Pine Bluff have complained about the delays to traffic caused by the many train crossings in that city. Total cost of the project, including underpasses and overpasses eventually, will be \$20 million.

BETTER WHEELS? - Ever since the cave man discovered the round wheel, not much has been done to improve it. After all, round is round, ain't it? Well, the mechanical department of the Cotton Belt are looking into making a better wheel, called unipoint locomotive wheel. This special wheel has a special tread in the flange area designed to make it last longer.



AGREEMENT MADE FOR ROCK ISLAND RAIL PURCHASE -

The Choctaw Nation has finally decided to purchase the old Rock Island Line from Perry, Arkansas to McAlester, Oklahoma, according to Dick Lane, the director of Chicago Pacific Corporation's rail assets. As you know, the Chicago Pacific Corp. is the current owner of the line.

The Choctaws purchased the line for a little less than \$3 million, a bargain in any man's book. The Choctaws will be responsible for repairing the road, which is in surprisingly good shape except for a stretch near Red Oak, Oklahoma.

Hollis Roberts, Chief of the Choctaw Nation, stated that the Tribal Council had agreed to purchase the line once the Right-of-ways along the tracks were cleared. Apparently some land owners were trying to declare sections of the track abandoned, allowing them to reclaim it. However, all 180 miles of the line from McAlester to Perry are intact.

Some station houses in towns along the route are part of the purchase price. While the Choctaws will rebuild the tracks, they will contract out the actual running of trains to one of two interested companies. They also hope to induce new industries to locate along the re-opened tracks. There is already a company ready to have its coal hauled by the line in Oklahoma, assuring at least some income right off the bat.

Estimates on the time of the first run will be sometimes this summer, with actual cleanup work beginning around June 1. (Thanks to the BOONEVILLE DEMOCRAT for part of the above).



COTTON BELT FACTS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN

by: Bill Merck

- 1) Back in the golden era of the passenger train, the Cotton Belt owned and operated the Dallas, Texas Union Station. At that time it was known as the Dallas Union Depot and Terminal Company, and if my memory serves me right, the Cotton Belt used two or three small steam switchers which were lettered DALLAS UNION DEPOT AND TERMINAL COMPANY. They did all the passenger train switching at the depot. Today the station is used only by Amtrak's EAGLE.
- 2) At the turn of the century the Cotton Belt had an official by the name of William N. Neff. At one time he was General Superintendent and during World War I when the railroads were under Government control he was Federal Manager of the Cotton Belt. Does anyone know if he may have been related to former Missouri Pacific official P. J. Neff?
- 3) Apparently the Cotton Belt did not believe in the "Grandpa" image of the dining car steward. All stewards of the Cotton Belt were never any older than the early thirties, most of them in their twenties. Could it have been that they thought a young good-looking steward may attract more female passengers to the dining car? Could be.
- 4) The Cotton Belt never used the services of the Interstate Company or Union News Company in selling food items, tobacco, cold drinks, newspapers, magazines or what have you on their passenger trains. This duty was usually assigned to either the train porter or a waiter from the cafe or dining car.

(Bill has more Cotton Belt facts, which will be put in the June RAILROADER)

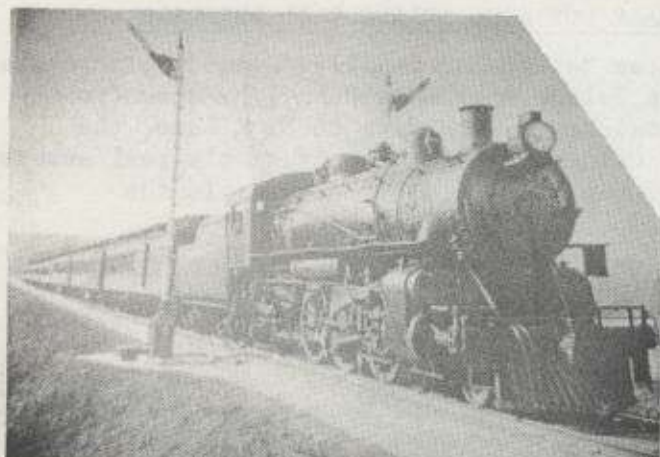


The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization that meets once a month on the second Sunday. Meeting place this month printed elsewhere. The ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the monthly publication of our club and to get it, you must join the club by sending \$10/year in Arkansas or \$7.50/year out-of-state to Treasurer Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Dr., Littel Rock, AR 72207. Editor of the RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Drive, North Little Rock, AR 72118 (501-758-1340). Send all contributions to be printed to him. (Also would like to have donations of 8 1/2 x 14 (legal size) paper, if any of you are so inclined. Thanks).

☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

The May program of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be given by Walter Walker on Dining Car China and promises to be a very interesting sight and sound display of the china of the glory days of train travel. The meeting place will be the same as always, the Twin City Bank Building, 3rd floor, in North Little Rock on Main Street, just across the Arkansas River from Little Rock. Time will be 2PM and date is Sunday, May 12 (Mother's Day)

REMINDER - due to a class in Kansas City on computers which your editor will be taking the first two weeks of June, the deadline for the June RAILROADER will have to be moved up about one week. Please have anything you wish printed to Ken Ziegenbein, 905 Valerie Dr., North Little Rock 72118 no later than WEDNESDAY MAY 22. Thanks. I'll need to get it out the week before I leave. ALSO...will have to be leaving the May 12 meeting at 2:15 due to church commitments, so if you have anything for me, come a little early. Thanks again.



PASSENGER TRAIN OF THE MONTH

St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Train #1, the SUNSHINE SPECIAL poses for a publicity shot just north of Arcadia, Missouri ca. 1915.

(Missouri Pacific photo from the Mike Adams collection)

NOTE: I'm still interested in obtaining shots of passenger trains, past and present, for use in this slot. Prefer trains in and around Arkansas, perhaps some short lines? If you have any, just drop me a line or send me the pictures and I'll return them after use. Thanks. (Editor)



MAJOR RAILWAY SYSTEMS 1984 (reprinted from THE FLYER via GULF COAST RAILROADING).

By: Lawrence L. McDonald

RAILWAY SYSTEM TITLE AND COMPONENT RAILWAY COMPANY INITIALS	ROUTE MILEAGE OPERATED	MOTIVE POWER UNITS	REVENUE EQUIPMENT UNITS	TRAFFIC VS PRIOR YEAR
ALASKA RR	526	57	1,250	N/A
BANGOR & AROOSTOOK RR	494	44	3,500	N/A
BESSEMER & LAKE ERIE RR	204	72	6,800	+ 34.6%
BURLINGTON NORTHERN RR	28,068	2,999	82,800	+ 8.4%
CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN TRANSPORTATION CO.	7,842	1,159	33,200	+ 3.3%
CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL & PACIFIC RR	3,150	305	10,300	+ 8.7%
CONSOLIDATED RAIL CORP. [CONRAIL]	15,602	3,900	106,000	+ 6.7%
CSX CORP. [B&O/C&O, RF&P, SBD]	26,650	4,486	237,000	+ 11.5%
DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN RR	3,618	337	10,700	- 6.7%
DULUTH, MISSABE & IRON RANGE RY	357	66	7,400	- 15.8%
ELGIN, JOLIET & EASTERN RY	231	97	10,050	N/A
FLORIDA EAST COAST RY	492	60	2,500	+ 16.7%
GRAND TRUNK CORP. [CV, DW&P, GTW]	2,045	303	15,450	- 5.4%
GUILFORD TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRIES INC. [B&M, D&H, MEC]	3,902	365	12,250	+ 6.9%
ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF RR	7,085	1,073	35,400	+ 8.6%
KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN LINES [KCS, L&A]	1,661	314	6,800	- 16.6%
MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS RR [MKT, OK&T]	2,495	203	4,500	+ 9.6%
NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORP. [AMTRAK]	23,400	398	1,880	+ 8.2%
NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORP. [N&W, SOU]	18,250	2,905	159,800	+ 7.3%
PITTSBURG & LAKE ERIE RR	399	92	11,100	N/A
SANTA FE-SOUTHERN PACIFIC CORP. [ATSF, SP/SSW]	22,720	2,325	138,000	+ 7.4%
SOO LINE RR	4,280	240	12,250	+ 10.3%
UNION PACIFIC SYSTEM [MP, UP]	22,440	3,002	117,500	+ 4.4%

