



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

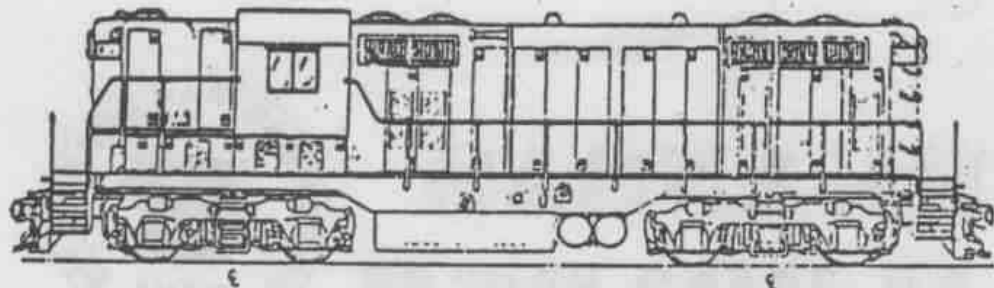
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819 LIVES!



GENERAL NEWS

CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED - Bill and Lalla Mae Merck celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 12, with their son giving them a reception in their home. As many of you know, Bill is at home recuperating from hip surgery.

819 UPDATE - All is well with the SLSW 819 4-8-4! Some recent events: April 8 - headlight installed; April 9 - fired up and moved out of the shop under its own steam for the first time; April 16 - final 62-point inspection, including a short run; April 17 - run up and down the Cotton Belt's main line through the Pine Bluff yards with the FRA inspector there again. Bill Bailey said the renovation was a success because of the following reasons:

- 1) Lots of thought went into it over the 2½ years it took to rebuild.
- 2) Steam locomotive knowledge was applied.
- 3) Caring enough to get the job done (most important reason).
- 4) The project had railroad (Cotton Belt) backing.
- 5) Money from members and the Arkansas Railroad Club.

819 TO FORDYCE (and Little Rock?) - On April 25, the 819 will power a couple of coaches, including the SP Business car "Pine Bluff" from Pine Bluff to Fordyce. In Fordyce, the engine will sit on display during the annual Fordyce-on-the-Cotton Belt festival April 26. There is also a possibility that the engine will go to Little Rock in June to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of the State of Arkansas.

SHOW AND SALE results were good. Expenses of the March 29th event for the club was \$959, revenue was \$1122 for tables and \$416 at the door. This equals a club profit of \$578 not counting sales. Elizabeth Gaines reported the sales as \$234.75.

DISCUSSION HELD - A six-member panel of ex-railroad greats from our club (Gene Hull, William Church, Mike Adams, Eakles Hille, L.J. Walker, and E.B. Faulkner) gave a question-and-answer session at our April 13 meeting. Questions were fielded from the audience on railroad topics - answers were always correct, as these guys helped write the book on railroads.

OTHER TOPICS AT APRIL MEETING: Ruby Holt thanked everyone for their friendships with Ross over the years. Railroads were always his business. He loved the 819. - Gene Hull reminded us that he is still working on a book researching the Arkansas River Basin that the club helped with financially several years ago. So far, after 7 years, there are 3,000 typed pages, 600 black and white photos, 55 maps. The project is 40% complete. - David E. McDonald, former editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER and a current member of our club, has a new book out from Kalmbach Publication about engine rosters, but the title eludes me.



☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

May 4 will be the next program of the Arkansas Railroad Club, instead of the usual second Sunday of the month because May 11 is Mother's Day. The site will be the same, The Twin City Bank Building on Main Street in North Little Rock, beginning at 2PM.

The month's program will be given by RICHARD GRIGSBY, manager of the Reader Railroad. He will give a slide presentation on the history of the Reader and its current operation. The club is planning an excursion to the Reader (just south of Prescott, Arkansas off Interstate 30) on May 17 and this meeting on May 4 will be a good time to firm up your plans. Phil Powledge of our club is in charge of making these arrangements. Mr. Grigsby will give us our options for the day. At any rate, they need to know how many are coming as soon as possible.

SLSW 819 HEADS FOR THE BIG TIME!

St. Louis Southwestern Railway Co. FORM L-2000A

TRAIN ORDER NO. 101 Apr 17 86

T. C. & E. Eng 819 line of Eng. J. J. Davis and
J. J. Stone

Pine Bluff Shops

Eng 819 own extra
Missouri Street to Michigan Street
and return to Missouri Street

J. J. Stone

Place Pine Time 2:45 p.m. - Duffy



ABOVE - Train orders for the test runs of the 819 April 17, 1986; TOP RIGHT - Storage site of the engine - next to the shops in which it was built; RIGHT - #819 backs onto the Cotton Belt's main line through the SSW's Pine Bluff yards.



SLSW 819 backs toward the main line in Pine Bluff past Cotton Belt #5006 - a GP30 that was retired in 1985. While the 819 became active, the 5006 is being donated to the State of Arkansas and will be displayed at the Arkansas State Capitol soon. (Ziegenbein photo)



Cotton Belt 819, in one of its many test runs April 17, 1986 through the Pine Bluff yards, passes a 6-unit Cotton Belt freight eastbound. The freight was lead by unit #5569. (Ziegenbein photo)

ONE OF THE LAST OLD-TIME LOCOMOTIVES

(from the February 15, 1969 CAMDEN NEWS, used with permission of Steve Fellers, editor)

The largest locomotives to ever operate through Camden was the 800 series of the Cotton Belt. Number 819 (above) used to pull the 100 to 125-car freight trains over the Cotton Belt between St. Louis and Fort Worth. They were a familiar sight on the railroad here at Camden where they had to stop and take on water at the old passenger station. They were (are) oil burners and took on oil at Herbert, just south of Camden (the Cotton Belt had a large pumping station and oil tank farm at Herbert).

This monster of the rails had eight drivers and they could haul tremendous loads at 70 to 80 miles per hour with ease, but seldom did the engineer "open her up". Speeds of over 100 mph were also possible but the tracks could not take that kind of speed except on straightaways and there were too many curves and grades on the Cotton Belt to allow anything but a "safe 60 mph" at times.

The whistle had a mournful sound and could be heard for miles. The bell was at the front of the engine above the headlight. After diesels replaced these huge locomotives, a few were placed in parks but most of them were designed to the scrap heap and cut up into

scrap iron. But anyone who ever saw one in action as it thundered down the rails with a full head of steam, black smoke pouring out and a long string of freight cars will never forget it.

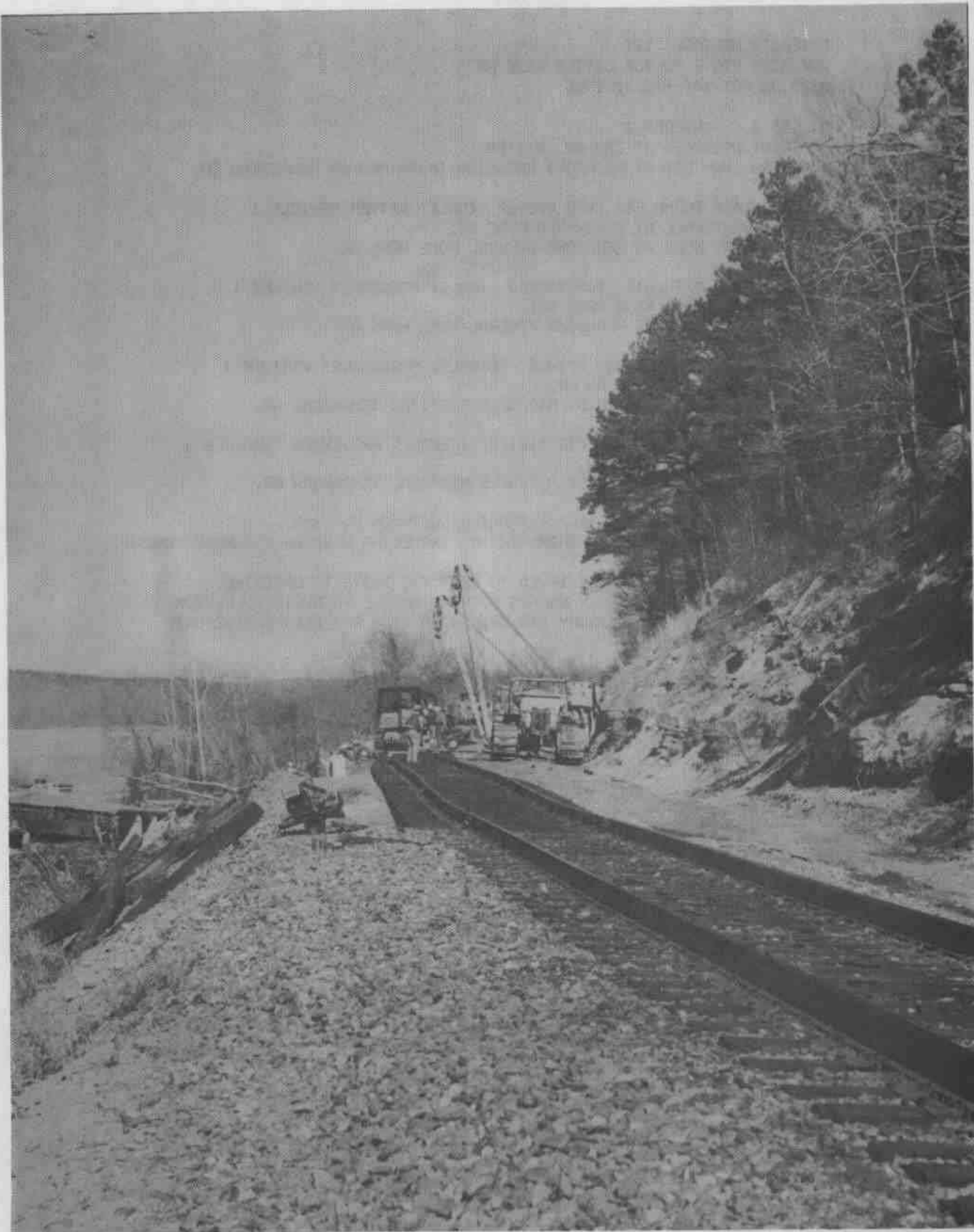
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NOW YOU CAN SEE IT IN ACTION - The 819 will run from Pine Bluff to Fordyce April 25 and will possibly run to Little Rock in June to help celebrate Arkansas's 150th anniversary. The future looks bright for this magnificent locomotive.

Apparently, the FRA inspector, who was on the scene for the test runs April 17, gave the green light for operation after a few minor corrections are made.



Speeding past a group of spectators (including the Halls and Hilles of our club), the 819 proves it can run. (April 17 - Pine Bluff, Arkansas)



Beautiful scenery surrounds this wreck of Union Pacific's northbound NOKC (New Orleans-Kansas City) freight, which occurred near O'Neal, Arkansas on UP's Cotter Subdivision (White River Division). O'Neal is about 15 miles north of Batesville. Date of the accident was March 1, 1986 and by the time this photo was taken, cleanup had progressed fairly rapidly. Twenty-two cars derailed in mid-train, probably due to rock slides.

Part of the wreckage was three racks of new Oldsmobiles. However, most of the train consisted of empty autoracks (probably made a whale of a noise as they spilled down a 20-foot embankment to your left).

Due to the quick work of the Hulcher Emergency Services crew, UP's main line was reopened at 5 PM on March 2.

(JOHN HARVEY photo and information)

FATALITY MESSAGE 121
ARKANSAS STATE POLICE LITTLE ROCK AR
8125 AM CST SAT APR 12 1986

KILLED 2 INJURED 2
ACCIDENT OCCURRED AT 730 PM 041186
LOCATION..HWY 355 AT RAILROAD CROSSING IN PATMOS AR HEMPSTEAD CO.

KILLED..CRIS CHAMBLESS DOB 090867 (MALE) DRIVER VEHICLE 1
. RESIDENCE RT 2 BOX 37A HOPE AR.
. BODY HELD AT HERNDONS FUNERAL HOME HOPE AR.

KILLED..EDDY D TULLIS DOB 102469 (MALE) PASSENGER VEHICLE 1
. RESIDENCE RT 2 HOPE AR.
. BODY HELD AT HERNDONS FUNERAL HOME HOPE AR.

INJURED..APRIL BARR DOB 071468 (FEMALE) PASSENGER VEHICLE 1
. RESIDENCE BODCAW AR.
. INJURED TAKEN TO ST MICHAELS HOSPITAL TEXARKANA AR.

INJURED..CHRISTIE MASON DOB 010172 (FEMALE) PASSENGER VEHICLE 1
. RESIDENCE BODCAW
. INJURED TAKEN TO ST MICHAELS HOSPITAL TEXARKANA AR.

VEHICLE 1--FORD MUSTANG 1967 TRAVELING SOUTH ON HWY 355
VEHICLE 2--KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN TRAIN TRAVELING WEST ON RAILROAD TRACKS

ENGINEER STATED THAT VEH 1 TRYED TO BEAT THE TRAIN TO CROSSING.
ENGINEER APPLIED EMERGENCY BRAKES BUT WAS UNABLE TO AVOID COLLISION.
ENGINEER WAS MARK C HATTAWAY DOB 021054 OF RT 4 BOX 256S SHREVEPORT
LA. NOT INJURED

WEATHER CONDITIONS--CLEAR ROAD CONDITIONS--DRY
SEAT BELTS WERE NOT IN USE

THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL FATALITIES THIS YEAR TO 147
COMPARED TO 117 THIS DATE LAST YEAR

The above message, taken from the National Weather Service's Weather Wire, tells the tale of death at a railroad crossing, this one involving 4 teenagers at the Patmos, Arkansas crossing of the Louisiana & Arkansas (KCS) Railroad on April 11, 1986.

Railroads try to prevent these tragedies from happening by running Operation Lifesaver trains, like the one shown below at Wichita, Kansas on April 9, 1986. The following pages relate to this Kansas Operation Lifesaver train on its two-day trek across Kansas April 8 and 9, 1986.



KANSAS OPERATION LIFESAVER

April 8 - 9, 1986

Your Editor had the honor of riding on the Kansas Operation Lifesaver train from Kansas City to Wichita on April 8 and from Wichita to Kansas City on April 9. Stops were made along the way at Topeka, Emporia, Newton, Wichita, El Dorado, Newton (different station), McPherson, Salina, Abilene, Junction City, Manhattan, Lawrence, Topeka (UP Station - the Santa Fe station was used on first leg), then back to Kansas City about 8:30 PM April 9.

Also on board from this area was Dusty Rhodes and Jim Bennett. Jim gave me this consist: UP 951 in lead all of trip; SP (in new paint scheme) 7556; Burlington Northern 2177; Kansas City Southern 755; Missouri-Kansas-Texas 360 (total of 5 engines); UP flatcar 903009 (hauling Roadrunner symbol of crossing safety); UP Boiler (6-wheel trucks in front, 4-wheel trucks rear) 302; UP Sleeper 1605 ("Sun Manor"); UP Baggage 5714; UP Lounge 6203; SP 289 ("City of Angels"); UP Diner 4810; BN Diner BNA26 "Lake Superior"; UP Sleeper 1609 ("Sun Ridge"), UP Dome-Lounge 9004; Santa Fe Dome-Lounge 60 (full-length dome); and finally Santa Fe business car "Topeka".

One interesting note before getting to the pictures: UP E-9 #951 had over 4 MILLION miles on it before starting on this trip.



TOP LEFT - The Operation Lifesaver train left the Kansas City Amtrak station at 8:30AM April 8. The eastbound Southwest Chief arrived about an hour before. TOP RIGHT - Roadrunner cartoon characters are symbols of Lifesaver programs. Sign was hauled on flatcar on train. MIDDLE LEFT - Sign on rear car, "Topeka"; MIDDLE RIGHT - Union Pacific's Gemütlichkeit German Band performed at each stop; BOTTOM LEFT - BOTTOM RIGHT - The KCS Operation Lifesaver van followed the train. (All photos by Ken Ziegenbein)



TOP LEFT - Union Station still stands in Wichita, Kansas. This was once used by Amtrak's "Lone Star" and "Texas Chief"; TOP MIDDLE - Kids were dancing to the UP Band's polka music at Salina; TOP RIGHT - This little girl was given a gift by the trips sponsors of a stuffed Wylie Coyote. She was on the train the whole trip (this trip fulfilled one of her lifelong dreams - she had cancer); MIDDLE LEFT - The Rock Island station still stands in Wichita; BOTTOM LEFT - Inside the Santa Fe long-dome #60. BELOW - The 5 engines all-in-a-row.



The sun was setting as the train pulled into the UP depot in Topeka on April 9, glistening off Santa Fe's "Topeka" business car. A fun-filled two days was just about over. (Photos by Ken Ziegenbein)

Here is another biographical sketch of a person in our club who once worked on a railroad. If you would like to submit your own biographical information, please send that information to club president Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205. He has forms you can fill out.

NAME - George Schmidt; Railroad - Missouri Pacific; POSITION - fireman; PERIOD OF SERVICE - November 1942 to November 1943; LOCATIONS - Texarkana (Hostler's helper), Helena (Switch Engine), Memphis (Extra Board). COMMENTS:

I grew up on a farm west of Stuttgart near the Cotton Belt main line. Of course each time a train passed it had to have inspection, engine number, number of cars, oil or coal burner, etc.

My first train ride was on old "Judy" from Stuttgart to Gillett. I remember she was pulled by a 4-4-0 similar to #129 shown on page 48 of Cotton Belt Locomotives. The consist was a baggage car, combination Jim Crow and smoking car and a regular coach, complete with coal stove and kerosene lamps.

In November 1942, while working at International Harvester Co. in Little Rock, I came home from work one evening, somewhat disgusted with my job and told Polly that for two cents I would go on the railroad. She jokingly handed me two pennies and that did it. The next morning I was at the master mechanic's office in North Little Rock. He said "bring me your birth certificate and high school diploma and I will talk to you". I scrounged these up, took the rules test and physical and got my letter for student trips.

My first try was on Switcher #9785. I managed to get a few scoops of coal into the firebox so the engineer signed by letter. First road engine was T&P #518, an oil burner, - piece of cake. The engineer signed for me at Gurdon so I hit a run from Gurdon to Monroe. Fireboy wouldn't let me touch anything so I got off at Camden. The engineer did sign that I rode the engine. Next trip was to Poplar Bluff. The fireman was a good guy and told me to take over. He said "if you foul up the fire we'll just unfoul it". Of course those weren't the exact words he used but I think you get the drift. On the return trip, I learned a valuable lesson while coaling the engine at Bald Knob. Never stand on the coal pile when pulling the coal chute chain. The coal hit my feet and several tons and I went to the bottom of the tender.

Finally made the board and was assigned to Texarkana as hostler helper. Elmer Youngblood was my hostler and I never forgot his patience with this greenhorn. Had only worked a week or two when I pulled the pin between the tender of a 1500 and an oil car. Only when a geyser about like old faithful in Yellowstone erupted did I discover that I had unhooked a water car. And, of course, who was there watching the whole thing but Mr. Long, the roundhouse foreman.

Had quite a few experiences in the yard, but one I especially remember. We were taking a T&P 700 passenger engine to the house and for some reason I was on the gangway step instead of at the back of the tender. As we were backing I happened to look down and saw the trailing truck taking off on the wrong rail in a turnout. I yelled and Hearn, my hostler, hit the air. The drivers didn't derail but we were accused on running a switch. I shined my flashlight under the engine and discovered the trailing truck axle had sheared off next to the left wheel. I guess the Good Lord had made it hang together to the end of the run.

In the spring of 1943 I decided I wanted some firing experience so I bid in a switch engine at Helena. Worked swing shift and had old 945B. She was as cantankerous as could be and rode so rough that we immediately named her "Galloping Gertie". You had to fire her just a certain way or she wouldn't steam for heck. It was always a treat to me when she was being serviced and we could use 9406 or road engine 454 which was normally used on the local.

Had several engineers but remember one who was so wild that I was almost afraid to ride with him. One night the brake rigging on old Gertie broke down so we got her to the house and took 9406. He took a 10 MPH turnout at about 20 and the next thing we knew we were bouncing along the ties. We stopped with the front end nosing down. He seemed to be in a daze and asked me what had happened. I quickly threw on his injector to be sure the crown sheet got covered and then explained to him that we were on the ground. Of course the roundhouse foreman complimented us on our feat of tearing up two engines in one night.

I finally decided I wanted some road experience, so I signed on the extra board out of Memphis. On my first trip out, the 1200 I was firing laid down and played "dead Doggie" about three-fourths up the Harahan Bridge. I had short fired it so bad that the front of the grates was bare. I had told the engineer it was my first trip and he was very good natured and helpful about it. He spread the fire for me and were ready with a good head of steam when the yard goat butted us over the hump.

(continued)

My most humorous experience was one night pulling 8 loads of soldiers out of Little Rock. We were just clearing Baring Cross bridge when "tweet, tweet" - stop at once. We stopped and here comes the brakie - what the h--- you stop for?" "You whistled us down." "No we didn't". Well, must have been one of those drunken soldiers. It was raining cats and dogs as the old saying goes and he didn't appreciate one bit having to slosh along the train in it. Started up again, were just getting up speed out of the yards when "tweet, tweet" - here we go again. Well, rules is rules, hit the air. You can imagine the brakie's mood this time. He wasn't mad at us because he knew we had to stop but you can imagine what he was saying. This time he told us to look back if we hear the whistle and if there wasn't a confirming lantern signal from a vestibule just keep on going. Whoever it was played a tune on that whistle almost to Bald Knob before he apparently gave up and went to sleep. In the meantime we almost wore out our necks watching track and vestibules.

Finally in response to requests by International Harvester, I went back to them and finished World War Two as truck parts expedited for the various defense plants in the area. However, I never did lose my love for the railroads and wished many times I hadn't given up my fireman's rights.

- END -



LAST DAYS OF THE SOUTHERN BELLE

by: Phillip Moseley



(Philip Moseley is located at P.O. Box 888 in Blanchard, LA 71009. His story is reprinted here from the DISPATCHER, the newsletter of the Central Oklahoma Chapter of the NRHS):

When I first started railroading in the mid-1960s as an agent telegrapher, the age of luxury passenger trains in the U.S. had already started to end. I have always considered myself very lucky to have gotten in on the end of the Golden Age with passenger trains, small town depots, express, mail business and telegraph.

It indeed was the glorious and romantic age of railroading. The only thing I missed was steam.

But this is the story of the last years of operation and the death of the "Sweetheart of American Trains," the Kansas City Southern's "Southern Belle," which made its daily cruise from Kansas City to New Orleans passing through what I believe is the most scenic country east of the Rockies, the mountains of eastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas.

In 1968 when I came over to the KCS from Uncle John's Santa Fe, the Southern Belle was still in operation and was still one of the nicest, cleanest trains in the U.S. It had just lost its RPO car due to the government's scrapping of mail contracts because official Washington said it was too expensive to haul mail by rail.

By the way, in 1968 you could mail a first class letter for 6 cents. Today it is 22 so that should tell you something.

Due to declining passenger revenues and the killing cut the loss of the mails the KCS found itself in the same position all railroads found themselves in in the 1960s. Passenger deficits rose and ridership dropped. Most railroads, in an attempt to discourage patrons, let their trains go, delaying them intentionally, using dirty equipment and such tricks as that, but not the KCS. Even in the mid- and late 60s, management on the KCS tried to keep their trains in A-1 condition. They even remodeled and refurbished passenger equipment in 1966.

In March 1968 the KCS dropped trains 15 and 16 between KC and Shreveport and Port Arthur. These trains ran through Green Country in eastern Oklahoma at night, but they still kept the old Southern Belle, which gave a spectacular tour of the mountains of Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas in daylight hours.

The Southern Belle in all the time I knew her was very seldom late on her schedule. Usually 30 minutes or so into DeQueen going south and about that going north.

The KCS managed to make good connections in KC with other railroads. Example, No. 2's arrival at KCUS connected with less than a two-hour layover with UP No. 9's train the City of St. Louis to San Fran, LA and the Pacific Northwest. Also the train made good connections to Chicago on the ATSF and St. Louis on the MOP.

But in 1968 the KCS had to come to the realization that the trains were costing too much and had to go. As I mentioned the old Flying Crow No. 15 and 16 went first in the early spring of 1968. But the Southern Belle held on until November 1969.

In May 1969 the Pullmans came off, but were returned to service in September and pulled off for the last time in October 1969. The observation diner however remained until the end. The KCS had one of the nicest dining cars with the most reasonably priced and tasty meals of any railroad its size in the U.S. Also there was always a most courteous crew and dining car staff.

Unlike the Katy and Frisco which allowed their passenger trains to go down terribly in their last days, the KCS kept the Southern Belle's equipment clean and in top notch shape until the very last run.

I was working that night, Nov. 3, 1969, when the last southbound run of the Southern Belle made its way into DeQueen. I remember it very well. No. 1 the Southern Belle left Heavener with engine 23 30 minutes off the advertised and didn't make up any time.

So it was called at DeQueen 30 minutes late. I sold more tickets that night than I had sold in any night in the little more than a year I had worked second trick at DeQueen. People came from everywhere to ride it and watch her pull out of DeQueen for the last time.

The engine crew who changed at DeQueen was called. Note the regular old head crew had laid off, I guess they didn't want to take her out to pasture. The last engine crew to take her out of DeQueen was engineer W.J. Thomas and fireman A.J. Henry.

Right on the 30 minute late call No. 1 pulled into DeQueen with engine 23, a B unit, one baggage car, two chair cars and business cars Kaysee and Tolmak on the rear occupied by then vice president R.J. Blair. The Belle eased to a stop and the carman iced the engine. Railfans and others boarder her and the platform full of people watched in a rather somber mood as she whistled off and pulled out of town for the last time. I watched the red marker light on the rear of the Tolmak as it faded in the darkness and around the curve south of town.

Somewhere in the darness down around Alexandria, La., it would meet the last No. 2 the northbound Southern Belle and fade into history.

Before I closed the books out I sold myself the last ticket issued at DeQueen, a round trip coach ticket to Neal Springs, Ark., nine miles south of DeQueen. It cost 35 cents.

I still have that ticket and the last set of train orders given No. 1 that night.

THOSE FEMALE WARRIORS

by: Gene Hull

The Summer of 1942 was a time of turmoil on the railroads. Uncle Sam was sending invitations to a great number of his young nephews to attend a "party" in the Pacific. To assure the young fellows would have an adequate supply of equipment for this flamboyant, fantastic fandango, the dear uncle was using every available freight car, whether box, tank, or flat, to move every item imaginable to the west coast. Then another "party" was announced in Europe. More nephews and supplies were rushed to the east coast.

Shipments to the east, shipments to the west, all across America the twain did meet, and caused mass confusion on the railroads. The single-track main line of the MoP between North Little Rock and Van Buren was a bit crowded at times.

As their "party" progressed, Uncle Sam decided to make them co-ed in format, and he invited some of his nieces to participate in some of the less hectic activities. So it was that there were trainloads of nephews and nieces rolling across the country. The ones in the East were sent to the West, and vice versa. Late in the summer of 1942 I had the opportunity to be associated with a contingent of those nieces.

I was working off the brakeman's extra board, and was busy as a short-tailed cow in fly time. Everybody was either coming or going. One evening just at dusk I was called for an extra freight out of the new yard at North Little Rock.

At the yard office, I found I was the "old head" on the train crew. After all, I had nearly seven months seniority. The conductor was already at the office collecting waybills and train orders. There were two items of information which made me realize this probably would not be an overly enjoyable trip. The "brains" had already absorbed a generous quantity of corn squeezin's and he informed me I was in charge of the switch list. To improve the gaiety of the situation, a fine drizzling rain had begun to fall. Fortunately the engineer came by the yard office on his way to the roundhouse. He saw the bright glow of the conductor's face and dull expression in his eyes. He realized the predicament I was in.

"Don't worry about it, Gene. I'll stop the caboose here at the office so ____ (the conductor) can get on. Just don't let anybody get hurt. We'll just tie-up wherever the hog law catches us."

I never knew if the conductor's condition occurred before or after he found out who his crew was going to be.

During the previous months, I had found it advisable to carry a switch list any time I was called. I never knew when I would need it. The forms were about 4 inches wide and 12 inches long, with a space for the number, railroad initial, and load status (loaded or empty) for each car in the train. I took a piece of wooden apple box and cut a section a fraction of an inch larger than the switch list form. A pad of forms was secured to both sides of the wood "paddle" with two wide rubber bands, one at the top and one at the bottom. Rain water didn't improve the surface of those paper forms.

As an expedient, I dipped a piece of clean cotton waste in coal oil ("kerosene" for those who prefer) and wiped each form on both sides. My "doctored" switch list shed water like a mallard duck.

The rear brakeman and I blundered through the dripping darkness to the east end of the New yard. After locating our caboose, the rear brakie began checking the oil in the marker lamps and hanging them in the brackets on the rear corners of the crummy, and proceeded with the rest of his housekeeping chores. I sure envied him as I made my way slowly toward the head end of the trackful of cars, filling out the list. The company had issued everyone an electric lantern, and two months later the batteries arrived. There were two flashlight bulbs in the bottom of the lantern, and to improve the efficiency of the lantern I took the reflector from a flashlight and attached it behind one of the bulbs. This created a fine "spot" light for seeing freight car numbers, and for spotting any obstructions when walking between yard tracks.

By the time I completed the list of cars in our train the 1500-class Mikado was coupled to the head end, the airbrake test was made, and we were ready to pick up our conductor. It seemed that the yardmaster had put everything but the yard office behind our engine. The engineer managed to stop the caboose reasonably near where the conductor was standing. We (the rear brakie and I) got him anchored in the swivel chair at the desk, and we were on the way to Van Buren, 158 miles away. We had one bit of good fortune - we had a train of through cars with no pick ups. Just before noon the next day we made it to Van Buren.

Shortly after supper our crew was feeling much better, especially the "brains", when we learned we would be called for a passenger extra, of which there were quite a few those days. This would be about a four-hour trip, and it became more interesting when we heard it was a trainload of Uncle Sam's nieces - Women's Army Corps, or WACs. Everybody was at the yard office well before the train was due in from Kansas City, via Osawatomie, Kansas. The girls were on their way to the east coast. There were twelve heavy steel cars, including one baggage car, a kitchen car, and one Pullman for the "brass".

My duties were to be minimal, so I went to the kitchen and got a fine cup of coffee. The military folks had an abundant supply of the best grade of coffee, and the exotic aroma permeated the kitchen like a heady perfume. We were given another 1500-class Mikado engine, and we had right over all trains Van Buren to North Little Rock, and a wait order - Passenger Extra Number (engine number) will wait at (stations) until (time). What more could a fellow ask for? A kitchen car with plenty of coffee, a trainload of girls, and right over all trains!

The rear brakie had filed claim to the rear seat in the rear car, in case he had to get out with his red lantern. Pleasantly full of good coffee, I began a leisurely saunter through nine cars of girls away from home. As I made my way through a couple of cars, my enthusiasm began to wane. The cars had come from the west coast and the girls were no longer fresh, pretty and well kept. They were dressed in army regulation skirts, blouses, and low-heeled shoes, and everything but the shoes were wrinkled. They all were tired, many were irritable, and some probably were having second thoughts about what they had gotten into and wondering about the future prospects. Bottles of booze were seen frequently, and the language was far from my idea of lady-like. Perhaps I was a bit naive.

My pace through the coaches increased considerably, and my previous anticipation was on the skids. The escort officers seemed to be pretty lax in discipline, which probably would come later. I finally reached the rear car just before the train rolled through Russellville. Back about mid-way of the coach, a disheveled girl dragged a piece of plywood, about three feet square, from under the seat. Balancing it between her seat and the one facing her, she said, "Alright, you b---s, get your money ready. We're gonna have a game of poker!"

Cards appeared, were dealt, and money appeared - mostly coins. A paper sack appeared, containing a bottle that gurgled when tilted up. The game ebbed and flowed, and I stood there watching. The girl who had issued the invitation was of indeterminate age, and had tangled blonde hair, the original color of which even she probably didn't remember. The bottle in the bag failed to gurgle when tipped and was dropped to the floor. Bets were made and cards were dealt for a time of about 30 dull minutes. The bleary-eyed blonde reached across the board and clutched the arm of the girl with the deck of cards in her hand.

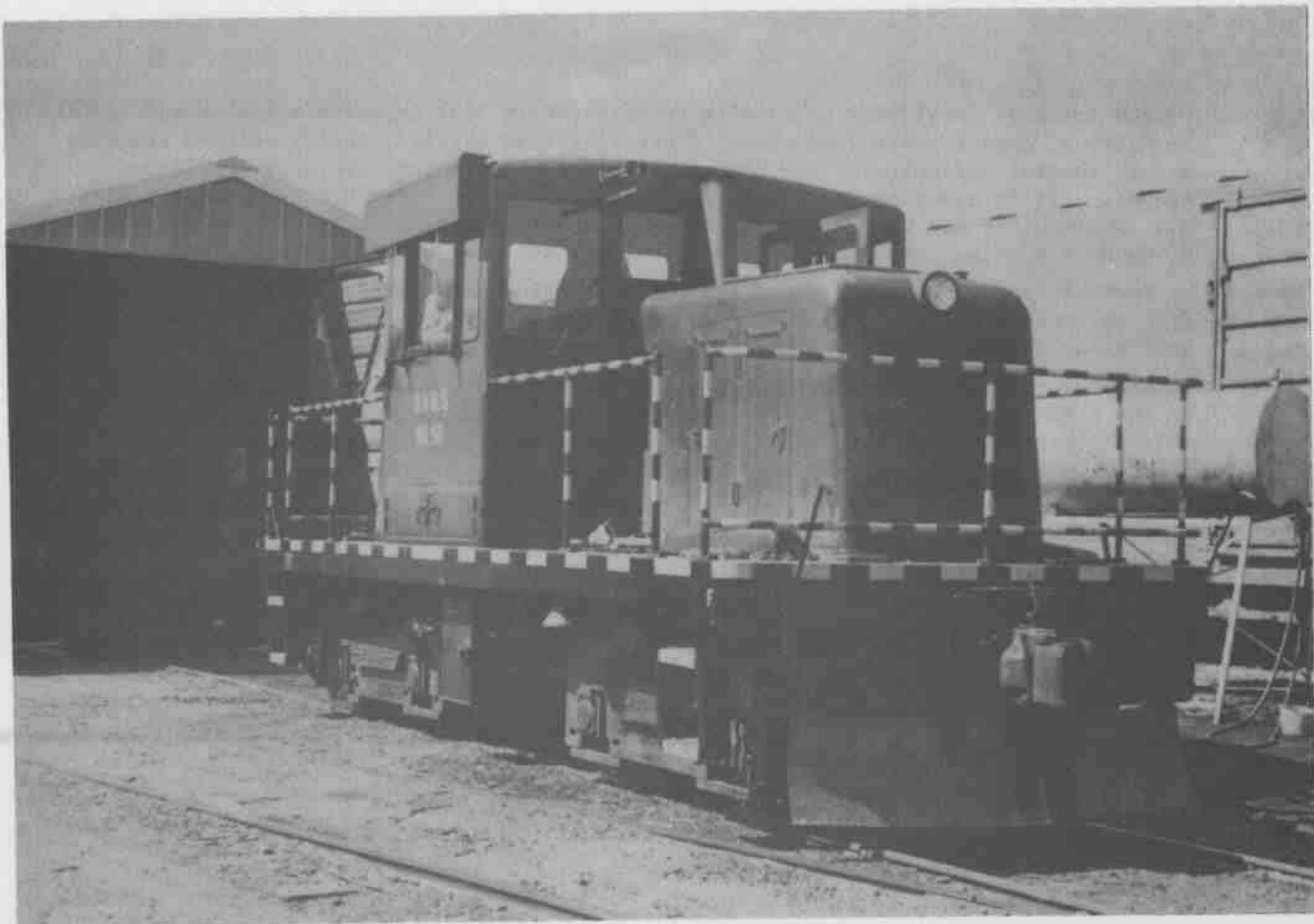
"You b---h, I saw you deal from the bottom!"

She got a mouth full of knuckles and a split lip. She fell sideways and came up with the non-gurgling bottle from the bag. Smashing the bottle against the wood arm of the seat, the blonde held the bottle neck with jagged edges. Leaning across the tilted board, the blonde made a slashing motion with her weapon. The girl beside her was caught next to the window and had no place to go. Jerking both legs up (very immodestly, too) she slammed her feet against the blonde, sending her sprawling into the aisle (also immodestly). The broken bottle neck was lost, the plywood board sailed across the back of the adjacent seat, cards and coins were scattered. The interesting display of flying skirts wasn't sufficient attraction. This was no place for an ordinary, defenseless brakeman. The girls were sprawled on the floor, furiously engaged in their genteel dispute. The fever seemed instantly contagious. A similar disagreement erupted toward the head end of the coach. The monotony definitely was broken.

Discretion seemed to be in order. The rear brakeman and I retreated through the back door to the safety of the vestibule platform. I pulled out my coach key and locked the door. (The key had been furnished when I agreed a few months earlier to work in extra passenger service). I and the other brakeman took turns for two hours sitting on the knobly surface of the vestibule and the passenger step stool. When we arrived at North Little Rock an armistice had been declared, but the battle field was a shambles. Arms were broken off the seats, two windows were broken, upholstery was cut, and generous splotches of blood were smeared about. Makeshift bandages were apparent. So far as I know the coach rolled on to St. Louis.

Fortunately, that was my one and only trip on a WAC train. Those "nieces" should have been in a combat battalion.

- END -



Delta Valley & Southern's Number 50 has finished its duties this Monday in March, 1986 and awaits to be tucked away for the night in its storage shed close to Wilson, Arkansas. (Ziegenbein photo)

CLASS III RAILROADS OF ARKANSAS

Part 10 - The Delta Valley & Southern Railway Co.

The Delta Valley & Southern Railway Co. was incorporated in Arkansas June 27, 1934 to acquire and operate a line formerly operated by the Frisco Railroad (now Burlington Northern). On March 17, 1947, the ICC approved the company's petition to abandon 11 miles of tracks in the vicinity of Denwood, Arkansas in Mississippi County. It now (in 1986) has two miles from Delpro to Elkins, Arkansas with an additional two miles of siding.



TOP - DV&S is headquartered in this sharp-looking section of Wilson, Arkansas. BOTTOM - DV&S sign on door of office.

TOP - DV&S's engine house in Elkins, Arkansas. BOTTOM - Distant view of shed, under the tree.

The trackage itself was originally constructed in 1887 to serve a lumber and timber industry of considerable importance. Since 1947 road service, on its reduced trackage, serves several agricultural and processing enterprises in the vicinity of Wilson, Arkansas. It is owned by Lee Wilson and Company. Officers are: M.E. Wilson, President; M.A. Davison, VP and General Manager; S.A. Wilson, VP and M.P. Wilson. The Delta Valley & Southern has four employees (Mr. Davison, his son, one engineer and one brakeman).

In March of 1986, the DV&S had a single operation per weekday, leaving Elkins at 7:30 AM, then leaving Delpro (formerly Evadale) at 8:00 AM. It interchanges with the Burlington Northern at Delpro. Major commodities hauled are soybeans, rice and cotton.

The General Manager of the Delta Valley & Southern is Mack Davison, also a member of the Arkansas Railroad Club. He was born in Hickory Ridge, Arkansas on February 16, 1931 and has been with the DV&S for 31 years. He received his certificate March 5, 1956, starting out as conductor. He and his wife Etta have a daughter and son (Connie and Mitchell).

His daughter Connie (28) is as much at home operating the road's single engine (#50) as the regular engineer.

Mr. Davison says the Delta Valley & Southern is in good standing with the American Shortline Railroad Association.

END

The following is reprinted from the March 1986 NRHS NEWS:

NORFOLK SOUTHERN EXCURSION SCHEDULE

Jim Bistline has furnished us with the 1st edition of the 1986 events, advising that all steam trains for the period [April 5 thru September 14] will be powered by the 611. He adds that the Class A 1218 is tentatively expected to go into service during September. "J" 611 has received considerable maintenance over the winter and is expected to be in superb condition during the upcoming season.

May 1	Sheffield to Huntsville [one way school trip] same power and folks.
May 3	Huntsville to Chattanooga [same]
May 3-4	Knoxville Circle Trip - SOU to Jellico, return via L&N each day with SOU diesels [OLD SMOKY-NRHS]
May 5	Huntsville to Chattanooga [same as May 3]
May 10-11	Greenville SC to Atlanta & return each day...611 [BLUE RIDGE RR CLUB & GREENVILLE-NRHS]
May 10	Salisbury to Asheville & return. FP7s [SPENCER-NRHS]
May 11	Salisbury-Whitney-Lexington-Salisbury circle trip via SOU-WSSB. FP7s [SPENCER-NRHS]
May 17	Norfolk to Petersburg & return. 611 [VIRGINIA OPERA ASSN]
May 19	Norfolk to Crewe Va one-way. 611 [School children][TIDEWATER-NRHS]
May 24	Alexandria to Harrisonburg Va & return. FP7s [WASHINGTON AREA-NRHS]
May 25	Alexandria Circle Trip via RF&P to Doswell; C&O to Charlottesville with FP7s and 611 joining at Charlottesville to Alexandria [WASH-NRHS]
May 31-June 1	Alexandria-Charlottesville & return each day. 611 [WASHINGTON-NRHS]
June 7-8	Two day circle: June 7 Alexandria-Petersburg via RF&P-SBD, thence N&W to Abilene thence WGN to Roanoke (overnite Hotel Roanoke). June 8 Roanoke to Alexandria via Lynchburg. 611 [WASHINGTON-NRHS]
June 21	Roanoke-Walton-Roanoke-Lynchburg-Roanoke. 611 [ROANOKE-NRHS]
June 25	Roanoke-Bluefield one-way. 611 [ROANOKE-NRHS]
June 26	Bluefield-Portsmouth Ohio one-way. 611 [ROANOKE-NRHS]
June 27	Portsmouth-Bellevue Ohio one-way. [same iron horse, same guys]
June 28	Bellevue-Frankfort Ind one-way. 611 [ROANOKE-NRHS]
June 29	Frankfort to St.Louis via Decatur one-way [Same!]
July 5-6	St.Louis-Moberly & return each day. 611 [ST.LOUIS-NRHS]
July 12-13	Kansas City-Moberly & return each day. 611 [KANSAS CITY-NRHS]
July 26-27	Two day circle trip July 26 Detroit-Chicago and return to Detroit on July 27. 611 [BLUEWATER MICHIGAN-NRHS]
August 2	Buffalo NY-Erie Pa round-trip. 611. [BUFFALO-NRHS]
August 3	Erie Pa-Bellevue Ohio 611 to Bellevue, diesel return [LAKE SHORE-NRHS]
August 9-10	Bellevue to Columbus Ohio & ret each day for Ohio State Fair. 611. [MAD RIVER & NKP SOCIETY]
August 9-10	Richmond-Keysville Va & ret each day. Virginia Summer Festival. FP7s [OLD DOMINION-NRHS]
August 16-17	Kenova WV-Columbus Ohio & ret each day. Ohio State Fair. 611 [C.P.HUNTINGTON-NRHS]
August 23	Cincinnati-Portsmouth round-trip. 611. [CINCINNATI RAILROAD CLUB]
August 24	Cincinnati-Danville KY round-trip. 611. [Same bunch!]
September 13-14	Lexington Ky-Chattanooga Tn on 13th, returning to Lexington on 14th. 611. [BLUEGRASS RR MUSEUM]

The MALVERN & CAMDEN Railway

by Bill Pollard

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the State of Arkansas witnessed an unparalleled growth of railroad branchlines as the major carriers fought to win traffic for their respective systems. The Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain was responsible for much of this expansion, but the Rock Island made a valiant attempt to overcome its later arrival in Arkansas by extending service to a number of regions formerly served only by the Iron Mountain.

The Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf had established their presence in Malvern on May 10, 1902, through the purchase of the Hot Springs Railroad. A connecting line was soon constructed between Benton and Butterfield, and by the autumn of 1902, through trains were operating from Little Rock to Hot Springs, via Bauxite, Benton, and Butterfield. The five miles of the original Hot Springs Railroad between Malvern and Butterfield were relegated to branchline status, and the 1904 acquisition of the CO&G by the Rock Island did little to change this operating pattern. The Malvern branch assumed greater importance in 1905, however, when a 1½ mile extension was made to Walco, the site of a large Wisconsin & Arkansas Lumber Company sawmill. The lumber company operated a tap line railroad, the Malvern & Freeo Valley, and Rock Island officials had negotiated an agreement whereby most of the mill's output would be routed over the Rock Island rather than the Iron Mountain, as a result of a more generous rate division offered by the Rock Island. The mill, located along the Iron Mountain mainline just southwest of Malvern, was an important shipper on the Iron Mountain, and that line was forced to match the Rock Island's rate division of 3¢ per 100 pounds in order to retain a share of the traffic.

The ease with which this traffic was diverted from the Iron Mountain encouraged Rock Island officials, and the company remained alert for other locations where a similar expansion could achieve the same results. The last such expansion of the Rock Island in Arkansas involved the construction of a new line from Malvern to Camden, to serve a region which was rich in the production of timber. This expansion was made under the name of a new corporation, the Malvern & Camden Railway, which had received a charter from the Arkansas Railroad Commission on June 3, 1911. Construction began during the summer of 1911, and 45% of the right of way grading was completed within the next twelve months. Tracklaying crews were able to begin laying rail in November, 1912.

The route of the Malvern & Camden Railway began at Walco, where connections existed with the Malvern & Freeo Valley, the Iron Mountain, and the Malvern branch of the Rock Island. At Walco, a joint agency station was established near the Iron Mountain crossing, to handle the billing of outbound lumber shipments. For the first eight miles, from Walco to Landers, the Malvern & Camden initially used the trackage of the Malvern & Freeo Valley. Landers was the main logging camp for the Wisconsin & Arkansas Lumber Company, and this fact no doubt helped influence the route selection for the new railroad. From Landers, new construction extended southward 46.7 miles, through the towns of Willow, Manning, Sparkman, and Amy. At Kent, a connection was established with the Cotton Belt, and trackage rights were secured for operation over that railroad for the final 2.18 miles into Camden. In Camden, the M&C constructed a small yard and a separate depot near the Cotton Belt station.

The "independent" operation of the Malvern & Camden Railway lasted for only a few months after the completion of the line in 1913. On January 1, 1914, the 54.82 mile route from Malvern to Kent, along with the trackage rights into Camden, were purchased by the Rock Island, Arkansas & Louisiana Railroad. [The RIA&L was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Rock Island, operating all Rock Island trackage south of Little Rock.] Even during the time that the Malvern & Camden was a separate corporation, the stock issued by the smaller line had been held by the Rock Island to secure over \$300,000 in construction loans provided by the larger carrier. Soon after the Rock Island gained direct control of the line, a separate route was established from Walco to Landers, with a grade-separated overpass over the Malvern & Freeo Valley.

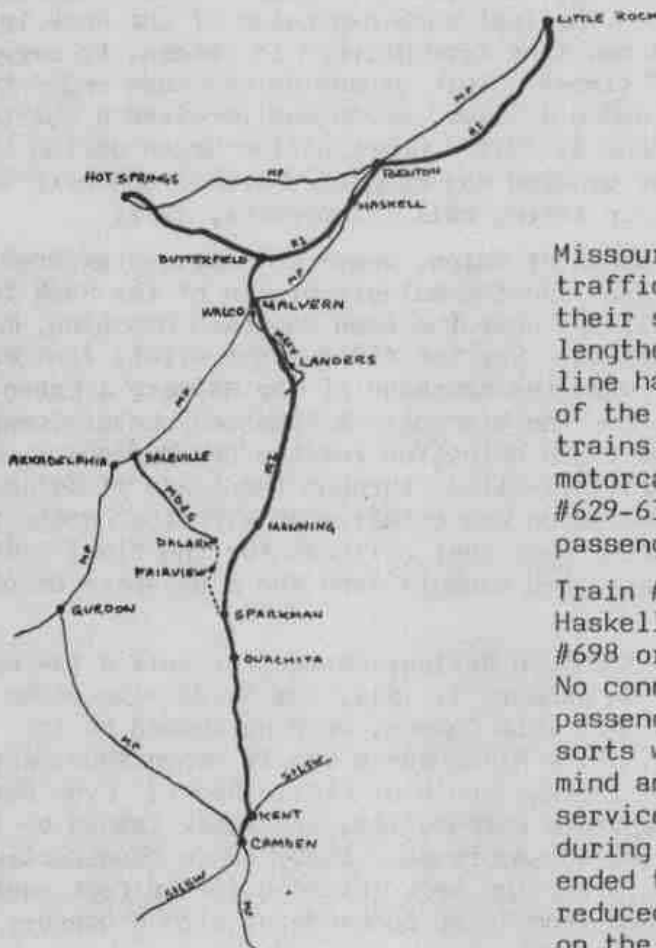
During 1914, daily passenger service was implemented by the Rock Island on a turn around schedule from Butterfield to Camden and back. At Butterfield, these trains made close connections with Rock Island mainline trains operating between Little Rock and Hot Springs. In keeping with the corporate goal of competing with the Iron Mountain wherever possible, these schedules managed to provide service which was equal or superior to Missouri Pacific schedules via Gurdon. A Camden-bound passenger could board RI #611 at Little Rock at 7:15am, change at Butterfield to #630 at 8:55am, and be in Camden by 12:10pm. The Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain offered a similar southbound schedule, with a 7:40am departure on #5, a change to #835 at Gurdon, and an arrival in Camden at 12:30pm. The northbound Mopac train left Camden at 1:15pm, while the northbound Rock Island train did not leave until 3:45pm. This later departure allowed time for businessmen from Little Rock to transact business in Camden and return home all in one day.

Much of the timber along the northern one-third of the line had been cut out by 1917, and during that year the Rock Island depot at Landers was closed and moved to Manning. This move coincided with the cessation of all logging activity in the Landers area. The Malvern & Freeo Valley briefly established a crossing of the Rock Island at Lehman in June of 1917, while the last of the Wisconsin & Arkansas timber was being harvested. In 1918, the Malvern & Freeo Valley ceased all operations, and the Rock Island lost a major shipper on their line.

Arkadelphia officials contacted Rock Island management in September, 1923, in an effort to encourage the Rock Island to extend a line from Sparkman to Arkadelphia. This proposal was advanced as a result of the foreclosure sale of the Memphis, Dallas & Gulf Railroad, because that sale was contingent upon the abandonment of the Arkadelphia division of the MD&G. This line, extending from Daleville (across the Ouachita River from Arkadelphia) to Dalark, had been constructed in 1894 as a logging railroad by the Arkadelphia Lumber Company. The logging line soon evolved into a common carrier tap line, named the Ultima Thule, Arkadelphia & Mississippi Railway. During its heyday, this line extended 34 miles through Dalark, Sparkman, and Washita (sic), to Bear Head, and offered two trains each way daily except Sunday. By the time the property was merged into the Memphis, Dallas & Gulf in 1910, the trackage south of Dalark had been abandoned. Malvern & Camden construction crews subsequently used much of the old UTA&M right of way between Sparkman and Ouachita.

Because of the threatened abandonment of the Memphis, Dallas & Gulf, Arkadelphia officials were concerned that businesses in the region would be at the mercy of the Missouri Pacific if some sort of rail competition was not preserved. The Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce proposed that a bonus be offered to the Rock Island if that carrier would purchase the Daleville to Dalark line and reconstruct the track over about nine miles of the old right of way from Dalark to a connection with their line north of Sparkman. While the Arkadelphia delegation visited and corresponded with Rock Island officials, the Clark County Judge persuaded the Arkansas Railroad Commission to withhold abandonment approval for that part of the MD&G. After a cursory inspection of the line to Dalark, Rock Island officials suggested that it would take a sizable bonus indeed to convince them to take over the 12 miles of dilapidated railroad laid with

nothing heavier than 35-pound rail. This response discouraged Arkadelphia officials, and the Arkansas Railroad Commission was allowed to approve the abandonment of the old UTA&M on January 22, 1924. Had this trackage become available ten years earlier, when Rock Island management was more interested in expansion, Arkadelphia might well have become a station on the Rock Island.



Missouri Pacific gradually won the battle for passenger traffic between Little Rock and Camden, by improving their schedules while Rock Island schedules were being lengthened. Conventional passenger trains on the Camden line had been replaced by motorcars by 1920, as a part of the Rock Island's program to replace branchline trains with motorcars wherever possible. In 1926, the motorcar service ended with the discontinuance of trains #629-630, and mixed trains #697-698 provided the only passenger and freight service over the line.

Train #697 originated at the important terminal of Haskell and operated through to Camden, while train #698 originated at Camden and terminated at Haskell. No connections were available southbound from mainline passenger trains to the mixed train, but a connection of sorts was available northbound for passengers who didn't mind an 11 hour trip from Camden to Little Rock. Motorcar service was restored on the branch for a brief period during 1928-1929, but the onset of the depression soon ended this service. Even mixed trains #697-698 were reduced from daily except Sunday operation to tri-weekly, on the line south of Malvern. As traffic declined, only Malvern, Sparkman, and Camden remained as open stations on the branch line.

Following the depression, the mixed trains resumed daily except Sunday operation. World War II brought a substantial increase in traffic on the line, much of which was the result of shipments to and from the Shumaker ordinance works in East Camden. The northern end point terminal was moved from Haskell to Biddle to speed traffic flow, and the train order office at Kent was reopened for the duration of the war. To reach the ordinance works, Rock Island trains operated over Cotton Belt spur trackage from Shumaker Junction, two miles north of Kent. The Cotton Belt industrial trackage extended six miles to the ordinance works, where Rock Island trains made their set-outs and pick-ups. The crew would then turn their engine on the wye, and run backwards into Camden.

During this time of heavy traffic, the steep grade near Landers became a limiting factor for getting tonnage over the line, and the Malvern switcher would frequently take southbound traffic to Landers to be picked up by #697. Even with this policy, the Malvern switcher frequently had to serve as a helper to get #697 from Malvern to Landers. From Landers to Camden, the line was essentially flat or down hill, with no other geographical features to limit tonnage.

After the war, service on the Malvern to Camden line saw little change, except that mixed train #697 was rescheduled to operate from Biddle daily except Saturday, to allow better utilization of train crews. Steam power gave way to diesels, but passengers continued to be accepted in the caboose until the late 1950's. The branchline continued to generate a large volume of timber traffic, just as the early proponents of the line had envisioned, but most of this tonnage was now pulpwood or wood chips rather than logs or lumber. Railroad and Western Union telegraph service continued along the route until June 10, 1958, when an order was issued to salvage the wire and abandon the pole line between Malvern and Camden.

By the early 1960's, this branch line, like many others, was in trouble. The Rock Island had hardly enough cash to maintain the main line, and money for branch line maintenance was simply non-existent. This cash shortage quickly translated into poor track and slower speeds, bringing less dependable service which further eroded the traffic on the line. By the mid-1960's, service was being provided by local freight #695, operating from Biddle to Camden on Monday-Wednesday-Friday, returning as #696 on Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday. Although these trains had timetable authority between Biddle, Butterfield, and Malvern, all trains south of Malvern operated per rule 93. With this arrangement, all trackage south of Malvern was considered within yard limits, the speed limit was a maximum of 20 mph, and the need for train orders was kept to a minimum. Except for traffic generated by industries on-line at Camden, most of the freight traffic originating on the line was from a pulpwood yard at Manning or a sawmill at Sparkman. Most of the pulpwood and wood chips were destined for the International Paper mill at Camden.

Effective with the arrival of #695 (behind Geeps #1205-1235) on August 15, 1967, through Biddle to Camden operation was discontinued. In place of this schedule, a local freight schedule was established between Malvern and Camden, leaving Malvern at 6pm and returning from Camden at 10am, six days per week. Service between Biddle and Butterfield was handled by the Hot Springs local or the Butterfield turn, and traffic between Butterfield and Malvern was handled by the Malvern switcher. Only two brakemen were assigned to the Camden local, so the train was limited to a maximum of 25 cars by the Arkansas Full Crew Law, unless a third brakeman was deadheaded down in advance.

In 1969, Rock Island officials applied to abandon 19 miles of the branch, from Sparkman to Camden. The final trip from Malvern to Camden took place in early June, 1969, with GP-9 #1322 and outside braced wood caboose #17802. The final trip down and back was made in one day, rather than the usual two, so that the abandoned portion of the railroad could be closed down. This final trip was uneventful, except for a minor derailment at Sparkman which was resolved with the help of a fork lift from a nearby sawmill. Arkansas Railroad Club member L.T. Walker was conductor on this last trip, and two other future club members also made the trip as 'unofficial' passengers.* Rail removal started at Kent on September 11, 1969, but crews worked only sporadically on scrapping the line. By June 30, 1971, only 20% of the line had been scrapped, but most of the remainder of the line was removed by the end of April, 1972.

Following the cessation of direct service to Camden, a new local (#777) originated at Fordyce and operated over the Cotton Belt to Camden. This job handled some switching chores at Fordyce, and also operated north to handle switching at Leola or Carthage before operating to Camden. The return trip from Camden to Fordyce was made on the following day. Service from Malvern to Sparkman was provided on an as-needed basis, usually by the first trick Malvern switcher.

Since most of the chips loaded at Sparkman or pulpwood from Manning was destined for Camden, a circuitous routing was required to get the cars to their destination. Undoubtedly, Rock Island officials thought that service could be maintained on a reasonable schedule without the direct route into Camden, but this was frequently not the case. Cars from Sparkman were first handled by the Malvern switcher, which moved the cars to Butterfield for pick-up by the eastbound Hot Springs local, #88. This local would carry the cars to Bauxite, or occasionally bring them into Biddle. Train #35 moved the cars from Bauxite (or Biddle) to Fordyce, and local #777 would then handle the shipment for the final segment into Camden. When everything went smoothly and all connections could be made properly, a shipment could be billed at Sparkman on one day and arrive in Camden on the following day. More frequently, the routing required four to five days, and it was not uncommon for a car to require eight days to make the trip. This slow car turn-around caused car shortages, and when the Rock Island was unable to increase the number of cars in this service, more and more of the traffic began to be diverted to trucks. During 1970, 221 cars of chips originated at Sparkman, and 921 cars of pulpwood originated at Manning.

Following the close of business on July 31, 1972, the Sparkman agency was discontinued, and billing and accounting functions were reassigned to Malvern. Plans were made to sell the old wood frame depot which had served since 1913. Time had largely passed this old station by; its train order signal was never modernized from the original rope and cable operated paddles, and the station never had its solid tuscan paint scheme replaced with the tuscan and yellow, or the solid white schemes of later years. The 24x64 foot station was sold on April 1, 1973, and was razed shortly thereafter.

During 1973 and 1974, the Rock Island experienced numerous problems with the Cotton Belt at Camden. Most problems originated with the Cotton Belt's unauthorized use of the Rock Island yard to store cuts of cars, and on several occasions the Rock Island train from Fordyce was blocked out of their own yard and forced to tie-up in the Cotton Belt yard. When discussions at the agent and trainmaster level did not bring an end to this practice, the Cotton Belt was billed for a broken rail which was caused while a Cotton Belt crew used the Rock Island yard to make up one of their own locals. After a flurry of correspondence between the Rock Island superintendent in El Reno, and the Cotton Belt superintendent in Pine Bluff, the unauthorized Cotton Belt use of the yard was terminated.

As business into and out of Camden continued to decline, Rock Island management in 1974 proposed the closing of Camden's station, with service being provided through the Fordyce station. The traffic department at Little Rock objected to this plan, saying that the Camden agency needed to be left intact to maintain the Rock Island identity at that point. The station remained open, but in 1976, following the loss of outbound paper traffic and inbound beer traffic, a proposal was made to allow the Cotton Belt to take over the Rock Island agency work at Camden. In return, the Rock Island's Fordyce station would assume responsibility for Cotton Belt agency work at Fordyce. Due to objections filed by affected employees, this consolidation was never implemented. In April, 1978, the Rock Island again sought to place Camden on an as-needed basis, tripiliz with Fordyce and Leola, but this request was thwarted by the Arkansas Transportation Commission.

Service on the Sparkman branch became more sporadic as traffic declined and as track deteriorated. The maximum speed limit for the 35 miles between Malvern and Sparkman was reduced to 10 mph by 1978, and in many areas even slower speeds were necessary. Since this service was provided by the Malvern switcher on an as-needed basis, no regular operating schedule was maintained, but trains continued to travel to Sparkman an average of twice each week.

Following the 1979 strike against the Rock Island, sporadic Rock Island service to Camden briefly resumed, but virtually all of the business had been captured by the Cotton Belt. On December 6, 1979, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued a service order allowing the Cotton Belt to serve all Rock Island industries at Camden for 90 days. On December 7, the position of agent at Camden was abolished, and the Cotton Belt took over all switching responsibilities at that location. Train service on the Sparkman branch was never resumed following the strike, and this trackage was the first to be removed by L.B. Foster scrapping crews when they began working in Arkansas in March, 1982

NOTE: The author wishes to thank L.T. Walker for reviewing the original manuscript, and for providing additional information based on his experiences as brakeman and conductor on this line.

(*) Railroad club members on the last trip included Paul Moon and Stanley Wozencraf

Rock Island crew members on the last trip were: Earl Morris--engineer, Jim Maddox--fireman, Bob Mimms and Bill Robbins--brakemen, and L.T. Walker--conductor.



Although not THE final run, Rock Island #1201 pulled one of the last in June of 1969. Crew pictured, L/R are: Earl Morris, engineer; Bill Robbins, brakeman; Don Gent, agent; Bob Mimms, brakeman; L.T. Walker, conductor; and Jim Maddox, fireman. (Walker photo)

I, John J. Martin of Pine Bluff, hereby certify that I was the engineer in charge of the survey location and construction of the Pine Bluff & Swan Lake Railway, extending from Rob Roy to Swan Lake.

The first 10 miles of rail placed in the track in 1885 was old rail bought from the Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas Railway. This rail had probably been in use on their track for 10 years. It was badly worn and many rails were laminated. The next two miles were laid with 40 pound steel rail. This was "culled" rail of inferior quality, so brittle that in some instances, in being thrown from the car, rails broke in three places. The next two miles were 30 pound iron rail. Being too light for the traffic and having been improperly installed by an incompetent foreman, it has been badly kinked by expansion. This is a surface kink which cannot be straightened. The next three miles were mixed rail, some second hand rail bought from the Texas & St. Louis Railroad, and some inferior "culled" rail, all laid by the same foreman and all now badly kinked from the same causes.

I have recently been over the road and find the rail in the condition named. The ties are also badly rotted from age and the bridges all need rebuilding entirely. The whole track has also suffered from the late overflow.

I regard the last valuation for [property tax] assessment as excessive, and quite double the present valuation of the track.

Jno. J. Martin, chief engineer
Pine Bluff & Swan Lake Railway
July 28, 1892

(The above was sent in by Bill Pollard. He found this jewel at the Arkansas History Commission during some research and thought it might be timely in light of the April 15 turmoil that hits most people. Times really haven't changed that much after all, especially when the tax man is involved.)

The following story was submitted by L. N. Gaines, Jr. The "Other Days" feature from the Cleveland County Herald is used with permission:

From the Cleveland County Herald, April 2, 1986 "Other Days" column: "April 8, 1926. The Cotton Belt is installing a modern concrete and steel water tank at their water station at Pool, five miles south of Rison (Arkansas) on Saline River."

This fine tank served such engines as the famous 819 until the mid 1950s when the Cotton Belt became the first Class I Railroad to go 100% diesel (according to H.J. McKenzie's book "The Little Railroad that Could").

There is a story that Johnny Cash lived in one of the railroad section houses at one time during his boyhood, somewhere in the Pool, Saline, Draughton vicinity. Certainly I have been fishing and swimming near this tank. At that time, the steel bridge across the Saline River had a metal superstructure over it, which has since been removed (the superstructure, not the bridge which still stands).

The sure'nuff railroad man of the family, my father, veteran of 50 years service on the Cotton Belt, loves to tell the yarn about how during the war (WWII) the dispatchers had come to hear the barking of a dog 'leaking' into their telephone. Since it was well known that Big Buddy kept his old hound "Blue" with him in the interlocking tower at Fordyce, they asked if it was his dog barking. My dad replied that no, his dog never barked up there, but that the pumper at Pool had a dog and a dispatchers phone, and that possibly that was where the noise was coming from. Further investigation revealed that this was where the problem was, and so the problem was corrected.

An interesting sight to see at Pool, Saline River, was the elderly gentleman who rode his bicycle from Kingsland daily to check the water height of the river, which information he had the Agent at Kingsland transmit via "Western Union" to his superiors. His bike had the following hand-painted sign: "U.S.R.G. (United States River Gauge).

L.N. Gaines, Jr.

OVER THE LINE WITH DAD

by: William Church

Boys raised in a railroad family grow up with the knowledge that Dad's loyalty to his job often put his family in second place at such occasions as Christmas, birthdays, Thanksgiving, graduations and other family or civic gatherings a family attends together, as Dad was often absent account of being on the road. The knowledge that neither Time, Tide nor Trains stands in the way of a man's calling. But sometimes a fellow would get lucky and he received an invite to the greatest thrill of a lifetime, a chance to go "OVER THE LINE WITH DAD".

Summers were always the best time for a boy to get such an invitation because of no school to attend. Rare was a summer that one or two trips were not in the offing. But Spring, Fall and Winter was another thing.

In my case, Mother, an ex-school teacher, insisted that for five days a week her children had to be in school, and of course on Sunday, Sunday School, rain or shine we were expected to be there. That left only Saturdays free and seldom was an occasion that a trip over the line with Dad could be made to comply with Mon's Iron Clad Rule of the proper way to bring up a family.

But sometimes the ONE who sees that a boy gets a break in life arranges it so that he gets a break off-season, and the magic invite would be made, and of course, accepted.

Dad was bucking the Conductor's Extra Board out of Illmo, Missouri on the Cotton Belt in those lean days of the early 1930's when fortunately for me the teachers in our school system had to attend a two-day teacher's meeting that would give school kids Thursday and Friday off. Dad had just come in off the road when I came in from school with the news of the holiday and he asked me if I wanted to make a trip with him.

A deadhead was scheduled to Paragould that night on No. 5 for a conductor and two brakemen to take a pile driver to the "Gumboot" near Leachville, Arkansas to drive some new piling on a bridge near there on the line.

Now there was a chance no Mother could fix. No school on Thursday or Friday, I could be home on No. 6 in time for Sunday School on Sunday. With Dad's OK, Mother caved in on my pleadings, and gave her consent with the firm understanding that I was to be home on No. 6 Sunday morning. Now all I had to do was hope and pray that no other Conductor's vacancy showed up for Dad between then and No. 5's time in the morning.

Again a boy's Guardian Angel comes through when the banging on our door by the Caller informed me that Dad had been called to Deadhead on No. 5 to Paragould for a Work-Train on the "Gumboot".

The "Gumboot" was the St. Francis Basin Extension that the Cotton Belt started in the late 1920's by buying up several small railroads in southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas then constructing several miles of new track to make a Memphis Gateway route from the Cotton Belt's main line at Malden, Missouri to McDonald, Arkansas. There the Missouri Pacific gave the Cotton Belt trackage rights over their Memphis Division to the Illinois Central Yard in Memphis.

Dad had been informed before leaving Illmo that the engine and its' crew, plus the caboose and the B. & B. Outfit were already in Paragould and the crew was called to depart Paragould on their arrival.

With the knowledge that a hot breakfast would be served to them in the Cook car, the crew made for the "Corner Cafe" that was located behind the Cotton Belt depot in Paragould for "Java", while Dad and his runner registered out in the telegrapher's office.

While the crew drank their java, I had to make a huge decision. In my pocket was my entire fortune, a .25¢ piece. It was the result of my labor of raking leaves and mowing grass and I had hoarded it against such a day as now. So long had I rubbed this coin in my dreaming that it was shining bright as new. Now studying the menu, calculating the cost of pie and coffee, and what my net worth would be after such a purchase, I pushed the thoughts from my mind of what Mom would say of pie and coffee for breakfast and splurged, only to be rescued from bankruptcy by the fireman, who said, "this is on me".

Later in the "PSE" yard, my new found friend, who with the good nature joking of most railroad men, invited me to ride the engine. "Boy, you had better ride up here with me, you just might get lousy hanging around the caboose with brakemen". Looking to Dad for his approval, and receiving a nod and a smile, but with a word of warning, "Billy, be careful and don't get your brains baked out up there. I kind of thought I just might make a conductor out of you".

From Paragould we ran over the Cotton Belt's "PSE" branch to a junction with the "Gumboot" at Hornersville, Missouri. Here we received running orders to Leachville, Arkansas over what was the new construction, and there, orders to work between Leachville and Caraway, driving new pile on a bridge on the old B.L.A.S. Railroad line.

For two days, life could hold no greater thrill for a boy but they passed all but too soon. By Friday night it was time to face up to the fact that the holiday was soon to be over and I would have to return to the real world of school and chores.

Dad and his crew were scheduled to work on Sunday. The B. & B. Gang had to finish up this job and were scheduled to be on another site by Monday. As much as I wanted to stay with Dad and come home on No. 6 Sunday night, I didn't dare to press by luck too far by missing Sunday School. With a sinking heart I went to bed with the knowledge that much too soon my vacation was rapidly coming to an end.

Saturday morning came all too fast for a boy on a holiday. After a scrubbing down, putting on clean clothing, Dad intrusted me with the family pass over the Cotton Belt, gave me a train fare from Leachville to Jonesboro on the Frisco's Motor Car, and I was ready to return home. From the cook I received a "Thousand Mile" lunch, a sack full of sandwiches, cake, pie and fruit, enough to hold me over until I reached home the next morning. After the crew left Leachville, I ambled over to the Frisco and caught the Motor Car to Jonesboro.

The Saturday afternoon in Jonesboro was all a boy could hope for. I still had my .25c piece, a free afternoon between trains, and I could watch all of the Frisco and Cotton Belt trains until I had my fill. Then sadly wishing, this would last forever.

Even after over a half century has passed, the joy of those boyhood trips are as fresh today as if they were yesterday. I often think of those days and am reminded of a poem written by another conductor's son, his name lost in history, but the message is the same, a desire to recapture a memory of.....

"OVER THE LINE WITH DAD"

*If I could be a boy again, on the wings
of fancy loose,
free from the cares that makes us men,
in my dear old Dad's caboose.
Of all there was that made my boy heart glad,
I wish I might go again, "OVER THE LINE WITH DAD";*

*Chum with the brakeman, laugh and joke,
ride on the engine awhile,
wash away the grime and smoke, standing
straight in the aisle.*

*Climb up on the counter high
Oh what a treat for a lad,
Sandwich, coffee, custard pie,
"OVER THE LINE WITH DAD"*

*Sit way up in the lookout too,
Keeping an eye on the jostling cars,
Climbing there in the night to view,
The way of the lanterned stars.*

*Snuggling close to the truest friend,
a fellow ever had,
wishing that the trip would never end,
"OVER THE LINE WITH DAD".*

(continued)

The old caboose had long since gone,
and its' crew has whistled the sky,
fancy still with its' radiant sence,
illuminates days gone by.

And when GOD's caller comes around for me,
my heart would be far from sad,
if I only knew that I am to go again,
"OVER THE LINE WITH DAD".

(Author unknown)

When HE who rules from Everlasting to Everlasting gives his last call for me, I beg of him this one last request: that I be allowed to turn down the ride HOME on the "Main Line", but be allowed to go deep in "Mud Line Country" to a spot that I remember from my boyhood.

There in the shade of a giant Water Oak tree I will wait until off in the distance I hear the sounds of a low-wheel Mogul pounding her way home over the uneven joints. When she heaves into sight I will station myself along side the track, and with a make-shift flag, I will signal the old grey headed Runner that I want to board. With outstretched arms, palms up, I will give him the old "pick me up sign", then scratching at the rib cage, "on the caboose".

One thing for sure I will know, that when the caboose draws near, I will see a figure standing in the open side door, one who my heart holds so dear, and then, as it was in the days of my boyhood, it be once again...

"OVER THE LINE WITH DAD"

- END -

(From: "My Love Affair with the Blue and Gold")

JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

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

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

RENEWAL

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

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Little Rock, Arkansas 72207

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

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

WELCOME ABOARD!!!

ONE-MAN SHOW - As a reminder, this newsletter is put together, typed, copied, stapled, folded, collated, zip-sorted and mailed by one person, your editor (I do have help with the stapling). I solicit your stories, photos, etc., but please realize that it may be months before some of the stories get published. Be patient. Thanks. (Ken Ziegenbein, editor)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

DERAILMENT - About 1 AM on Sunday, April 20, 15 cars of a Union Pacific freight derailed between Higginson and Kensett, Arkansas. Three engines also went off the track. At least 4 of the cars carried chemicals, including one with black alcohol which was spilling down an embankment. No one was injured.

SALE OF BURLINGTON NORTHERN IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS QUESTIONED - The ICC is reviewing a request that would permit the Arkansas and Missouri Railroads to buy 146 miles of Burlington Northern track from Monette, Missouri to Fort Smith Arkansas. Opposition to the sale has developed. Three railroad unions have asked that wages and benefits be guaranteed to the 58 employees who would have to be transferred or fired by BN. Arkansas and Missouri Railroad plans to hire 45 employees if it buys the line and has offered to give the displaced BN workers first crack at the jobs. But their current wages would not be guaranteed by the new company, which plans to settle in Springdale. A second protest has been filed by the Kansas City Southern Railway. KCS claims it would be forced to cancel Fort Smith service if the sale to Arkansas and Missouri Railroad is approved. KCS uses some of BN's tracks into Fort Smith. Alarmed by KCS's warning, the city of Fort Smith has written letters to the commission asking it to reject A&M RR's petition. (ROGERS NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MORNING NEWS)

LOCAL DEPOT OPEN HOUSE HELD - The Train Station Inc., a non-profit organization renovating the Bentonville Frisco depot on Main Street held an open house March 1. Upon completion, the depot is to be used for Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce offices, as well as a community conference room. Plans are to hold a grand opening during Sugar Creek Days festivities the first weekend in May. (BENTON COUNTY DAILY DEMOCRAT)

ENGINE 303 DOOMED? - (Paragould) - Paragould Parks Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend to the Paragould City Council that Engine 303 be removed from Harmon Park in that city. Commissioners said they consider the steam locomotive to be a safety hazard in its dilapidated condition. They want it to be removed and want trees planted and playground equipment installed to replace it. Two offers to restore it have fallen through. The commissioners expressed hopes of having the train off the site by June. (PARAGOULD DAILY PRESS)

RAILROAD WANTS SPEED OF TRAINS TO BE INCREASED - (Hope) - Union Pacific requested March 4 that the Hope, Arkansas city board allow trains to resume maximum speeds once those trains have occupied the eastern and western boundaries of Hope. Presently, freight and passenger trains (Amtrak's "Eagles") observe the 30 mph speed limit when passing through town. Railroad officials asked that the same speed limit still be observed, but that trains be allowed to resume speeds up to 60 mph for freight and 70 mph for passenger trains once the lead car has passed through the farthest railroad crossing in the city. Approximately 25 freight trains and one passenger train pass through Hope each day. While Hope maintains a 30 mph speed limit for trains, Prescott's limit is 55 mph, Arkadelphia's is 60 mph, Gurdon's is 40 mph and Malvern's is 35 mph. Another railroad representative said that in Conway, accidents decreased by 50 percent after city officials raised the speed limit from 30 to 45 mph. "Too many people play hide and seek with a slow moving train", he said. "By raising the speed, people will be more aware and quit playing tag with trains." (HOPE STAR)

MO-PAC MAN GIVES PROGRAM ON CROSSING SAFETY (Corning, Hope) - On April 4, students at Central Elementary School in Corning, Arkansas were visited by the Missouri Pacific Railroad's famous super safety hero "MoPac Man", as portrayed by MOPAC shop foreman Steve Sparr. Using films, "MoPac Man" and his team have brought the crossing safety message to thousands of current and future drivers. He also spoke in Hope on April 10. (CLAY COUNTY COURIER)

ROCK ISLAND DISPOSITION - (Danville and west) - Now that all the track and ties of the former Rock Island have been taken up west of Danville, where does the land go? It is amazing how the railroad right-of-way has been broken down in terms of buyers. Here is the breakdown:

- 1) Land - is owned separately and sold by itself.
- 2) Mineral rights - owned separately.
- 3) Rails - sold separately.
- 4) Gravel under the tracks - sold separately.
- 5) Ties - sold separately.

Gravel is sold by the mile (\$1900). Land is about \$360 an acre or more. Most adjacent landowners will have to buy the land on the right-of-way themselves if they want to keep it in their possession. They will be offered first shot at getting the right-of-way, however, but time is running out. O. Taylor Enterprises of Guthrie, Oklahoma, who owns the right-of-way now, said for those wanting to get some of this land to contact them at O. Taylor Enterprises, 114 W. Harrison Ave., Guthrie, OK 73044.

On a related note, the Rock Island Lines from Danville to Perry have been saved, largely through the action of the parent company of Wayne Poultry of Danville and State Rep. Lloyd George. The move will reactivate the line from mile post 220, located beneath the Highway 27 overpass, to Perry where the lines, operated by the Little Rock and Western Railroad end. Continental Grain Co. of Chicago has "put together the deal" which will assure that the tracks will stay intact for at least the next five years. Wayne Poultry hopes to receive the first cars by rail by April 25. The company will receive 1,000 railroad cars of grain per year, beginning with three runs per week of about 25 cars each. Although Wayne will be the major customer, other companies may also use the rail service, including Ola's Deltic Timber plant. They believe the availability of rail service could pave the way for the Wayne Poultry plant to add another 150 jobs.

Arkansas Governor Clinton, who was at the dedication ceremony, was given credit for stalling the salvage operation and then encouraging the salvage work to start from the western end, as the Danville to Perry deal looked more promising.

Renovation of the line will cost about \$100,000. Clinton called the revival of the rail line a "boon for the economy of Western Arkansas". (RUSSELLVILLE COURIER DEMOCRAT)

STEAM ENGINE 253's OUT OF TIME - (Texarkana) - Engine No. 253 sitting in a Texarkana park, sits right in the middle of one of five multipurpose ballfields the city is building on the site of the old fairgrounds. They can't find anybody to move it, and they need to soon. The engine was built for the Florida East Coast Railroad Co. in July 1924 by the American Locomotive Co. and sold in 1936 to the Louisiana and Arkansas Rwy Co. It came to Texarkana on its own power. They built a temporary spur into the fairgrounds and drove it in. The Texarkana fairgrounds did everything they could to keep it from junk dealers who just wanted to scrap it. Several parties are interested. (TEXARKANA GAZETTE)

COTTON BELT LOCOMOTIVE TO BE DONATED - A Cotton Belt locomotive is being prepared to be donated to the State of Arkansas. It will be placed on display at the Arkansas State Capitol in Little Rock (within smelling distance of the U.P., no less!) and the area for it is now being prepared by the state. The locomotive is SSW 5006, an EF 423, model GP30 which was built in 1963 and retired in 1985. It has been maintained by the employees of the Pine Bluff Locomotive plant during its many years of service. All of the component parts have been removed and it will be for display only. A plaque will be placed in the cab listing the employees who have worked on the locomotive over the years. Many employees in years to come will be proud to show this engine off to their grandchildren, as well as future generations. (Perhaps in some future year - 2016 for example - an interested group of people will start a 5006 Foundation to revamp and rebuild the GP30 to running condition. I think its great that the SSW and State of Arkansas are saving this locomotive for display. They will be classics someday, too, like the 819.)



ARKANSAS 1836-1986 SESQUICENTENNIAL WAGON TRAIN TOUR

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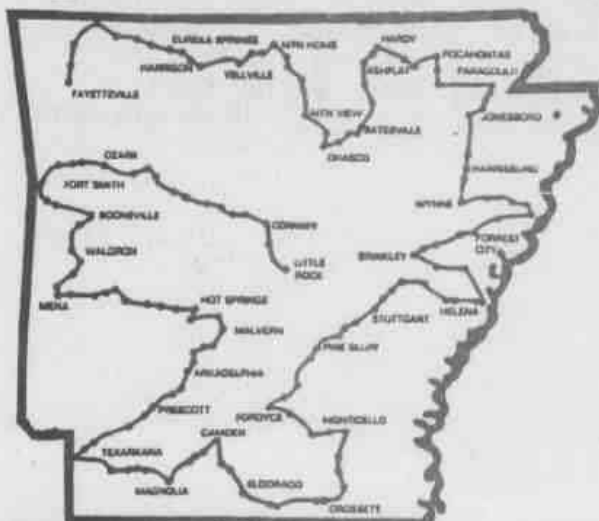
(501) 761-3550

DATE	DESTINATION	MILES
MAR 1	ROGERS	17
MAR 2	WAR EAGLE MILLS	15
MAR 3	ROCKY TOP	27
MAR 4	GREEN FOREST	10
MAR 5/6	HARRISON	23
MAR 7	YELLVILLE	25
MAR 8	MT. HOME	24
MAR 9	CALICO ROCK	26
M 10/11	MT. VIEW	24
MAR 12	BOB RIDDLE	25
MAR 13	BATESVILLE	14
MAR 14	EVENING SHADE	25
MAR 15	CHEROKEE VILLAGE	21
MAR 16	IMBODEN	21
M 17/18	POCAHONTAS	15
MAR 19	WALNUT RIDGE	15
MAR 20	PARAGOULD	26
MAR 21	JONESBORO	22
MAR 22	HARRISBURG	19
MAR 23	WYNNE	26
MAR 24	EARLE	19
M 25/26	MARION	19
MAR 27	SHELL LAKE	16
MAR 28	FORREST CITY	23
MAR 29	MARIANNA	15
M 30/31	HELENA	30
APR 1	MARVELL	16
APR 2	CLARENDON	26
APR 3	STUTTGART	20
APR 4	ALTHEIMER	24
APR 5/6	PINE BLUFF	17
APR 7	RISEN	24
APR 8/9	FORDYCE	16
A 10/11	WARREN	28
APR 12	MONTICELLO	16
A 13/14	HAMBURG	26

DATE	DESTINATION	MILES
A 15/16	CROSSETT	15
A 17/18	82 BRIDGE	12
APR 19	STRONG	14
A 20/21	EL DORADO	24
APR 22	SMACKOVER	18
A 23/24	CAMDEN	18
APR 25	STEVENS	18
A 26/27	MAGNOLIA	18
APR 28	LEWISVILLE	22
A 29/30	TEXARKANA	28
MAY 1	FULTON	18
MAY 2	OLD WASHINGTON	14
MAY 3/4	HOPE	10
MAY 5/6	PRESCOTT	17
MAY 7	GURDON	18
MAY 8	ARKADELPHIA	18
MAY 9	BISMARCK	17
May 10	HOT SPRINGS	17
M 11-13	CRYSTAL SPRINGS	17
MAY 14	MT. IDA	19
MAY 15	PINE RIDGE	21
MAY 16	MENA	18
MAY 17	"Y" CITY	24
MAY 18	WALDRON	14
M 19/20	BOONEVILLE	26
MAY 21	CHARLESTON	20
MAY 22	BARLING	18
MAY 23	VAN BUREN	14
M 24/25	ALMA	16
MAY 26	OZARK	18
MAY 27	CLARKSVILLE	18
MAY 28	RUSSELLVILLE	18
M 29/30	ATKINS	19
MAY 31	MORRILTON	20
JUNE 1/2	CONWAY	19
JUNE 3	BURNS PARK	20
JUNE 4		

OFFICIAL SESQUICENTENNIAL EVENT

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION



GENERAL RAIL NEWS

DREW LEWIS NEW HEAD OF UNION PACIFIC APRIL 1, said the following: "I'm going to be interested in being certain that we are competitive... competitive with our competing rail lines and competitive with other modes of transportation...I think you are going to find me very direct and very demanding".

SAFE! - Railroads are the safest way to transport hazardous commodities. In a typical year, American Railroads move about a million cars of hazardous materials...about 70 percent of all hazardous material moved in the U.S...but are involved in only 10 percent of the accidents. In the past five years, there were 60 fatalities connected with the truck handling of hazardous materials, but zero fatalities on the railroads, Southern Pacific chairman McNear said. (UP UPDATE)

LONG TRAIN - From the Journal of Commerce via UPDATE comes the following from the Soviet Union: "A coal-carrying super heavyweight train more than four miles long has made its debut in the Soviet Union. The train was made up of 438 cars and was powered by 14 electric locomotives. It weighed over 43,000 tons". (Bet you it has priority over other trains - it couldn't exactly take many sidings).

BLE AGREES TO ARBITRATION - For the first time in 30 years, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in early April agreed to submit negotiations on a new contract with the nation's largest railroads to binding arbitration.

STEAM IN ST LOUIS - Norfolk & Western Class "J" #611 and her train will be in St. Louis this summer, July 5th and 6th. The St. Louis Chapter, NRHS, will operate No. 611 as the INDEPENDENCE SPECIAL. Details are now being worked out. (ST LOUIS CHAPTER NRHS)

SANTA FE DONATIONS - Santa Fe has donated three old steam engines, nine diesels and a diesel-powered motor car to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The equipment had been stored in Albuquerque, New Mexico for 20 years.

UTU QUILTS AFL-CIO - The United Transportation Union has quit the AFL-CIO, the first union to leave in nearly 20 years. The decision came after an AFL-CIO committee found that the UTU went against the AFL-CIO charter by trying to raid members of other unions at Amtrak. (SP UPDATE)

TRACKAGE RIGHTS GUARANTEED? - A bill requiring railroads to grant trackage rights to competing railroads so they will have access to so-called "captive" shippers has passed the House Judiciary Committee. The bill, called the Seiberling Act of 1986, is opposed by the railroad industry.

AMTRAK FUNDING at present looks much more favorable than it did last year. The National Association of Railroad Passengers said the Senate Budget Committee voted 13-9 for a budget that includes a three-year funding for Amtrak frozen at this year's \$606 million. It is still not passed the whole process to become law, however. (RAIL TRAVEL NEWS)

TICKET AGENT MURDERED - A long-time Southern Pacific ticket agent was found stabbed to death last March 26 in his office at Burlingame, California Train station. His body was found by his wife who drove to the depot after he failed to return from work. George Grant had worked 39 years for SP. (SP UPDATE)

CONTINUED DECLINE - Southern Pacific's total carloadings declined again in February, off 9.4% from last year. This marked SP's 16th consecutive month of declining carloadings. Meanwhile, Union Pacific posted a 3% gain in carloadings for February and have increased 3 to 6 percent during the first quarter of this year.

NO TO ABANDONMENT - The ICC has turned down on National Defense Grounds Burlington Northern's bid to abandon 4.9 miles of track between Little Falls Minnesota and Camp Riley to the north. The state said the line was crucial to the National Guard facility, especially in times of national emergency. BN said no cars were hauled over the line in 1982 and beyond. (Union Pacific's spur to Camp Robinson in North Little Rock Arkansas fits this same condition - I haven't seen a train on that line in years, yet the UP maintains it). (MIXED TRAIN)

NEWS in this edition of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER updated through April 20 - mailed Wednesday, April 23.

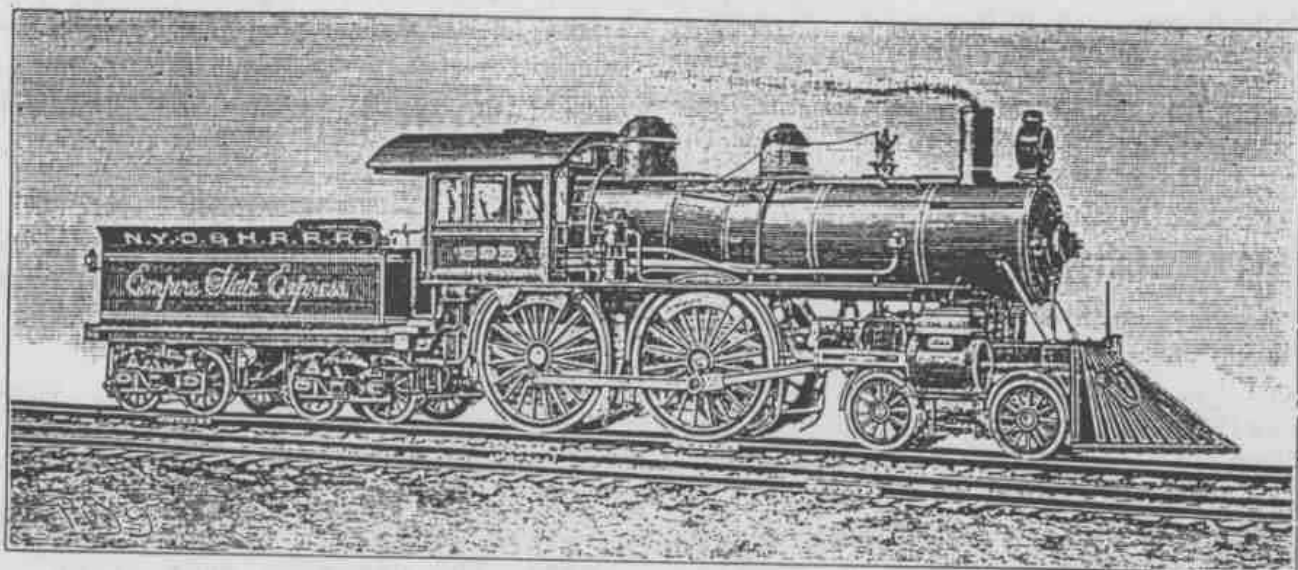
The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train lovers. The club meets once a month on the second Sunday. This month's meeting details can be found under the "PROGRAM" notice elsewhere in this newsletter. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

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

If you would like to join, send your check made payable to the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB to the club's treasurer: Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our club by sending \$9.00/year more.

Editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein. Any change-of-address, stories, pictures, news, etc., are all welcome. Send all correspondence regarding the RAILROADER and all material contributions to:

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