



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

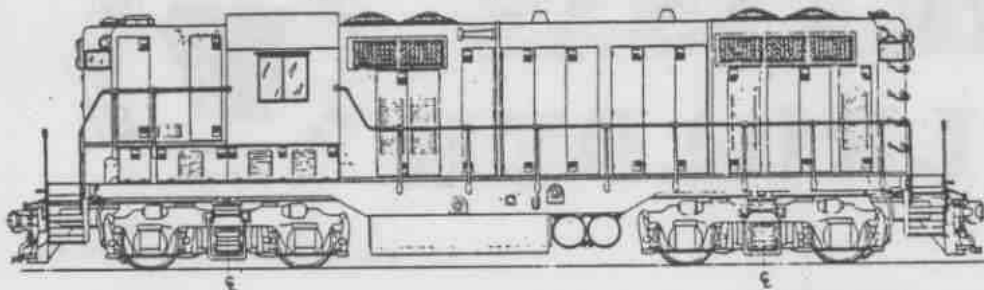
VOLUME 14 NUMBER 5

MAY - 1983



Easing around the Ft. Smith Wye at North Little Rock, a MoPac/Burlington Northern Coal Train prepares to depart Westbound. The empty 111-car trains carry coal to the Generating station at White Bluff, near Redfield, Ark, then return empty as this one is doing, designating it the "CBK" Train. (Coal-White Bluff to Kansas City). In the background, a pile-driver prepares the foundation to the new Heavy Locomotive Repair Facility. Photo in the fall of 1982.

Photo By John M. Martin



GENERAL NEWS

Rio Grande Locomotive at North Little Rock -- Rio Grande #3124 a GP-40/2, was sighted at the MoPac's North Little Rock Yard facility Wednesday, May 4th. This was the first siting of a Rio Grande unit in pool service.

Speaking of the Rio Grande, when the mergers took effect, the Rio Grande acquired trackage rights into Kansas City, and the M-K-T rights into Omaha. Below is a listing for March 2, 1983 of the Trains of the Rio Grande and Katy using MoPac trackage:

D&RGW Operations

Train

- 150-01 Departed Pueblo at 1:50a.m. with 23/03 cars, arrived K.City 9:40p.m.
- 151-01 Departed Kansas City at 12:50 a.m. with 15/49, last reported by Osawatomie, KS at 3:20 a.m.. This departed K.City 3 hours and 50 mins later than "Plan Times".

M-K-T Operations

- MLL-01 Departed Lincoln, Neb. 9:25 a.m. with 42 loads arriving back in Lincoln at 9:40 p.m. (Makes a turn).
- MKO-01 Departed Kansas City at 9:30 a.m. (2'30" Late) with 0/8 cars arriving in Omaha at 6:15 p.m.. The 'MKO' Train set out 3 empties at Atchison. The MLL01 train set out 41/0 cars for MOK02 at Atchison.

Port Engine "Sick" -- May 9th, the Port Railroad's locomotive "got sick" and a Missouri Pacific Lines Locomotive was leased for a day to take care of the Port's switching chores. Like Rolls-Royce, Relco Leasing flies in a mechanic to repair their leased locomotives. For many years Rolls-Royce would fly mechanics to repair stricken autos. MoPac #1175 was leased for the day at a whopping sum of \$815.00 per day.

Ex-Frisco Car returns to the U.S.A. And Home -- Ex Frisco sleeper "Cimmarron River" has been purchased by Mr. Tony Marchiando from Via Rail Canada and will return home to St. Louis. Information from Bill Pollard.

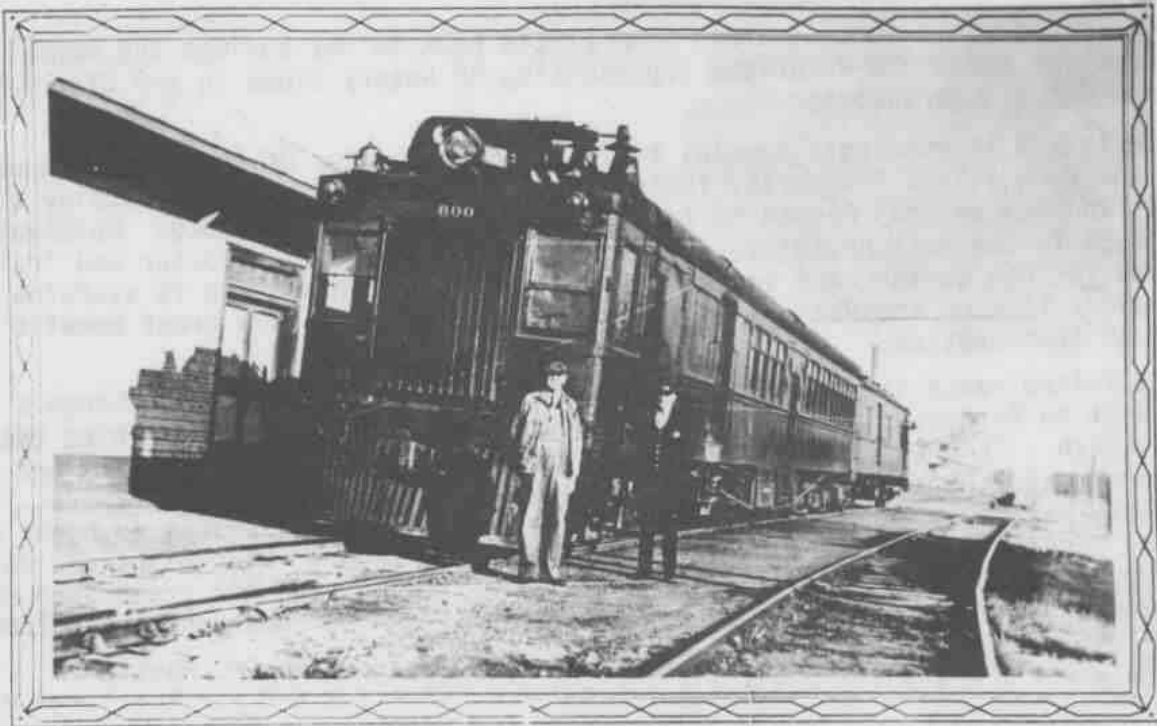
HOGTRAIN Set to Roll -- A fabulous Western Vacation Excursion on the Car "Cynthia" is set to roll away from Little Rock Friday, June 17th, for 7,275 miles of pleasure. The Cynthia will visit such places as Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and Seattle returning home on July 2nd. The trip sold out quickly and requests have been recieved, according to Bill Eldridge, to fill two additional cars, if they were available. Truly a unique travel experience.

"819 CAMPAIGN KICKOFF" -- The campaign to move and restore Cotton Belt #819 has begun with a trust fund set up to finance the cosmetic restoration. Headed by A.R.R. Club Member Sally Miller with Bill Bailey actively involved in the restoration, plans are to move the Pine Bluff built 4-8-4 to a site along the expressway near Pine Bluff's Courthouse, from it's present vandalized site at Oakland Park. Photo right of the 4-8-4 being moved into place in Oakland Park on a temporary panel track in July of 1955 by Boyd T. Pyle.

Diagram from the Collection of Jim Bennett.

THE ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the Official Publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club. The Regular Meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club is held the Second Sunday of Each Month at Union Station in Little Rock, Arkansas at 2:00 p.m.. Visitors are always Welcome. The Arkansas Railroad Club has memberships available for \$10.00 for In-State, \$7.50 for Out of State Associate Members. Inquiries may be made to:

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Missouri Pacific Lines Motorcar #600 was constructed by General Electric's Erie Works with a Watson Mfg. Co. Carbody in May of 1912, Serial #3727. On the Missouri Pacific, motorcars were always regarded as self-propelled passenger cars rather than locomotives. As of 1912 the only vacant passenger car numbers were in the series 100-999. Consequently number 600 was assigned to the new GE car and later cars numbered 601-up. The 600 was a 70' long Gas-Electric car weighing 102,000 lbs and seating 85 passengers. It's model designation was CRE70B11 and it developed 175 horsepower. It was installed initially on the Madison Branch between Butler, Mo., on the Carthage Subdivision, and Madison, Kansas. By 1924, the car was on the Illinois Subdivision at which time it was transferred to the Arkansas Division to operate between Newport and Batesville on the White River Subdivision. In 1927 it was rebuilt with EMC gas-electric machinery, probably at MPL's Sedalia, Mo. Shops, Thus the EMC Style nose with a classic G.E. Style Carbody. It was rebuilt in April of 1927 and the new equipment developed 220 h.p., increasing the weight to 124,300 lbs. Seating was reduced to 74 seats. This photograph shows the rebuilt #600 location unknown, after 1927. The car was used until 1948 where it reportedly was used to transport employees around Dupo Yard at Dupo, Ill. The car was dismantled at Sedalia Shops 9/28/48. An interesting side note is the EMC Rebuilt Serial Number of C-8 indicating that this is the eight set of equipment sold for the conversion of other manufacturer's motor cars to EMC Equipment. The only G.E.Cars ever converted were MoPac #600 and ATSF M105 (EMC C-10 in 1928). Information from John Baskin Harper/Extra 2200 South. Photograph from the Collection of Jim Wakefield



The LITTLE ROCK & WESTERN by Dr. BILL POLLARD



Photo By John M. Martin

Laboring uphill with an endless string of empty box cars, Little Rock and Western RS-3 #307 passes Murray Lock and Dam on the Arkansas River near Western Little Rock, bound for the Kraft Paper Mill at Perry, Ar. Notice the renovated roadbed and a slightly dimpled nose, evidence of it's entanglement with a boxcar.

THE LITTLE ROCK AND WESTERN RAILWAY

Three years ago this June, the Little Rock & Western Railway began operations over former Rock Island trackage between Little Rock and Perry, a distance of about 42 miles. In the beginning, the future of this railroad -- one of Arkansas' newest shortlines -- seemed uncertain. The deteriorated track condition, and the possibility of Santa Fe operation over the entire Memphis to Amarillo route made the long-term existence of the LR&W somewhat problematic. However, three years later, with a major track upgrading program almost completed, the future for this line looks bright.

Any discussion of the LR&W must include mention of Arkansas Kraft Corporation, whose plant provided the major reason for the formation of this new line. Construction of Arkansas Kraft's papermill near Oppelo started in 1965, and the decision to locate the plant on the Rock Island meant increased traffic for the old Arkansas Division. On February 20, 1965, construction started on a 2½ mile spur track from the Rock Island mainline to the mill. This new trackage, constructed under authority of AFE T65-19, left the mainline at milepost 180 pole 9 -- about 3 miles east of the Perry depot. Known as Kraft spur, the line was 95% complete within 3 months, with only several farm road crossings and a run around track on Arkansas Kraft property remaining to be built. In addition to this north run around track, the line had a south run around track holding about 28 cars. Speed was limited to 10mph from the south run around track to the mill.

The papermill began operating in October 1966, with an estimated output of 250 tons of linerboard per day. Most of this traffic moved to plants of Arkansas Kraft's parent company, the Green Bay Packaging Co. To protect this traffic, Rock Island assigned seventy 60-foot DF boxcars (series 33,800-34,100) to pool service for outbound loads. Inbound shipments included pulpwood and some waste paper. Pulpwood was loaded on-line at Belleville, Booneville, Vick, and Benton, Arkansas, as well as Red Oak and Wister, Oklahoma. In October 1967, Arkansas Kraft purchased Rock Island #721, an Alco S2 switcher. Number 721 had been the last S2 to operate in Arkansas, having been retired from its last assignment at Stuttgart only two months earlier. As the plant switcher, the unit continued to wear the former RI tuscan colors for several years. [The unit was subsequently sold by Arkansas Kraft to RELCO in July 1973, becoming RELCO #1020.]

Problems with car supply to the mill were a more or less constant challenge during the first decade of operation. Low utilization of the existing freight car pool (cars were returned empty to Perry) forced RI car controllers to keep the pool as small as possible. With no surplus car supply, increases in mill production often resulted in the plant temporarily running short of cars. At these times, the RI agent at Perry would frantically wire Biddle and El Reno, requesting that empty boxcars of the appropriate type be sent on the next available train. Rock Island tried to interest other roads in contributing to the Arkansas Kraft equipment pool in late 1967, using a formula based on the destinations of outbound loads. Equipment was solicited from the following carriers: B&O-1, C&O-2, CB&Q-2, GB&W-5, IC-4, NYC-2, PRR-8, and Southern-1. Predictably, this proposal drew little response, although C&O eventually contributed 4 cars and Penn-Central contributed 3.

Rock Island had increased the original seventy car pool with an additional sixty 50-foot boxcars in April 1967, and 25 more DF boxcars were added in July 1969. Mill output by this time was exceeding 400 tons/day. Additional raw material for linerboard production was being received in the form of wood chips from two sawmills at Ola and one at Mansfield. This commodity required a pool of 25 hoppers (88,500 series) because all loads had to move first to Biddle for weighing and then be backhauled to Arkansas Kraft. Although the railroad was agreeable to a per-car tariff, rather than setting rates by weight, Arkansas Kraft's contracts with the sawmills were on a tonnage basis, thus requiring the enroute weighing. A shortage of pulpwood flats forced the papermill to begin trucking pulpwood from the woodyards at Belleville and Booneville. Rock Island met this traffic erosion by leasing 25 pulp flatcars from the Santa Fe, rushing most cars into service by late November 1969, only weeks after the shortage began. This effort halted the trucking of pulpwood, at least temporarily, but the brief car shortage had resulted in a backlog of 110 carloads of pulpwood on the ground at the two wood yards.

During the summer of 1970, Arkansas Kraft initiated a study of the costs of movement of mill products from Perry to Morrilton by truck, for shipment over the Missouri Pacific. It was felt that Mopac would be more capable of accomodating the increased car demands, but the transloading costs to truck and then back to rail were deemed prohibitive. Rock Island's traffic managers no doubt breathed easier after this proposal was put to rest.

Over 3,000 cords of pulpwood were being consumed each week by 1971, with most being furnished by wood yards at Wister, Booneville, and Belleville. Because of car shortages, only 700 to 800 cords per week were moving by rail. In August, the boxcar pool was increased with the addition of 15 Illinois Central 50-foot DF cars, obtained through a one year equipment exchange program. Boxcar shortages were becoming less of a problem by this time, because of increasing shipments of scrap paper inbound for recycling. After cars with scrap paper were unloaded, they could usually be pressed into service for outbound linerboard shipments if necessary.

From the time Arkansas Kraft began production in 1966, until the Rock Island's demise in 1980, rail service to the plant underwent several changes. When the plant first opened, west end local freights were operating daily in each direction, but this frequency gradually dropped to tri-weekly or less. As local service became more sporadic, the 'through' freights began handling more set-outs and pick-ups at Perry, particularly if the mill was running short of cars. The need for dependable switching schedules, which the sporadic local freight service could not provide, was one motivation for Arkansas Kraft to maintain their own plant switcher.

In late February 1972, Rock Island began operating a Perry turn from Bidle to Perry and back about every third day. This operation lasted less than a month, being abolished when a traveling switch engine job was created at Perry. Roundhouse records for March 16, 1972 indicate that GP-9 #1312 was to be set out at Perry, in what was possibly the first locomotive assigned to the traveling switcher. After the switcher was established, it handled switching chores at the papermill and also worked industries at Bigelow, Ola, and Danville. This job originally tied up on the south run around track, near the crossing of state highway 113. At that location, the tuscan geep and weathered wooden caboose made a picturesque view of branchline railroading. In later years, after THE ROCK had replaced Rock Island, the job usually tied up on the house track behind the Perry depot.

After federal judge Frank J. McGarr ordered the liquidation of the Rock Island in January 1980, the search for alternative transportation for mill products began. Trucking to rail sidings on the Mopac at Morrilton was again investigated, as well as all truck transportation, and reportedly even a rail line from the mill crossing the Arkansas River to a connection with the Missouri Pacific. It soon became obvious that the best option, and perhaps the only option which would allow continued mill operation, was to in some manner continue service over the existing RI trackage.

Directed service by the Kansas City Terminal over the Rock Island began drawing to a close in February and March 1980. As embargos for inbound freight shipments were issued, it became clear that for the Rock Island, the end was near. Regular freight service officially ended on March 23, though sporadic service would be operated by the KCT for another week. On Monday morning March 24, the Bidle yard of the Rock Island was transformed into the Little Rock yard of the Cotton Belt. Under an ICC directed service order, Cotton Belt assumed operation of former RI lines from Fordyce to Little Rock, Little Rock to Memphis, and branches to Hot Springs and Malvern. No mention was made of trackage west of Little Rock, although Rock Island continued to supply empties to the mill and other industries along the line. All shippers west of Little Rock were warned to have cars loaded soon enough for them to be moved to an interchange point with another carrier before March 30th.

During this period of turmoil, Arkansas Kraft contacted both Missouri Pacific and Cotton Belt, requesting that they operate the Little Rock to Perry segment. On Tuesday, March 25, the ICC amended its original order to allow the Cotton Belt to operate west to Perry, and on the following day the Cotton Belt began accepting shipments for this segment. Rock Island's Perry switcher (job 750) was abolished on March 26th, and ROCK GP-7 #4550 - the last Perry switcher - was added to an extra west which operated from Perry to Booneville picking up all cars stored on the line. The last eastbound RI freight, extra 321 East, had a number of cars for the paper mill. The crew received a message at Booneville to spot the cars directly at the mill, rather than on the spur, to facilitate loading before the March 30 deadline.

Effective 8:01 AM, March 28, 1980, the Cotton Belt assumed train dispatching between Little Rock and Perry on the former Rock Island, and service on a predictable frequency began to return. On that date, the first SSW Perry turn was called for 9 AM, with locomotives SP 3369 and SP 6674 handling one load, 32 empties, and SP cab 4604. Perry briefly became an interchange point between two railroads at 2:30 that afternoon, when Rock Island train #38 delivered 4 loads and 9 empties destined for Arkansas Kraft to the Cotton Belt. [The Rock Island train then returned to Booneville, with instructions to pick up all cars on-line except bad orders and cars unloading at Danville.] After switching the mill, Cotton Belt's Perry turn returned to Little Rock with 13 loads and 3 empties, arriving at 8:55 PM. Even as this service was being restored to Arkansas Kraft, the Cotton Belt reiterated their unwillingness to purchase the line west of Little Rock -- thus underlining the temporary nature of this reprieve.

On Saturday March 29, the Perry turn included 6 Rock Island locomotives and 12 RI cabooses behind the two Southern Pacific locomotives, as the last remaining RI power at Little Rock began the final exodus from Arkansas. At Perry, a Cotton Belt agent manned the depot, and the old semaphore train order signal was set to display a permanent stop board, protecting SSW movements against nonexistent eastbound trains.

Cotton Belt operations to Perry soon settled into a routine, with the outbound train leaving Little Rock around noon, performing all switching at the mill, and then returning to Little Rock yard about midnight. The trains were identified in the timetable supplement as train #122 outbound, and train #121 inbound, but to the crews, it was just job 810. On April fool's day, the turn was powered by the unlikely combination of Conrail geeps 3655 and 3656, a lash up that lasted for two more trips before the pooled power was returned to Pine Bluff. A final vestige of the Rock Island lasted from April 2 to April 20, while RI bay window caboose #17079 was assigned to the run. Although train consists averaged a respectable 25 cars throughout the period of Cotton Belt operation, Cotton Belt still opted to end service after only 60 days. Termination notices were posted for all operations over former RI trackage on May 27, with the Brinkley to Memphis segment being the only exception. The final Cotton Belt Perry turn left Little Rock on May 31, 1980, powered by SSW 2482, SP 2719, and MP 2075, and trailing 11 loads, 31 empties, and SP caboose 1841.

The presence of Mopac locomotive 2075 in the consist was a clue that all was not lost for rail shippers west of Little Rock. During the 60 day reprieve provided by Cotton Belt's temporary operation, Arkansas Kraft had taken steps to insure the continuation of rail service to their plant through the creation of a new shortline -- the Little Rock & Western Railway Corporation. The LR&W was formed as a wholly owned subsidiary of Arkansas Kraft Corporation, and Leo Crowley of Green Bay, Wisconsin was named president of the line. On May 19, the Arkansas Transportation Commission approved the new railroad's request for common carrier status, and arrangements were made to continue service uninterrupted after the Cotton Belt's withdrawal.

The LR&W officially began operations on June 1, 1980, using leased locomotive MP 2075, and headquarters were established in the former RI depot at Perry. Almost all employees of the new line had formerly worked for the Rock Island. Initial operations were limited to the segment between Perry and Pulaski, and the siding at Pulaski (milepost 141.7) became the interchange point with the Missouri Pacific. [Mopac had assumed operation of terminal trackage from Pulaski, through Biddle, to east Little Rock, with the demise of Cotton Belt operations.] LR&W trackage rights over the former RI tracks were established through a lease agreement with RI bankruptcy trustee William Gibbons. Temporary operating authority was provided by the ICC with 90 day renewable permits. In addition to keeping the mill supplied with cars, the LR&W also served a cross tie manufacturer and a LP gas distributor at Perry.

By mid June, the leased MP locomotive had been replaced by a leased Green Bay & Western Alco RS-3 #305. (The fact that Green Bay Packaging Company was an on-line customer of the GB&W no doubt helped to expedite this arrangement.) After the arrival of a second leased unit, GB&W #307, on July 7, LR&W operations began to settle into a predictable pattern. Power for the Perry turn would tie up overnight on the house track at Pulaski. Westbound departures were scheduled for 6-7AM, seven days per week. A two man crew (engineer and brakeman) made the trip to Perry in about two hours, and mill switching usually consumed another several hours. Arrival back at Pulaski was usually around 2-3PM. With two units available, the locomotive serving in road service was usually changed out about once each week. The second unit was based at Perry, and provided switcher service at the mill and occasionally was required as a helper on the rear of eastbound trains struggling to climb over the steep grade through Copperas Gap, about 2 miles west of Houston.

In late summer, LR&W operations were extended through trackage rights from Pulaski eastward to the Cotton Belt connection in North Little Rock. Interchange runs to the Cotton Belt began on an as needed basis, usually tri-weekly. With this extension, the LR&W became the first regular user of the RI Arkansas River bridge since the end of Cotton Belt operations several months earlier. Since the bridge control in the Biddle yard office was unmanned, the bridge was left in the open position to allow uninterrupted river barge traffic. In advance of LR&W movement to the Cotton Belt interchange, the bridge would be lowered using the controls in the cabin at the center of the lift span. On days when cars were interchanged with the Cotton Belt, cars destined for Mopac were dropped on the mainline west of Pulaski, to be picked up later by the Mopac's Biddle switcher. The trip from Pulaski to the Cotton Belt connection and return usually consumed about two hours, if no delays were encountered at the Mopac crossings at HH Tower and at East Little Rock.



Photo By John Martin



Photo by Bill Pollard



Photo By John Martin

In late September 1980, Rock Island bankruptcy trustee Wm. Gibbons rejected as too low the initial LR&W bid to purchase the trackage between Perry and Pulaski. Neither the trustee nor the LR&W appeared particularly surprised at the purchase denial, and negotiations for the trackage sale continued. Satisfactory agreement with Missouri Pacific for long term trackage rights over 11+ miles of track from Pulaski to the Cotton Belt connection in North Little Rock was a condition placed on the trackage sale by trustee Gibbons.

Passenger train service returned to the former Route of the Rockets in May 1981, when the Little Rock & Western helped transport participants in the Riverfest celebration to Murray Park. Four Amtrak coaches were deadheaded to Little Rock and used to shuttle passengers from a loading facility at the defunct Razorback drive-in to an unloading site near the Overlook Drive crossing in Murray Park. Amtrak equipment included coaches Nos. 5419, 5429, 5435, and 5421. In order to give the LR&W publicity for their willingness to help with the Riverfest project, the local Amtrak ticket office crew, the author, and others arranged for makeshift lettering to be applied to #305, which had been freshly cleaned for the occasion. L-R-W letters replaced the G-B-W lettering on the long hood, a Riverfest Express emblem covered "Green Bay Route" under the cab window, and "Little Rock & Western Ry." was carried on each side of the short hood. This lettering project served to identify #305 throughout its remaining career on the LR&W.

Leo Crowley, president of the LR&W, announced in early July that an agreement had been reached with trustee Gibbons as a result of a second LR&W offer tendered in December 1980. The agreement provided for the purchase of 44 miles of track between Perry and Pulaski, and also gave the LR&W reserved rights over the 11 miles of track from Pulaski to the Cotton Belt interchange. Finalization of the purchase agreements could not be made until approval had been received from both the bankruptcy court and the ICC. During this period, efforts were being made by the Arkansas Transportation Commission and others to interest the Santa Fe in operating the entire sunbelt route from Amarillo to Memphis. LR&W officials stressed that their purchase of the Perry to Pulaski segment would pose no problem if Santa Fe began operating into Memphis, because LR&W was willing to negotiate trackage rights with the Santa Fe. (Santa Fe interest subsequently declined when the Arkansas Legislature capitulated to extreme lobbying pressure from Cotton Belt and Missouri Pacific, and killed legislation which would have assisted Santa Fe in reopening the through route.)

The LR&W suffered a major locomotive failure on October 5, 1981, when #307 broke down near Pinnacle. The unit was hauled back to Perry, and a GB&W mechanic was summoned to assist with repairs. A new piston and rings were ordered from Green Bay, and a large crane from Nabholz Construction Company in Conway helped transform the Perry house track into a heavy repair facility.

The Arkansas State Rail Plan update issued in October contained a favorable recommendation for track upgrading funds for the LR&W as soon as purchase from the Rock Island was finalized. This rehabilitation project was given top priority over 4 other branchline rehabilitation proposals. Funding was to be provided under the Local Rail Assistance Program, whereby federal funds would cover 80% of the cost, and LR&W funds would cover the remaining 20%. Rehabilitation of the line from FRA Class 1 (10 mph) to FRA Class 2 (25 mph) was expected to require 33,000 crossties, 488 tons of 115 pound rail, and 41,000 tons of ballast. Total cost was estimated at \$2,224,000.

The new year brought misfortune early, when locomotive #307 was stolen from the house track at Pulaski on Friday night January 1, 1982. Vandals apparently operated the locomotive much of the night, shoving cars onto the Arkansas River bridge until being blocked by the concrete counterweights of the open lift span. Interlocker reports from the Mopac crossing at HH Tower indicated that the unit had crossed the Mopac no less than 7 times during the night, and the unit was seen as far west as Bigelow. Early Saturday, the vandals abandoned the locomotive and allowed it to collide with a cut of boxcars near Hot Springs Junction at the west end of Biddle yard. The 307 received extensive damage to the short hood, pilot, and front truck, and a decision was made to send the unit to Mopac's Pike Avenue shops for repair. MP locomotives 2110 and later 2305 were used for a period in January before the 305 assumed all duties. Locomotive #307 was returned from Pike Avenue on March 2, after a thorough overhaul. The unit returned with its characteristic Alco contoured nose intact, thanks to some impressive body work by MP shop forces. The extent of damage had led to some speculation that replacement of the short hood with standard EMD parts would be required. However, after the unit returned to the LR&W, only the new paint on the nose and pilot gave a clue to the unit's close encounter with a boxcar.

Finalization of the long awaited trackage sale was made on May 5, 1982. The purchase price of \$2.7 million represented a cost of approximately \$61,000 per mile. Operating rights over the Pulaski-North Little Rock segment was obtained for a monthly rent of \$38,558. J. Earl Durden, General Manager of Rail Management & Consulting Company (which managed the LR&W) announced that the track rehabilitation program would begin shortly, and noted that plans were underway to purchase two locomotives to replace the two leased GB&W Alcos.

With the assistance of FRA funding, the track rehabilitation program got underway in the summer of 1982. The 8.7 mile segment from Pulaski to Maumelle was rebuilt first, because it had received the least maintenance during the Rock's last years. The first 12 tons of ties were unloaded from Pulaski westward in late August, and by year's end, the track crews were approaching Bigelow.

During three years of operation, the make up of LR&W trains have undergone several transformations. In the first months of operations, MP and MKT equipment predominated. By late 1980 and into the spring of 1981, an increasing number of Railbox and private owner shortline cars were being used. A car leasing agreement was signed with BRAE Corporation in December 1980, placing a large group of BRAE owned cars with AD&N and TO&E reporting marks in LR&W service. The first AD&N and TO&E cars were received in February 1981, stenciled "When empty, return to agent Little Rock & Western Ry. Little Rock Ark." In March 1982, boxcars with LRWN reporting marks began to make their appearance. This initial series of 21 cars was the first to carry Little Rock & Western reporting marks. These cars were former St. Lawrence RR (reporting marks: NSL) cars owned by the National Railway Utilization Corp. The light blue cars continued to carry the St. Lawrence lettering and 5700 series numbering even after receiving the new LRWN reporting marks. Little Rock and Western trains began to assume a rainbow appearance with the frequent use of shortline boxcars from the Moscow Camden & St. Augustine, Galveston Wharves, Mississippi & Skuna Valley, Helena Southwestern, Ann Arbor, Ashley Drew & Northern, Texas Oklahoma & Eastern, Pend Oreille Valley, and Port of Tillamook Bay. Virtually all of these cars appeared as part of car supply agreements with BRAE, a major railcar leasing firm.

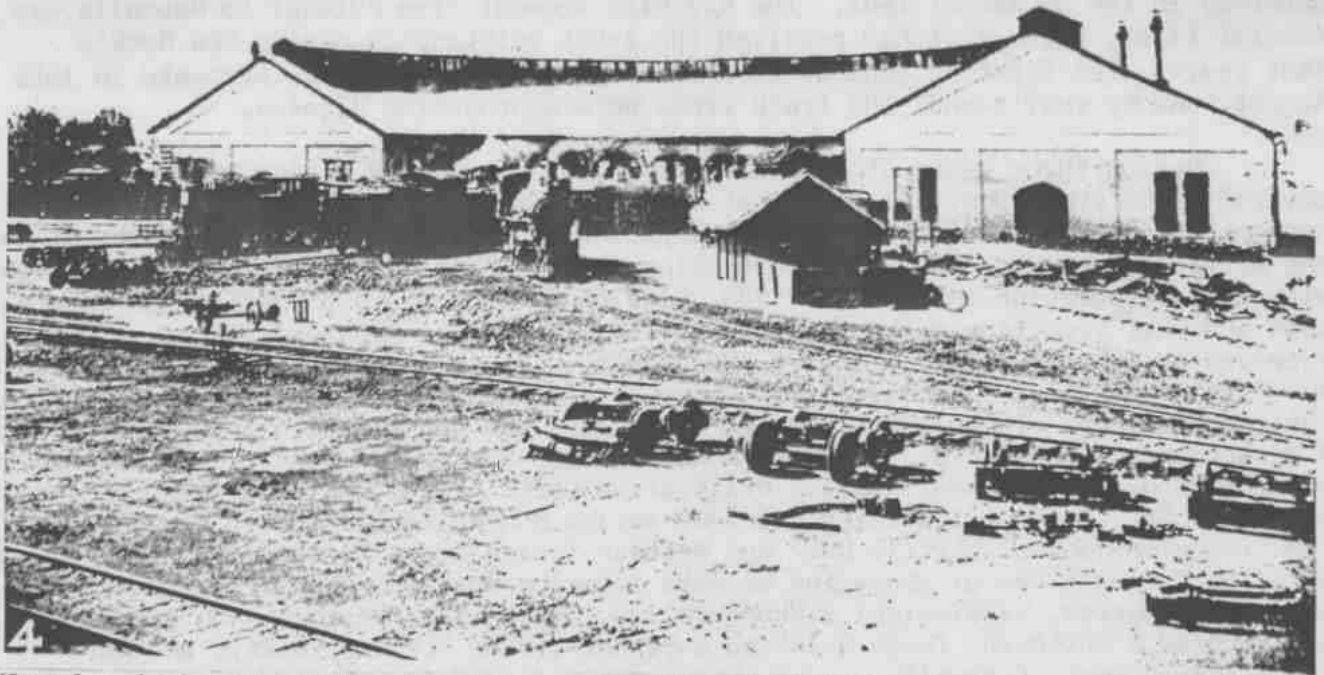
In December 1982, the Little Rock & Western signed an agreement with BRAE Corporation for 350 additional LRWN boxcars. Almost immediately, former Virginia and Maryland cars began appearing with LRWN reporting marks, and numbered from 1000 to 1025. A third LRWN car series appeared on January 9, 1983, with the delivery by Mopac of 19 cars numbered LRWN 2001-2020. These light blue cars have continued to increase in number, as part of the LR&W's December agreement with BRAE. All former lettering and numbers are painted out on these cars, although they appear to have been originally St. Lawrence RR or Pickens RR equipment. In addition to the fleet of leased boxcars, the LR&W owns one freight car, ROCK gondola #501303 which the railroad bought from the RI trustee for use in maintenance of way service.

New locomotives were ordered during the summer of 1982 to replace the two leased RS-3's. After considering several sources and makes of rebuilt locomotives, the LR&W selected two Alco C-420's to be "remanufactured" by the Green Bay & Western. The unit that was ultimately to become LRWN #101 was originally Long Island RR #207. On the Long Island, the unit powered commuter trains before being sold to the Erie Western shortline. The unit was subsequently sold to the GB&W, and was used by them for about 10 months before being completely rebuilt for the Little Rock & Western. LR&W #101 left Green Bay in early January 1983, but was delayed by a hotbox in Bagley, Wisconsin while traveling over the BN. The unit finally arrived on a Mopac local on January 21, and was interchanged to Pulaski in time for the Perry turn to haul the unit dead in train to Perry. After being placed in service, the unit was broken in by use in switching service before being assigned to road service. In contrast to the red & white paint scheme of the RS-3's, the new unit is painted green with yellow trim, with colors being similar to those in use by the Katy Railroad.

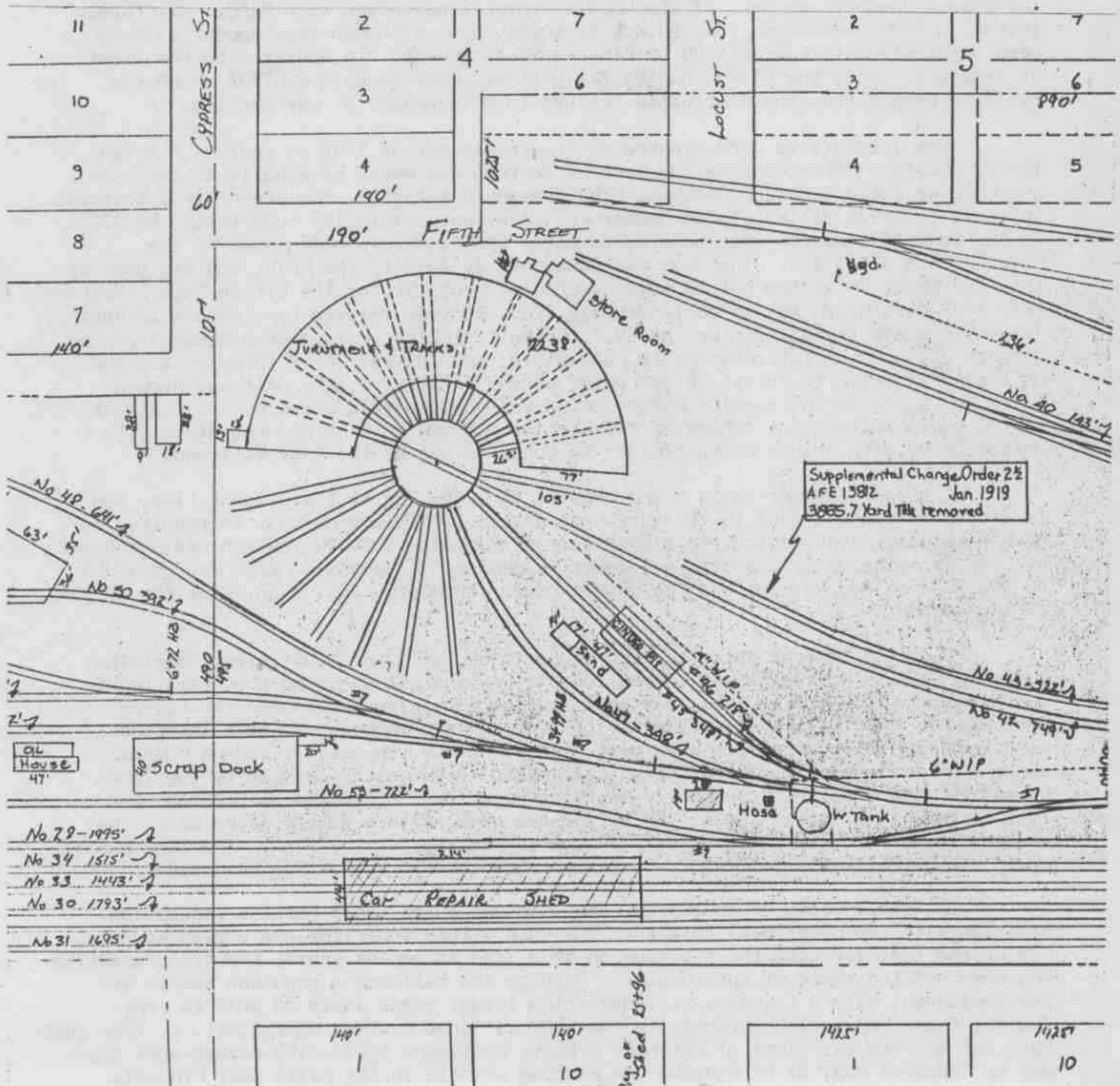
A second locomotive is being rebuilt at Green Bay at the present time, and is slated to replace #307 in the very near future. This second unit is reported to have originally been Louisville & Nashville #1307 (also a C-420), which was purchased by GB&W from Chrome Crankshaft, a locomotive dealer. Leased Alco #305 was returned to the GB&W on January 28, and the LR&W expects to release #307 soon after the arrival of the second C-420.

The LR&W is continuing to take steps to become a self-sufficient shortline. A new locomotive servicing and inspection pit was installed behind the Perry depot on the house track during 1982, and most routine servicing procedures can now be performed by LR&W personnel. Trips to the Cotton Belt interchange have increased, with runs now being made each week day. The eastbound run usually leaves Pulaski about 7 AM, returning from the Cotton Belt about 10 AM unless delayed by the lone RI switch engine which occasionally shuffles cars for the trustee at Biddle. The trip to Perry now leaves about 1 PM during the week, with a return after dark. On weekends, the Perry turn leaves by 7 AM and is usually back by noon. The line handles roughly 600+ carloads per month -- a respectable traffic volume for this line.

In just 3 years of operation, the LR&W has established quite a reputation. Starting with the proverbial "piece of the ROCK", this shortline has worked wonders. For anyone familiar with the trackage on this line in recent years, the transformation has been nothing short of spectacular. Perhaps the railroad's greatest assets are its employees, with a friendly attitude which larger roads would do well to copy. And for those who would characterize the LR&W as 'just another shortline'.... they just have not had the privilege of watching a heavy eastbound train-with pusher-work its way up Copperas Gap, or of hearing the echoing whistle in the hills near Pinnacle.



Now buried under the freeway, the North Little Rock Roundhouse and Engine Terminal of the Rock Island-Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf was located between Locust and Cypress Streets and was the predecessor of the Biddle Shops in Little Rock. The 180-degree, 12 stall roundhouse also had eight outside tracks and three leads, with one on either side of the sandhouse. Most locomotives were coal burning at this time and a large elevated coal chute was located between the roundhouse and the Argenta Station. From the collection of John M. Martin.





PROGRAM



★ The June Program will be given by Bill Walters - retired plant manager for the 3M Company in Little Rock. He will give a program on Circus Trains. Time of the meeting will be 2pm on the second Sunday of June (June 12) at the usual place (the Train Station, Markham and Victory Streets, Little Rock). There should be another "Arkansas Railroader" out before that meeting possibly giving more details of this program.

As the story elsewhere in this newsletter explains, Cotton Belt Engine #819 in Pine Bluff needs preserving. An important issue will be voted on at the June 12 meeting, so WE NEED AS MANY MEMBERS AT THAT MEETING AS POSSIBLE. It has been proposed that the Arkansas Railroad Club give \$500 to a trust fund set up in Pine Bluff specifically to move and preserve this fine steam engine. In order for that amount of money to be spent, a quorum of Arkansas-state members needs to be present at the June 12 meeting to vote on this issue (that translates to at least 38 members being present).

So, COME TO THE JUNE MEETING and have your voice heard.

★ FORDYCE RESULTS - Naomi Hull said that the Arkansas Railroad Club grossed \$405.05 from sales at Fordyce last April and had a net of \$211.05. The net was more than the club received last year.

★ MISCELLANEOUS NEWS - In the first quarter of this year, all major airlines had operating losses, but the load factors were up (load factor is the percentage of available plane seats occupied by passengers). For instance, United Airlines load factor was 63.5% while TWA (which serves Little Rock) had a load factor of only 58.3%. Don't know how this officially compares with AMTRAK, but the times I've ridden the train, I've had trouble finding seats. Seems we need more trains, right?

★ DIESEL PLATES STOLEN - In late April, 50 builder's plates were stolen from Santa Fe units near Belen, New Mexico. It is in our interest as concerned railfans to be on the lookout for anyone trying to sell or other wise dispose of these plates. (from Gulf Coast Chapter of the NRHS).

★ The Center for Transportation and Commerce Formally opened in Galveston, Texas on April 16 at the site of the old Santa Fe Depot. Several private railroad cars were ferried to the event, including the following: BIG JOHN (now in new Daylight Colors), EAGLE CLIFF (Eagle colors), CITY OF CHICAGO (Nickel Plate colors) and HOUSTON. These 4 cars were carried back to their homes along the old route of the Katy's BLUEBONNET from Houston to Dallas by a Katy freight. It's consist was: Engines MKT 184, 316, Conrail 8025, MKT 310, 228, 180, 183 and 204, 31 hopper, rock boxes and gondolas, plus the 4 cars above and caboose MKT #109.

This special train ran through your editor's home town of New Ulm, Texas on April 17 and the story said that one photographer was waiting for the train as it sped through New Ulm. Sorry to say, I wasn't that photographer since I was on AMTRAK's EAGLE in Illinois at the time. (RATS!). (Story from "GULF COAST RAILROADING").

★ FRISCO ANNIVERSARY (from "THE DISPATCHER" of the Oklahoma Railfan Club, Ltd). -

On May 14-15, the 35th anniversary of the inauguration of Frisco's new streamlined "Meteor" between St Louis and Tulsa and Oklahoma City will be observed. The first run of this train occurred May 14, 1948 with the original consist being a mail-baggage car, dormitory-chair car, three chair cars, chair-lounge buffet, five 14 roomette-four double bedroom sleepers and a diner-lounge observation car carrying the markers.

To quote from a 1948 Frisco brochure, "Frisco again brings to travelers between St. Louis, Tulsa and Oklahoma City the finest and latest railuxury travel...each (train) finer, more modern and more luxurious than the last."

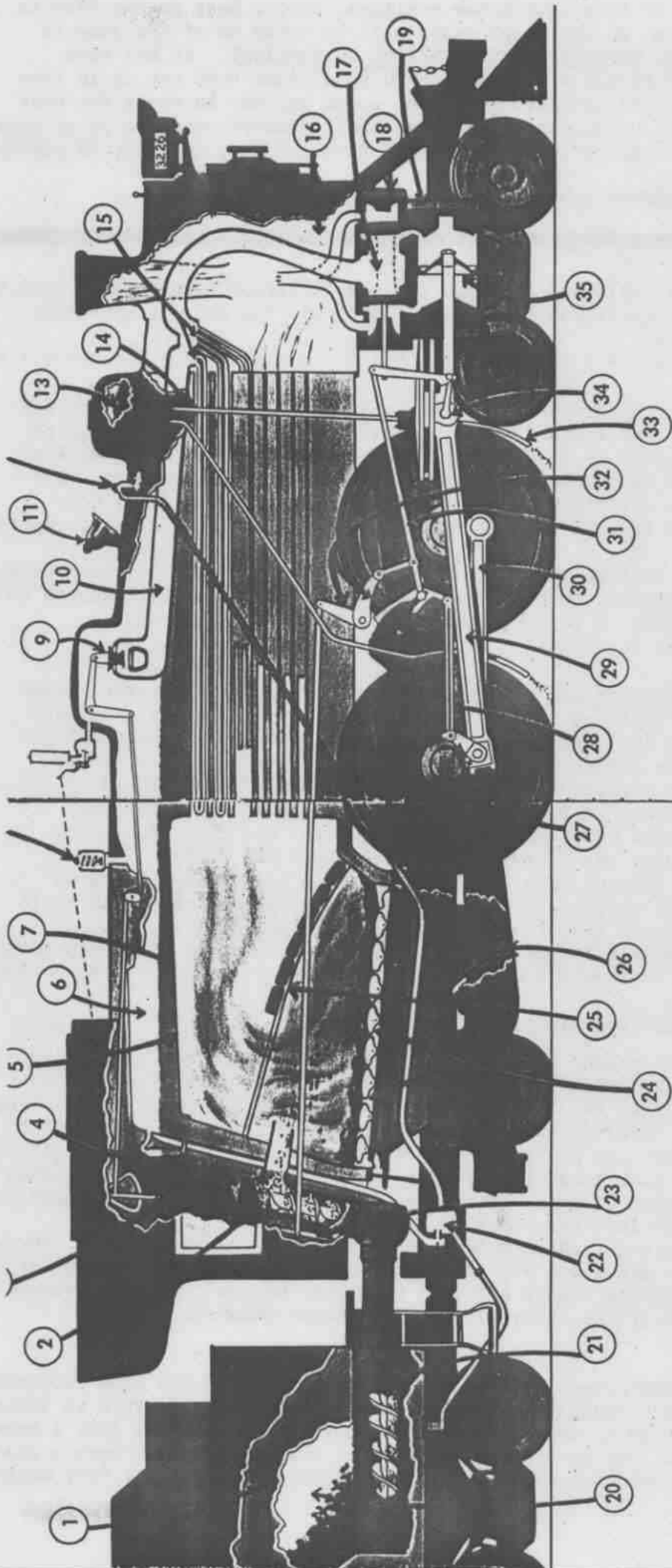
Unfortunately, this optimism and enthusiasm did not last long. First, the diner-lounge was squared off for mid-train operation; next it lost the chair-lounge buffet and finally lost all dining and lounge service. When the "Meteor" was discontinued in 1965, it was down to chair cars only plus one St. Louis-Oklahoma sleeper.

★ Also from "THE DISPATCHER" comes news that Tulsa's Union Depot has been converted into an office building with dedication ceremonies to be held May 20. This is indeed good news, because I happened to see the old depot years ago and it was just a home for derelicts at that time. Now at least the ghosts of trains past will have a place to continue residing. (The station was built by the Frisco, Santa Fe and Katy Railroads).

★ AMTRAK NEWS will resume in the next issue. By the way, we still appreciate the many of you who donate your envelopes for mailing the "Arkansas Railroader". This not only saves the club money, but saves us time when mailing them out. If you would like to do this, we need legal (large) size envelopes with your address on them and at least 20¢ in postage.

Again a reminder that 1983 dues are due and any of you who have not paid by the end of June will be dropped from the mailing list. That is when I'm making a new set of address labels.

Regarding the engine diagram below, notice number 27 - "Eccentric crank". Know of any engineers who fit this description?



PARTS OF A LOCOMOTIVE

- 1 Water Tank.
- 2 Stoker - coal is transported to the stoker where steam jets blow it to all parts of the fire bed.
- 3 Throttle Lever.
- 4 Water Gauge - shows the water supply in the boiler. Water must always cover the Crown Sheet 5.
- 5 Crown Sheet - moist steam is fanned over the Crown Sheet, which is the hottest part of the Firebox.
- 6 Steam.
- 7 Water.
- 8 Safety Valve - opens to keep the steam pressure from getting too high.
- 9 Throttle Valve - in Steam Dome controls the flow of steam that runs the locomotive.
- 10 Dry Pipe - conducts steam to the Valve and Cylinders 18 and 19.
- 11 Bell - rings by air pressure.
- 12 Water Delivery Pipe (see 22).
- 13 Sand Dome - sand is blown down the sand pipes if the track is slippery (see 14).
- 14 Sand Pipe.
- 15 Superheater Tubes.
- 16 Smokebox - it is filled with exhaust gases.
- 17 Valve Piston - guides live and used steam in and out of the Cylinder.
- 18 Valve.
- 19 Cylinder.

- 20 Coal Bunker.
- 21 Worm Coal Conveyor.
- 22 Injector - water flows from the tender to the Injector, where it mixes with a jet of steam. The steam and water combine and push their way up the Delivery Pipe and into the Boiler.
- 23 Reverse Lever.
- 24 Grate.
- 25 Brick Arch.
- 26 Ashpan Hopper - ashes from the Grate 24 are discharged.
- 27 Eccentric Crank.
- 28 Eccentric Rod.
- 29 Main Rod - gets its power from the Piston 35.
- 30 Coal Bunker.
- 31 Worm Coal Conveyor.
- 32 Injector - water flows from the tender to the Injector, where it mixes with a jet of steam. The steam and water combine and push their way up the Delivery Pipe and into the Boiler.
- 33 Reverse Lever.
- 34 Grate.
- 35 Superheater Tubes.
- 36 Smokebox - it is filled with exhaust gases.
- 37 Valve Piston - guides live and used steam in and out of the Cylinder.
- 38 Valve.
- 39 Cylinder.
- 40 Side Rod - delivers the power from the Main Rod to both large wheels.
- 41 Radius Rod - controls the forward and reverse motion of the engine. The Radius Rod is lifted up to go the other way.
- 42 Valve Gear - controls the up or down position of the Radius Rod.
- 43 Sand Pipe Outlet.
- 44 Crosshead - the point where the Main Rod joins the Piston.
- 45 Piston - steam comes in from the right through the Dry Pipe 10 and forces the Piston to the left, thus pushing the Main Rod 29 giving motion to the Engine.