



# ARKANSAS RAILROADER

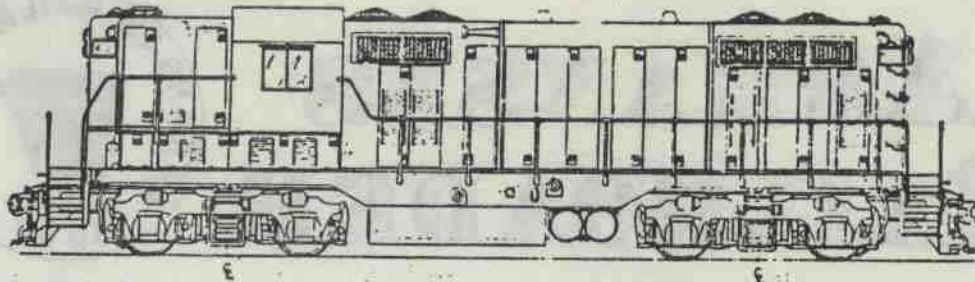


LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# GENERAL NEWS

## CLUB HAPPENINGS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

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COVER PHOTO - Southern Pacific 4-8-4 #4461 at 16th Street in Oakland, California in May 1949. Photo by Fred Matthews, Jr., from the collection of Gene Hull/Ken Ziegenbein.

T-SHIRTS FOR SALE - The Arkansas Railroad Club has T-shirts, caps and jackets for sale, in person or by mail. These are really great looking with the state of Arkansas in red (caps are only black and white). Prices are as follows (state sizes on T-shirts/jackets):

T-SHIRTS --- \$6, plus \$1 postage EACH  
CAPS ----- \$4, plus \$1 postage EACH  
JACKETS (non-monogrammed) --- \$25, plus \$2 postage EACH  
JACKETS (first name only monogram) --- \$27, plus \$2 postage EACH

Absolutely NO COD's please! The money raised will go to future club activities, trips, newsletter expenses, etc. Send you check for the correct amount made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club to:

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB  
P. O. BOX 9151  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

Please allow 2 or 3 weeks for delivery, longer on monogrammed jackets.

COLLECT SHURFINE LABELS FOR CLUB - While grocery shopping, be sure to collect those Shurfine labels off of cans, cartons and bring them to the club. Through a special promotion, they are worth 2 cents each to

(CLUB NEWS continued on Page 17)

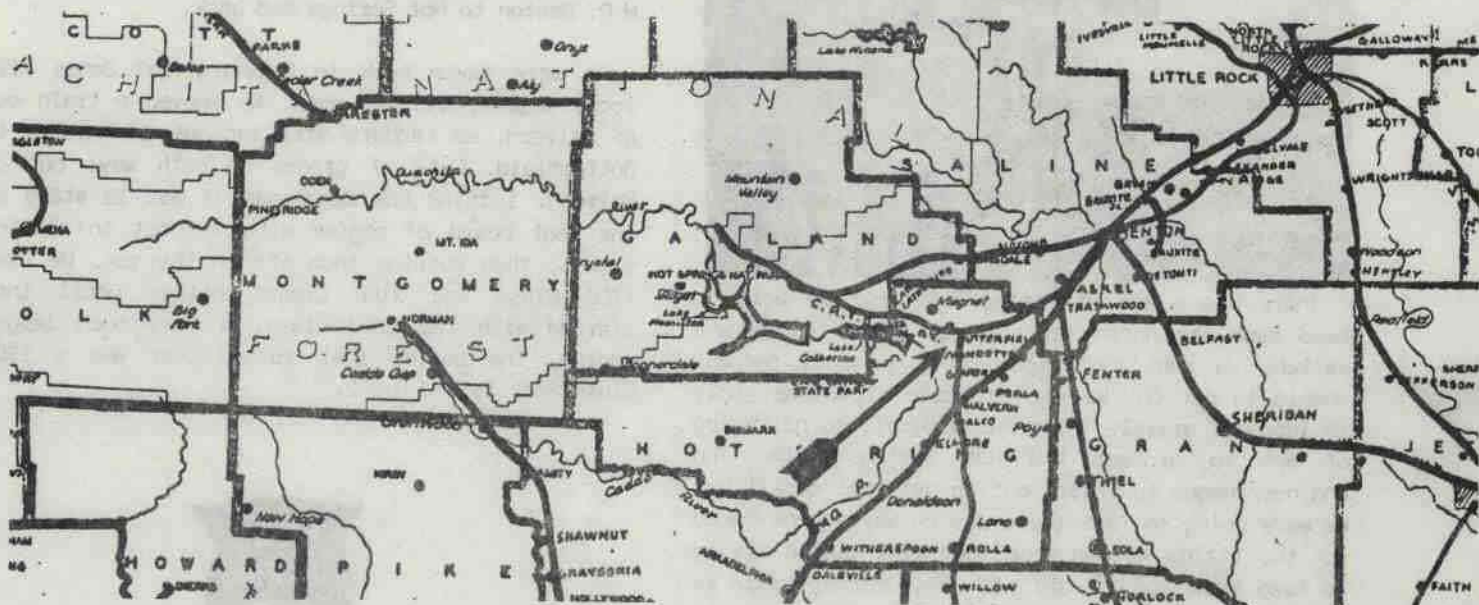
## A SCARY EXPERIENCE - MY FIRST TRAIN WRECK

by: L.T. Walker, retired Rock Island Conductor

It was January 1943 on a very cold day, down to zero: I was living at Malvern, working the Malvern switcher. We went to work at 7:00 AM, got our work orders and lists from the agent at Malvern; the agent at Malvern was a joint agent for the Rock Island and the Missouri Pacific. We got our switch lists and train orders at the depot at Jones Mill.

Camp and the hobos had not got out from under their paper boxes to make their coffee.

We came out from the river, then we had to weigh the cars. Each car was so long we would weigh half at a time then the weigh clerk would call out and say weigh half because we were on a curve and



Their cabooses was a Driver car which was supposed to be used for the ranchers to have a place to sleep on the cattle train, but being as the Rock Island had run out of cabooses, they were using all kinds of cars as cabooses. But the Driver Car got its name after the cattle men.

We worked the Missouri Pacific transfer track and made the morning delivery, then went to take cars to the river for pea gravel loading. They were building Kay Air Force Base at Stuttgart, and some auxiliary bases around Carlisle for training pilots and also glider pilots.



After delivering the cars to the river, which was about three miles, we picked up fifteen loads of gravel that the river switch crew had got out for us. They also got empties and loads out for the Missouri Pacific (the Rock Island and Missouri Pacific used joint track part way to the river).

When we went by that cold morning, we passed Hobo

across from him. After weighing, it was time to take the cars to Butterfield, which was five miles from Malvern on the Hot Springs main line, then they would be moved to Biddle by the Hot Springs local #698 out of Camden.

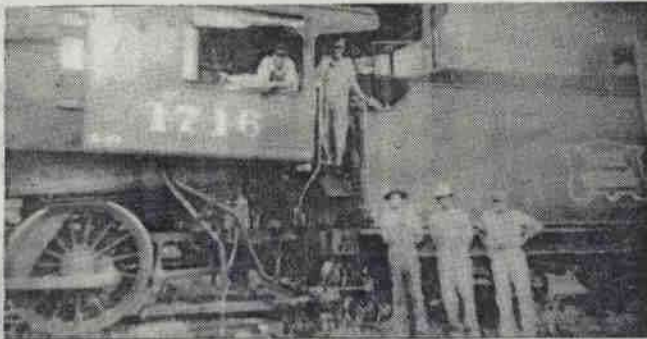
After we were ready to go, the conductor went to the depot for running orders to Malvern and back. But #697 was out of Biddle, and could not be contacted, but the dispatcher said to find Section Foreman and his crew and send a flag on the motor car and hold #697 at Butterfield until we arrived, so conductor wrote out flagging instructions to Head Brakeman Cody, who is a Choctaw Indian. When



he left on the motor, he was about froze. He turned around and waved the red flag in the air and hollered WA-WHO. He was quite a guy.

After he was gone around thirty minutes we were to leave. But in the mean time, dispatcher sent a

message to go on because #697 was at Haskell, picking up. We had made air test so we were ready to go. We started back down in the yard on the Camden main so we could get run at the hill out of Malvern. We was able to make it up the hill but had trouble with sanders stopping up so we two brakemen would get a horn of sand and run down beside the engine, get on foot board and pour sand on rail - a pretty dangerous job, but I suppose most every trainman has done this very thing.



There was a wye at Butterfield, but we were to head down the north leg. We got close to the wye switch. We went by Flagman Cody so fast he was unable to get on. We did not have a caboose, only 15 loads of gravel. There was a derail on north leg of wye to protect the Hot Springs Main. The engineer began to holler out to get that derail but we were going so fast there was no way anyone could run the train. We had storm curtains closed trying to keep warm but it did not stay closed long. We were all trying to get off the train, which was in a cut with high banks on both sides frozen on the top of that.

Conductor Henry Adama, Brakeman Tommy Garner and Fireman Bob Cannon got off on the south side. Fireman Cannon jumped out window, slid down bank but was not injured. I got off just before we hit the derail. The drivers were sliding. The poney trucks derailed first.

I was lying on my back because I could not get up the frozen bank. I saw them derail. Also, the sliding drivers shoved the derail off the rail. I thought maybe we would make it without turning over. I could almost feel the pea gravel and cars derailling on me but everything stayed on the rail where we all had jumped off.

When the engine hit the guard rails on the Hot Springs Main, the poney trucks turned side ways then everything began to break up. The engine turned over on the right side and the tender derailed on the left side. When the big steel drawbar between the engine and tender broke, it sounded like a shot gun. Engineer Floyd Boggs stayed on until the engine began to turn then jumped off on the west side of the Hot Springs Main.

We asked him why he waited so long before getting off. He said he froze and was literally scared half

to death. Then he said, "Boys, we are all fired except Cody. Our Flagman Cody came down and said "Was I supposed to get that derail?" Conductor said you did just right.

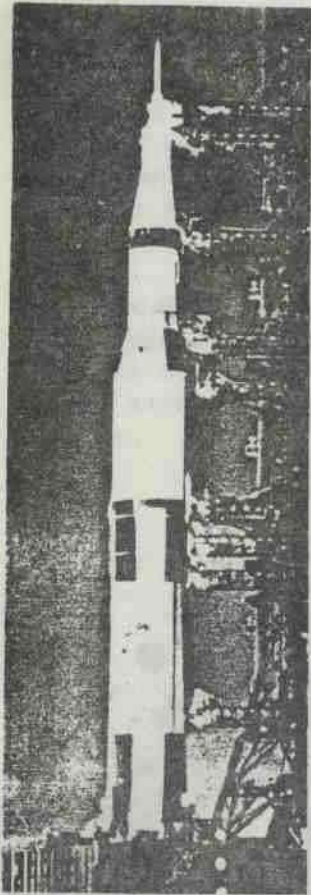
The investigation was made and was determined that the train line was froze up, probably froze while we were waiting at Malvern. Engineer got 20 demerits, also the conductor. The rest got nothing. The Big Hook wrecker was called out of Biddle to clear up main line. Other trains were detoured over M.P. The "Hot Springs Limited" detoured over the M.P. Benton to Hot Springs and back.

We were taken back to Malvern, got Jones Mill local engine, went to work. We shoved a train out of Malvern, up Landers Hill and out of Malvern to Butterfield. Lots of grades on both ways out of Malvern. I think how dangerous it was to stand on the foot board of engine with air cut in shoving trains, then cutting them off on the run. We used 1700 Class and 2100 Class engines until they started with the 2600 Class, a very much larger engine. The engine that turned over was a 1700 Class Rock Island 0-8-2.



(I can still remember working the Malvern switcher; Uncle Joe Harris, engineer for the gravel company, blowing his whistle early and late down the river; Rock Island trains #697 and #698 to Camden; Missouri Pacific trains coming through, some taking water and if you were close to the tracks coal cinders flying; long trains of nothing but tanks of oil a hundred cars or more hooked to big locos double-heading, letting nothing grow on them for they would be really moving. I can still vision the main street crossing watchman on main street standing with the big sign trying to keep motorists from running into train and maybe get killed or injured; some ran by him and did get killed over the years. Lots of Missouri Pacific RR men and Rock Island men can remember how it was at Malvern back in 1943.)

Editors Note...Looking back at old Arkansas weather records...on January 20, 1943, the low temperature was plus 5 degrees at Arkadelphia, 8 degrees at Camden, 7 degrees at North Little Rock, 2 degrees at Hot Springs, all pretty close to Malvern.



# Things Change

APOLLO 11 vs CONSOLIDATION 111

by Eakles A. Hille

July 20, 1969! Twenty years anniversary! Anniversary of what? Of the moonwalk. The first man on the moon and how he got there. That endeavor was wonderful, with all the split-second timing, instant decisions made not only by the three on board Apollo spacecraft itself but by Mission Control in Houston, Texas. It took years and years of time, billions of dollars, and more that one-third million people to bring this great event to fulfillment. What a Thrill.

I do not understand much about space travel, and that is not the subject of this story, but about something that I had a lifetime and a hands-on experience, with. Steam locomotives. What a thrill.

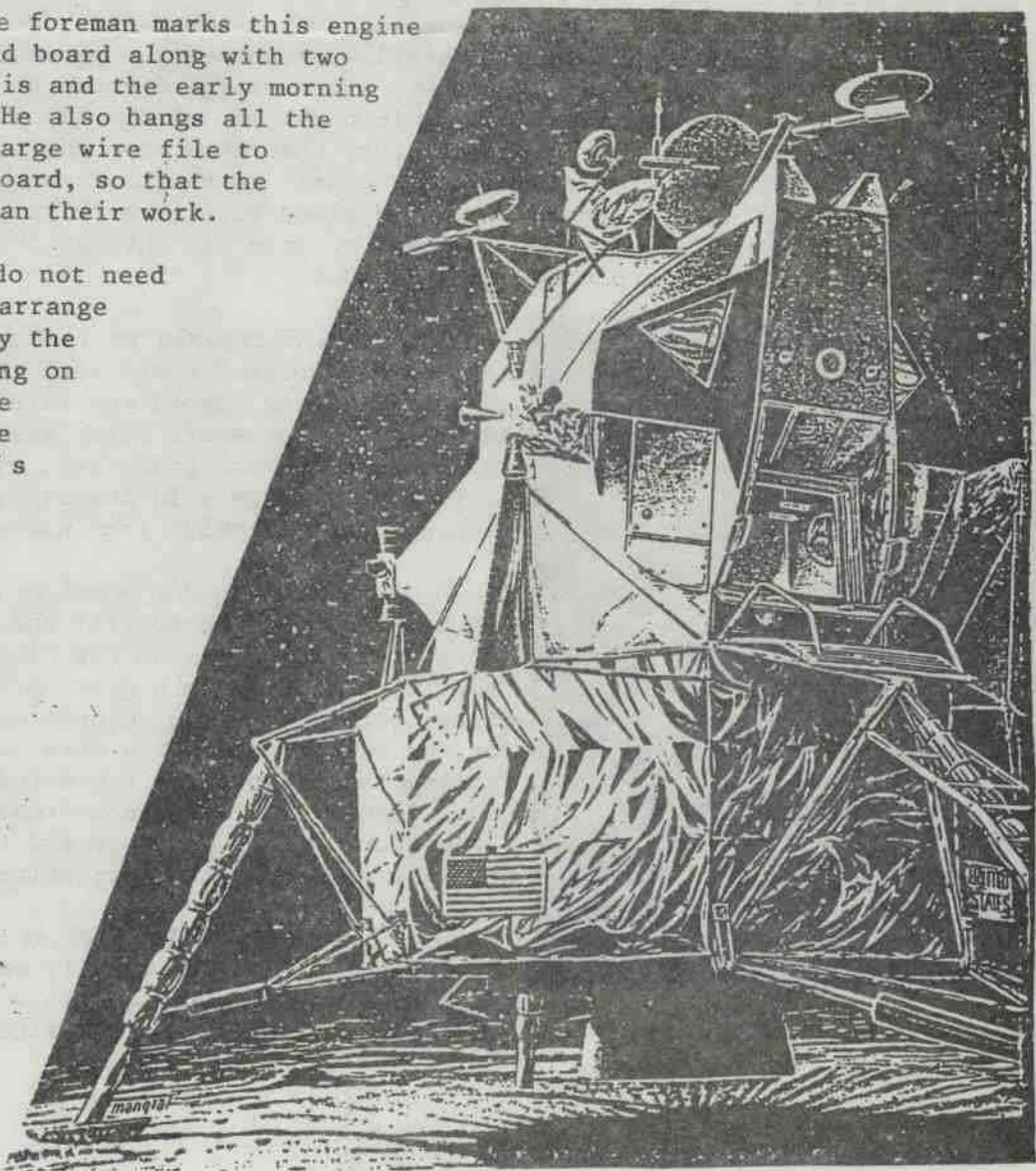
Not many people, not even many railroad "Buffs" know of all the time spent, and work involved to put a locomotive with a train out on the High Iron. Let's ready the 111 for a connection of No. 67 (Hot Shot merchandise run from St. Louis to California) shown on the midnight lineup to arrive North Little Rock at 730 A.M.

This Consolidation (2-8-0) had 22" x 30" cylinders, Walschaert valve-gear, 200 lbs boiler pressure and was built by Alco's Brooks Works in 1909. It was one of the systems work-horses.

The roundhouse foreman marks this engine up on the Outbound board along with two North and a Memphis and the early morning passenger power. He also hangs all the work-slips on a large wire file to the left of the board, so that the machinists may plan their work.

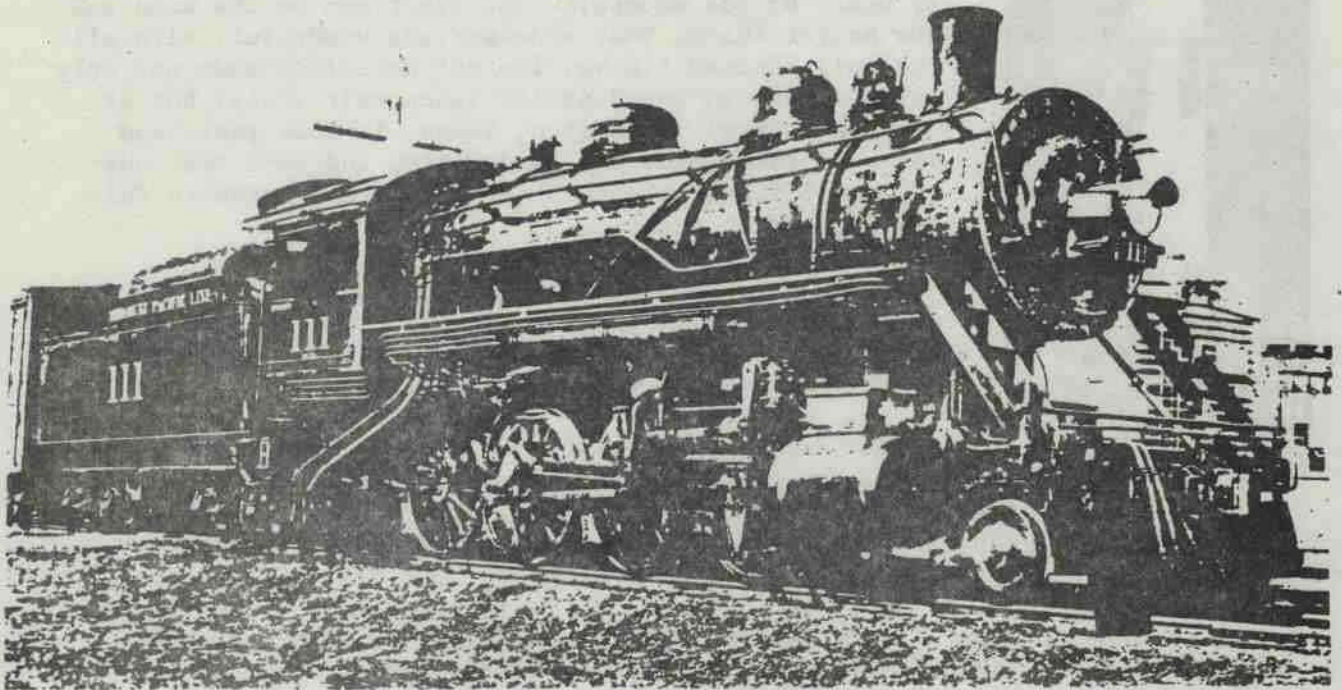
Some workers do not need work-slips, they arrange their work just by the engine number being on the Out board. One such group are the firebuilders. Let's accompany one of these men named "Booger."

Now "Booger" is a very, very dark person and it may be hard to keep him in sight because of the dim lighting in the roundhouse. But we will try our best.



We're standing on the walkway around the front of the engines close to the 111, when a large gunny-sack of sawdust and chips comes down the walkway on two very short legs and turns into the next stall. The sack climbs partway up the steps to the cab and then falls over on it's side, and that move reveals our man, Booger, white teeth and all.

Neither of us had any experience of watching the workings of a roundhouse force, we decided to do everything in the right manner, so we asked "Booger" if we might watch him as he fired up this engine. He said, "Sure, Boss, you all jus' climb up there and have a seat on the other (right) side. I'll be up there ina shake."



But before we could get on the steps we see the fire-builder start arranging the 3/4th inch pipes that we had stumbled over a short time ago as we felt our way in the dark between the engine stalls. He worked the pipes around, back and forth until the longest, about 20 foot, with a large S-curve at the loose end was on top, then he hung this S-curve into the top of the 111's smoke stack. The roundhouse was equipped with a steam pipe, that come from the powerhouse, and ran all the way around the roundhouse, up next to the roof, with a branch between each stall. When properly put in place this long 20" pipe, with its S-curve and steam turned on, made a blower to draw air through the firebox and furnish the necessary draft to burn the fuel.

We quickly scramble to find places on the engineers' seatbox as "Booger" comes into the cab to lay the fire in place. Having opened the firedoor wide open by hand, (no air pressure being available), he proceeded to cover the entire grate area with 3 or 4 inches of coal from the supply in the tank, then covering that with sawdust and chips from his gunny-sack.

Only once was he bothered in his work, that was by the oil-man, wanting to fill the hydrostatic lubricator, which was on top of the boiler just in front of the engineer's seat. After some friendly banter between the two colored men, we all made room for the oil-man to do his work, which also included filling the oilpots for the water glass, steam and air gauge lights. The 111 had a steam operated dynamo (generator) but it was only for the headlight no electric cab or classification lights.

After putting in the sawdust and chips, "Booger" threw handfuls of lighted oily waste into various parts of the grate area and in a very short time had a good fire going all over the firebox. Bidding this man

A snapshot of "Booger" at 2 A.M.

farewell we got down to watch a machinist playing with a long handled tack hammer.

Now that we had a couple of hours to wait on the 111 to get hot we went around to the foreman's office to see if he would like some coffee about now. He would, so we crossed over Pike Avenue to the Missouri Pacific Cafe at 707 Pike, that stayed open all night to accommodate the late workers.

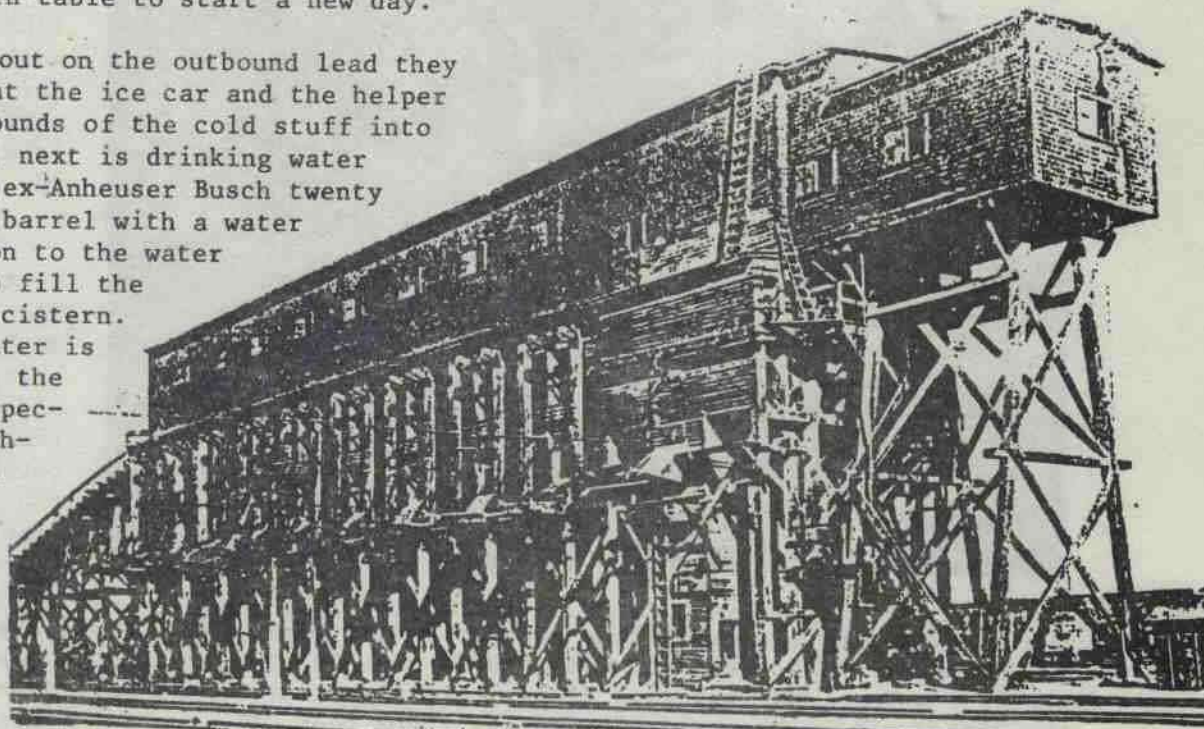
COFFEE	PIE	HAM & EGGS	CIGARS
5¢	10¢	35¢	5¢ & 10¢
			White Owl

While resting at our table, we mentioned about the fellow with the funny tack hammer to the foreman, and after he stopped laughing, he explained what an important part that hammer played in inspecting a locomotive. The machinist was an outbound inspector (there were also inbound inspectors), and through years of experience he was able to find flaws in the metal parts, cracks in pipes, or loose fittings that required repairs before the locomotive could be placed in service. These hammers (issued by the railroad company) weighed about 1/2 pound, made with one flat head and the other pointed, and the handle was about two foot long and very slender, thereby transmitting a different sound or feeling to the inspector when he was using it. So some funny things are serious around a railroad.

After having refills we returned to the office just in time to find that Yardmaster "Bigfoot" Moore was ordering No. 67 to be called for 8:10 A.M. Things were picking up, we hurried to the engine dispatcher's board wondering which crew was to be called for No. 67. On the way we met Hostler Foreman E. B. Kelley telling Mr. Finegan (Hostler) and William Cotton (his helper) to get "the three aces out, head it south, supply it and leave it in the pocket (track), she's called for 8:10 A.M." We introduce ourselves to Mr. Finegan, and explain that we are interested in just how much work it takes to get an engine ready for a trip. Mr. Finegan is a nice old gentleman (starting on StL. I. M. & S. in 1895) and said to climb into the cab. But realizing that we could understand the movement better from a distance, we declined his offer with thanks.

The four of us head for the stall where the 111 is standing, and while the hostler looks the engine around, Cotton lines the table for number 14 stall and puts the lock in place so that we will not get on the ground as we back out. The hostler has, in the meantime, started the air pump and after the main reservoir pressure has reached 90 pounds, the brakes set and released, he signals Cotton to move whatever blocks are on the rail (usually three foot of heavy car chain). With the Johnson Bar in back motion, and just a little steam going into the cylinders and the cylinders cocks open, this hunk of steel awakens and backs onto the turn-table to start a new day.

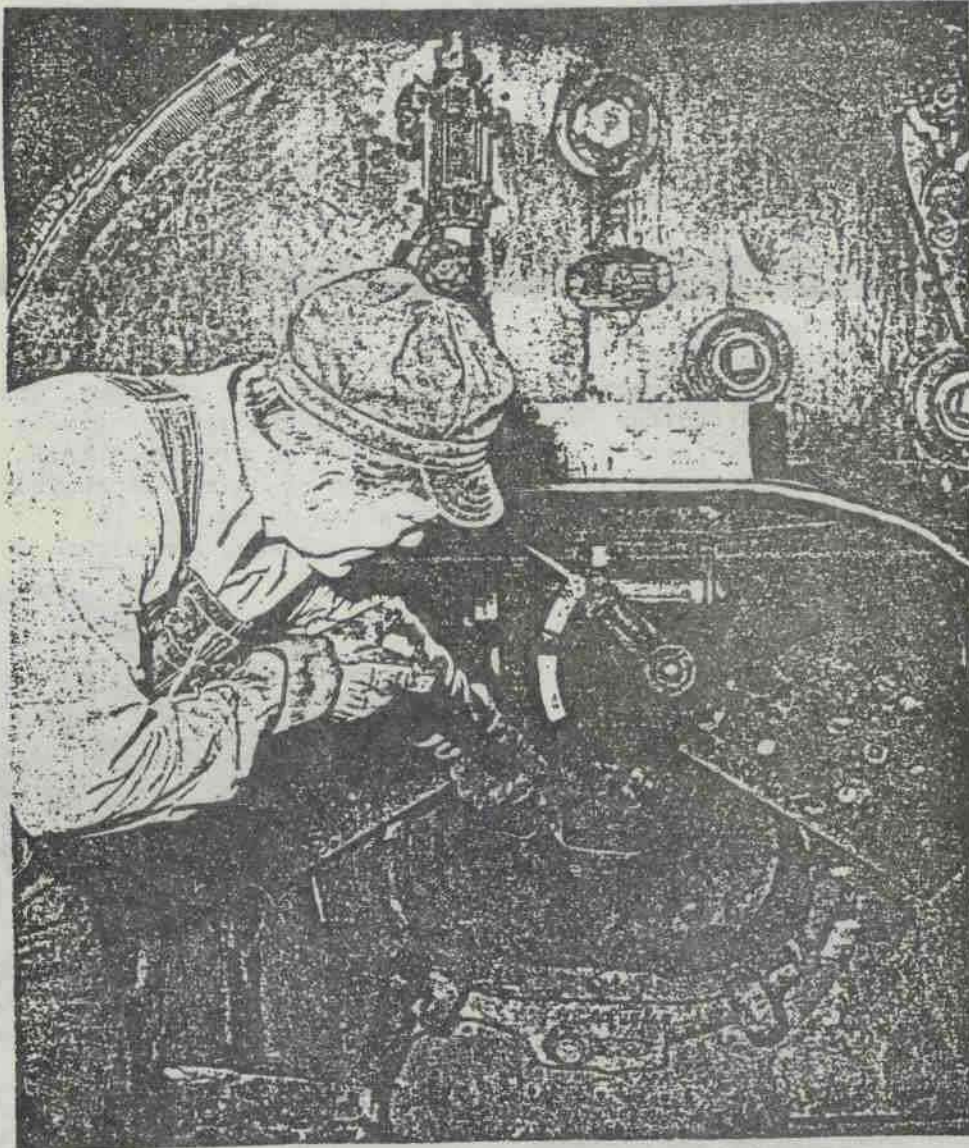
Heading out on the outbound lead they first stop at the ice car and the helper throws 50 pounds of the cold stuff into the gangway, next is drinking water put into an ex-Anheuser Busch twenty gallon beer barrel with a water hose. Then on to the water standpipe to fill the 7000 gallon cistern. While the water is being taken, the outbound inspector is finishing his work he started in the round-house, the ash-pan is



washed out and dumped, sand-pipes are checked and opened, if needed, an airman makes his locomotive tests. Johnnie Womack is the supplyman and just watch all that he has to do. True, some of his work is only to look for items, but that is work also. He brings the engineer's tool box and 1/4 pound of waste, checks to see if there is a long and a short clinker hook, two scoops, a coal-pick, two white, two green and one red flag, one red, one white lantern, 8 torpedoes, 12 fuses, 1 gallon engine oil, 1 pint kerosene, if needed he would replace the whistle or bell cords. Back on the ground, he would look into the opossum belly for two rerailing frogs, a car chain, emergency knuckle, water can, packing paddle, a hook. If the engineer did not have a toolbox, Johnnie would have had to put a monkey wrench, a ball peen hammer, a chisel and a torch on the engine for his use. This seems like a lot of work but most of these items stayed on the locomotive from trip to trip, but must be checked each trip.

Having filled the water cistern, Cotton walked down the track, lining switches as he went and was waiting on the Fourth Street overpass watching traffic and talking with the walkers and bicyclists coming to work, not only in the roundhouse but also the back shops. About this time of day, there was a steady stream of workers over the Baring Cross bridge from Little Rock, besides the "Hoodlum" made three trips, with two or three hundred each trip.

When everyone was through with the three aces at the water plug, Mr. Finegan run down over the switch, Cotton threw it, giving a back-up signal letting the engine roll past him. He got on the front step, up over the pilot and the right runningboard to the sandbox.



They are now backing toward that "monster" of a coaling dock or chute built in 1912 and razed at the very end of steam operations in 1955. Of all wood construction it measured 174 feet in length, 75 feet high, with 200 feet of incline to get the cars of coal topside, winched up by cable. There were nine chutes on each side with a ten ton bin above each.

When big power like 2100, 2200 started working in this area the tracks under the chutes were both lowered three foot for clearance.

The hostler spotted the engine for sand without any signal from the helper (he must have had a marker). After removing the sandbox cover Cotton inserts the four inch retractable pipe into the box and pulls the rope to start

the flow of sand, releasing the rope stops it. Now ready to take coal, the helper walks on the handrail fastened to the boiler, back to the cab getting on top of it, he stomps with his heavy shoes five times and squats down to clear the pocket aprons as the engine passes under them. The hostler stops the coal



tank under number five pocket.

A quick jerk of the gatechain would usually allow enough coal out onto the apron to counter-balance the weights and the apron would come down by itself and run coal as long as the gate was open. It did not take long to fill the 17 ton tank. This hostler and helper put the 111 in the pocket and went home at 7:00 A.M.

Engineer W. A. Plott and Fireman Ben Massey come out of the roundhouse with their grips, went over and climbed into the 111's cab, and started getting ready for the trip to Texarkana, by starting the dynamo turning steam to the lubricator and oiling around. Ben looked to see if a full supply of water and sand had been taken.

A new hostler crew now took the engine over to the south end of the freight yard, while Mr. Plott walked over the main line with us and waited for it's being placed on the train in track No. 10. Ben put green flags in the holders on either side of the smokebox and after brake test was OKed, First 67 pulled out onto the main line and across the Arkansas River bridge. The last we saw and heard of them was a little red caboose going around the bend and the sharp exhaust of three aces of Little Rock hill.

- END -



Missouri & North Arkansas's Number 103, apparently taken in 1912 at Helena, Arkansas. Nothing else is known about the photo. (Collection of Johnnie M. Gray)

## THE ELEPHANT THAT DELAYED A TRAIN

by Bart Jennings with photo by Sarah Jennings



Well, did you hear about the circus train at McGehee, Arkansas on July 13, 1989?

Anyway, it was a Thursday night with just one special move, the circus train was heading to Little Rock through McGehee. I hoped for a couple of good pictures and that was it. In pulled the train with the elephants hanging out. As Sarah took pictures of the elephants, I ran ahead for some artsie pictures of the train at the depot. Just as I returned to the elephant cars, one began to rock and people began to run. An elephant was down!

Okay, we have a derailed elephant! Then worse, a man is under the elephant, and no one wants to go in. After a time, the handler crawls out, the elephant gets up and things return to normal. Kind of. We treat the handler, a new man crawls into the car, and the train finally leaves after more than an hour delay.

Now its fun time for me, this train is hot and delays must be reported and explained. But how do you report a fallen elephant? An escaped one maybe, but fallen? After a number of minutes on the phone, a suitable code is found - "Shifted Load."

So, thats how an elephant held up the circus train at McGehee.

(The picture shows an elephant in a car on the circus train at McGehee, although this particular elephant and car were not the same ones talked about in the story above.)



*UNION PACIFIC'S CENTENNIAL #6938 (DDA40X) is shown parked at U.P.'s Jenks Shops in North Little Rock in August, 1989. Its' fate, according to E. J. McCaddon, Senior Manager of Locomotive Maintenance at the shop, is still not certain, but he said it probably will be put on display in North Little Rock. The 6600-HP DDA40X was built exclusively for the Union Pacific in 1969 as part of the road's 100th anniversary. Forty-seven units were constructed...none are operational today. (Photo by TOM SHIRCLIFF, Sherwood, Arkansas)*



*Shown near Cincinnati, Ohio in 1948 is Chesapeake & Ohio No. 500, the world's first steam turbine electric locomotive. Coal compartment is in the front section. A stoker feeds coal to a firebox in the center section, where also is a 6,000 HP turbine, and 2 - 2,000 KW generators which supply current to 8 motors mounted on the axles. The last unit is a water tank. The engine was 154 feet long, the longest steam locomotive ever built. There were electric and air brakes. It was called "Sacred Cow." Built by Baldwin in 1947 with 98,000 lbs T.E., weight 1,233,970 lbs, boiler pressure 310 lbs., carried 29½ tons of coal and 25,000 gallons of water. Three such engines were built. (CLIFTON E. HULL collection)*

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(Ken Ziegenbein collection)

## THE LEGEND OF THE MYSTERIOUS GURDON LIGHT

by: Lara Rowlett, Arkadelphia DAILY SIFTINGS HERALD, May 17, 1988

North of Gurdon, Arkansas, between state Highway 57 and Interstate 30, at a place called "Sandy Crossing" lies a lonely old railroad track that holds great historical importance to the community of Gurdon and neighboring areas. This railroad track not only has an old cemetery along it and a tree which people were hanged and buried underneath, but it is the sighting for the Gurdon Light.

Since the 1950s, college students have made witnessing the Gurdon light a traditional experience. On many warm, dark nights students make their way down the four mile stretch of desolated tracks until they see a ball of light floating ahead in the distance.

The light, which has been an unsolved mystery since the 1930s when it first appeared, has had extensive research done on it. People have also tried to guess what it might be caused by. Headlights from the interstate? Swamp gas? The ghost of a foreman? Who has the answer?

Supposedly, it all started in 1931 when William McClain, a foreman for the Missouri Pacific railroad, had an argument with one of his long time employees, Louis McBride, over how many days McBride should be able to work.

During the Depression, workers for the railroad were only allowed to work two or three days a week. When McClain explained that the company would not allow McBride to work more hours, McBride was angered and the argument continued until he struck McClain over the head with a shovel. McClain, trying to run away, tripped over a stump. McBride then bludgeoned McClain to death with a spike maul.



When McBride arrived back in town, he was arrested for acting suspiciously. McBride then confessed to murdering the foreman and authorities found McClain's body by following a trail of blood from where McClain crawled to his death. McBride died in the electric chair three months later.

From this murder incident, the legend says that

the light is the foreman's lantern swinging eternally down the railroad tracks. This, however, isn't the only explanation which people believe to be behind the Gurdon light.

Could it be headlights? That is a question asked by many people who have seen the light. However, the Gurdon light has been seen on tracks dating all the way back to the '30s, long before the interstate was even built.

Mike Clingan, a former student of Henderson State University and a graduate student of the University of South Carolina, has performed extensive research on the light. According to published reports containing interview with Clingan, he ruled out the explanation of it being headlights. The nearest interstate to the tracks is about four miles away, and a large hill stands in between the tracks and the interstate. According to Clingan, if the light was caused by passing headlights, it would have to be refracted up and over the hill to be visible on the other side.



Even though people have reported seeing the light before the interstate was ever built, Dr. Charles Leming, professor of physics at Henderson State University has a different opinion. "I think it is headlights," he said. Leming explained that a photographer took pictures of the Gurdon Light with the use of a spectrometer, a device that receives light and breaks down the light into spectrocolors. "All sources of light have their own characteristics of spectrum," said Leming. When the photographs of the Gurdon Light taken with the spectrometer were compared with the pictures of car headlights taken with the spectrometer, the comparisons were the same.

In Clingan's research, he also ruled out the theory of the light being caused by swamp gas because the light has been seen in strong winds which would disperse clouds of glowing gas.

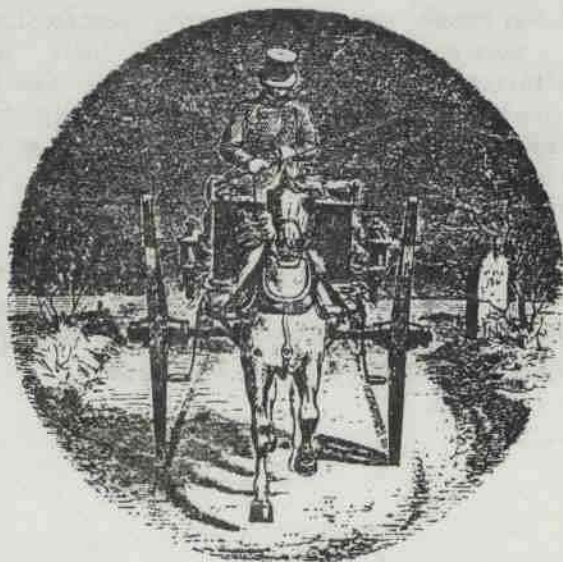
The theory found to be most believable is called the "piezoelectrical effect." This theory states that a group of crystals, especially quartz since it is common in these areas, are put under intense pressure from the fault lines such as the New Madrid Fault, which runs through the area. When these crystals are squeezed together, they develop an electrical charge giving off sparks. This usually happens during earthquake activity.

Many people may choose not to believe this theory because knowing what causes the light, instead of believing the supernatural legend, would ruin the excitement. This theory may also raise some questions since many people may have had different experiences with the light instead of just seeing it glow and dance across the train tracks.

An alarming incident concerning the Gurdon Light 15 years ago was witnessed by J.C. and Miriam Eby of Curtis on their way to Gurdon. As they approached Sandy Crossing, they saw a big light coming down the tracks. Thinking it was a train they stopped. But when the light passed, there wasn't a train behind the light. Since they were from Michigan, they never heard about the Gurdon Light. "We didn't know what to think," said Miriam. "It was real ghostly."

According to published reports, some people have claimed to be chased by the light. Also, the light has appeared behind people, instead of in front of people, who travel far enough down the tracks. Rumor has it that when the light appears behind people, instead of ahead in the distance, they will never make it back to their cars. "Some people say they've seen dramatic things of the Gurdon Light. Others say they were disappointed," said Russell McClain, a resident of Gurdon who is also the son of William McClain, the murdered foreman.

It used to be that one of the more exciting things about going out to see the light was when boys would hide and scare girls who were trodding along the tracks. Some would hide behind tombstones in the old cemetery and jump out and scare them. Others would hide under the trestles and wait for girls to walk by. As the girls walked down the tracks, the boys would reach up through the ties and grab their ankles. One night, however, they were scared away, but no one knows by what.



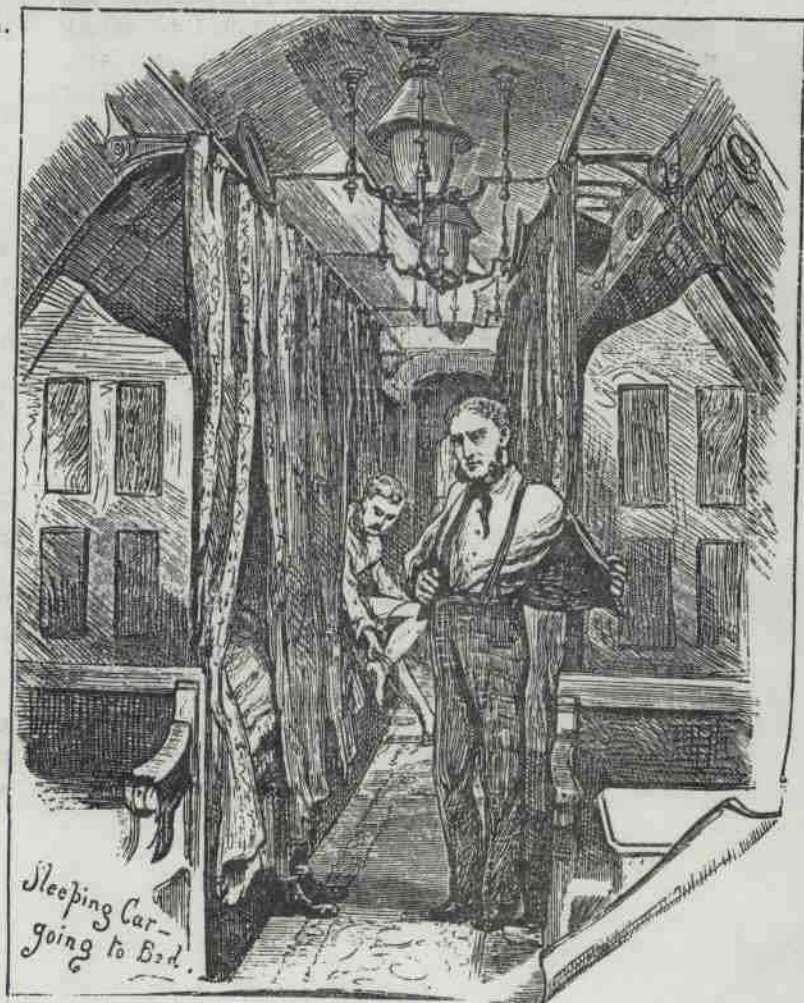
Vicki Gray, a student of Henderson State University, experienced a frightening incident while going to see the Gurdon Light with two male friends and one of her girl friends. When Gray and friends went to the tracks to see the light, the boys took a pistol claiming that strange things had happened when they were out there before. The group started to walk down the track until they saw the Gurdon Light. "It was really weird, it was like a see-through sheet coming down the track," said Gray. When the group began walking back towards their car, they heard something moving in the bushes. "It may have been an animal," said Gray, "but it sounded big."

People who have seen the light along the four miles of track just north of Gurdon, describe it as being a ball of light about one and a half feet wide and one foot tall. Each time it is seen, it is a different color; maybe blue, white, yellow, orange or red. It also bounces up and down, or sometimes swings from side to side.

Even though people have seen it and others have researched it, the Gurdon Light remains a mystery. Whether or not the cause of the light will ever be solved, people will still raise eyebrows to the legend of the foreman's ghost who swings his lantern eternally down the deserted train tracks.



- END -



## JOHNNY MARSDEN'S GHOST

by

William Church

Everybody loves a mystery story. Especially when they border on the supernatural. Some mysteries are easily solved or explained away. Other phenomena go on unexplained and linger on through out the years with the age old question being ask over and over again. What was it? Like the one right in our own back yard, a mysterious light seen by a crew at Galloway in 1907 on the Arkansas Division of the Rock Island that could have been the ghost of Rock Island brakeman who had been killed near there while walking over the top of the train to open the switch at Galloway for a meet with No. 92.

According to a one Mr. J. H. Holbrook of El Paso, Texas, who wrote to the Railroad Magazine in 1937 that in 1907 he was braking on the Argenta-Brinkley Local-Way Freight when he and the crew of No. 44 saw this phenomenon at the east switch of the Galloway passing track.

Mr. Holbrook gave the readers of his story a good description of the trials and tribulations of a Rock Island brakeman back in the Fall 1907 as he brings his story up to the night of the incident.

The Argenta-Brinkley Local Way Freight was a rawhiding job. Not only was there enough work for four jobs on this section of the Arkansas Division, but a practice by the Mechanical Department at Argenta of using the Local's motive power while laying over in Argenta on two short turn-around jobs, not only made the jobs all night runs both ways instead of day light runs as advertised, but the Chief Dispatcher compounded the problem by loading down the locals with dead freight slowing them down to a crawl.

After several weeks of being rawhided by all night runs and excessive tonnage, Holbrook's crew voted to pull the contract on the Chief Dispatcher and tied their crew up for rest at Hazen after they were ordered by him to take their train on to Brinkley with the dead-freight instead of cutting and running for their terminal with the Merchandise cars.

While the local crew was getting their rest the engine developed a leak which drained the boiler and killed the fire. As a result of this mishap the crew was ordered to dead head from Hazen to Argenta on No. 91, the westbound manifest.

No. 91 had a meeting point with No. 92 at Galloway and while they were coming around the curve eight miles east of Argenta the fireman on No. 91 looked back and saw the lantern light of head brakeman, Johnny Marsden, as he was walking over the top of the train. But when they arrived at Galloway brakeman Marsden was not at the head end of the train. After waiting several minutes for him to show up, they went back up along the train looking for the missing brakeman and found his mangled body some thirty cars behind the engine. Johnny Marsden had fallen between the cars and had been killed.

The weeks went by and the local still faced the same problems they had at the time they had tied up at Hazen and the dead head to Argenta on No. 91 the night Johnny Marsden had been killed. They were still working nights both ways between Argenta and Brinkley.

One night they had headed in at Lonoke to do the station switching and clear up for No. 43, the westbound passenger train. After No. 43 arrived at Lonoke there was no sign of No. 92 the eastbound manifest, that should have been at Lonoke for No. 43. The train dispatcher was wanting to move the local away from Lonoke against No.92. But because No. 92 had already been cleared at Argenta he could not issue a train order to No. 92 and as there were no other open telegraph stations between Argenta and Lonoke to give No. 92 an order for a meeting point with the local, he gave the conductor this message:

"Send a flagman on 43 to Galloway to hold all trains until you get there."

Holbrook, who was braking ahead on the local, was deligated by the

the local's conductor to ride the engine of No. 43 to Galloway and to hold all east trains until the local arrived.

No. 43 arrived at Galloway about 3 a.m. he dropped off at the east switch and after 43's departure for Argenta and lined the switch for the local to head in.

Holbrook had been waiting over half a hour when an eastbound headlight appeared in the distance. On flaging the train he found it was train No. 44, the Argenta-Memphis passenger train.

As the brakeman's instructions were to hold all trains he stopped No. 44 and told the engineer of his flaging instructions, who also agreed that his conductor might have erred in telling him to hold all trains, but only intended for him to hold No. 92. But they then all agreed since the flagman's instructions were to hold all trains that they could do nothing else but to wait at Galloway for the local.

Meanwhile No. 44's conductor, train porter and several passengers had gathered at the engine with Holbrook and the engine crew. While this group were standing around talking, one of the them happened to glance down the main toward Kerr and saw a white lantern coming around the curve. Believing it was the local brakeman flaging over to see what was the hold-up. Holbrook, before starting out to meet the oncoming light, made arrangements with No. 44 that if it was the local flaging over to Galloway, that he would give a stop signal, if the local wanted them to proceed he would highball them.

Holbrook had walked down the track

about half a mile, the approaching lantern still came to meet him. When the light was within a quarter of a mile, the lantern turned off down the side of the fill and vanished. Holbrook walked on to the place where he saw the light disappear but could find no trace of the light or the one who was carrying it. Holbrook made a hasty retreat to the engine of No. 44.

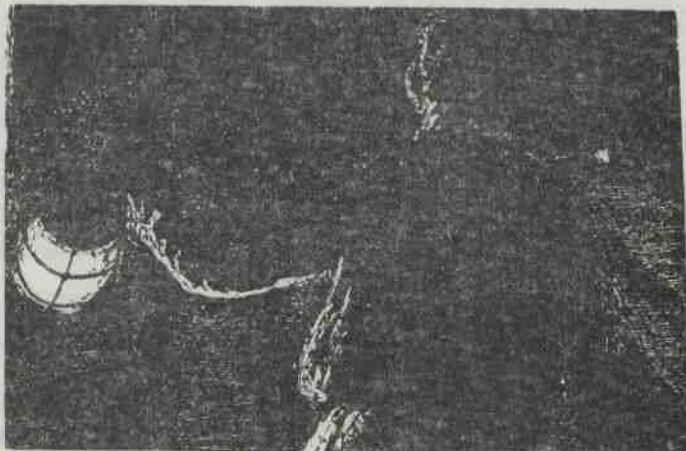
While others that night had seen the light, no one could venture a guess just what it was.

At daylight Holbrook and the train porter on No. 44 walked a flag to Kerr and found the local in the siding there.

After Holbrook had left Lonoke on No. 43 for Galloway, the train dispatcher had been able to get ahold of the conductor on No. 92 at Argenta and issued a train order to No. 92 and the local, giving the local right of track over No. 92 to Galloway. The conductor forgot that he had instructed Holbrook to hold all trains and cleared up at Kerr for No. 44.

An inquiry was made by Holbrook of the local crew if any of them had walked around the curve with a lantern that night. All denied that they had left the train.

This mystery was never solved. Maybe it was a mirage, maybe not, or just maybe it could have been brakeman Johnny Marsden ghost walking over the train to head in at Galloway, just as Johnny had done several months before when he fell to his death under the wheels of No. 91.



T H E E N D

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the club. You can also collect the SHURFRESH and PRICE SAVERS labels. All these labels can be cashed in and used for our club's activities.

**CHRISTMAS PARTY STILL SET FOR DECEMBER 9** - The annual Arkansas Railroad Club's Christmas dinner/party will be held Saturday evening, December 9 at Wyatt Cafeteria on JFK in North Little Rock beginning at 5:30 PM. The cost will be \$7.50 each and you will have a choice of entrees. A country/western band will play for us after the meal. We will begin receiving reservations in November.

## ☆☆☆ PROGRAM ☆☆☆

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be Sunday, October 8, at the Twin City Bank on Main Street in North Little Rock. Time will be the usual 2 PM. The speaker will be none other than Bart Jennings, Manager of Track Maintenance for the Union Pacific Railroad. His topics will be U.P.'s steam engine #8444 (now called #844, its original number), Western Canadian Rockies' railroads, plus something on the 1989 NRHS convention in Roanoke (see story about this convention elsewhere in this newsletter). Refreshments will be served (remember, we meet on the 3rd floor, but the refreshments will now be way up on the 7th floor).

Bart also stated at the September 10 meeting that he will begin working for the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad in Springdale, Arkansas on October 1 in charge of track. He will quit his job with the Union Pacific. Bart happens to be from Fayetteville, so he will be close to home. GOOD LUCK!

**R. W. McGUIRE** of our club has been elected president of the Morse Telegraph Club of America's Mid-Arkansas chapter. Congratulations!

**MISSOURI PACIFIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO HOLD MEETING** - The MoPac Historical Society will hold its annual regional meeting on October 6, 7 and 8 in Little Rock at the Otter Creek Holiday Inn on I-30 west of the city. An \$18 fee will be collected at the door. Non-members can get a table on a first come/first served basis for this fee.

**APRIL/MAY TRIP ON THE U.P.?** - Vice President Matt Ritchie said talks were underway to possibly have a rail trip from Little Rock to Van Buren in April or May on the Union Pacific, diesel powered. This trip would be limited to 400, if everything goes well. Price cannot be nailed down yet, but due to high insurance costs, it would probably be in the neighborhood of \$50 per person. If this comes off, we need VOLUNTEERS! Anyone interested?

**L. T. WALKER** reported at the September 10 meeting that a caboos is still on its way to Hazen, where the city has renovated the old Rock Island depot and made it into a museum. The Union Pacific, which is donating the caboos, said the one they had planned to give could not be moved because it failed inspection.

**READER RAILROAD TO HAVE NIGHT RUN (probably)** - (Malvern) - Reader Railroad president Richard Grigsby said in a telephone conversation that the steam tourist line will operate its famous night train again this year on October 28, if there is enough interest. This run features old wood-burning locomotives, turn of the century kerosene-lighted passenger cars and old-fashioned cracker barrel cheese, hot chocolate and apples. To keep costs down, there probably will not be live entertainment this year, but a slide show instead.

Costs should run somewhere between \$10 and \$12 per person, but

final costs were not determined yet. The Arkansas Railroad Club might try to get a group together and go to this event.

Like I've said in past years, the Reader night runs are something not available anywhere else. To run through the deep Arkansas woods on a crisp, cool fall night in kerosene-lighted coaches pulled by wood-burning locomotives is an experience in which you can truly lose reality for awhile and actually feel you're in a time 90 years ago. It's a feeling unable to be reproduced in other steam trips.

For more information, call the Reader Railroad at 501-337-9591.

Club member ELIZABETH GAINES now works for the Cotton Belt Credit Union and no longer works for the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce.

### ☆☆☆ ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS ☆☆☆

DERAILMENT ON THE COTTON BELT - (Rison) - Around 5 AM on Wednesday, September 6, 1989, fifteen cars of an 82-car Cotton Belt freight derailed while northbound through Rison at the Oak Street crossing. The cars were in the middle of the train, 8 of which contained chemicals, some toxic (such as acetic acid and acetone). One of the cars burst into flames (carrying 23,000 gallons of ethyl acrylate), causing evacuation of everyone within about a half mile of the site, including the Cleveland County nursing home. About 620 were evacuated in all.

(Your editor was working at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in North Little Rock that day and we gave updated wind and weather forecasts for Rison to Arkansas Office of Emergency Service personnel at the site. To those of you who don't know, Rison is in Southern Arkansas, on the route of the annual Cotton Belt 819 steam trip between Pine Bluff and Fordyce).

There was one injury (10 stitches) and that was the conductor of the train located in the caboose (YES...there WAS a caboose!). He hit his head as the train buckled to a stop.

The Pine Bluff Arsenal (U. S. Army) and Little Rock Air Force Base helped extinguish the fire with special foam later in the day.

The train was traveling at 49 MPH with maximum speed through Rison 60 MPH.

Most of the people evacuated were allowed to return home 2 days later, on Friday, September 8. Trains were also allowed through Rison again that Friday on a siding past the derailed cars. Cotton Belt trains had been rerouted over Union Pacific to Little Rock immediately after the wreck.

Jim Johnson, Public Relations head of the Cotton Belt, did his usual good job in handling the press. He got to Pine Bluff the day of the derailment about 2 PM, and considering he was in Chicago on railroad business when he was notified of the accident instead of his office in Kansas City, that was quite an accomplishment. He was seen on many TV live reports and newscasts. (Jim is well known in the area, being associated with steam engine 819 and its trips. He is also an Arkansas Railroad Club member).

Bill Rauls, a resident of the Cleveland County nursing home, who was one of the many evacuated, said of the accident, "It's not that bad. It's kind of exciting."

These reports came from many sources, including the ARKANSAS GAZETTE, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, CLEVELAND COUNTY HERALD, and the Little Rock local TV newscasts.

COTTON BELT TRAIN DISPATCHING functions in Arkansas are now being controlled from Houston instead of Pine Bluff, spokesman Jim Johnson said. Pine Bluff-based dispatchers for years directed trains from East St. Louis to Shreveport and into Texas and North Little Rock. The move to the state-of-the-art facility in Houston was phased in

the week of August 14. (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, by Randy Tardy)

**DERAILMENT COSTS PUT AT \$20,000** - (Mountainburg) - The Arkansas and Missouri Railroad derailment at Mountainburg, Arkansas August 11 is costing the railroad about \$20,000, according to Diane M. Collins, manager of administration. The company considers itself fortunate it was not more extensive. Four engines and 11 cars were forced onto a 150-foot spur at 9:30 AM Friday, August 11. A padlock had been broken from a switch which was thrown, forcing the train from the main line. It had been traveling at about 20 MPH preparing to stop at the next crossing.

Collins credits the minimal damage to this reduced speed and the soft soil and rock ballast the engines plowed into when they left the track (four engines derailed, #60 and #58 being the first two). Traffic on the main line resumed August 13. The FBI will also investigate the vandalized lock, which is considered a Federal offense. (Van Buren PRESS ARGUS-COURIER, August 17, 1989)

*A University of California researcher reports that people absorb information 40 percent faster when standing as opposed to sitting down.*

**TRAIN CROSSING FACTS** - Familiarity and lack of attention are the main factors involved in the majority of train-car accidents, according to Union Pacific's Operation Lifesaver's Larry Breeden. "In 97 percent of the accidents, the driver is within 25 miles of their home," he said. Breeden said "of the 3,538 railroad crossings in Arkansas, 1,000 are equipped with automatic warning devices. Fifty percent of the accidents occurred at these crossings." Breeden said some people believe the speed of a train might reduce the number of accidents. He said in most cases this is a myth.

"We have more accidents when a train is traveling 35 mph or less because people think they can outrun the train. Motorists can not accurately judge the speed because of the size of the engine." However, when motorists know a train will be traveling 60 mph they won't take the chance, he said. As an example, Breeden said trains travel about 10 mph to 25 mph through Fort Smith. In July 1989, two accidents were reported. (Fort Smith SOUTHWEST TIMES HERALD, August 13 by Michelle Hillier)

**BRIDGE GONE** - (North Little Rock) - The former Rock Island bridge over East Broadway in North Little Rock has been demolished as of the end of August. Also, the Union Pacific overpass across East Second Street in North Little Rock has been torn down.

**EUREKA SPRINGS & NORTH ARKANSAS RWY MISHAP** - (Eureka Springs) - Steam engine 201 ran off the end of ES&NA's tracks at Highway 23 when the engineer was unable to stop it while trying to turn it around. The mishap occurred the week of August 21. The engine remained upright but the engine's wheels became buried in sand. (EUREKA SPRINGS TIMES-ECHO, August 23)

**ASBESTOS SUITS FILED AGAINST RAILROAD** - (Benton) - A number of asbestos-related lawsuits were filed this summer in Saline County against Union Pacific. The suits generally state that the railroad did not warn employees of the health risks of asbestos exposure over the years. Typically, the ones filing the suits are in their 60s, having worked with asbestos-insulated locomotives during the 40s and 50s. Medical effects of asbestos exposure include lung diseases and some increase in risk of cancer. Those diseases usually take 20-40 years to show up. There have also been suits filed alleging that the railroads did not warn employees of the risk of hearing loss due to high levels of sound in railroad workplaces. (BENTON COURIER, August

### TRAGIC ANNIVERSARY

The picture on page 9 of Missouri & North Arkansas motor car No. 103 was taken about 2 years before a tragic accident demolished this car...along with 43 lives being lost. August 1989 was the 75th anniversary of the fatal 1914 wreck involving the 103 and a Kansas City Southern freight at Tipton Ford, Missouri.

The incident occurred at 5:55 PM, August 5, 1914, when southbound M&NA No. 103 with 77 aboard, operating over KCS trackage rights between Joplin and Neosho, Missouri, failed to take a siding at Tipton Ford, and encountered KCS 4-6-2 No. 805 and seven freight cars in a curve. The motor car was pushed 650 feet backward after the impact. Its fuel tanks ruptured and many of the victims were burned to death. In all, 43 died and 34 survived.

An estimated 10,000 people attended a funeral on the courthouse square in Neosho on August 7th for 25 of the dead, who were then buried in a mass grave in the Odd Fellows Cemetery. A monument was erected there in their memory. The ensuing investigation was somewhat inconclusive, although it fixed the blame on the M&NA and exonerated the KCS. It seems that the M&NA conductor either had not received his orders to take the siding at Tipton Ford, or he had ignored them. There was a receipt for the orders, but "The Joplin Globe" relates that James R. Fair, of Austin, Texas (who wrote "North Arkansas Line" about the M&NA and is an Arkansas Railroad Club member), is of the opinion that blame might lie with the operator at the Joplin Union Depot. He could have failed to deliver the orders and then forged the conductors signature in order to protect himself. As Mr. Fair concludes, "There is a lot of mystery associated with this."

(Thanks to the September 1989 CROW, monthly publication of the Kansas City Southern Historical Society, for the above story.)

OLD RAILROAD CARS PROVIDE NEW ROAD BRIDGES - (Marianna) - Lee County Judge Kenneth Hunter of Marianna in East Arkansas said he has been building highway bridges out of used railroad cars for years. Flatcars are used most often with parts of boxcars and tankers also used. A total of 25 boxcar or flatcar bridges have been built in Lee County since 1982, most 85-90 feet in length. Each car can withstand 100,000 pounds and two are used per bridge, saving huge sums of money for the county compared to constructing new steel bridges. Some tank cars can be cut off at the ends and made into a large culvert.

Installing used trailer-train flatcars as bridges also is much faster than building a new one from scratch. Normally, it takes only one day to put the bridge in place. Replacing a concrete bridge from scratch costs about \$25,000 to \$100,000 while putting in an old flat car costs only \$10,000, counting the concrete supports at each end.

D&R TRAINS WILL OPERATE AT NIGHT - (Dardanelle) - Rebuilding work began in late August on the Dardanelle & Russellville Railroad in Dardanelle to upgrade tracks and street crossings along the 5.2 mile line. The improvements will be complete by the end of November. William K. "Bill" Robbins, owner and president of the road, says the daytime work means the D&R will run at night. "The motoring public for the first time in our 106-year history, will see the D&R trains run at night. Be careful and don't run over my choo-choo," Robbins cautioned. "We will flag all the crossings during the crossing work but watch out for men and machinery."

The D&R began operations in August 1883 and is the oldest short line railroad in Arkansas still in operation. Trac-Work of Ennis, Texas has been contracted to do the track work. The D&R received a \$300,000 grant to help in this work. The project will include 10,000

tons of ballast and replacing 2 out of 3 ties. (RUSSELLVILLE COURIER-DEMOCRAT, August 29)

**MAN IRKED BY STALLED TRAIN BLOCKS TRACKS WITH TRUCK** - (Pine Bluff) - A man apparently irked by a train stalled at a crossing in Pine Bluff pulled his pickup truck onto the tracks and dared the train to run over him August 29. Chief Deputy Pete Harrison said a member of the train's crew reported the incident, but when a deputy arrived, both the train and the driver of the truck had left.

A train apparently had stalled at the crossing on Rob-Roy Road about 8 PM August 29. The man's truck and another train had been blocked about 30 minutes, said Jerry Ashcraft, engineer of the second train. The man in the truck became belligerent when he couldn't get across the tracks. When the first train was repaired and pulled away from the crossing, Ashcraft said the second train started to follow it.

"He pulled onto the tracks and dared us to run over it," Ashcraft said. The man jumped from his truck and started yelling and cursing at the train. "We were barely moving. We stopped about an engine length from the truck," Ashcraft said. "He started cussing us. I tried to simmer him down, and I asked him politely to move his truck. He started cussing us."

The man managed to block the second train for almost as long as the first train had blocked him. The man threatened violence against the train's crew. The crewman said he pleaded with the man for 10 minutes to move the truck, but he wouldn't. The man eventually moved the truck after the crew informed him they had called the police. "The truck wobbled off down the road," engineer Ashcraft said. (PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL, September 1, 1989 by Mark Minton sent in by Elizabeth Gaines)

*Every hour the Amazon River delivers an average of 170 billion gallons of water to the Atlantic Ocean from Central America, 60 times the flow of the Nile.*

**BOOK SIGNING HELD** - (Pine Bluff) - A book signing was held September 7 at the Arkansas Railroad Museum by historian David Weitzman, author of SUPERPOWER, The Making of a Steam Locomotive. This event was sponsored by the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society and Pickwick Book Store.

**819 NEWS** - Basically, there is none to report. A possible 819 trip to Tyler, thought possible for October, apparently will not take place. Jim Johnson said that there were no immediate plans to run the locomotive. (Editor's note...isn't it amazing, however, that this engine has made as many trips as it did over the years? I count seven trips since 1986...4 to Fordyce, 2 to Little Rock and one to Tyler. Who'd have thought it back in 1982?)

#### GENERAL RAIL NEWS

**END OF THE LINE?** - Kansas City Southern's F7A's 4059 and 4064, GP7 4151, NW2 4205 and SW7's 4308 and 4314 were seen at Kansas City on July 29th, all with their red KCS lettering painted out. If they indeed have been sold, 42 years of powered F units on the KCS have come to an end. The only remaining F's are road slugs. (THE CROW, September 1989)

**SANTA FE WARBONNETS ARE BACK!** - The Santa Fe's red "Warbonnet" paint scheme is returning for use on priority trains. ATSF's new president Michael R. Haverty says, "We're going to refer to our freight trains as the Super Fleet, and we're going to use the Warbonnet scheme in a

\$500,000 advertising campaign in national magazines and the business press." (MIDWEST RAIL SCENE, via Central South Carolina chapter's THE ORDER BOARD, September 1989)

THE NEW GEORGIA RAILROAD is running steam excursions using 63-year old restored engine #290 (Southern Crescent engine). Their first trips occurred September 10 between Underground Atlanta and Macon, with other trips planned from Atlanta to Savannah September 22-24 and Atlanta to Rome October 21. For reservations, write THE NEW GEORGIA RAILROAD, The Georgia Building Authority, 1 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. (THE ORDER BOARD)

*Man to bright boy: "I have a mystery for you. A farmer comes across a dead man in his cornfield. The man is dead because his backpack contains something that should not be there. What does it contain?"*

*Boy answers: "That's easy...a parachute." (SEP 1989 SCIENCE DIGEST)*

TRAIN RETURNING TO GRAND CANYON - (Williams, Arizona) - As reported in previous "Railroaders", train service is slated to begin to the Grand Canyon again after over 20 years absence. This private service will be between Williams, Arizona and the Canyon on the 64-mile ex-Santa Fe line, now operated by the Grand Canyon Railway. Steam is supposed to be used eventually. Details of the operation are sketchy.

NEWS UPDATED through September 18...mailed Monday, September 25. Next Railroader deadline October 15.

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The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization that meets on the second Sunday of the month. This month the meeting will be held on OCT 8 at the Twin City Bank Building on Main Street in North Little Rock. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Programs are presented.

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

If you would like to join, send your check made out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" to: DICK BYRD, Treasurer, 12 Flintwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our Club by paying \$12/year more.

Editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein. EVERYTHING having to do with the ARKANSAS RAILROADER should be sent to the address below left, such as stories, pictures (prints only, any size), diagrams, ADDRESS CHANGES, etc.:

NEWSLETTER:

KEN ZIEGENBEIN, Editor  
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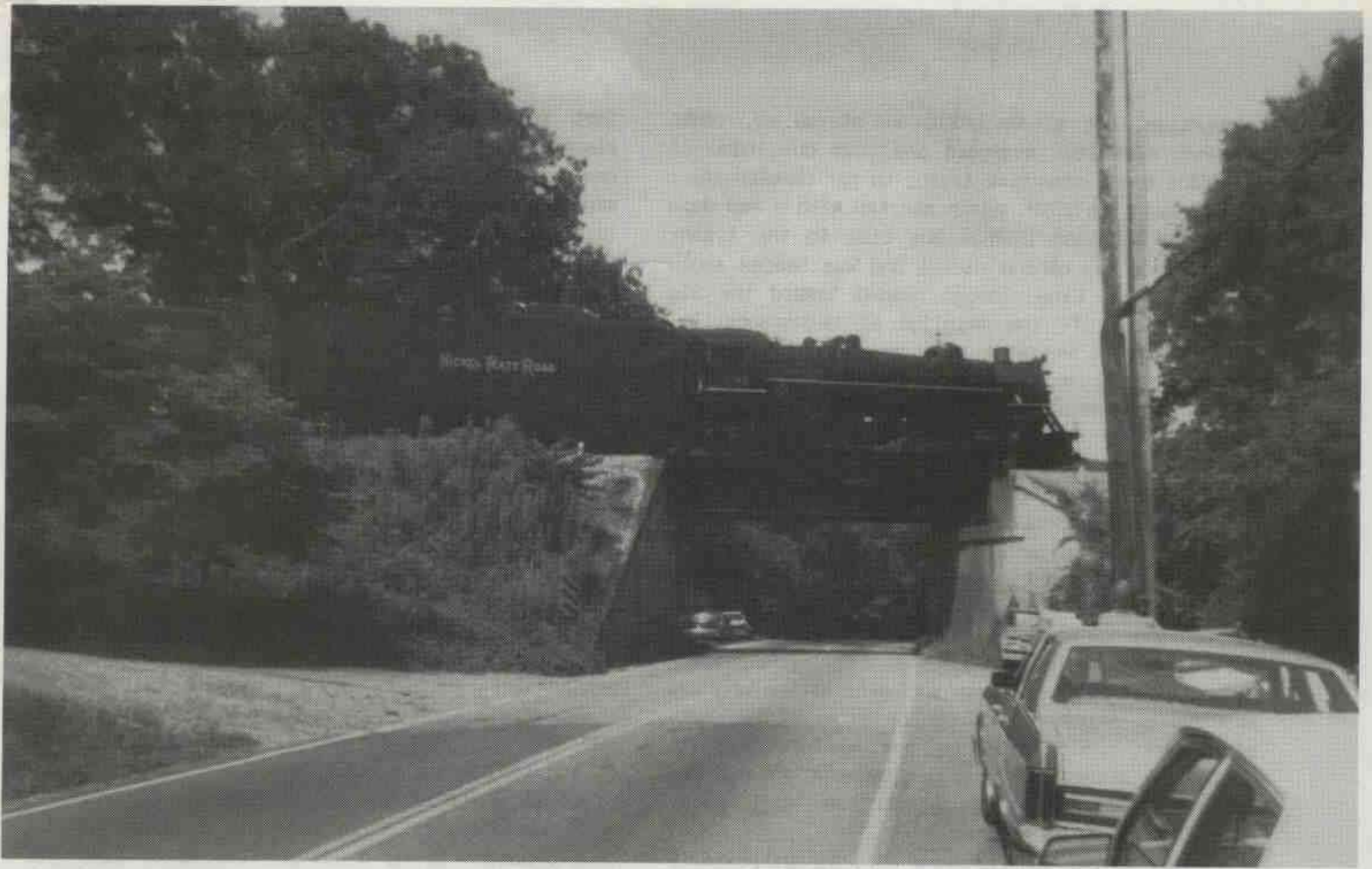
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NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

Phone: (501)-758-1340



NICKEL PLATE #587 south of Newport, Tennessee on NRHS convention run to Bulls Gap, Tennessee Friday, July 21, 1989. (Photo by Sarah Jennings)

#### 1989 NRHS CONVENTION - ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

by: Barton Jennings

The 1989 NRHS convention began when at least three members of the Arkansas Railroad Club boarded a train behind N&W 611 at Alexandria, Virginia the morning of July 18, 1989. The members were Mia Mather of New York, and Sarah and myself. Although the train would seat over 450, only about 125 rode the inbound special, mostly in the two open window coaches and two baggage cars.

At Lynchburg, Virginia, the train had a 45-minute pause to allow for photographs and to add N&W 1218 to the head end of the train. Both locomotives then pulled us on into Salisbury, North Carolina for the night. Unfortunately, the train began to run later and later, getting into Salisbury an hour and a half late, preventing any run-by photography this day.

Day two started early with a quick meal and a run for the 6:30 bus to the train. Upon arrival at the station, we found that 611 had been cut off and Nickel Plate 587 (2-8-2) had been tacked on the front of 1218 (2-6-6-2), for a very interesting look. Our train was nowhere to be seen, but it soon arrived, while several freights ran by, including the northbound roadtrailers.

Speaking of roadtrailers, among the riders was one member of the roadrailer organization who kept talking about Norfolk Southern's dedication to the service while those other roads (CSX and UP) were not really interested in the concept, and only tried them for show.

Anyway, today's trip started well with plenty of photography of mainline trains buzzing by while 587/1218 put together their train, and with the 611 still steaming just down the track. Put together, we boarded up, backed up to the wye and headed up the secondary line over the mountains to Asheville. A stop at Hickory and two runbys only led up to the show of climbing up the old Fort Hill into Asheville. This climb is on the second steepest, and curviest, line that NS has, and the engines really put on a show in the light rain, especially when ever a rail oiler was encountered. Both engines experienced wheel slips and the show was great.

We arrived at Asheville early, giving everyone plenty of time to get to their motels. Everyone onboard the train had already checked in to the

convention, but at the motel we stayed at, rooms had not even been assigned and four bus loads of railfans spent some time trying to get checked in.

Thursday, the 20th, again started with a mad dash for breakfast and then a bus ride to the train. Today's ride was behind diesel and was headed south on the Saluda Line. Though headed toward the Big Hill, we cut off the mainline at Hendersonville, North Carolina and went west on a branch line to Pisgah Forest, a timber-based community. A runby was held here while the engines reversed train ends and then we headed back to the mainline. At Hendersonville, we stopped for a visit. The entire town was out looking for a steam engine that the local paper said was to be on the train (they also reported that we were a group of retired train engineers, but what can you expect for 25 cents).

The runby was held during our visit, with the few of us who climbed up onto the highway bridge getting the only unobstructed shots, thanks to the thousands of amazed locals who were asking what we were doing. After a short spell, we ended the party of dancers, music, etc., by running for the train just as a thunderstorm dumped buckets of rain on the community, and we thought that we had left all of the wet stuff in Arkansas.

A quick run brought us back into Asheville early enough to go shopping and to find someplace to eat besides the hotel.

During the evening, we had a candlelight tour of the Biltmore Estate, the summer home of Vanderbilt, the grandson of the famous Commodore. Most castles are small compared to this place. On the way back to the hotel, we experienced a nice lazy drive as the two bus drivers raced to see who knew the best back roads to get us back to town. All of this in the dark and rain!

Friday was the chase day what with NKP 587 the main power (yes, a diesel was tacked on behind its extra tender) for the trip to Bulls Gap, Tennessee. What was expected to be a hard chase turned out to be easy since heavy rains the week earlier had caused the French Broad River to flood over the track and slow orders were everywhere. We were even able to get ahead of the train taking the long way around and over the mountain following gravel trucks!

The only thing that slowed the chasers this day was that traffic mess at Newport, Tennessee, where it took 20 minutes to get through the 11 traffic lights in 11 blocks. We then chased like lost hounds until a pack of us caught the train again near Bulls Gap where the interstate goes over the track.

When Sarah and I got there, a man was pulling a Matt Ritchie and was cutting all of the offending trees down, providing a nice looking view of the engine and train. After turning the power at Bulls Gap, we took the short route home (I will never go through Newport again) and went to a railroad sale that afternoon.

Friday evening was night photo session, but as we boarded the bus, gloom was in the air. The word was

that no bulbs were to be used, that a new electronic flash system was to be used, if someone could figure out how to use it. We sat around for awhile and then were driven to the roundhouse where 1218 and 587 sat, with the flashes set up right in the way of anyone trying to take a picture. After threats, yelling and a little bit of advice, the strobes were moved and the cameras were set up.

Just as everyone was ready to go, Bubba's brother, the governor of North Carolina (a part time rail buff), showed up for some promised publicity photos which delayed us even more. Finally, after several failed attempts, we got four shots at one location for \$21, not the best bargain I ever had. In fact, my shots taken during the setup were better than the planned ones. And all of this with experts with bulbs standing around. Yes, this is my one big complaint.

Saturday was a trip up the Murphy Branch, a 100+ mile line into the Smokeys. The first 30 miles was behind three Norfolk Southern diesels and included a beautiful runby at a half mowed field. Yes, the 500 of us who left the photo line to get up on top of the hill greatly outnumbered the 100 or so who stood along the tracks. My pictures are great.

At Waynesville, North Carolina a number of us caught busses to go a little further to ride the Great Smokey Mountain Railroad behind the former Dixie River Railroad locomotives from McGehee, Arkansas (they looked much better now than they did earlier). Seven coaches and three open cars provided great views and allow us to yell at the rafters on the river next to the tracks. All the time, Bubba's brother was politicking at the back of the train. Again, every little town turned out to see us and short stops would be made, allowing photography of our train and the "new" CF7s from the Texas & Northern (I went to North Carolina to photograph Texas engines?)

The GSMRR runs passenger service over four different stretches of track daily and is a good operation to ride. The state owns the line (Bubba's brother was a big mover behind the purchase) and is spending money to help the operation make it big. The trip ended with a state police escort to get out of the narrow valley by bus (a dozen busses can tie up a country road).

Saturday evening was the time for the annual banquet, confused considerably by the fire marshall who ordered the tables rearranged at the last minute. It quickly became a game of find an empty spot and sit. The speakers were Carl Jensen (the head of the NS steam program and NRHS vice-president), the Claytor brothers (heads of Norfolk Southern and Amtrak), and the governor of North Carolina (Bubba's brother and the best story teller around. I will trade Clinton and both Houses of state government for him right now). The evening was ended on a very comical note as Carl Jensen sang "The City of New Orleans" with a very good group of pickers, the lead singer of whom works in his own department.

Sunday was a choice of which trains and which



engines to chase. The day started with 587 being pulled backwards to Marion, NC, while several freights pulled out of Asheville with 1218 and 25 cars right in the middle of things. It was a typical mountain morning, with the cool, moist air holding the steam down and allowing the whistle to really echo. An easy chase of 1218 to Marion followed, where 587 grabbed part of the train for the return trip (1218 took the outbound convention train on to Roanoke for the evening). Runbys and mountains caused the train to be late back into Asheville, forcing Sarah and myself to abandon the chase at the top of the mountain (and we just got to our flight).

Overall, the convention was a good one with beautiful country and great locomotives. The photo runbys were for the most part the typical dump 'em

out and lets go (what happened to the good ole planned runby at a location where you can get back from the track)? But enough trains ran that you could get creative and still get plenty of shots. The trips were good ones but it was too bad Norfolk Southern fears Saluda so much that this hill was off limits. There were also plenty of other activities (slide shows, displays, sales, etc.) to fill up any extra time you could find.

Next years convention is in St. Louis, a much closer location for our club. Hopefully, our club can make a bigger impression next year even though the club shirts Sarah and I wore did get us quite a bit of attention. Below is the registration form for St. Louis. Register early to get in on all of the good stuff (June 14-17, 1990).

BART JENNINGS

To pre-register: Complete and detach form below, and mail with check or money order to St. Louis Chapter NRHS, 1990 Convention Registration, 1432 Ruth Drive, Kirkwood, MO 63122 by December 15, 1989.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

NRHS Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed for: \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 Pre-Registration with First Class advance mailing.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$13.00 Standard Pre-Registration--NO First Class mailing.

### JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

Dues are \$10/year for Arkansas residents and \$7.50/year for out-of-state. Dues are for calendar years January through December, so if you pay in the middle of the year, please prorate the payments (for instance, if you pay in June, pay only \$5.00 for the rest of that year). Dues are always due January 1st of each year. You may also join National Railway Historical Society through the club by paying \$12 additional per year (total payment for Arkansas residents \$22.00).

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

RENEWAL

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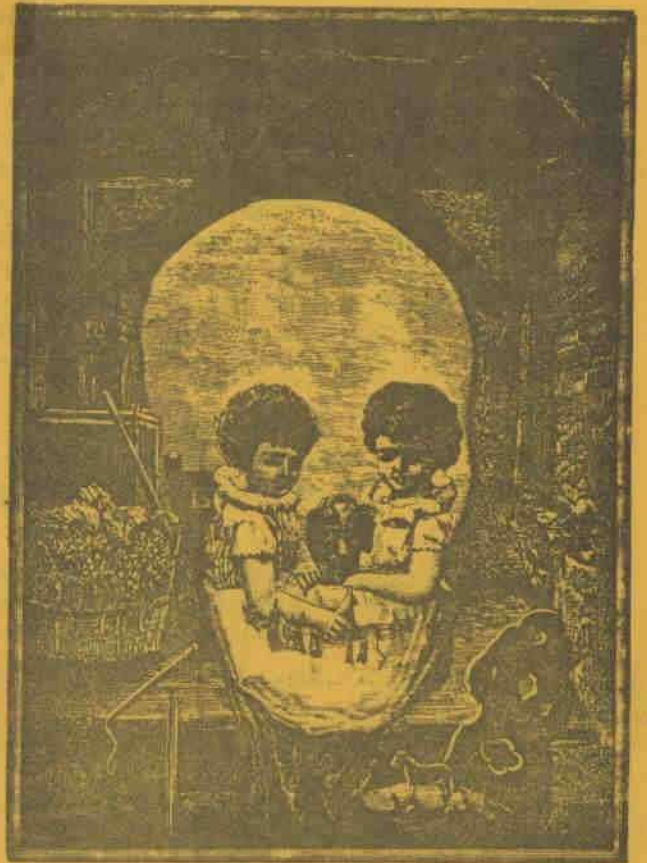
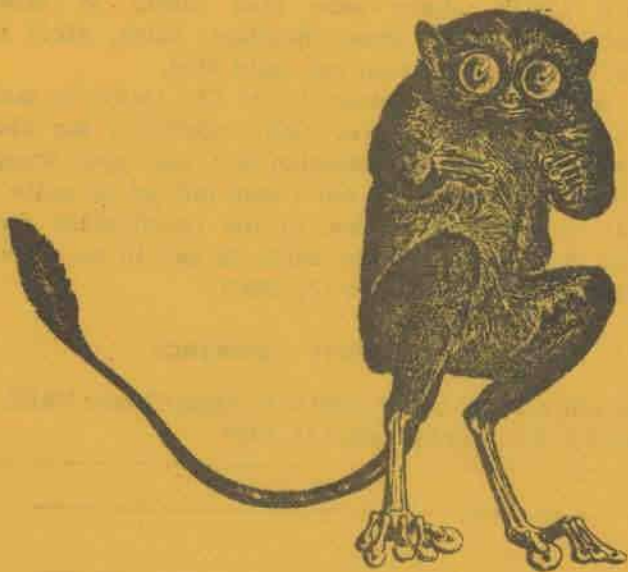
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For Change of Address or other concerns about the ARKANSAS RAILROADER, write to this address:

Ken Ziegenbein, Editor  
905 Valerie Drive  
North Little Rock, AR 72118



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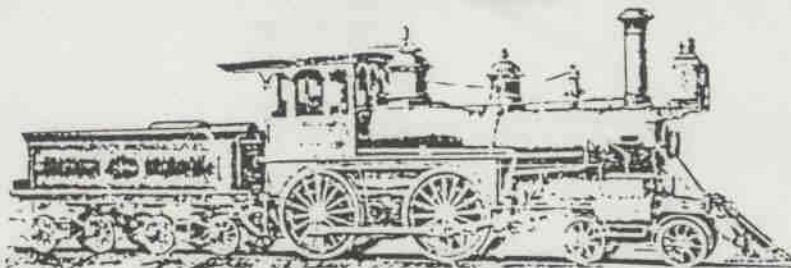
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OCTOBER 1989



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ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB  
P. O. Box 9151  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR. 72119

TO: Officers and Club Members of the Arkansas Railroad Club.

Subject: Selection of Officers for 1990.

Your Nominating Committee, ( Stanley Wozencraft, Naomi Hull and William Church) is seeking club members who would be willing to serve as officers for the year of 1990. The offices and term are:

President, 1 year, Vice President, 1 year, Secretary, 1 year, Treasurer, 1 year, Board of Directors (1), 5 years, NRHA Rep. 1 year.

To help the Nominating Committee fill these positions they would appreciate those who are intertested in filling the above offices complete this form using the reverse side if needed for information on your qualifications and mail to the above Post Office Box number in time to reach the Committee before the October 8th, 1989 meeting or hand same to a member of the committee at this meeting.

Name.....Address.....

Have you ever held an office in any Organization/s?.....

If yes, what organization/s?.....

Will you be able to take a part in all of the club's programs?.....

Will you serve the full elected term if nominated?.....

Are you subject to transfer by your employer?....if yes, would this transfer hinder you from serving out your elected term?.....

The Nominating Committee understands that sometimes it is not practical for an elected officer to attend all meetings but if you are nominated for an office will you make a serious attempt to attend all meetings?.....

The Nominating Committee will select their choice for Officers to serve in 1980 and present them to the Board of Directors who will vote on their selection and give their report to the Club at the November 1989 meeting. All officers selected will be installed at the the Annual Christmas Party that will be held on December 9, 1989 at Wyatts, North Park Mall, North Little Rock, Ar.

Although normally the Vice President moves up to the President's office this is not a hard and fast rule. The Vice President can decline the office of President if he/she so desires

