



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



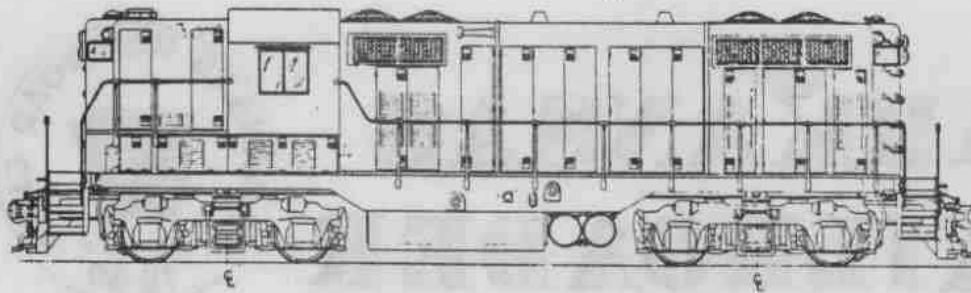
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A PICTURE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS -- or Poetic justice, perhaps this photograph sums up the Rock Island's later years. Train #771 the Haskell Turn picks it's way thru the wreckage of Train #34 which had derailed and sideswiped a long cut of cars stored in Brittain Siding just South of Little Rock. The damaged cars were set off the main and trackage restored to reopen the main line so the profitable little local could carry its wares to Bauxite, Benton and Haskell. The cars will be rerailed later, but today there is more important work to be done. Photo about 1975 by John M. Martin



GENERAL NEWS

FUELING BEGINS WITH A RARE ONE -- AMTRAK'S Train #22, the Northbound Eagle, began fueling at Little Rock Friday, August 19th, 1983 with a rare consist. Due to an SP Freight derailment between El Paso and San Antonio, the through cars were cut off at El Paso and a General Electric P30CH locomotive was borrowed from the Sunset Limited to run to Fort Worth with connecting there with the Eagle's regular section. Further mechanical problems at San Antonio resulted in one of #22's F40PH's being left for repair and forwarding on the Sunset Lmt'd, thus Train #22 lead by P30CH #723 and F40PH #280 were the first two units fueling at Little Rock. The Northbound run requires less fueling than the Southbound run, the Northbound taking on about 500 gallons per unit, the Southbound usually requires 1200-1300 gallons in the locomotive that supplies Head-end power and 800-1000 gallons in the other locomotive(the tanks hold 1500 gallons).

EVEN RARER -- Mechanical Failures have consistently plagued the Eagle thru the last days of summer. Three trains in the last two weeks have required MoPac freight units to suppliment their Amtrak failed motive power. Occasionally, the Extra Heritage Fleet Sleeper has run hot and this was rectified by pulling it from service and replacing it with a Superliner Sleeper -- thus the folks who had conventional Bedroom space got the bargain of getting a Superliner Deluxe Bedroom for their lower fare.

Train #22 arriving in Little Rock September 6th had what is possibly the rarest mix of power yet...Failed F40PH's for #22 at San Antonio were taken off and two P30CH (G.E.'s) were substituted, Head-end power failure in the generators of the P30CH's required the addition of one F40PH for H.E.P. Only-no tractive power. Well, this consist of mixed breeds left San Antonio and got as far as Texarkana where both P30CH's went off line. A MoPac GP-38/2 was added for motive power and when #22 arrived in Little Rock the line up was this: MoPac 2189 GP-38/2 supplying tractive power, P30CH's 710 and 703 idling and F40PH #280 providing headend power. At St Louis the MoPac unit was relieved by GM&O #647 (still in GM&O paint and numbers).

ROY FILES IN HOSPITAL -- Arkansas Railroad Club member Roy Files suffered a mild stroke and is in St. Vincent's Infirmary. We wish Roy a speedy recovery and our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Little Rock and Western to build New Office Building -- The Little Rock and Western Railroad will construct a new office building across the tracks from the current General Offices housed in the old Rock Island Station at Perry. The new metal office will offer a nicer surrounding for the staff of the LR&W and give more modern office space to the growing short line. Thanks to Bob Sandage for this information.

LR&W #307 to be Gone -- The last RS-3 of the LR&W was to be shipped from Little Rock the week of August 14th according to Bob Sandage of the LR&W. The #307 has been a backup engine for the LR&W while the two new C-420's were broken in.



FARRELL LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

Farrell Locomotive Works, located in Brinkley, Arkansas, was one of only a handful of locomotive dealers or brokers which were headquartered in this state. The company was originally known as J.J. Farrell Machinery Company, and handled heavy machinery for sawmill and cotton gin installations. The company was subsequently named Farrell Machine Works, and Farrell Locomotive Works, both being possibly separate divisions of the same parent company. J.J. Farrell also owned and operated the city water system and city electric utility system in Brinkley during the early part of the century. Locomotive brokerage activities were generally limited to smaller steam locomotives used by various logging operations and some shortlines. After obtaining locomotives from trunk lines, industrial or shortline operations, Farrell Company rebuilt or reconditioned the equipment at their shop in Brinkley. The finished locomotives were then advertised for sale in various railroad and lumber industry trade journals. Farrell Company's activity in the railroad industry is known to span at least a 26 year period from 1916 to 1942. The company still exists in Brinkley, operating from their original building adjacent to the Cotton Belt mainline. Present day activities are apparently more in the general contractor field, rather than the machinery and locomotive operations of the past.

Partial List of Locomotive Transactions

- 10-27-1916 Cotton Belt 0-6-0 #95 (built Pine Bluff shops, 8-1900) was purchased by J.J. Farrell Machinery Co. Subsequent owner unknown.
- 10-1918 One 18-ton Heisler for sale by Farrell Locomotive Works. Prior and subsequent locomotive owner unknown.
- 3-1925 One 42-ton and one 47-ton Heisler for sale by Farrell Locomotive Works. Prior and subsequent locomotive owner unknown.
- 12-1936 One 24-ton Heisler (construction #1347) offered for sale by Farrell Locomotive Works. Purchased from Brown Brothers Land and Lumber Company, Brasfield, Ark. Subsequent owner unknown.
- 1942 One 47-ton Heisler (construction #1437) sold by Farrell Locomotive Works to National Fireworks, Inc. Locomotive was originally Cairo Truman & Southern #10, then Tschudy Lumber Company #10.

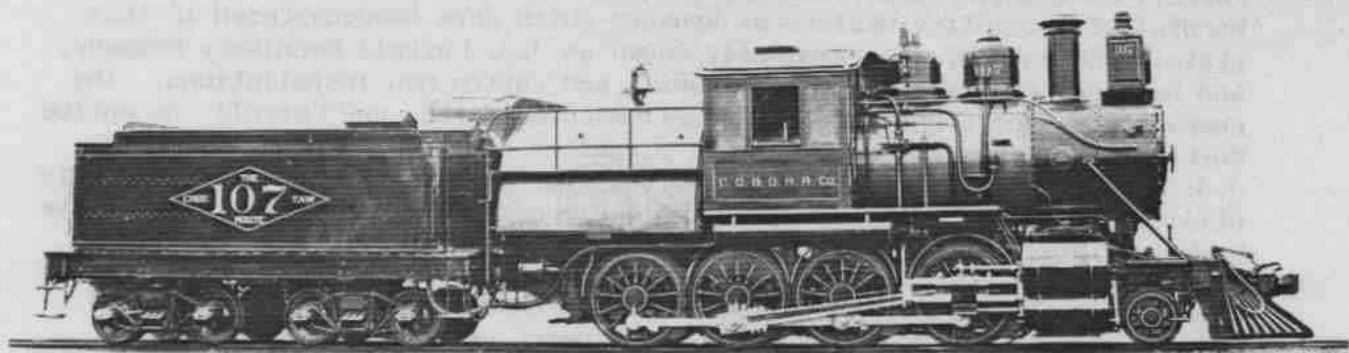
The following Shay locomotives were also handled by Farrell Machine Works and/or J.J. Farrell Machinery Company. Dates of these transactions are unknown. These locomotives are listed by their construction number, as shown on their builders plate. The original owner, as well as any known Arkansas owners are also shown.

- 351 built for Joseph Desert Lumber Co. #1 (Wisconsin) 1891; Arkansas owner(s) are unknown.
- 685 built for Fred B. Dubach Lumber Co. (Louisiana) 1902; later owned by Benton Gravel & Construction Co., and Little Rock Lumber & Manufacturing Co.
- 870 built for Henderson-Bennet Lumber Co. (Louisiana) 1904; later owned by McNulty-Grayson Lumber Company, Stephens, Ark.
- 1759 built for Bering Manufacturing Co. (Eagle Mills, Ark.) 1906; subsequently owned by Eagle Lumber Company [Freeo Valley Ry.] Eagle Mills, Arkansas, and by McNulty-Grayson Lumber Company, Stephens, Ark.
- 2245 built for W.H. Scott & Son (Falcon, Miss.) 1909; Arkansas owner(s) unknown.

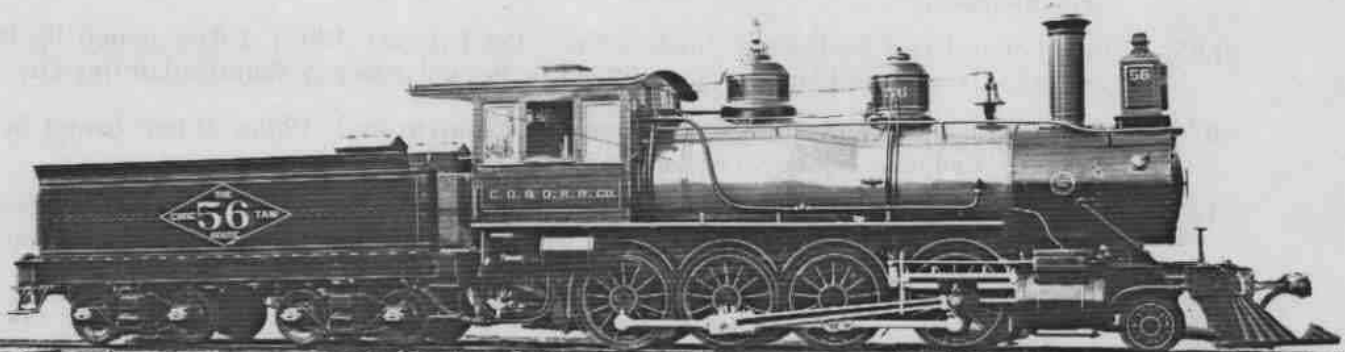
NOTE: Can you supply information on any additional locomotives which were handled by Farrell Locomotive Works? If so, your assistance is requested in compiling a roster of these transactions. Please contact Bill Pollard, 32 Fair Oaks, Conway, Ark. 72032.

NO FORMAL MEETING THIS MONTH --- Instead, all members
are invited to go to the Arkansas Museum of Science and
History at MacArthur Park in Little Rock and view a display
of the "Golden Years of Railroading" (1859-1959). Admission
will be \$1. Time is from 1 - 5PM. Come and enjoy! Sunday, Sep. 11.

Please excuse the lateness of this newsletter. Your editor has been on vacation and working day shifts on top of it, so getting the printing done has been quite a chore. The October newsletter will come out earlier.



1597



1413

LOCOMOTIVES OF THE CHOCTAW ROUTE -- TOP: Camelback Consolidation #107 became a 1800 series Rock Island locomotive after the purchase in 1903. They were the only true camelback locomotives the Rock Island ever owned or acquired. Middle: Chief Engineer Molitor's Private Steamcar, the Arapahoe sits for its builder's photo. Bottom: Similar in specs to the consolidation #21 which pulled the Chocataw Flyer Westbound, Consolidation #56 is typical of the short, aquatty power which the Choctaw owned. All Photos Broadbelt Collection

THE WESTWARD EXTENSION OF THE CHOCTAW

Compiled by John M. Martin from
Newspaper Accounts.

In 1892 the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad has a milage of 95 miles, divided into two divisions: 31 miles between Fort Reno, Oklahoma Territory, then a gap of 120 miles to South McAlester, where there was a stretch of 64 miles Eastward to Wister where the Frisco's St. Louis to Dallas line crossed. Arrangements were made in 1892 to unite the two divisions and in November, 1895, trains were running throught from Wister to Fort Reno. When the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf road was extended from its terminus in Missouri to Texarkana, Ark., it passed through Howe, Indian Territory, which is just six miles East of Wister, then the terminus of the Choctaw Route. Within a short time this little gap was closed, giving them an outlet to Kansas City from the Eastern End of the line.

In 1898, attention was turned to the Western Terminus and to the thriving little prairie town of Weatherford, Oklahoma Territory, which is 45 miles West of Fort Reno. This extension was built during the last year and the road then gained milage to 269 miles. Still there was no direct outlet for the coal of the territory and the officials of the Choctaw turned their attention to the Little Rock and Memphis Railroad, running the 135 miles from those two cities. The LR&M was in the hands of a reciever and several attempts were made to sell it at auction, but as there were no bidders, it was still "on sale." After a thorough investigation it was decided to purchase this line and to construct the road between Little Rock and Howe, Indian Territory, a distance to 182 miles. This extension would give the CO&G a trunk line along the 35th parallel from Memphis to Weatherford, a total distance of 563 miles.

The Little Rock and Memphis was again put up on the auction block on October 25, 1898, and at this time General Manager Henry Wood of the CO&G bid \$325,000. The sale took place at the depot in North Little Rock, which was abandoned December 11th, 1899.

"Three hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars is bid," said the auctioneer. "Once, Twice and sold."

A certified check for \$25,000 was deposited as evidence of good faith and from that day began the work to close the gap. The Gazette proclaimed, "The sale was a dawning of a new era for Little Rock and her citizens realize it!"

Right of way was at once secured between Little Rock and Howe and forces put in the field surveying it. Large forces were employed in the betterment of track between Little Rock and Memphis. The contract for the extension work was let November 1, 1898; the contractors moved on the work December 1, 1898 and the final location of the line was completed Christmas Day, 1898. Track-laying commenced from the West, April 20, 1899 and was completed to Booneville, Ark. June 17, 1899, and the line opened to that point. October 1st the line was opened to Casa, Ark.. From the East tracklaying commenced August 1, and the rails met October 13th, twenty-three miles West of Little Rock, at what is now Natural Steps, Ark., Chief Engineer Molitor's private steamcar, the *Arapahoe* crossed the junction point and came into Little Rock from South McAlester. The work of straightening out and balancing the track was then pushed and the opening of the Line set for December 3rd but shortly before it was postponed until December 10, 1899.

On that date, December 10, 1899, the first trains left each terminus for the through run of 563 miles. The West-bound train passed through Little Rock at 4:37 a.m. and was boarded here by quite a small party. Mr. Gano C. Grissom railroad editor of the Memphis Commercial Appeal, and the Arkansas Gazette representative were the only passengers who went through with this train to the Weatherford terminus. From Little Rock to Booneville the train was pulled by locomotive #21, with engineer George Geister at the the throttle. His run was over all new track but he made it in the five hours schedule time and also made up fifteen minutes of time that was lost between Memphis and Little Rock. His maximum speed was forty miles an hour. On Friday, December 8, he left Weatherford in charge of a special train of four coaches, one of which was the private car of General Superintendent John H. Harris, and had a speed indicator attached. Between Bridgeport and Calumet, Oklahoma Territory, the recorder showed an average speed of 68 miles-per-hour; and between Wilburton and Red Oak, I.T., a distance of fifteen miles, the average was sixty-three miles per hour. There were indeed remarkable bursts of speed but were made on old track.

At Little Rock, the Arkansas River was crossed by "one of the finest steel bridges ever put up." This bridge, including the northern approach is 2400 feet long, the steel work alone being 1,600 feet long, four spans of 400 feet each. The structure rests on piers of handsome Bedford Politic Limestone, containing with the south bank abutment, 4,425 cubic feet of masonry. The caissons and cribs beneath the piers required 900,000 feet of timber with a displacement of 225,000 cubic feet, in these caissons and cribs are 5,002 cubic yards of concrete bedded on solid rock. The South bank abutment rests of solid rock, exposed in open formation. The first pier is sunk to bed rock, twenty-nine feet below the bottom of the river, and the other piers go from forty to fifty-one feet beneath the riverbottom, all resting on bed rock. They extend above the river forty feet and in their copings are used 140 cubic yards of dressed stone. Five hundred thousand feet of lumber was required for the false work necessary in erection of the spans. The stone used in all foundation work was tested to stand 5,000 pounds to the square inch, and concrete, after thirty days set, to stand 450 pounds of the square inch. The spans placed upon these supports were of the finest steel, each of the fixed spans weighing 1,247,740 pounds and the draw span 1,070,534 pounds, bringing the total weight of the bridge to 4,813,759 pounds, exclusive of the flooring which weighs 450 pounds per linear foot. The total weight of the bridge being 5,538,800 pounds. The spans were designed to carry two locomotives weighing 90 tons each, with tenders weighing 52 tons each, followed by a train weighing 4,000 lbs per linear foot. The trusses at the center spans are 66 feet deep and are twenty feet apart. The draw span was center bearinged and was designed to make a complete revolution in 1½ minutes operated by electric motors.

The contract for the bridge was let March 21, 1899 and the first caisson was landed on hardspan September 25, 1899. All masonry was completed two weeks later and the last pin was driven in the superstructure November 7, 1899.

Now an account of the first run by the Arkansas Gazette's Railroad Editor:

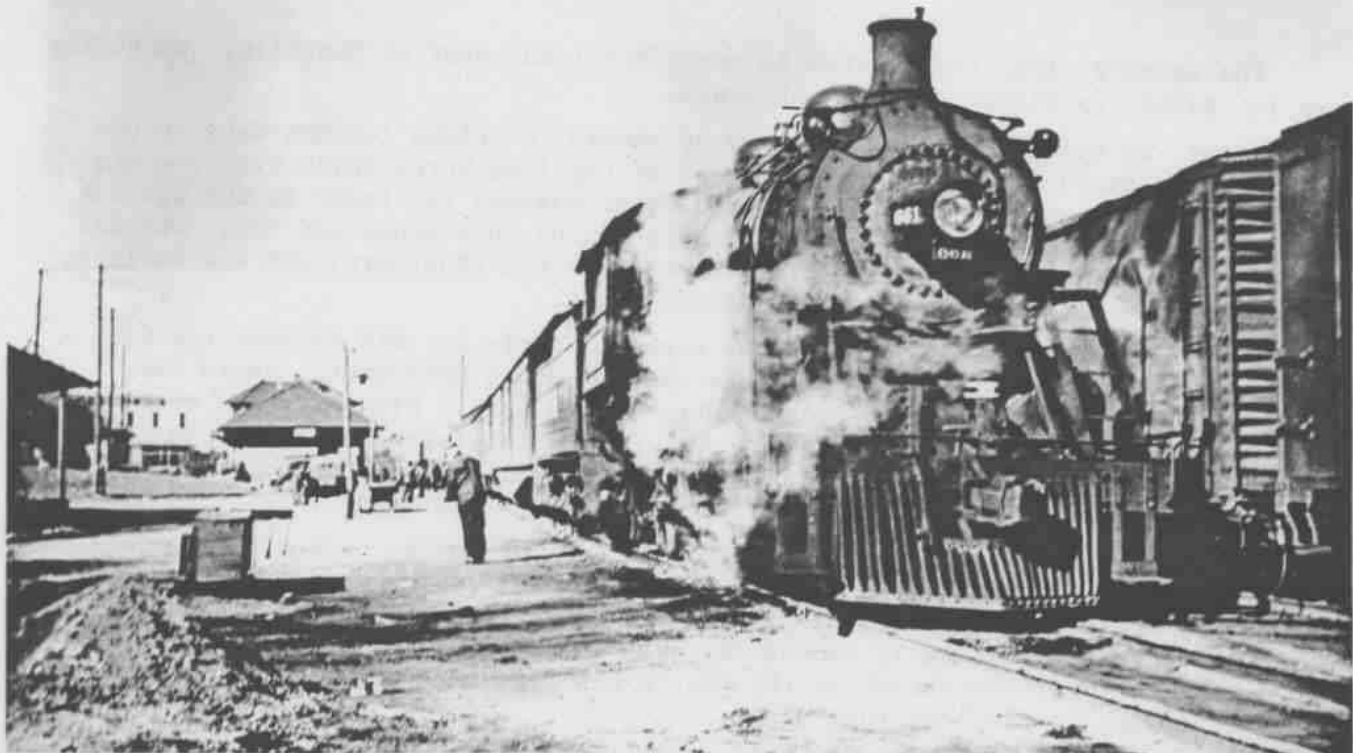
The inaugural trip of Choctaw Passenger Train No. 1 the *Choctaw Flyer* concluded last night (December 11, 1899) in Weatherford after a pleasant run of over 563 miles of rail. Despite Sunday's rains, the train was greeted at every station West of Little Rock by crowds of delighted citizens. They were all proud to salute No. 1 and conductor Harry McDonald was pleased with his charge as a boy with a pair of new shoes. Although made under unfavorable weather conditions, the trip yielded abundant satisfaction to the travelers inasmuch as it furnished evidence of boundless resources that will now be developed and augment the prosperity of the people benefiting not only the capital which was wisely placed this section within easy reach of the markets but the worthy people concerned as well. Through the facilities kindly furnished by the Wells-Fargo Express Company and Messenger A. B. Meador, the people at each station were well supplied with copies of Sunday's Gazette, which they received at least 24 hours in advance of the custom before the Choctaw. The handsome vestibuled coaches made an imposing appearance threading their way through the vast stretch of forests and valleys and along the streams of Western Arkansas. No wonder that the people were so enthusiastic in their greeting.

The train left Little Rock a little late Sunday morning but arrived in Weatherford nearly on time. A heavy rain was falling when the train left Little Rock and continued until the Indian Territory was reached in the afternoon. The heavy fog prevailing here was also visible to the territory. Despite these drawbacks, the people were at the stations, from 25 to 500 at different stops.

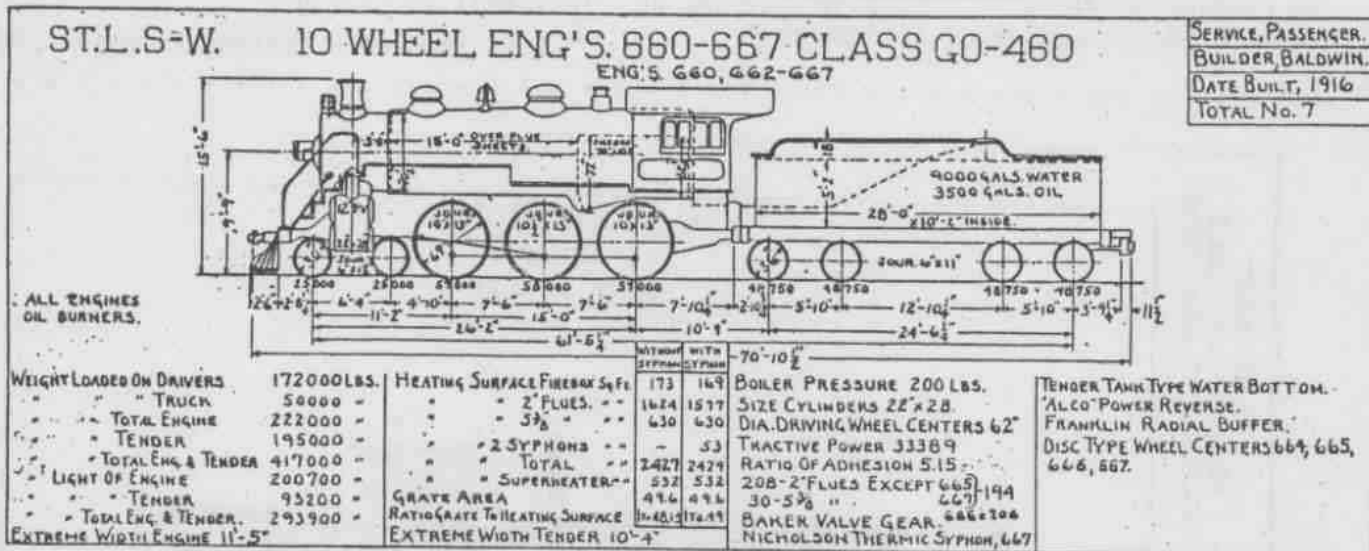
The train was the prettiest that ever passed through Little Rock on a regular run, this being admitted by all who saw it. It was composed of the sleeper *Luna* a handsome chair car and a day coach, a combination smoker and a combination baggage and express car, all wide-vestibuled, except for the latter. Engine #21 pulled the train from Little Rock to Booneville, the end of this division point. Engineer George Geister was at the throttle. He is admitted to be the best engineer in the State, and was for seven years with the Frisco, running out of Springfield, Missouri. He says that between Greenville and Booneville at one time he reached the speed of 40 m.p.h.. His fireman was Lewis Hickman who is also an experienced man.

This engine, as well as all of the new moguls (Ed. Note: #21 was a 2-8-0 built by Baldwin in 1898) is equipped with an electric headlight and automatic bell-ringer. They are all powerful locomotives.

One could hardly believe that towns could spring up as fast along the new line as they have along the Choctaw. Everywhere there are new buildings and stores going up with more material on the ground. In many places the people are living in tents as they have not had time to build. The road passes through several coal towns. At Hartshorne, I.T. there are seven openings in the side of the mountain and one mine has an output of 125 cars per day. There were forty tents in sight there. This is the center of the coal district.



Cotton Belt #661 leads Train #5 the Southbound Morning Star at it's mid-afternoon stop in Camden, Arkansas. Head end traffic was heavy this day and the engineer finds time to relax and stroll about while the business towards the rear is handled, or maybe he beat the scheduled 2:41 p.m. departure time so much he has the time to stroll... Up on the hill behind the depot the Cotton Belt Hotel sits basking in the cool Arkansas Air. The 661 was the first of the 650-series engines to bite the dust. It was wrecked at Pine Bluff in May of 1945 and cut up for scrap the same month. The accompanying diagram from the Jim Bennett collection shows the missing 661. Photo above collection of John Martin.



BAUXITE AND NORTHERN #16, an MP-15, leads a short train back to the shops and interchange at Bauxite, Arkansas. Soon she will shove the two Rock Island boxcars thru the interchange and slip into the shadows of the fine metal enginehouse adjacent to the General Offices at Bauxite. Photo by John Martin, 1978
