

MULE TRAINS by Clifton E. Hull

On January 1, 1872, a railroad began operation with one wooden car for freight and one for passengers, both pulled by mules over rails of wood. It was known as the Searcy Branch Railroad, extending from Searcy to West Point, about 8 miles apart in White County. In 1877, it was reorganized as the Searcy and West Point Narrow Gauge Railroad.

The following is an account of a trip over the road in July 1877 after the road had been extended to Kensett:

"From Searcy to Kensett, connection is made by a wooden tramway, dignified by the name of horse railway. It is a very rough, shake-up and jigglely affair, an excellent remedial agent for dyspepsia, but withal a pleasant route of travel and of great convenience to those who wish to transport goods from the depot to town, or who wish to come out of their bird's nest of a place to journey and see the world.

"The rolling stock of this road consists of one wooden passenger car and one freight car. The engines are three mules named Maude, Muggins, and Hun. We had the pleasure of riding behind Madam, a brownish, dun-colored animal with a gait like that of an old-clothes peddler, a paintbrush tail, and a look of wicked intelligence.

"Madam is honored by being a passenger 'engine' and is kept in a little better repair than Hun and Muggins, who, compelled to haul freight, feel their humiliation."

The road was abandoned and the rails were taken up about 1900. In the latter part of 1904, the Doniphan Lumber Co. built the Doniphan, Kensett and Searcy Railroad to connect with the old Missouri & North Arkansas road. The DK&S was finally bought by the Missouri Pacific in the 1930's and is still serving its namesake locations, especially Searcy, which was deserted by M&NA and CRI&P.

PAY THE FREIGHT ON OUR RAILCAR....

The club has its first piece of rolling stock - that ex-Alabama, Tennessee & Northern (Frisco) railcar, which was moved from Springfield, Mo., to Scott, Ark., where it is operating on the rails of the Dortsch Plantation Museum.

However, there is one problem. Mr. Walter J. O'Rourke, who volunteered to drive a truck to bring back the railcar, found it was too heavy to move. Faced with a now or never situation (he had to move the railcar immediately, or we would not have gotten it), he had it shipped to Scott by rail and paid the freight charges out of his own pocket. The charges were

over \$360. Since the railcar is the property of the club, a way of reimbursing Mr. O'Rourke was discussed at the last meeting. It was decided that voluntary donations would be the best means. Several members pledged \$10 each. If you wish to help, payments may be made to Arkansas Railroad Club, % C. R. Byrd, 6815 Dahlia Drive, Little Rock, Ark. 72209. Donations are tax deductible.

SANTA FE FILMS AT OUR NEXT MEETING

Two movies from the AT&SF, both in sound and color, will be shown at our April 11 meeting. They are "Milepost 100" and "Argentine Yard". That is Sunday afternoon at 2:00 P.m., Room 305, Union Station.