



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Arkansas Railroader



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APRIL 1975

APRIL MEETING: The Regular monthly business meeting for April will be held SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 1975 in the Missouri Pacific Office Building, 1000 West 4th Street North Little Rock at 2:00 p.m. Fred Fillers will present a program on the collecting of builders plates.

MUSEUM SALES COMMITTEE: Naomi Hull reports that the Museum Sales Committee has met and organized. Information has been received from several suppliers as well as other clubs operating museums. Hopefully samples will have been received by the April meeting.

"THE CAR" Hopefully we will someday be able to refer to our piece of equipment as something besides "The Car". With some effort and care, possibly we can get enough paint removed to find the original name. At any rate, the Car has finally been moved across Pike avenue and after sitting there for a couple of weeks suddenly appeared alongside the building. It is now in position for restoration to begin. Let's hear a report from the Car Committee.

CLUB BUILDING: The Museum portion of the building has not exactly been cleaned up but it has been straightened up and much of the debris and junk removed. It is at least ready to receive the sheet rock on the walls. We need to get this done during the month of April in order to be ready to set up for our show. Contributions towards the purchase of sheetrock are still necessary and anyone who can contribute the price of one sheet or a contribution towards its purchase should contact the Museum Building Committee.

Arkansas Railroad Club is a not for profit Organization. It meets the second Sunday of each month at the Missouri Pacific Office Building, 1000 West 4th St. North Little Rock, Ark. For information, write P. O. Box 5584, Little Rock, Ark. 72205

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ROCK ISLAND DILEMA:    As of this writing, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad had filed for bankruptcy under Section 44 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act. Additionally they have issued an embargo against all perishable commodities effective March 24 and against all traffic March 31. On March 25, hearing was held before the Interstate Commerce Commission on an application by the troubled carrier to apply a surcharge of \$30 on each carload and \$15 on each Trailer that move totally over the Rock Island.

At a meeting between the I.C.C and 15 carriers in the area served by the Rock, Island, MoPac officials offered to provide service over virtually all of the Rock Island lines in Arkansas including from Booneville to just east of Brinkley, Little Rock to Hot Springs, Eldorado, Crssett, Warren and Sparkman and the lines to Des Arc and Stuttgart.

4449 RESTORATION:    (From PNW Chapter "Trainmaster") Restoration of the S.P. 4449 is proceeding on schedule according to the project coordinator. The initial hydrostatic tests have been made with pressure up to 375 psi. Side rods are replaced, three new seats donated for the cab and the air brake system completely overhauled. Test runs are now estimated to begin in early April.

NEW BICENTENNIAL LOCOMOTIVES:    Following the lead of SCL's Spirit of '76 (which has now been modeled by three companies) N&W and Bangor & ArOOstook each came out with a Red White & Blue locomotive in the patriotic theme. Now two others have gotten on the bandwagon even though one lasted only a short time.

Illinois Central Gulf was first with distinctive gold striping to make the nose resemble the beak of the American Eagle. It met an untimely fate when it collided with a loaded tank truck near Brookhaven, Miss on it's maiden run. Engineer and truck driver were killed, fireman critically injured and locomotive destroyed.

Now the Santa Fe has entered the picture. Diagonal stripes on the body of what appears to be an SD 45 with stars emblazoned between stripes and the National Seal attached to the handrails aft of the cab. The usual Santa Fe logo on the nose. Who will be next. Where is MoP and the other local lines?

PROSPERITY ROLLS ACROSS ARKANSAS  
BY  
CLIFTON E. HULL

(CONTINUED FROM MARCH ISSUE)

A shop switch engine was called to begin assembling a train of 20 huge, shiny new steam locomotives. The officials at Baldwin began making hurried calls to the railroads which would handle the special train. The many details of a schedule were arranged to move the train only during daylight hours so as many persons as possible could have the opportunity to see and inspect it. The greatest benefit possible must be realized from the visual impact of such a display. Call it "vulgar" if you will, but drastic times call for drastic measures.

Finally all arrangements were completed, the advance publicity had alerted the people all across the country that "prosperity" was coming their way. A telegram arrived and Sam Vauclain was pleased to read it to the assembly of Company officials, politicians and a press corps.

"My blessing on the Prosperity Special,  
may her speed be steadily maintained  
and may God grant her a safe arrival."

Warren G. Harding  
President of the United States

At noon on Friday, May 26, 1922, a series of long, bellowing sounds of locomotive whistles were heard reverberating around the Baldwin plant at Eddystone, and the strangest train ever assembled slowly clanked out of town. Two heavy Mikado, 2-8-2 type Pennsylvania engines on the head end were sending billowing clouds of smoke soaring into the air, while a third Mikado was eagerly pushing at the rear of a 2,000 foot string of locomotives.

The route over the Pennsylvania called for overnight stops at Perryville, Maryland; Harrisburg, Altoona, and Pitcairn, Penn; Canton and Crestline, Ohio; Ft. Wayne, Richmond, Indianapolis and Terre Haute, Indiana and at East St. Louis, Illinois.

Governors, mayors, chamber of commerce of commerce officials railroad officials and educators were groomed for the occasion. There would be a succession of gala inspection banquets and a few speeches. The real enthusiasm came from the folks along the way. Farmers paused as they toiled in the fields to stare as a regiment of glistening iron giants marched by with side rods rising and falling with an uneven rhythm. A plodding gait of about 12 miles an hour maximum speed gave everyone a good opportunity to digest this once-in-a-lifetime demonstration. Lines of tiny automobiles stopped along the roads as drivers gazed in wonderment and tooted horns enthusiastically.

The several hundred men of the Pennsylvania Railroad shop forces at Altoona cheered lustily as the engine procession rolled by. They all knew big Sam Vauclain and were proud of him. He had grown up in the town, and his father, Andrew had helped old Matthias Baldwin build his first steam locomotive--Old Ironsides. Now people the world over knew their Sam.

West of Altoona, six large freight engines were required to dnake the 4,000 tons of dead weight over the lofty Allegheny Mountains--tow on the head end, two cut in behind the 10th engine, and two bringing up the rear.

In the yards at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, two of the huge engines climbed over the rails and there was quite a scramble getting them off the ground. Due to a great deal of complex switching in the yards, it was decided to pull the train backward 92 miles to Richmond. This was a touchy situation, since a steam locomotive would be easily derailed in a backward motion. They ran thus for 10 hours and arrived safely.

The special train arrived at East St. Louis on June 5. Commonwealth Steel Company, a manufacturer of heavy locomotive castings, played host to the train and the 20 traveling engineers one of which was assigned to ride the cab of each engine from Eddystone to California.

J. W. Herbert, President of the Cotton Belt, had made arrangements for a private car to be set out at the terminal for the use of officials. It would follow the train during its run over the Cotton Belt. About two days were spent at East St. Louis.

On the morning of June 7, a Cotton Belt locomotive consolidation 2-8-0 type #762, coupled to the head end of the "Prosperity Special", and a similar helper engine was cut into the train about midway. Gently taking the slack out of the 20 couplers, the train slowly rolled across the fine, steel spans of the Thebes bridge across the Mississippi. The Cotton Belt and four other railroads built the bridge in 1905 to eliminate the troublesome barge transfer service used for many years down at Grays Point.

The first night spent in Arkansas was at Jonesboro. A crowd of about 800 persons spent several hours gazing at and inspecting the engines. At 4:30 on the morning of Friday, June 9, the train headed south for Pine Bluff, where it arrived at 8:00 p.m./

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Engineers Ammons and Rushing rolled through Pine Bluff, saluting the cheering crowds at every street crossing with echoing blasts of the engine whistles. They slowly pulled the train past the railroad shops and offices to the South end of the yards.

Very shortly people began to arrive at the shops to have a look at the strange train the whole country was talking about. All the streets in the vicinity of the shops were lined with parked automobiles, and several hundreds rode the shuttling line of street cars.

A steady stream of people began trudging the quarter-mile from the shops to reach the string of locomotives. Till late in the night they came, several thousand of them. Young, adventuresome boys clambered all over the magnificent engines, ringing the bells and generally having a wonderful time. Many men used flashlights to inspect the giants of the rails.

This train was specially interesting because it represented the tremendous cost of \$1,500,000.00- an amount hard to even imagine.

At dawn the next morning the train was separated into three sections for the trip to Texarkana. One Cotton Belt engine would pull seven of the heavy beauties, and two others would take charge of six each. The first section pulled out of town at 4:30 a.m. and rumbled across the Bayou Bartholomew bridge. The other two sections followed at five minute intervals. Sharp curves and track conditions made short train necessary. The final section had the private car of Cotton Belt Superintendent W. E. McGraw in Tow. He accompanied the train all the way to Texarkana.

The Cotton Belt delivered the engines to Corsicana, Texas, where the Southern Pacific took over. Considerable time was lost between Houston and El Paso Texas due to floods and washouts. The train left El Paso on June 27 with Division Superintendent W. Wilson's private car coupled to the rear to Yuma, Arizona. Here Wilson was succeeded by Supt. W. H. Whalen, who had called crews with seven locomotives to lift the special out of the Colorado River valley and across Beaumont, Hill.

At 5:40 p.m. on June 30 the train rolled to a gentle stop at the Los Angeles Exposition Park her destination. From May 26 to June 30 the "Prosperity Special" made a publicity run of 3,740 miles across the United States. All across the forests, prairies, deserts and mountains it spread the message that "good times are gonna roll again". Twenty locomotives had become famous before expanding steam had moved their ponderous bulk.

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Big Sam Vauclain gave America a shot of confidence it so badly needed, and he set a publicity mark for the public relations men to shoot at.

Who can say that Sam's "PROSPERITY SPECIAL" was not the spark plug which helped to produce the few years of prosperity the country was to know and enjoy.

FROM THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE CAB  
(The Presidents Column)

Historical Societies, like people, record today's events for tomorrow, for it is their responsibility to publish the "Yesterdays" today, such that memory will not fade and facts become lost within a generation.

The Football Specials of the Rock Island; a ride to Memphis or Dallas on the LONE STAR of the St.L-SW or overnite on the MoPac/L&A to Shreveport are events of importance which should be shared. I would urge each of you to write your story for the Arkansas Railroader today!!! This is a record. This is what history is.

It should be noted that committee Chairmen appointments for 1975 are a trust; your efforts will also be recorded in 1975.

Tom Shook

BOOK REVIEWS

Three new books have come to the editor's attention as worthy of review.

PENNSY STEAM & SEMAPHORES: Fred Westing, 187 p. Illustrated. Superior Pub. Co. \$13.95.

The dustjacket of this excellent work shows two Pennsy L-1's leading 22 SP 2-10-2's that made up the PROSPERITY SPECIAL

The period covered by this book is that from 1890-1920. Mr Westing does an excellent job of filling the gaps that have existed in this period with a book filled with well captioned photographs. A Must for the Pennsy fan.

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SPOKANE, PORTLAND & SEATTLE CHARLES & Dorothy Wood, 159 ppg illustrated, Superior Publishing Co. \$14.95. This volume, by the author of the "Northern Pacific" and "Milwaukee Road West" covers James J. Hill's building of the SP&S as an extension of his Great Northern in partnership with the Northern Pacific.

A well written text is bolstered not only by a large number of photographs but also a motive power roster, steam, diesel and electric. Another chapter in the saga of our great northwest.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY, Patric C. Dorn--175 pgs illustrated Superior Publishing Co., \$13.95

Those of you who enjoyed Mr. Dorn's "Domeliners" will appreciate his "Canadian National Railway". This is a capsule history of that line from the laying of the track and bridges through the era of steam locomotives to today's diesels, the steamships, trucks and airplanes.

Pictures abound of locomotives, passenger cars both heavyweight and streamlined. A well written book in the manner of the "Domeliners".

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Secretary Holt advises that membership cards have now been mailed to all who have paid their dues for 1975. If you have not received yours, please notify the secretary.

SOUTHERN STEAM SPECIALS. A list of the Southern's Steam Specials for 1975 has been received but space does not permit printing in its entirety in this issue. However the schedule for April is below

|       |          |          |  |
|-------|----------|----------|--|
| Fri., | April 4  | Eng 722  | Birmingham Ala to Columbus Ga one-way                        |
| Sat., | April 5  | " 722    | Columbus to Albany Ga & Return,<br>CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY-NRHS |
| Sun., | April 6  | " 722    | Didn't make it yesterday?                                    |
| Mon., | April 7  | " 722    | Columbus to Atlanta via SRS                                  |
| Sat., | April 12 | " 722    | Atlanta to Macon & ret. "Dogwood<br>Special" Atlanta NRHS    |
| Fri., | April 18 | Eng 4501 | Birmingham to Chattanooga one-way                            |
| Sat., | April 19 | " 4501   | Chattanooga to Huntsville & ret TVRA                         |
| Sun., | April 20 | " 4501   | 2nd Edition of "Rails to Rockets" spec                       |
| Mon., | April 21 | " 4501   | Chattanooga to Knoxville one-way                             |
| Sat., | April 26 | " 4501   | Knoxville to Cumberland Gap & ret.                           |
| Sun., | April 27 | " 4501   | OLD SMOKY NRHS. Features "Folk Fest"<br>both days.           |