

ARKANSAS RAILROADER
The Arkansas Railroad Club Newsletter
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READER RAILROAD TO MAKE FINAL SCHEDULED RUN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2. So states a notice received from Mr. T. W. M. Long dated November 15, 1972. Extra trains will be operated Tuesday, November 28th, and Thursday, November 30th. These trains will depart Reader at 10:00 a.m. The last scheduled run will depart Reader at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 2. After that date, the line will become, pending final approval of its application for complete abandonment by the Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D. C. (See ICC Docket Number AB-58), "Operated for irregular freight and passenger service only."

LITTLE ROCK & NAPOLEON
by Clifton E. Hull

In the fall of 1868, a group of men from Pine Bluff and Little Rock associated themselves together for the purpose of constructing, operating and maintaining a railroad for public use in transporting persons and property. This was in strict conformity with an act of the General Assembly of the state of Arkansas, entitled "An act to provide for a general system of railroad incorporation", which was approved on July 23, 1848.

The railroad was to be known as the "Little Rock, Pine Bluff & New Orleans". It should begin at Little Rock, then progress southward to, or near, the town of Pine Bluff, in the county of Jefferson, thence to Monticello, in Drew county. From here the line was projected south to the Arkansas-Louisiana border, passing through, or into, the counties of Pulaski, Jefferson, Drew and Ashley. Also, there was to be a branch line diverging from the main line at, or near, Pine Bluff, traveling in a southeasterly course to, or near, the terminus of Eunice, on the mighty Mississippi River. This would give a direct water-route connection with the port-city of New Orleans, as well as the transportation center of St. Louis. The length of the main line was about 160 miles, and that of the branch about 105 miles, making an impressive total of 265 miles.

The charter for the company was to continue in force for a period of 99 year. The capital stock of the company, including the cost of construction, acquisition of right of way, motive power and tolling stock, etc., was to be \$7,155,000 divided into 71,550 shares valued at \$100 each. The board of directors was composed of the following: George R. Weeks, Saul W. Mallory, James Lewis, Oliver Snyder, and Jackson E. Sickels. These men were also authorized to open books for public subscription to the stock of the company. They personally subscribed to 530 shares each.

The articles of incorporation were sworn to before Mr. W. W. Wilshire, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Arkansas, then filed in the office of the Secretary of State.

On July 31, 1868, Governor Powell Clayton of Arkansas signed an act granting aid to railroads, in the amount of \$15,000 per mile in state bonds. These bonds were payable to the state in 30 years, at 7% interest per year. This same act provided for a state railroad commission, composed of the governor, secretary of state and the superintendent. The Little Rock, Pine Bluff & New Orleans applied for and received \$1,200,000 in state bonds.

After careful surveys were made, it was determined that it would be to the advantage of the company to build the branch line to terminate at Chicot City, instead of Eunice, still keeping a Mississippi River connection. To facilitate their work, and to "kill two birds with one

stone", the company signed a contract with the state to build a levee along Cypress Creek. For this work, the state paid the company in state bonds. After the levee was completed, they laid rails on top of it to the town of Chicot. Thus, they accomplished a roadbed and were paid for it, in addition. There were approximately 15 miles of it. In the beginning, it was contemplated that the road should be built as a narrow-gauge, but fortunately, this was vetoed and it became standard gauge.

Some of the bonds, which the company had received from the state, were sold, while others were given as collateral to secure money needed for construction. When the work was finally put under contract, it was pushed forward with great energy and perseverance. The road was completed from Chicot to Pine Bluff, a distance of 65 miles, in 1873. Soon after the completion of the line to Chicot and when trains began to operate over it the discovery was made that the levee from Redfork to Chicot would not withstand the pressure of a high rise in the Mississippi River. In the fall of 1874, about 15 miles of it gave way. This was a most serious loss to the company. About this same time, many of the state bonds, given as aid to various roads, were dumped on the New York market. This flood soon reduced the value of the bonds until they were practically worthless. Great effort was required to sell the bonds for even 25 cents per one dollar face value. The company soon became insolvent, along with its neighbor, the Mississippi, Ouachita & Red River. Colonel A. H. Ryan, Secretary of State was appointed as receiver for the line.

Such a situation had been provided for back on March 2, 1870, when the stockholders met in Little Rock. The directors were given the authority to consolidate the capital stock, rights and franchises with those of any other railroad company which they, the directors, deemed would be in the best interests of their road. On November 16, 1870, the Mississippi, Ouachita & Red River stockholders met and made the same decision. On October 14, 1873, both companies decided to merge.

At this time, the new company was chartered under the name of the "Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas" (also known as the Texas, Mississippi River & North-Western Railroad Company), and was to have all the conveyed rights and privileges of the original companies. The directors and officers duly appointed to serve until the first election to be held on the 3rd Wednesday of November, 1874, were as follows: Powell Clayton of Little Rock, President; Jackson E. Sickels of Little Rock, Treasurer; A. H. Ryan of Little Rock, Secretary; S. W. Mallory, O. P. Snyder and J. M. Clayton of Pine Bluff, B. W. Martin of Warren, G. B. C. Rumbough of Little Rock, Irving C. Smith and D. B. Sickels of New York, and A. O. Morgan of South Acton, Mass., Directors.

The company would have its general offices at Little Rock. The capital stock was set at \$10,550,000 divided into 105,500 shares valued at \$100 each. It was decided that the outstanding stock of the old companies should be convertible at par, share for share, into the stock of the new corporation. The \$700,000 capital stock of the Mississippi, Ouachita & Red River was to be issued before the ratification of the consolidation and to be placed in trust with the treasurer of the new company, to be paid over to the cities and counties which had subscribed or authorized a subscription therefore, and to provide for the payment of the capital stock of the said company, when the same should become due to the state of Arkansas, in payment for land granted by the state in a special act of January 16, 1861. Also there was to be issued \$50,000 of the stock of the L.R., P.B. & N.O., before the ratification of consolidation and said stock placed in the trust of the treasurer of the new company, for the purpose of being issued to the original stockholders of the Little Rock & Napoleon. The certificate of consolidation was filed at the office of the Secretary of State on November 11, 1873.

At the time of consolidation, the road was operating from Chicot to Pine Bluff. Because of the slight grades of this portion of the road, light rails were needed instead of the rails which were required on the remainder of the system. Since the company had a common agent in New Orleans, a mistake was made by him which created quite a bit of ridicule and adverse publicity, and the directors were accused of cheating. Some of these light rails were spiked down on the wrong section and when the mistake was discovered, they were taken up and sent on to the proper location, the L.R., P.B. & N.O. branch. The officials were accused of using the same rail to secure state aid in two different sections of the country. They were eligible for state aid when they had ten consecutive miles of road constructed.

After a couple of years of trial and error, the company decided to shift portions of the road to escape the yearly flooding of lowlands along the old Bartholomew Bayou. This was a great benefit for maintaining an uninterrupted schedule.

Early in 1879 the relocated portion to Arkansas City was completed. It diverged from the old route about two miles south of Varner. The trains were loaded to capacity with freight of all kinds. They were making the run from Pine Bluff to Arkansas City in only 8 hours, including all stops. About two and three-quarter miles of trestle had been built to keep the road from being flooded. The cost of the relocation was paid from the receipts of the two preceding seasons. About the first of April 1879, additional work was done and the running time was reduced to five hours. The depot at Arkansas City was conveniently located on the bank of the Mississippi River so as to facilitate the transfer of freight to and from the steamboats. There were nine stations erected on the line, which ran through a most rich and fertile section of country. Also many stores were being erected. That all spoke very well for superintendent Houdlette and his assistant, Major J. W. Buckner, who had previously worked for the Little Rock & Ft. Smith. Conductors Sappington and Watson were also very popular with the passengers.

There was a great deal of agitation for the completion of the road from Pine Bluff to Little Rock. Early in December of 1879, president J. E. Redfield, and principal stockholder E. H. Winchester, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, were in Little Rock. These gentlemen were making an effort to induce the business men of the city to subscribe to \$50,000 in stock of the railroad. The engineer's estimate of cost for the 44 mile gap was \$600,000. The major portion of this had been raised. The day was drawing near when the road would enter the capital city.

During the year of 1880, the entire existing road was generally rehabilitated. Old bridges were replaced with new ones and additional side tracks were laid to take care of the increased business. All ties had been replaced and water tanks, depots, platforms, machine shops and two elevators had been erected. The southern end of the road had been completed to Monticello and it was anticipated that the northern end would reach Little Rock early in January 1881. There was on hand twelve locomotives, 250 freight cars and passenger cars sufficient for the already increased traffic. A statement of the business for 1880 showed total tonnage of 86,945 tons, with baled cotton of 50,000 tons the largest item.

The gentlemen entrusted with the guidance and direction of the road are worthy of note at this time and they make quite an impressive list. The first president was Hon. O. P. Snyder, ex-member of Congress from Pine Bluff. The second was Gen. Sam. W. Mallory. The third, Dr. J. M. Lewis. The fourth, ex-governor and ex-United States Senator Powell Clayton. The fifth and present one was Col. J. E. Redfield, a resident of

Essex, Connecticut, through whose energy, perseverance and New England pluck the road had attained its prosperity and commercial importance. The general superintendent, Col. J. A. Woodson, deserves more than a passing notice. He was born to the "grand manner", and the people had more than ordinary pride in his sterling qualities as a gentleman, a citizen and as a railroad manager. His rapid advancement from station agent's clerk in 1873 to general freight and passenger agent in 1875 to general superintendent in 1878, without the aid of influential friends, but simply by the standards of merit, presents a picture of deserved success that is seldom equalled. He was a genuine self-made man. The general supervising management was in the hands of an executive committee located in Boston and composed of J. E. Redfield, Elisha Atkins and E. H. Winchester. (Redfield and Atkins were also the guiding force behind the Little Rock and Fort Smith.) The principal owners of the road were Charles Main, of San Francisco; E. H. Winchester; J. E. Redfield; and Elisha Atkins, F. Gordon Dexter, John H. Reed, E. L. Adams, and C. W. Huntington all of Boston, Massachusetts. These gentlemen were all capitalists and extensive owners in other railroads. Therefore, it was fairly safe to say that this road would be built, fully equipped and ready for active business soon.

In July of 1880 there was 10 miles of roadbed graded north of Pine Bluff and rails would be laid by the first of August. Contractors Meyer & Cassidy had the contract for completing the road to Little Rock. In March of 1880 the road officially changed the name of its terminal on the Mississippi River from Arkapolis to Arkansas City. On October 11, 1880, there were four passenger coaches and two baggage cars delivered to Little Rock for the road, so it was fairly certain the line would soon reach town. The cars were from the Ohio Falls Car Works at Jeffersonville, Indiana, and were in charge of Mr. Milo Turk, a representative of the car works. On this very same day, the new rails had been laid 16 miles north from Pine Bluff and trains began running to end of track.

The gap between Pine Bluff and Little Rock was closed on February 25, 1881. The evening before, Col. Woodson had announced that the final spike would be driven home and invited all his friends to go down and participate in the festivities. At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 25th, the train, in charge of Conductor Hightower, left the foot of Cumberland Street loaded down with the most prominent citizens. Among them were Mayor Fletcher, Senator Thornton, Senator Whittington, Col. Zeb Ward, Leo Pallock, E. J. Butler, A. G. Deshon, C. T. Walker, Rep. Hare, Dave Pollock, Judge S. W. Williams, Col. J. N. Smithee, W. P. Grace, Fred Kramer, Secretary of State Frolich, S. B. Kirby, George T. Black, Rep. Turner, Rep. Williamson, Joe N. Martin, Col. W. D. Slack, Charles Ogden, Col. J. W. Gay, Col. P. J. Bennett, Sol F. Clark, William Kirten, C. E. Stephens, J. Niemeyer, L. Volmer, Sam O. Smith, Fred Hanger, W. H. Wright, Senator Hall, Thad O. Atkins, Adam Clark, Senator McPhetridge, Max Hilb, Rep. Marrs, Reverend Hamilton, Senator Duncan, J. J. Shell, Major Hanes and Fred Roesh.

After crossing the levee, the engineer greeted the steamboats with some gay artistry on the whistle and then the train thundered out toward Fourche Bayou and into the woods. They reached the end of track, four miles from town, at 11 o'clock. The remaining gap was one rail long.

At 11:30 the train from Pine Bluff arrived, loaded to the vestibule with happy people. The two little locomotives greeted each other with jubilant screams of delight and old Fourche Mountain took up the glad sound and hurled it to the skies. The two crowds pressed forward, eagerly clasping each other's outstretched hands.

Foreman Ryan got the rails in place and the silver plated spikes were put in position. The first blow was struck by President Redfield,

who was succeeded by Superintendent Woodson and many others. With blows from the mauls, the silver spikes were driven home and a glittering line of steel connected Little Rock and the southeast. Judge Frank Silverman made a very pretty speech, expressing the sentiments of all those present, when he expressed his joy at the connecting of Pine Bluff with the civilization of the world, making their friends in the capital city nearer and dearer. Judge S. W. Williams urged liberal railroad legislation, pointing to the Valley Route as evidence of what it could bring.

President Redfield was called upon, and in a few well-chosen words, said he had come here six years before as an agent of the bondholders, and he had spoken by his works instead of words. At his invitation to "wet it down", there was a din of popping champagne corks.

A citizen of Pine Bluff felt a poetic urge come over him, and the result was the following gem:

Here is the road that Redfield built.

Here is the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here are the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here is the wine, sparkling light,
To fill the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here is the Rock, with its elite,
To drink the wine, sparkling light,
To fill the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here is the Bluff, in rueful plight,
To help the Rock, with its elite,
To drink the wine, sparkling light,
To fill the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here is civilization, illumining night,
To teach the Bluff, in ruefull plight,
To help the Rock, with its elite,
To drink the wine, sparkling light,
To fill the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

Here is the Mayor, of great height,
To welcome civilization, illumining night,
To teach the Bluff, in rueful plight,
To help the Rock, with its elite,
To drink the wine, sparkling light,
To fill the men, not yet tight,
Who drove the spike, silvered bright,
That joins the road that Redfield built.

The Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas, better known as the Arkansas Valley Route, occupied for offices a suite of rooms in the Metropolitan Block, at the corner of Markham and Main streets in Little Rock. In the front room was Col. J. A. Woodson, general superintendent, and his chief clerk, Mr. George B. Allis. The next room was the office of Train Dispatcher E. D. Sill, a very popular young man. Mr. J. R. Honeycutt was the night operator. The third office was that of a handsome young blonde, Mr. H. G. Allis, auditor, and his assistants S. B. Smith, F. B. Babney, A. V. Stafford, and E. B. Bloom. The roadmaster, Mr. S. A. Callanen, and his clerk, Mr. Charles Lloyd, occupied the next room, while the genial, old reliable general freight agent, E. W. Outlaw had the last room. The city agent was Capt. Sam. O. Smith, whose office was in the Dodge & Meade Block, nearly opposite the Capitol Hotel.

In the fall of 1883 there appeared a rumor that the Valley Route and the Little Rock & Fort Smith were contemplating a consolidation. A gentleman by the name of Bennett with the Fort Smith road released a notice that the stockholders of the companies had agreed upon one superintendent for both roads who would be Mr. Henry Woods. There was also talk about joining the two roads physically by constructing a bridge across the Arkansas at Little Rock.

During the summer and fall season of 1883, business on the Valley Route increased remarkably.

The Little Rock Junction Railroad Company was formed as an independent company to construct a bridge across the Arkansas River, thus joining the Valley Route and the Ft. Smith road. It was built at the foot of Commerce street in Little Rock.

In January of 1884, the Valley Route was inundated by flood waters of the Mississippi River, bringing all traffic to a halt. Trains were running again by late in March.

In January 1884, the Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas, in conjunction with the Fort Smith road, established an invalid fund for the benefit of its employees. From the wages of every employee, 50 cents was withheld each month. This entitled sick or injured workers to free medicine and medical attention at home, or in hospitals provided by the companies. This was the forerunner of the present Missouri Pacific Hospital at Little Rock.

At the time of merging with the Fort Smith road, Elisha Atkins had been elected president. In July of 1885, Mr. Atkins announced that a reorganization was inevitable. It was most important that the road should be extended westward to Camden, forming a junction with the Texas & St. Louis road (later becoming the Cotton Belt). The treasury was empty, and interest on its bonds was overdue and could not be paid. The executive committee recommended a reorganization on the following basis:

1. Organize two entirely new and independent corporations, one of which would purchase with its bonds and stock, to own and hold, the Pine Bluff division, extending from Little Rock to Arkansas City, and the other corporation should purchase and hold the Ouachita division, extending from its intersection with the former division at Trippe's station, about 7 miles west of Arkansas City, to Texarkana. The latter corporation should retain the right to use and enjoy, in common with the former corporation, the seven miles of road from Trippe's station to Arkansas City, as well as all terminal facilities there.

2. The stock and bonds of the present company should be assigned to the new companies and exchanged for new stock and bonds.

This proposal was met with approval of the majority of stockholders and was being formulated when misfortune took an active hand in the affair. Mr. Jay Gould, the railroad tycoon of the United States, ap-

proached Mr. Winchester on the sly and purchased his large block of stock. With what Gould already owned this gave him control of the Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas, as well as the Little Rock & Fort Smith. He then effected a lease of the Ft. Smith road and caused the Pine Bluff line to be put up for public sale.

On December 15, 1886, the property was bid for by Jay Gould for the amount of \$50,000. The circuit court decreed the bid was made and accepted illegally and declared the sale void.

Mr. Charles P. Redmond, Master of the Circuit Court, of the Eastern District of Arkansas, would offer the property at public sale, after first giving notice 20 days previously, by placing advertisements nine times in the Arkansas Gazette, the New York Evening Post and the Boston Daily Post. The last ad would be placed five days before the sale.

The date of January 28, 1887, was set for the sale.

At that date, Jay Gould bid \$1,800,000 for the property, at the front door of the U. S. Court House and Post Office at Little Rock. He gave the court \$25,000 in cash and the balance in first mortgage bonds.

Thus the Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas became absorbed into Mr. Gould's St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern, and finally the Missouri Pacific in 1917. Even today it is known as the "Valley" division.

THE NEXT ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB MEETING IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, at 2:00 p.m. in room 305 of the Missouri Pacific Union Station at Little Rock.

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the furthering of interest in railroads - past present and future. Annual dues are Regular (Arkansas residents) \$5.00 and Associate (outside Arkansas) \$3.00. Correspondence should be addressed to P. O. Box 5584, Little Rock, Ark. 72205