



Arkansas

DELTA VALLEY & SOUTHERN

Railroader



COTTON PLANT-FARGO RAILWAY

WARREN & SALINE RIVER

LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MERRY CHRISTMAS - HAPPY NEW YEAR

DECEMBER 1976

PRESIDENT.....WALTER WALKER
SECRETARY.....ROSS HOLF
TREASURER.....C. R. BYRD
NEWS DIRECTOR.....GENE HULL
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NOVEMBER MEETING

Blame it on the weather for the cancellation of our November meeting. We awoke to a snowy morning and ice coated streets. President Walter Walker made many telephone calls, as well as others, cancelling the meeting. The proposed new officers for 1977 will be acted on probably at our January meeting.

DECEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY

As all of you know by now, the annual Christmas party to be held at the home of your editor, will take the place of our regular meeting. Again a reminder--try to be here by 7:00 PM; cost is \$3.75 per person. Dress is optional--(No tuxedos please). It is important that you fill out the form which was in the November letter and let your committee know how many will attend. We plan on having lots of "goodies" to eat as well as lots of fun and fellowship. The date is Saturday night, December 11th. Will try and have my driveway leading to carport open if any of you want to park in it. Drive, Walk, Fly or whatnot but please try and come out for a grand evening.

EDITOR'S WESTERN TRIP

My purpose will be not to bore any of you about a trip as I know many of you take long trips all the time. Cannot let it slip by however to tell you a few things about your editor and wife's trip to some of the far reaches of these western United States. The highlights to me of the trip were a visit to Hoover Dam in Nevada (formerly called Boulder Dam) Las Vegas (what a place), The Grand Canyon in Arizona, a visit to the Santa Fe's Bicentennial train which was making a tour of the west. The train was in Glendale, Arizona for three days. It consisted of diesel, two exhibition cars and caboose, all painted in Red, White & Blue. Santa Fe officials were very courteous and a tour of the train included a visit to the cab of the diesel. Let me say that the real highlight of the trip was closer to home; In fact it was at Flint, Texas, some few miles from Tyler, Texas and it was the Whistle Stop Ranch, owned by Mr. B. B. Garrett, General Freight Claim Agent for the Cotton Belt at Tyler. This is truly a rail fan's paradise. Included among things to see at the ranch are Ex-SF Twin Unit Diner, Nos. 10277, 10278 and 10279. Also an Ex-SOUTHERN RAILWAY business car (number not available) Ex AMTRAK CARS Nos. 4840 and 8321. Ex COTTON BELT restored wooden caboose and the semaphore that served the former Cotton Belt station at Plain Dealing, La. This semaphore is wired for

WHISTLE STOP RANCH

lighting at night and is a real beauty. Also on the front porch of the ranch house is the former S.P. train schedule board from the former station at Columbus, New Mexico, showing the SUNSET, GOLDEN STATE and other former fast S.P. passenger trains. If you get in the area of Tyler or Flint don't fail to visit the Whistle Stop Ranch. Mr. Garrett is a prince of a fellow and welcomes all rail fans. Oh yes cannot let this end without saying something about antique shops. There are hundreds of them where we went but finding railroad "goodies"---just almost non-existent. Very disappointed did not find anything (except at Whistle Stop) but ah-thats another story. We are glad to be back in good old Arkansas and again see friends like you.

A BIT OF THIS AND THAT

Have in my possession a very lengthy news article which was run in THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC of Phoenix, Arizona about former great restaurant man, FRED HARVEY, his Harvey Houses, dining cars on the SANTA FE and other information. It is very interesting and will try and run at least a part of it in the January, 1977 news letter.

Saw lots of S.P. and Santa Fe trains out west. The former SP-Santa Fe passenger station at Phoenix, (now used by AMTRAK) is a spanish type design and still very beautiful, although the inside looks rather run down. The former Santa Fe station at Grand Canyon, Arizona, is now used by some tour bus lines. The tracks, including the bumpers at the end, are still in place although one can tell there has been no usage of them in a long time. Rumor has it that a tourist rail line operator is interested in opening the line to the Santa Fe connection at Williams. This would be a very scenic operation should

A BIT OF THIS AND THAT-CONTINUED

it materialize. The station at Grand Canyon is right down the hill from the EL TOVAR HOTEL, formerly operated by Fred Harvey.

It is sure nice to have AMTRAK'S INTER-AMERICAN on a daily basis thru Little Rock. We note they are now doing some advertising too in the local papers. We need AMTRAK on other routes in Arkansas too; Little Rock-Memphis for example; or Little Rock to Birmingham and Atlanta via Memphis. There is some other fast track in the state; Pine Bluff-Texarkana, Pine Bluff-St.Louis via Jonesboro. The boys sitting in Washington, D.C. in the Congress are the ones to get it going. We hope that the future will see more than one AMTRAK route in our state. We can hope can't we??????

Auto drivers at El Paso, San Antonio and Austin must be the fastest on wheels. Going thru these cities they were driving like demons with no observance (so it seemed) of the speed limit and no cops in sight. This is no reflection on our good rail fan friends in the Lone Star state. One thing remains certain though; next time your editor takes a long trip it is going to be via the good old TRAIN. Period.

CONGRATULATIONS--COTTON BELT

The St. Louis Southwestern Railway, (Cotton Belt Route) will be one hundred years old in 1977. The line started operations as a narrow-gauge line in 1877. Today it is one of the Nation's fastest and modern freight carriers. Last page of the news letter carries article which was in the line's 75th Anniversary pocket memorandum book. Hope it will be of interest to all of you. It is reprinted courtesy of COTTON BELT ROUTE.

THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF COTTON BELT ROUTE

Time has yellowed the pages that record the history of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway lines. The story is woven through and through with ever-present financial difficulties and the endless struggle to weld the various segments together and extend the line through wild, unsettled areas to trade centers.

The first link in the present modern system serving the great Southwest through the St. Louis and Memphis gateways, was the Tyler Tap Railroad. Conceived in 1871, the narrow-gauge line was completed from Tyler to Big Sandy, Texas, a distance of 21½ miles in 1877.

The country was in the grip of a great depression at the time. General U. S. Grant had stepped down and Rutherford B. Hayes had just been inaugurated president of the United States. Only a year prior to completion of the little road, Alexander Graham Bell had invented the telephone and the United States had celebrated its 100th birthday as a nation.

Financial difficulties soon overtook the road, and a group of financiers that owned the St. Louis Cotton Compress Company took over in 1879 and reorganized it as the Texas and St. Louis Railroad. The line was extended to Texarkana, Texas to connect with the Iron Mountain Railroad to ship cotton to St. Louis. As another extension to Waco, Texas was being completed, Jay Gould, the great railroad tycoon, purchased the Iron Mountain and revoked the traffic agreement to force the Texas and St. Louis line to sell out or give up of doing a through business to St. Louis. Although seemingly a catastrophe, it became the deciding factor that encouraged the "yard wide road" to extend its rails north of Texas.

The Texas and St. Louis Railroad of Arkansas was incorporated in 1881 to construct a narrow-gauge road from Texarkana, Texas to the Arkansas-Missouri state line. The company consolidated the same year with the Little River Valley and Arkansas Railroad, a small line operating between New Madrid, Malden and Birds Point, Mo., with the right to construct from Birds Point, Mo. to Texarkana, Texas. The road through Arkansas was completed in 1883. Meanwhile, the line in Texas had been extended south making a 725-mile system from Birds Point, Mo. on the west bank of the Mississippi River opposite Cairo, Ill. to Gatesville, Texas.

Reorganized again in 1886 as the St. Louis, Arkansas and Texas Railroad, the building program continued. By 1888 various branch lines were completed, the cost of which, coupled with the expense of changing from narrow to standard gauge track, forced another reorganization. In 1891 the present St. Louis Southwestern Railway Lines acquired the properties.

When access to the St. Louis and Memphis gateways was accomplished, interchange with eastern, northern and western lines placed the 1700-odd-mile system on a firmer basis. The road prospered for many years and improved its properties until the depression of the troubled thirties forced bankruptcy upon it. The trustee returned the properties to the stockholders 11½ years later. It is believed to be the first time in American railroading that a trunk line emerged from bankruptcy intact, the investment of the stockholders protected and preserved 100 per cent.

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization that meets the second Sunday of each month in the Missouri Pacific Office Building, 1000 West 4th St. North Little Rock, Ark. For information about the club address ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, P. O. BOX 5584, LITTLE ROCK, ARK. 72215.
