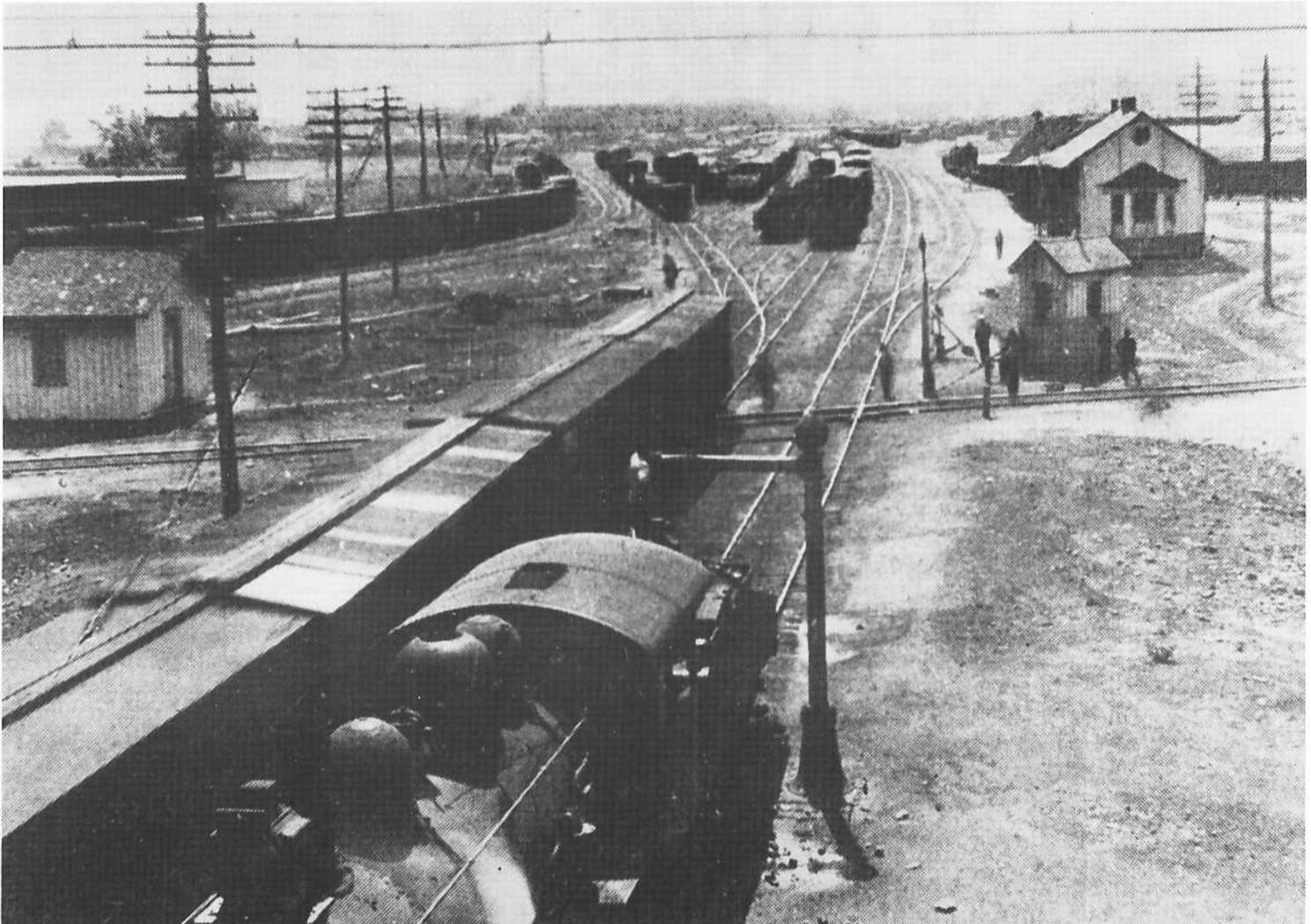


LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
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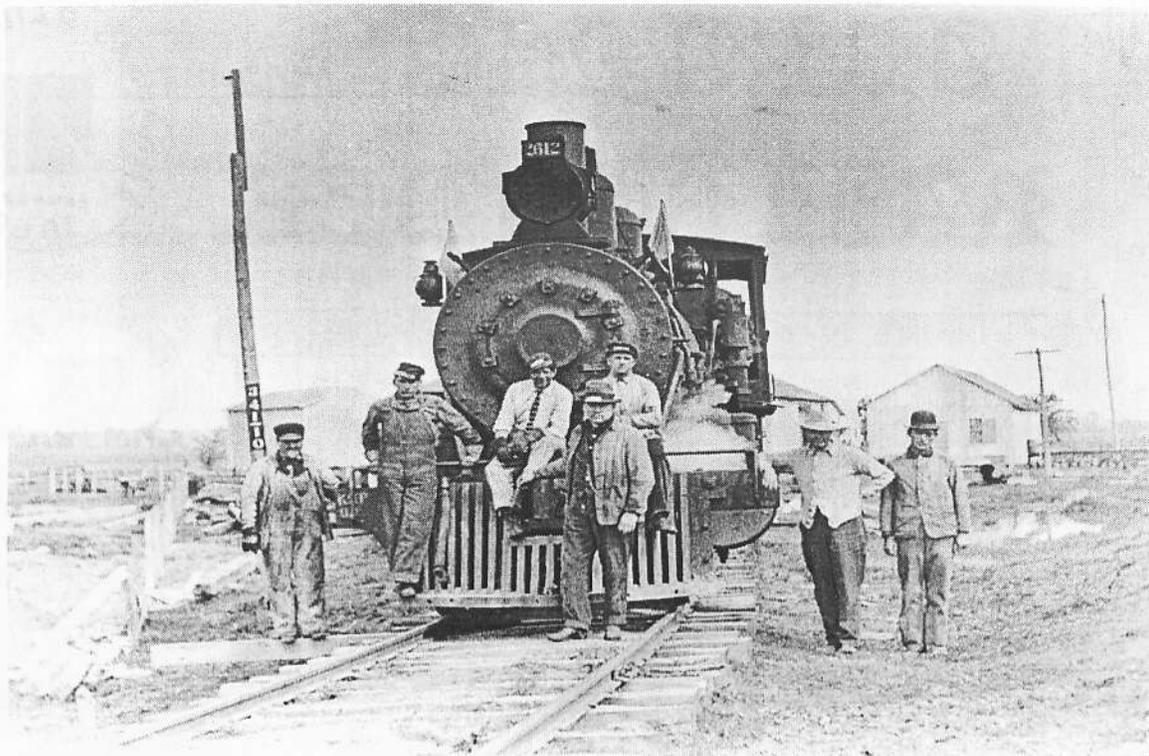
ARKANSAS RAILROADER



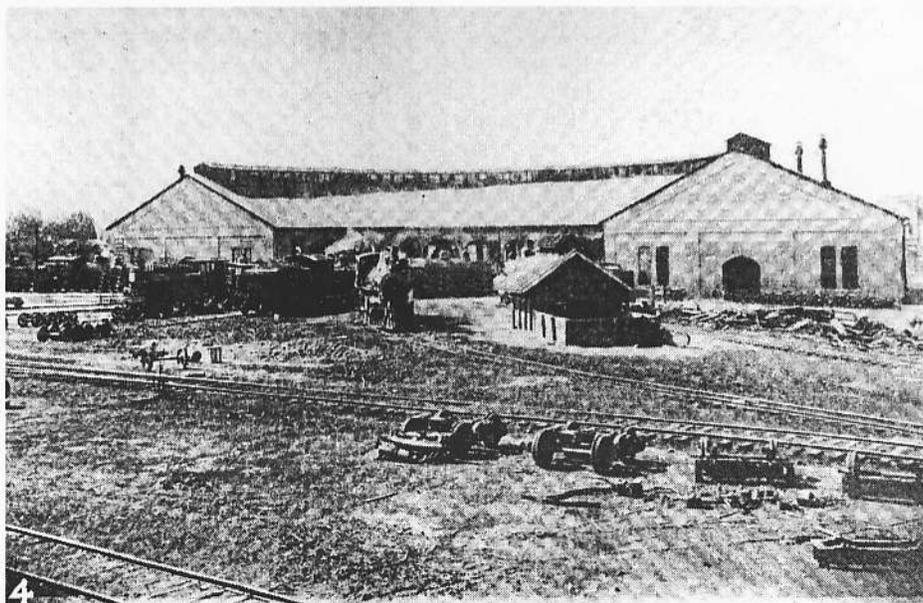
VOLUME 29 NUMBER 12 DECEMBER 1998



Looking west down the Iron Mountain main track at Argenta, Arkansas ca. 1908. The train yard was the HOLE yard. In the distance are the back shops and roundhouses. Upper right is the YARD OFFICE and also served as a sort of passenger station for Argenta. In the center left to right was the infamous "Fort Smith Crossing," OR, as the LR&FS called it the "IRON MOUNTAIN crossing." A contract was let in 1909 to double track the main line but the crossing was kept in service, however, until early World War II. It was then removed as unsafe, unnecessary and probably unsanitary. The area in the left rear background was known as "over the crossing" or abbreviated OXING. So far as I know - still is! I went to work in the yard office in June 1946 as yard clerk (mud hop) and most of my time was spent out in the yard checking cars. The yard office housed the General Yardmaster and his assistant plus a slew of clerks, most of them 24 hour-seven days a week job. The most important to our story was a fenced-in cubicle about the mid point of the building and behind the NS telegraph office. This was the den of the CHIEF CALLER and his helper the ubiquitous CALLBOY. At this time the callboy was furnished an old Plymouth coupe to do his awakening chores with. On back in the building and in a newer portion was the Assistant Superintendent and some locker rooms. In 1952 the Locust Street yard, ½ mile north or east, was doubled in size, the HOLE yard was abandoned for train classification and this building was razed upon completion of a fine two-story brick building at 11th and VINE. I was told and have no reason to doubt it that a full truckload of empty bottles were salvaged from the ground under this old eyesore. I don't recall anyone shedding any tears for having to move from this old relic to a modern air-conditioned office. (W. M. Adams collection)



Iron Mountain Extra 2612 South (?) at Mile Post 341 Pole 10 ca. 1910. Here we see the engine crew (left) the train crew complete with shiny hat badges and possibly the local agent and station porter. But where??? MP 341 Pole 10 on the Arkansas Division was just south of the Tie Plant connection but this don't look right to be there. There was another such mile post location over around Helena. John Martin gave me this picture and said he believed it was over there. I will agree with him. We do know that the 2612 was a 4-6-0 (ten-wheeler) built as Missouri Pacific 761 by Baldwin in 1893. She was renumbered in the big December 1905 tie-up to 2612 and scrapped at North Little Rock June 17, 1935. From the looks of this terrain the callboy had to wear gum boots to call his crew. *(John Martin collection, caption by Mike Adams)*



119 LR RISE ARGENTA

The Memphis and Little Rock/Little Rock and Memphis/Choctaw Route and last but not least Rock Island roundhouse about the turn of the century. This was located between Fourth and Fifth Streets and bordered by Locust Street on the east and Cypress on the west in what was (from 1890 to 1904) the Eighth Ward of Little Rock but earlier and later ARGENTA. In 1907 the Rock Island started construction of the Biddle complex in southern Little Rock and this edifice was abandoned. It became a pigeon roost, fell into ruin and became an eyesore to the people of Argenta. It a few years it was destroyed by fire of a "mysterious" origin. When I was switching on the Rock Island in late 1949 many of the old foundations were still evident. *(W. M. Adams collection)*

THE CALLBOY

By W. M. "Mike" Adams ca 1998

*"He has the roundhouse foreman send one of the bright young boys ***
to call the engineer and fireman whose names were posted
'first out. ' " Edward Hungerford 1911.*

It was axiomatic that in days of yore most of the outstanding upper echelon positions of any reasonably well managed railroad were occupied by crusty old gents who had started their long climb to the top as a lowly callboy. There they learned that not all employees had been hewn from the same rock and found out at a very young age just how to cope with the varieties of humankind.

Before the days of the telephone it was necessary that all train and engine service employees be called by a visit to their front door, or perhaps their favorite saloon. On the Missouri Pacific - Iron Mountain such employees were required to live within one mile of the depot, yard office or roundhouse. That is why so many enginemen at what is now North Little Rock lived in the Baring Cross area. Conversely Clendenin Hill, just to the north of the yard office then located about Tenth and Maple, was heavily peopled with conductors. I had one old timer tell me that when he entered service as a brakeman his one ambition was to become a conductor and buy a house on Clendenin Hill.

As the telephone became the norm the necessity for door shaking became redundant and the men started moving to the suburbs - after buying a Model T of course. There was another practical reason also. They could get a little acreage and raise some corn, potatoes and beans and a few chickens to tide them over when they might be cut off due to lack of business or perhaps even fired for dereliction of duty - or just plain bad luck.

In this day of super government highways hereabouts we have men and women living in Greenbrier, Lonoke, Conway, Benton and on and on. When I retired the callboy had sunk to the status of mostly a messenger. The crew board was handled by the "chief" caller for trainmen and the engine dispatcher for enginemen. They did all the calling by telephone except for a few that still had to be rounded up by the callboy. Sure has taken away the starting point for a young lad or lass who pines to be a railroad president. I understand the callers are now located hundreds of miles away, say Omaha, and most of the work has been delegated to a computer, com dot com or something.

When I first bid in on a "chief" callers job in 1947 I found out that we were still

saddled with a few employees who couldn't be trusted to take a verbal awakening from the callboy and report to his train. These miscreants were always, but always, required to sign a small book used by the callboy. If they delayed a train this was sufficient evidence to give them some punishment. I wonder how the computer handles such cases if any exist now?

Now all callboys did not become brass hats - far from it. Their job was beset with many a pitfall. The late Cal Eudy and I used to fish somewhere at every opportunity. Cal was terminal manager of the Little Rock Terminal Division before his sudden death at a relatively young age. We loved to float the White River for trout and for some time went to Cotter and used the Hurst fishing services. One Saturday Bill Johnson, manager of the dock, introduced us to Homer Queen who was to be our guide for the day. Bill was an ex-MoPac clerk, his father had been an engineer until fatally injured in a freak accident at Diaz. Bill told us Homer worked for the railroad and guided for them on week-ends to help them out. Bill said he knew every fish in the river from up above Wildcat Shoals to down below the mouth of the North Fork.

We hadn't gone far when Homer turned to me and said, "You say your name is Adams. You sure look familiar." I told him my Dad was Walter Adams and we used to live at Cotter and my Uncle Elmer had been a relief agent/operator at one time. Homer then told us he had been the callboy at Cotter back in the early 1920's and remembered my Dad since he worked in the chief dispatchers office and handled train crews and Homer answered to him for trainmen, the enginemen being handled by the roundhouse foreman and his clerk,. Homer then told us how his rise in the ranks from callboy got "big-holed."

Seems he was sent to call an engineer for an early, very early, morning train but this old curmudgeon had layed off but no proper record made. It was cold with several inches of snow on the ground when Homer went up on the engineman's porch and knocked. He knocked and knocked and finally got a response, and what a response. This engineer was a mean old rooster high on the seniority roster and his nickname was "SATAN." From all accounts he lived up to it. He called Homer every name in the book as he retreated down the steps and out to the yard gate. Spewing his venom the old boy finally said something that Homer felt was entirely out of line and Homer picked up a handful of snow determined to stop this invective, one way or the other. In his haste seems Homer picked up a right fair sized rock so he just wrapped it in snow and let fly. His aim was true and he hit old Satan right between the eyes! Homer went back to the roundhouse as fast as he could and told his troubles to the foreman. The foreman sympathized with him but told him he was probably in deep trouble and he was.

By the time all the daylight dignitaries had gotten to work old Satan was on hand

with a small bandage on his forehead and mouthing foul imprecations. The chief dispatcher (trainmaster) was C. A. Forbes and he told Homer it looked like he was going to have to let him go. The wounded engineer didn't like this - he wanted Homer put on a chain gang or worse. There was no union coverage of callboys at this time but Homer was in luck. Seems the southend roadmaster was in town that day and witnessed all this palavering and told Mr. Forbes he needed a scrappy youngster to put on a scaling gang he was getting together for spring. He told Forbes he wanted Homer and would put him to work immediately. Satan was furious and Homer went to work for Charlie Jeffrey's gang. If they had to flag a train and often did in the course of their work and it happened old Satan was engineer then Charlie let Homer do the honors. Homer would load up his pockets with several sticks of dynamite and crawl up on the engine and nearly give the engineer apoplexy!

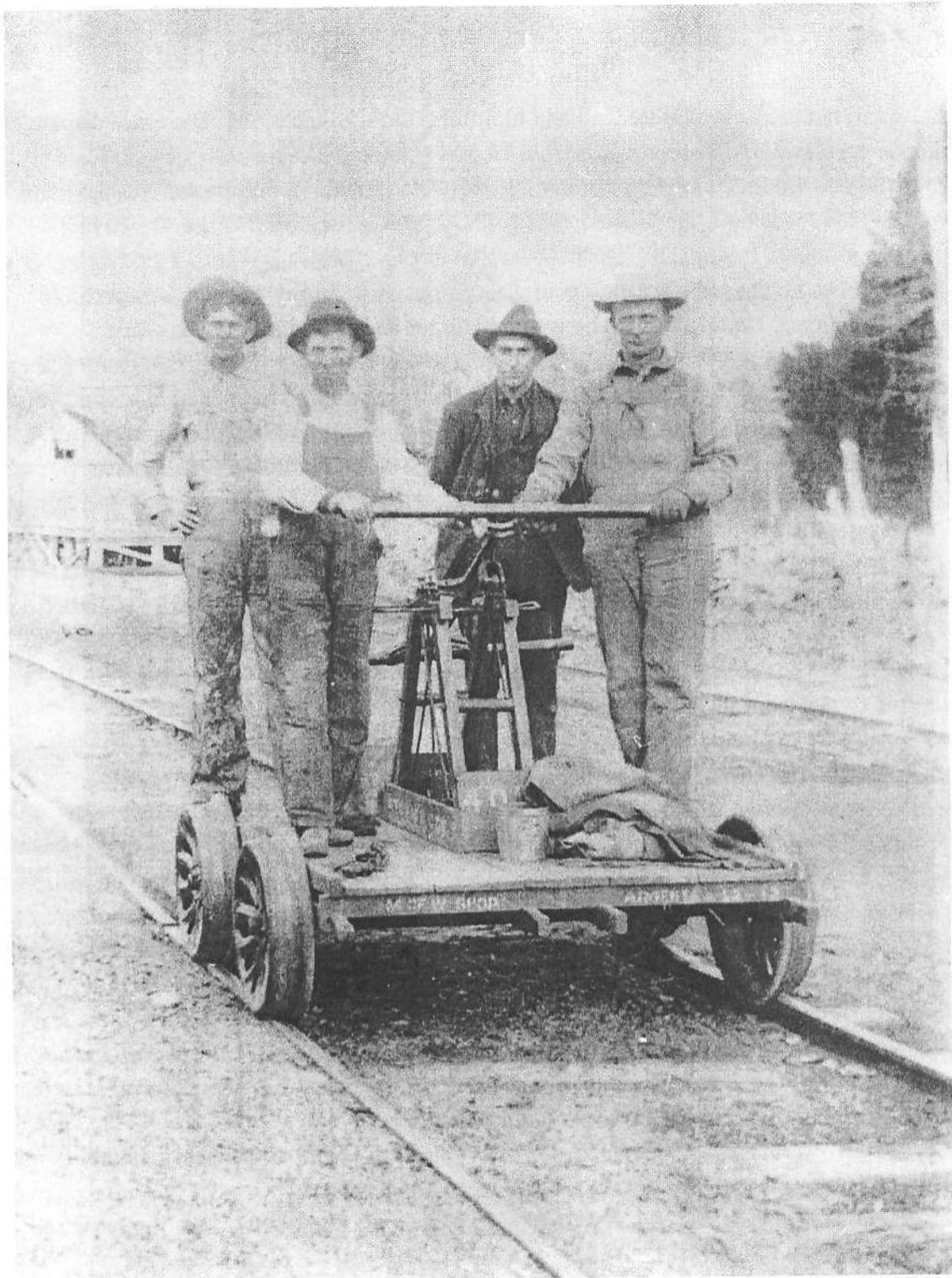
I suppose Homer and Satan got along together in later years but Homer never did get to be superintendent or general manager much less president. He came out even better.

He retired as section foreman at Buffalo, Arkansas living in a company house right across the tracks from the river where he kept his boat tied up. His sons went into maintenance of way work on the White River Division and just the other day I saw in the death notices in the Union Pacific Magazine INFO that a Homer Queen, Jr., age 74, retired section foreman at Buffalo, Arkansas had passed away. He was the oldest and stayed right in his father's footsteps including fishing.

I didn't go to work as callboy but at a position even lower on the railroad ladder. I started as a mail and baggage handler. I never heard of a mail and baggage handler getting to be president so I was careful not to break this tradition

"In command of each section ... is a section boss. The section boss is a wry and wise soul ..." Ibid





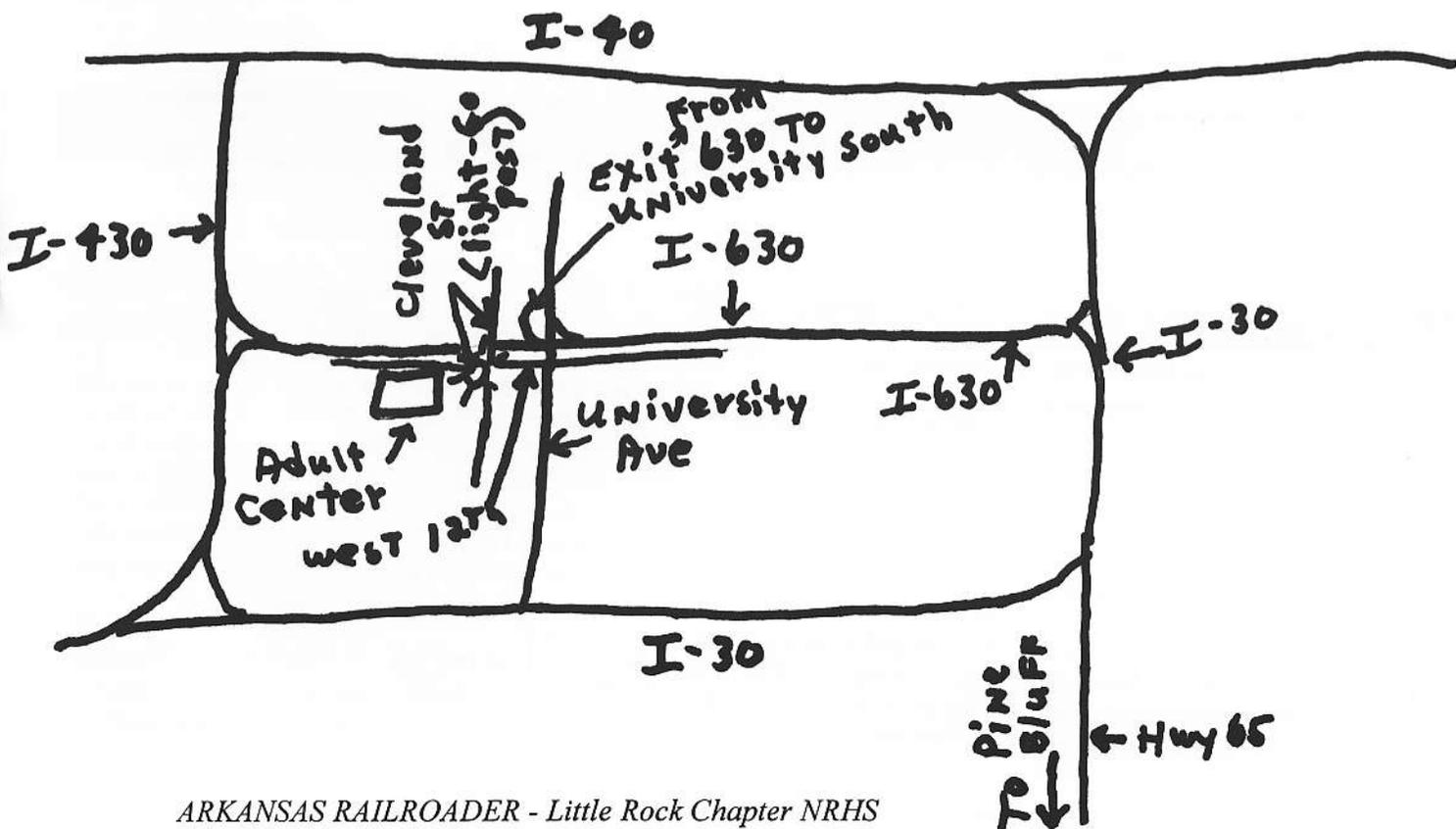
Iron Mountain section crew at Ward, Arkansas ca. 1914. The section foreman (in black) was C. Piker. One of his sons G. C. "Bud" Piker was a conductor on the Missouri Pacific. Another was a switchman on the Rock Island. A third owned and operated a service station on North Main in north Little Rock. Note the "Irish Mail" handcar had been repaired at the Argenta, Arkansas Maintenance of Way shops in December 1912. *(Photo from the late G. C. Piker, W. M. Adams collection)*

1998 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

- PRESIDENT - Leonard L. Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)
- VICE-PRESIDENT - John Hodkin, Jr., 506 Gordon St, N Little Rock AR 72117 (501-945-2128)
- TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826)
- SECRETARY - Carole Sue Schafer, 103 Thayer St, Little Rock AR 72205-5951 (501-371-0034)
- EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340)
- NRHS DIRECTOR - Jim Bennett, 1002 South Leslie St, Stuttgart AR 72160 (870)-673-6753)
- PHOTOGRAPHER - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729)
- TRIP ADVERTISING - David P. Hoge, 3721 Idlewild, N Little Rock AR 72116 (501-771-1025)
- BOARD '98 - Robin Thomas, 10908 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412
- BOARD '99 - Stanley Wozencraft, 108 N Palm, Little Rock AR 72205 (501-664-3301)
- BOARD '00 - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington #31, North Little Rock AR 72114-6455 (501-945-7386)
- BOARD '01 - Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr. Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
- BOARD '02 - Bill Bailey, 8318 Reymere Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3944 (501-224-6828)

NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The next gathering of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 6 p.m., which will be our annual CHRISTMAS DINNER. This event will be held at the University Park Adult Leisure Center, 6401 West 12th Street, Little Rock. Time will be 6 p.m. and the cost will be \$15 per person, payable in advance. There will be a buffet with 2 meats and several vegetable choices. This is always a well attended club function. If you plan on coming, send your \$15 check made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club and mail to our address: PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. Here's the directions to the place:



NEWSLETTER DEADLINES - Deadline for the January *Railroader* is December 15.

OFFICERS NOMINATED FOR 1999 - Here are the nominees for the chapter's 1999 officers, which will be installed at our Christmas Dinner December 6. President - Leonard Thulmueller; Vice-President - John Hodkin, Jr.; - Treasurer - Walter Walker; Secretary - Carole Sue Schafer; Board of Directors for 2002 - Robin Thomas. Other positions in the club: Editor - Ken Ziegenbein; NRHS Director -; Photographer - John Jones; Advertising - David P. Hoge.

NAME, PLEASE - I enjoy getting photos and encourage you to send them in for possible publication in the *Railroader*. However, sometimes they get separated from the envelope they came in and weeks or months later, I have nice photos but no one to credit since nothing is written on the photo. PLEASE write your name on any photos you send in to guarantee that you get proper credit.

SHORTLINE BOOK REPRINT - Gene Hull's *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas* book will be reprinted soon and only cost \$24.95. One thousand copies will be printed. We'll let you know when it's available.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS: THOMAS OLMSTEAD (12/07); EDWIN M. HORTON (12/10); THOMAS M. BINGER (12/19); CRAIG GERARD (12/20); JOHN B. ELDERS (12/22); KEVIN HINES PHILLIPS (12/24); PAUL F. FILES (12/25); JOHN C. JONES (12/26); BOB W. SANDAGE (12/29).

NEW WEB ADDRESS - I've upgraded my web address, where I post the *Arkansas Railroader* each month, along with lots of other things, such as weather forecasts, radars and satellite pictures, various newspapers, etc. I now have 20 mb of disk space, so I can post railroad pictures. The address is:

<http://www.trainweather.com>

My email address (which is also the Arkansas Railroad Club's email) is: ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com. This hasn't changed.

WANTED : FOR SALE OR TRADE

The following is for those who want to find certain railroad-related items, information, or want to sell or trade such items with other railfans. We reserve the right to refuse listings if deemed inappropriate. The Arkansas Railroad Club is not responsible for misleading ads.

WANTED - Will purchase or trade train orders from various railroads - worldwide - and employee timetables. Dr. Edward Metz, PO Box 523, Crawford NE 69339, 303-665-1546.

WANTED - Standard gauge hand car. Advise price, condition and location. Peter Smykla, PO Box 1892, Pine Bluff AR

71613 or call 870-535-4724.

FOR SALE - The Arkansas Railroad Club's hardbound, 120-page book called *Railroad Stations and Trains through Arkansas and the Southwest* is ready for mailing. It was written by Clifton Hull with help from Tom Shook, among other club members. Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions did the graphic design and artwork. You can order from White River Productions, 24632 Anchor Ave, Bucklin MO 64631. Cost is \$29.95 plus \$4.50 postage and handling (total of \$34.45 if you're having it mailed). MasterCard or Visa accepted. You can call White River Productions at 816-695-4433.

FOR SALE - James R. Fair's new book *The Louisiana & Arkansas Railway*. This 176-page clothbound book has 80 black and white illustrations and covers the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway from its beginning to the modern era. YOU CAN NOW ORDER DIRECTLY FROM MR. FAIR. He'll even autograph it for you. Cost directly from him is only \$34. His address is: James R. Fair, 2804 Northwood Rd, Austin, TX 78703-1630. Call 512-451-6194 or 512-471-3689. James Fair is and has been an Arkansas Railroad Club member for years.

WANTED - Oral history, railroad documents, railroad worker's housing, newspaper clippings, photographs of

segregated stations or Jim Crow cars, or any other items relating to the topic of blacks and the railroads. This information will be used in a upcoming book on African Americans and the railroads. If you can

help, write to Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., Professor, 6334 Lake Decatur Avenue, San Diego CA 92119 or call 619-461-0098. (I sent him the oral history I did of a former

MoPac porter in Little Rock back in 1991 - that was printed in the *Railroader* at that time).

RAILROAD ABANDONMENT PROPOSALS

The address of the Surface Transportation Board is: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, Washington DC 20423. The STB phone number for abandonment procedures (Office of Public Services) is: 202-565-1592. If you contact them, it would be handy to use the Docket Numbers. Their Web address is: <http://www.stb.dot.gov> if you'd like the complete listings.

These abandonment proposals have been printed in the Federal Register or have come directly from the Surface Transportation Board. They will go in effect unless one of the following occurs: 1) an offer of financial assistance is received; 2) a request for public use of the land is received (for instance, rails-to-trails); 3) petitions to reopen the case is filed. Railroads, before they can file these "notices of exemption under CFR 1152 Subpart F," must certify that 1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; 2) any overhead traffic can be routed over other lines; 3) no formal complaint filed by a user is pending and; 4) environmental reports, historic reports, transmittal letter, newspaper publication, and notice to governmental agencies have been met. Even though approval is granted for the railroads to abandon, it may be months or years before track is actually taken up.

CALIFORNIA - UNION PACIFIC - To abandon a 2.2 mile line on the Torrance Branch extending from m.p. 500.67 to the end of the line at m.p. 502.87 in Torrance, California. Effective November 25, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-33, Sub No. 127X, decided October 19, served October 26, 1998)

TEXAS - UNION PACIFIC - To abandon 2.16 miles of railroad known as the Austin Subdivision (formerly known as the old MKT Main Line) extending from m.p. 136.47 near South St. Marys Street to the end of the line at m.p. 138.63 near Durango Street in San Antonio, Texas. A final decision is due February 1, 1999. (STB Docket No. AB-33, Sub No. 128X, decided October 27, served November 3, 1998)

MASSACHUSETTS - PIONEER VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY, INC. - To abandon 0.26 miles of line from m.p. 9.40 at the Easthampton/Southampton border to m.p. 9.14 at the south side of Coleman Road in Southampton, Massachusetts. Effective December 10, 1998. (STB Docket No. AB-531, Sub No. 2X, decided November 3, served November 10, 1998)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

UP HIRING

Union Pacific plans to hire 60,000 workers across the country, including Arkansas, during the next 12 years. UP spokesman Mark Davis said the new hires will replace retiring workers and are in response to increased business for the 36,000 mile railroad. In 1998 alone, UP hired 6,500, the most since the 1970s. UP employs 3,674 workers in Arkansas, mostly in the North Little Rock area. They

plan to hire an additional 75 switchmen soon. Entry level pay ranges from \$30,000 to the mid \$40,000 level. Davis also said that 50% of UP's current crop of workers are at least 50 years old. (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, November 11, by member Randy Tardy*)

FIGHTING TO KEEP TRACKS

(*Gurdon*) - Several state politicians are fighting Union Pacific's plan to remove

the tracks between Gurdon and Camden in southern Arkansas (UP applied to have these removed almost two years ago - that notice was published in the *Arkansas Railroader*). Officials hoped the tracks would be used to increase tourism in the area. (*Editor's note: if the state really wanted to increase tourism in the area, they should have invested or explored ways to renovate the Reader Railroad (read ISTEAs grants)- that was once, and*

could be again, a major tourist attraction. Its' equipment is now at Dardanelle. Fairview Farms in Collin and Grayson counties of north Texas, near Dallas, have said that the Reader Railroad will be there soon, operating tourist lines according to a phone call I made in mid November. If anyone knows anything

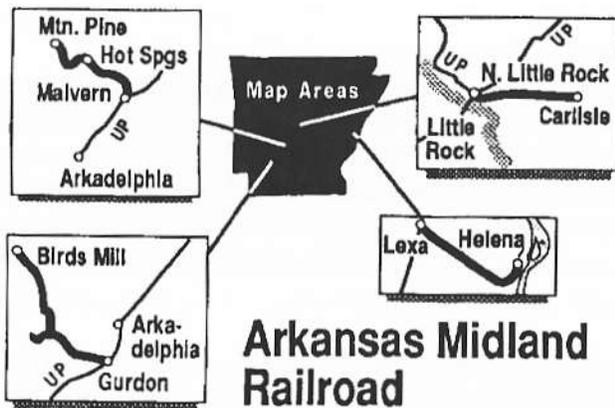
about this, let me know. Fairview Farms's number is 972-422-2500.) Union Pacific officials said the company recently offered the line for sale, but NOBODY bothered to bid on it. (October 28, 1998 - thanks to Tom Lewis of Houston, Texas for the Fairview Farms article)

TROLLEY TRACKS SPOTTED

(North Little Rock) - During street work in early November, crews unearthed old trolley tracks at Fourth and Main streets in North Little Rock. They were covered up again a few days later. The last trolleys ran there in 1939. (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and personal observation)

ARKANSAS MIDLAND USED

(Butterfield) - The Arkansas Midland Railroad was used in the opening scene of the movie "The White River Kid" at Butterfield on August 15. After a morning of filming, the movie crew invited the train crew and AMR's superintendent to a gourmet lunch at their movie tent. They allowed the director to set up the train and his "switch list" had the railroad crew laughing well into the next week. "I'd like two of the see-through cars (Centerbeams), then two wood chip cars, then the blue one - I really like the yellow one, and then whatever that car is (gondola)." The next Monday they had to ask the conductor how many see through cars and blue ones he switched today!



Arkansas Midland has been (and IS) a good community citizen. They have brought their steam engine theme barbecue pit to the opening of the Transportation Center and benefit for the Nature Trail in Hot Springs. Coming up, they will sponsor the second annual "Santa Train" between Malvern and Hot Springs on December 12th. March 27 and 28 they will host a caravan of 20-25 motor cars sponsored by the North American Railcar Operators Association, also on the Hot Springs line. (The Arkansas Midland map is one I had - it may not be current)

Short line railroading is alive and well in Arkansas. Class I railroads formerly employed all of Arkansas Midland's management team and they enjoy making a difference for their customers and community. (Letter from the Arkansas Midland, October 14, 1998 written by AMR's Manager, Marketing & Sales, Brian Holtz)

A&M EXCURSION TRAIN STAYS

(Springdale) - The A&M Railroad announced that it would continue its tourist passenger trains for at least another year after Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee (R) and others persuaded them to do so for the tourist dollars. The A&M operates 140 miles of former Frisco track between Van Buren, Arkansas and Monett, Missouri and hauls 25,000 freight cars each year. It grosses \$18 million a year. The tourist trains haul 15,000 to 20,000 annually. (The Morning Star, October 17, 1998 via Bob Oswald)

(Crossett) - As mentioned in the November Railroader, a new intermodal transportation facility is set to be completed in Crossett this December. This facility is being built by and for the Arkansas Louisiana & Mississippi Railroad (a subsidiary of Georgia-Pacific), a common carrier railroad. The facility is "designed to improve rail and truck transportation for Georgia-Pacific and other shippers in southeast Arkansas." The new facility will not only support the new Georgia-Pacific \$150 million tissue plant, but also other southeast Arkansas manufacturers. It will be capable of handling 150 truck trailers or containers on and off rail cars per day. The

facility will also support the vast tissue and other paper and building products operations already in place in Crossett. Even shippers from northeast Louisiana will use the facility.

Georgia-Pacific's pulp and paper operation has about 1,800 employees who make business communication papers and bleached paperboard, in addition to tissue products. They have more than 750 employees who produce Southern pine plywood at one of the largest plywood production facilities in the world. (Ashley News Observer, September 30, 1998)

NEW INTERMODAL FACILITY

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

FALSE WARNINGS

(Jacksonville, Florida) - Amtrak and CSX were sued by the family of a woman and her 7-month old son who were killed when they failed to yield to an Amtrak train at a crossing north of Jacksonville on September 27, 1996. They claim that the crossing's warning gates had a history of flashing when no trains were coming, so people just ignored them. The suit claims that CSX was told of the problem, but had not fixed it. Witnesses said that the lady, 18-year old Kali Cooper, had stopped to allow a freight to pass, then the arms went back up to allow a few cars through, but went down again as she approached. She ran through the downed gates into the path of Amtrak's *Silver Meteor*.

ZOO TRAIN FATALITY

(St Louis) - A St. Louis Zoo train carrying 10 people went out of control and jumped the tracks October 16, killing the engineer, who was heard yelling that he could not stop the train. The engineer, 67-year-old John Forsythe, was thrown from the train. The manufacturer of the C. P. Huntington engine, Chance Home Rides of Wichita, Kansas, sent investigators to the scene.

The red miniature train with partly open sides and five cars normally travels at 3 to 5 mph as it goes around the Forest Park Zoo. However, this day witnesses claim it was going 40 mph or so when it derailed on a curve near the main entrance of the zoo after racing through a station where it was supposed to stop. Forsythe, who worked as engineer of a real train for 41 years, was nicknamed "Mr. Hollywood" because he always had a smile on his face. Eleven teenage conductors of the train walked the entire 1.5 mile line in somber tribute to the engineer. The train carries 700,000 passengers a year. It was to remain closed until the investigation is complete. *(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)*

TRI-STATE ALLIANCE

(Oklahoma City) - A three state alliance to bolster passenger trains is taking shape between Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Plans call for restoring Amtrak service to Oklahoma via Fort Worth in the Spring of 1999 and legislators want to see this expanded to Tulsa and Kansas City. This task force would have 18 members, or six legislators and three executive branch officials from each state. *(Amarillo Globe-*

News, October 22, 1998 and Tulsa World via Bob Oswald)

NEUTRAL SWITCHING

(Houston) - There was an interesting article regarding neutral switching in large cities, like Chicago, in the *Houston Chronicle* recently. Neutral switching involves a company in a large market that switches customer's cars to any railroad they want. However, in Houston most of the lines are owned by UP or BNSF, so this possibility of neutral switching was remote unless told to do so by the Surface Transportation Board. *(Via Dan Barr of Houston)*

GREYHOUND MERGES

On October 19, Greyhound announced that it was merging Laidlaw, Inc. Greyhound's headquarters will remain in Dallas. Greyhound employs 12,500 people nationally and serves 2,600 destinations with 18,000 daily departures. Greyhound's phone number is 800-231-2222. *(Greyhound press release)*

AMTRAK NEWS

NO AMTRAK AT UNION STATION

(Kansas City) - When Kansas City's newly restored Union Station opens in 1999, it will be without passenger train service as Amtrak decided not to participate in the redevelopment. Amtrak will, however, operate a waiting room should someone else build it. The space reserved

for Amtrak will now serve only as a station history exhibit. *(Kansas City Star, October 15, 1998 via Jim Johnson)*

WHO RIDES AMTRAK?

According to an editorial unfavorable to Amtrak in a Las Vegas newspaper, it was stated that upper-income travelers account

for a larger share of Amtrak passengers than any other form of transportation, INCLUDING commercial airlines. It said that 3 out of 4 Amtrak riders have incomes above the national average and 20 percent make more than \$100,000 a year.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE - November 21, 22; December 19,20 - Twelve mile roundtrip aboard the "Secret City Scenic" train out of East Tennessee Technology Park near Oak Ridge. Train will be pulled by Alco diesels. Departs at various times during the day. Cost is \$10 adults. Sponsored by Southern Appalachia Railway Museum, PO Box 5870, Knoxville TN 37928, 423-241-2140.

MICHIGAN AND ELSEWHERE - Various times of year - The Bluewater Michigan Chapter of the NRHS presents a

series of historic rail and rail-related journeys this summer and fall. For a brochure, write to them at: Bluewater Michigan Chapter, PO Box 296, Royal Oak MI 48068-02966 or call 248-541-1000 M-F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WORLDWIDE TRIPS - Various times of year - Trains Unlimited Tours is offering rail tours across the world, anywhere from San Diego and Cumbres, to Alaska, South America and Siberia. For a brochure and pricing, write to Trains Unlimited Tours,

PO Box 1997, Portola CA 96122 or call 530-836-1748.

CALICO ROCK, ARKANSAS - White River Railroad runs most days of the year through scenic north Arkansas along the former Missouri Pacific line. Shopping stops are done at various locations. Prices are \$23.50 adults, \$17.50 child, \$22.50 seniors, \$35 for dome car for everyone. Call 800-305-6527 or 870-499-5700.

CHRISTMAS REMEMBERING

by: P. B. Wooldridge



Change is certainly the order of the day. We who worked for the Cotton Belt during the 1930s and 40s remember Lewisville, Arkansas as a busy railroad town. Every morning there would be 20 or 30 railroad men down on the platform, going to work. There was a passenger depot, a freight depot, a 5 track railroad yard extending a quarter of a mile, a water tank for steam engines, a machine shop. Today all of this has disappeared. Through town we have only double track, the main track extending to Texarkana and the side track extending to Shreveport. No train stops, but back then we had six daily passenger trains. This is what some call "PROGRESS."

We had no paid vacations back then, and most of us worked 365 days a year. We loved working on holidays as then we were paid time and a half.

Christmas Eve and Christmas were always special. The station platform would be crowded at train time with greetings for incoming passengers, home for the holidays.

I recall one Christmas Eve when upon the arrival of No. 802, the passenger train from Shreveport, and No. 2, the Lone Star passenger from Texas, a group of college students home for the holidays crowded into the telegraph office. They were fascinated by the noise made by the 5 telegraph instruments on the desk. It was midnight and they were busy clicking and clacking away, and the

students were wondering what they were saying.

A northbound freight was outside setting out and picking up. I was copying a train order, when conductor Hutson patted me on the shoulder and asked: "Don't you know you could be fired?" Unable to understand, I glanced around, and saw on an adjacent desk, a half full pint of whiskey which some college student had left.

Today only the memories remain (and written stories like this), and I'm reminded of a poem Longfellow wrote a very long time ago:

**CHANGE IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY
AND GOD FULFILLS HIMSELF IN MANY WAYS,
LEST ONE GOOD CUSTOM
SHOULD CORRUPT THE EARTH.**

TAKE TIME TO

WORK

(it is the price of success)

PLAY

(it is the secret of perpetual youth)

THINK

(it is the source of power)

READ

(it is the fountain of wisdom)

PRAY

(it is conversation with God)

LAUGH

(it is the music of the soul)

LISTEN

(it is the pathway to understanding)

DREAM

(it is hitching your wagon to a star)

WORSHIP

(it is the highway of reverence)

LOVE & BE LOVED

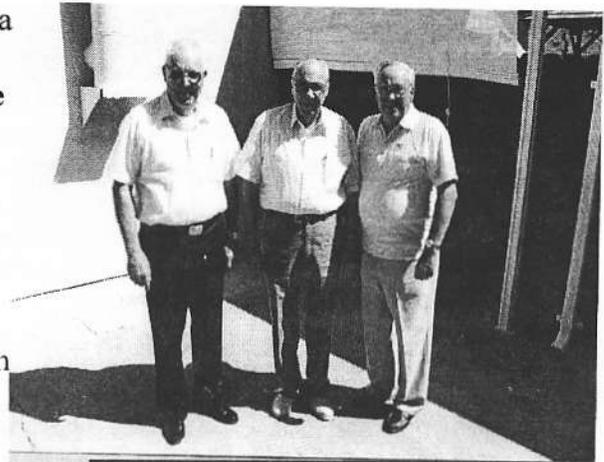
(it is the gift of God)

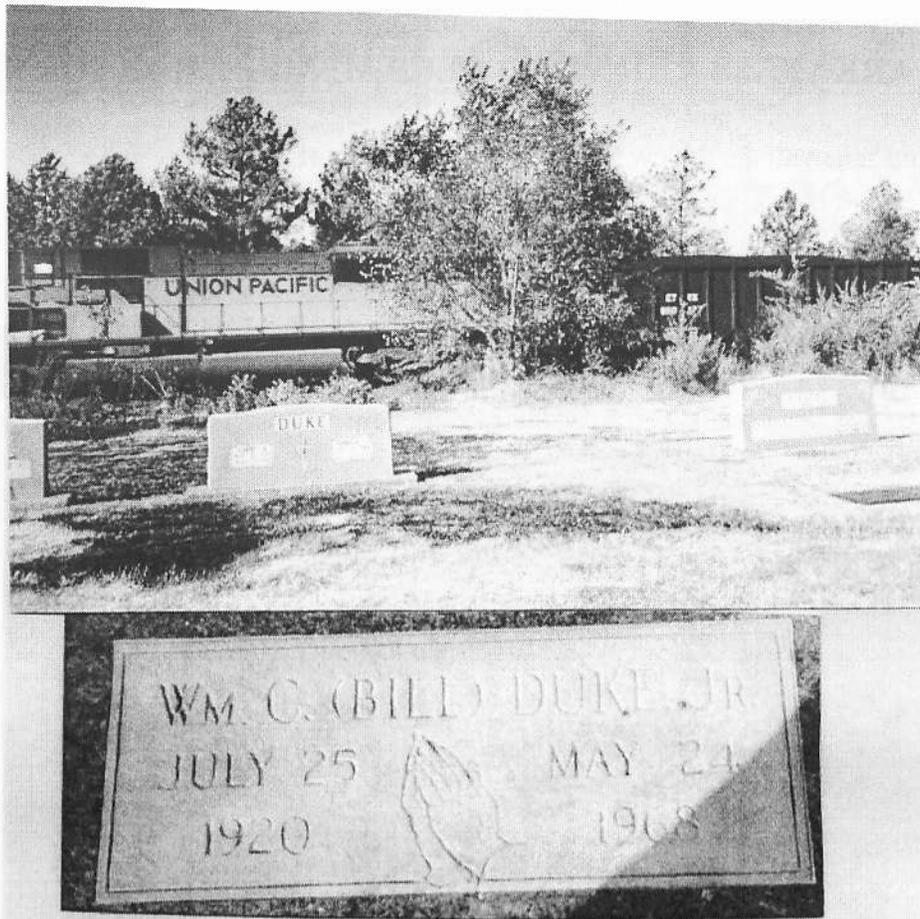
(Above from a sign I saw in a museum)



ARKANSAS RAILRO.

Top - Three Simpkins brothers in Napa, California April 7, 1996. These were all railroad men, L-R Gus, A.B. "Boomer," and Luke Simpkins. **Middle** - In 1984, there were five brothers, L-R John, Ford, Gus, "Boomer" and Luke Simpkins. All were served honorably in WWII and/or Korea. Their father, Alvin, served in WWI. There was over 200 years of safe railroad service between them. **Bottom** - A. B. "Boomer" Simpkins, a long-time Arkansas Railroad Club member, shown on his last trip as conductor on the Union Pacific, August 8, 1990. He was given a "green light" the entire way by UP dispatchers on his final run in California. One order stated: "This order is acknowledgment of your valued cooperation both in service and personal contact of which you may be proud. May this last trip impart to you as pleasant a memory as the splendid record you have left gives us. **May you find enroute nothing but health, happiness and clear signals** and wish you and yours the very best for the future. This track bulletin may not be voided. JPB." "Boomer" also was mentioned in the Congressional Record by Rep. John P. Hammerschmidt (AR) on February 7, 1991 for his meritorious service, both in the military and with the railroad.





CALL IN THE "FLAG" FOR BILL

written by Ivan Avance of North Little Rock, club member and retired MoPAC and UP Engineer

My friend W. C. "Bill" Duke died May 24, 1968 from a heart attack. Our Bill was quite a character. He loved life and he did put a lot of living into his 47 years. Bill has a deep love for his job, as engineer and for the Missouri Pacific.

His memorial service was at the North Little Rock Funeral Home. When this service was over, the hearse, family limousine and many friends departed for Edgewood Cemetery (located some two and a half miles northwest of town - the Missouri Pacific Central Division tracks parallels the west side of this cemetery). At the exact time the funeral procession arrived at the grave site, a Missouri Pacific engine from North Little Rock arrived and stopped some 100 yards from our group. The engineer whistled out the flag man (1 long and 3 short). A short grave service was held and when this service was over, the engineer whistled five long to call in the flag. From the north direction, when the flag came in, the engineer whistled two short and went back to town, as we departed for our homes.

This service at Edgewood Cemetery has always impressed me and many of my fellow workers very deeply. Having served in the military, calling in

the flag for this engineer and playing taps for a lost comrade means about the same to me. A job well done and a last farewell.

When I think, write or talk about the Missouri Pacific, I think families. Sons followed their fathers into their line of work. James Benj. Avance, three of us sons, J. R. Spoon and three of his sons. The Duke's were also a railroad family, James T. and William C. were the elders. They were Arkansas Division engineers, as was our Bill, Jr. J. C. and Paul O. were sons of James T. and were both Central Division engineers.

Local representatives and rail officials arranged for this short trip to the cemetery. There were no complications as Bill's cousins operated the engine.

I will never forget the day the Missouri Pacific Railroad closed down the Central Division, or a least a small part of the railroad, to pay tribute, recognize and honor this man and call in the flag for W. C. Duke, Engineer. Dukes still work out of North Little Rock on the new Union Pacific.

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership renewal New Member Change of Address

Send membership renewal, application, change of address, etc. to:

Arkansas Railroad Club
PO Box 9151
North Little Rock AR 72119
501-758-1340 (phone/fax)
e-mail: ken.z.rw@ix.netcom.com



Please fill out the following questions after checking the appropriate box above.

Date: _____ Your birthday (optional - no year needed) _____

Name: (last) _____ (first) _____ (init) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____) _____ e-mail address: _____

Membership dues information:

Membership: **\$20.00** per year, Arkansas Railroad Club only; **\$37.00** per year if you join or renew National Railway Historical Society membership through our Club. Dues are payable/due by January 1 of each year. If we don't have your dues by March 1, you will be dropped from the membership rolls.

Membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club entitles you to a membership card and the monthly *ARKANSAS RAILROADER* newsletter. Meetings are held monthly, except December, on the second Sunday of the month. We usually meet at 2 p.m. in the Mercantile Bank main building on Main Street in North Little Rock, just north of the Arkansas River. Interesting programs are presented each month and refreshments (cookies, sandwiches) are served. We are a non-profit organization and member of the NRHS. Officers are listed in each newsletter.

