



ARKANSAS RAILROADER



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Dardanelle & Russellville snow-covered train in North Dardanelle, Arkansas, January 29, 2000. Locomotive is D&R No. 18. (Photo by Douglas Harley)



Musings about Trolleys

By Richard Allin, former columnist for the Arkansas Gazette and Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, specially written for the Arkansas Railroader.

We would have been better off hanging on to our streetcars when the big push to change to diesel buses was rampant. Little Rock and North Little Rock would be tourist meccas if their classic streetcar system had been retained. It was one of the most interesting and best designed in the world, operating over a fascinating territory, both hilly, rolling, and flat.

Think of the tourists from the world over who would flock to central Arkansas just to ride the trolley cars down Kavanaugh to Stiff's Station, on to Union Station, down Markham Street past the major hotels. Today, they would mosey on down President Clinton Avenue, to the library and stellar restaurants. If they wanted they could have stayed on to Biddle Shops, or gone out west past the high school.

I know aging men who, as youthful high schoolers, gambled their lunch money shooting craps in the back of the special Pulaski Heights car that was transporting them to Central High School. I remember the Kavanaugh line when I was a teenager from Helena visiting my uncle and aunt in Little Rock. When it was time to leave for home, I trudged down Pine Street to pick up the car that was bound downtown for Union Station and beyond. What a thrill! There are some old residents who still speak of Kavanaugh as "the car line."

Helena, my home town, had streetcars too. The system went out of business about 1934 when, alas, city buses replaced them. But they ran on a picturesque route from industrial south Helena, east to Cherry Street (Helena's main street), west on urban Porter Street to Perry, and then through cuts in Crowley's Ridge that took them on a pleasant leafy route to West Helena. In the old days, the Hornor brothers who founded West Helena had installed a playground and small amusement park at Beechcrest, on the eastern edge of West Helena. The park made the streetcar practical if not profitable.

I was only three years old when it went out of business, and I can't remember riding the line, although I'm sure I did since both my father and older brother loved any sort of conveyance that ran on rails. There's one famous picture of a Helena streetcar stopped just outside my grandfather's machine shop. It shows the motorman and conductor in spiffy navy blue uniforms standing on the front platform. The motorman's hand rests on the controller. The name Allin Machine Works proudly adorns the building behind it. If you know where to look in Helena, you can still see sections of rail that were part of the old system.

It was exciting to find myself behind one of the River Rail streetcars a few days ago when they were showing it off to the Railroad Club. I stayed behind it, my tires wobbling on the rails, until it stopped and the motorman dismounted to throw the switch that turned it into the car barn. The car is a warm yellow color with windows that throw wide open, and controls at each end. Classic.

I often have daydreams of the return of a real streetcar system to the Twin Cities. I don't know whether it's practical or not. But the thought of catching a car at the Peabody Hotel or at the court house downtown and riding it out to Pulaski Heights is a sweet dream indeed. And maybe one day, a special line could run to the Clinton Library, and then on eastward to the airport. It seems that many great cities have provided rail lines between downtowns and airports.

I'm rambling, I guess. But I love streetcars and have ridden them in many cities. Memphis had a stellar line that went to Overton Park. Philadelphia, San Francisco, and New Orleans still have successful streetcar lines. Greater Little Rock could have one too with foresight and enthusiasm. Think what an attraction it would be.



Streetcar No. 409 on a test run August 31, 2004 on Markham Street in Little Rock. The Peabody (right) and Capitol Hotels (left) are visible. (Ken Ziegenbein photo)

2004 OFFICERS/POSITIONS OF THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

PRESIDENT - Robin Thomas, 10980 Rivercrest Dr #26, Little Rock AR 72212-1412 (501-225-1952)
V-PRESIDENT – Peter Smykla, Jr., 2800 W 37th Ave, Pine Bluff AR 71603-5661 (870-535-4724), p.smykla@worldnet.att.net
TREASURER - Walter B. Walker, 8423 Linda Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-5983 (501-225-0826), wwalker@aristotle.net
SECRETARY - Jackie Roach, 4023 S Shackleford #142, Little Rock AR 72204 (501-225-6818)
EDITOR - Ken Ziegenbein, 1023 Claycut Cir, N Little Rock AR 72116-3728 (501-758-1340), ken@trainweather.com
NRHS DIRECTOR -Tom Shook, 1716 Alberta Dr, Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955)
PHOTOGRAPHER - John C. Jones, 117 Cottonwood, Sherwood AR 72120-4011 (501-835-3729), johnphotonut@aristotle.net
HISTORIAN - Gene Hull, 3507 E Washington Ave #31, N Little Rock AR 72114 (501-945-7386)
BOARD '04 - Stanley Wozencraft, 108 N Palm St, Little Rock AR 72205-3827 (501-664-3301)
BOARD '05 - Leonard Thalmueller, 21 Hanover Dr, Little Rock AR 72209-2159 (501-562-8231)
BOARD '06 - Jim Wakefield, 316 Auburn Dr, Little Rock AR 72205-2769 (501-664-0232)
BOARD '07 - Fred Fillers, 29009 Bandy Rd, Little Rock AR 72223-9720 (501-821-2026), cffillers@aol.com
BOARD '08 - Ron Esserman, 326 Esserman Ln, Dover AR 72837-7754 (479-331-2030), shay473@cei.net

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train enthusiasts that was formed in 1969. We are also the Little Rock Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. We meet on the second Sundays of most months at 2 p.m. Anyone interested in trains is welcome!

Dues to join the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB are currently \$20 a year, which includes the monthly *Arkansas Railroader* newsletter. If you'd like to join the NRHS through our club (thus being a member of the Little Rock Chapter NRHS and national NRHS), you must pay \$20 a year more, bringing the total to \$40 a year for both. Dues are always payable on January 1st of each year, but you may pay at any time (membership will extend through the following year).

To join or renew, send your name, address and phone number plus dues to the ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, PO BOX 9151, NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for information. The newsletter editor's email address is: trains@trainweather.com The Arkansas Railroader is put on the Web monthly, and that address is: <http://www.trainweather.com>

CHRISTMAS PARTY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 – This year's Christmas Party will be held at our usual meeting place, Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, 4401 Woodlawn Drive, Little Rock, on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, beginning at 6 p.m. The cost is \$12 per person. Please write or call Tom Shook if you plan to attend. His address is: 1716 Alberta Dr., Little Rock AR 72227-3902 (501-225-8955), magiandtom@peoplepc.com. Tom also will once again be in charge of getting the food from Franke's Cafeteria, which will be the usual Christmas fare of ham and turkey plus all the trimmings. See you there!

2005 DUES – Arkansas Railroad Club dues renewal/reminder sheets are attached to this issue. Dues are always due the first of January, as is the custom of all local NRHS chapters across the country. Dues for Arkansas Railroad Club membership (local/Arkansas Railroader newsletter subscription dues only) remain at \$20. For National Railway Historical Society plus Little Rock Chapter membership, annual dues are \$40 (\$20 local and \$20 national NRHS). The NRHS Bulletin is included with the NRHS dues, along with the Arkansas Railroader. Our mailing address is PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119.

NEW MEMBERS – Joining the Arkansas Railroad Club the past few months (all but one are local Arkansas Railroad Club, newsletter-only members – one NRHS/chapter member):

RON SCHRODT, 8500 Canopy Oaks Dr., Fort Smith AR 72903
 JOHN P. GILL, 5100 Crestwood Dr, Little Rock AR 72207
 DAVID GUARNACCIA, 78 Sherlock Dr, Bella Vista AR 72715
 CHRIS CHAMNESS, PO Box 7947, Citrus Heights CA 95621
 TOM BRIDGERS, 4 Bradley Ln, Little Rock AR 72227-1501
 RAY STROUD, 13319 Hilario Springs Rd, Little Rock AR 72206-4955
 LYLE GROTH, 5513 Francis St, N Little Rock AR 72118-3041
 DAN MOODY, 16904 Pineview Dr, Mabelvale AR 72103
 GILBERT MOSER, 2006 Steeple Chase Dr, Jacksonville AR 72076-2669
 JUSTIN JEFFERS (10 years old), 394 Ouachita 154, Camden AR 71701
 JERRY HUIRAS, PO Box 427, Morgan MN 56266
 DENNIS POWERS (NRHS), 18600 Brookfield Lake Dr #56, Brookfield WI 53045
 MICHAEL HIBBLIN, 412 S 16th Ave, Hollywood FL 33020-5104
 YON LAMBERT, 216 Clifton Ave, Spartanburg SC 29302

2005 OFFICERS/BOARD NOMINATED – Basically, it was decided to nominate the same officers as in 2004 except Mark Silverberg will be our new Vice President. The new board member nominated to serve through 2009 is Douglas Harley taking the place of outgoing board member Stanley Wozencraft. These will be voted on and installed at our Christmas Party December 11.

LETTERS REGARDING GENE HULL'S PA STORY – From Charter Member **Phil Powledge**: “A comment regarding Gene Hull's recent article in Arkansas Railroader. Missouri Pacific did own ALCO FA units. In fact, some of them were used in passenger service. One such loco was No. 367 (a Model FPA-2, the passenger service variation of the FA-2) which was seen often in 1955 at El Dorado on the Gurdon to Monroe train. Gene is absolutely correct in regard to the early ALCO diesels being unreliable. The pair of PA-1's that the Cotton Belt had (Nos. 300-301) helped extend the service life of the ex-FEC 4-8-2's (Nos. 675-679) since the PA's spent a great deal of time in the shops! By the way, this past month (September 2004) marks the 50th year since MoPac steam operations ended on the Gurdon to Monroe subdivision. The last locos at El Dorado were 0-8-0's 9734, 9738 & 9765 and 2-8-2 1224. Seems like last week!”

From another Charter Member **John A. Mills**: “Gene Hull's ‘Rescue and Revival of a Ghost’ was most enjoyable, but contained one glaring error. MoPac did purchase Alco FA units, in fact one-hundred-forty-seven (147) units between March 1948 and April 1954 in the following sequence:

301-320 A units @ 1500 HP – 20 units

B units @ 1500 HP – 10 units

321-392 A units @ 1600 HP – 72 units

B units @ 1600 HP – 45 units

147 total FA units all with Alco 244 V-12-4 Cycle
Turbocharged Power-Plants.

(See MoPac Diesel Power by Kevin EuDaly published in 1994 for details and pictures)

Also, PA No. 8030 pictured on the front cover and also on page 2 of the October 2004 issue is trailed by EMD AA6 (1/2 of an E6) 1,000 HP No. 7100 which was built to power the Delta Eagle. Notice the baggage room door on the left side standing wide open as the two units approach Union Station.

As a newly hired Machinist apprentice in June 1948 I remember quite well the Alco FA units. Working with a Machinist named Dennison, every time we opened a crankcase inspection cover on any Alco product, we expected to find and usually did find metal shavings lying on the catch-screen of the crankcase. Also, they also nearly always needed crankcase oil to be added as a result of being several gallons low.

Both the FA and PA units built by Alco had General Electric electrical systems which was far superior to the Diesel power plants. Some roads, including MoPac, repowered some Alco units (NOT FA units) with EMD power plants. Rock Island repowered one or two PA units with EMD power plants.

Starting in 1962, FA units were traded in to EMD for new EMD GP18 1,800 HP units. Numbered 400 through 499 these GP18s were equipped with the old FA (T-1 trucks) and included re-numbered 1776 and 1976 painted in patriotic colors for the 1976 Bicentennial.

After General Electric developed a power plant to go with their fine electrical systems, they soon overtook EMD in the railroad Diesel-Electric locomotive market. However, EMD has made a comeback and seems to be gaining ground on General Electric.”

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.

FOR SALE - KCS SOUTHERN BELLE BOOK – This book, by Thad Carter, is supposed to be published by the end of October 2004. It is about the Southern Belle of the KCS and will have color pictures and text, according to ARC member Phil Moseley. The cost of the book is \$19.95 plus \$4.50 shipping. Missouri residents need to add \$1.44 for sales tax. It is available from the author, Thad Carter, PO Box 519, Marionville, IL 65705. Brad Carter's email: thadcarter@prodigy.net. Thanks for Phil Moseley, who said it's supposed to be a good book.

WANTED – Help with the following book – How valuable is it? I can find no other copies. The book is a leather-bound copy called "History of the Illinois Central Railroad Company," published in 1900. It's not in perfect shape, but has the history of the Illinois Central from about 1849 to 1900, including personnel who worked for the line and their biographies during that time frame. If you can help me with this, call me at 479-524-8440 (Sandi Bertaux). My email: sandicreek2002@yahoo.com.

WANTED – 12-pound rail needed for G-16 train. I could use up to 4000-5000 feet. Could use all 16-pound rail. I can haul to Jasper, Arkansas. If you have any rail or clues, please call JIM KATES, 870-446-6077 any time.

FOR SALE – Steve Goen's *Texas & New Orleans Railroad* book. The all color book is about the Texas & New Orleans Railroad (SP's Texas & Louisiana Lines). The book will be 128 pages long and will contain over 300 all color photos of T&NO operations between 1944 and 1961 when it was officially merged into the Southern Pacific. The book will also feature a separate chapter on the El Paso & Southwestern of Texas which also ceased to exist in 1961. Over 100 T&NO depots (most long gone) will also be included. The book features some excellent color views at T&NO steam operations as well as their fleet of passenger trains. Trains such as the SUNSET LIMITED, SUNBEAM, HUSTLER, OWL, ARGONAUT and BORDER LIMITED are all included. The list of photographers is endless. Photos from 36 well known rail photographers are featured, including such well known names as Richard Kindig, Joe Thompson, F. Dale Morris and George Werner just to name a few. The cover of the book ("Sunbeam and Semaphores") is absolutely stunning. It features Train #14 south of Ferris and may be John Winfield's best painting to date.

The book sells for \$59.95 plus \$4.50 postage. Only checks and money orders accepted, no credit cards please. I ship via US Priority Mail. Send orders to: Steve Goen, 1519 Sweetbriar Drive, Wichita Falls, TX 76302-2911.

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 - STOCKTON TERMINAL AND EASTERN RAILROAD – To abandon approximately 3,600 feet of rail line extending from the west edge of North Duncan Road to the end of the line near North Wall Road, in Linden, San Joaquin County, CA. Effective on November 17, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-812X, decided October 8, served October 18, 2004)

VIRGINIA – NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY CO - To abandon an approximately 33.8-mile line of railroad between milepost N-134.10 near Burkeville and milepost 167.90 near Pamplin City, in Nottoway, Prince Edward, Cumberland, and Appomattox Counties, VA. The line includes the stations of Rice, Farmville, and Prospect. Service will continue to the stations of Burkeville and Pamplin. A final decision will be issued by January 18, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 252X, decided October 13, served October 20, 2004)

NEW YORK – DELAWARE AND HUDSON RAILWAY CO - To discontinue overhead trackage rights over approximately 229.55 miles of railroad line owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) between Lanesboro, PA, and Buffalo, NY. The specific lines proposed for discontinuance by D&H include: (1) NSR's line between milepost 189.8 in Lanesboro, PA, and CP Coles at milepost 210.9 in Binghamton, NY; (2) NSR's Southern Tier Line between milepost 217.0 in Binghamton, NY, and milepost 419.8 in Buffalo, NY; (3) NSR's Bison Running Track between the point of connection with the Southern Tier Line at milepost 419.8 and the point of connection with the lines of CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) at milepost 423.3 in Buffalo, NY (including NSR's SK Yard, which D&H currently operates under an agreement between D&H and Consolidated Rail Corporation dated as of February 1, 1984), a distance of approximately 3.5 miles; and (4) NSR's Howard Street Running Track between the point of connection with the Bison Running Track at milepost 420.15 and the point of connection with the lines of CSXT at milepost 422.3, a distance of approximately 2.15 miles. D&H will retain trackage rights over NSR's line between milepost 210.9 and milepost 217.0 in Binghamton, NY, because D&H requires the use of that segment for ongoing operations in the Binghamton terminal area. A final decision will be issued by January 19, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-156 (Sub No. 25X, decided October 13, served October 21, 2004)

- NORTH DAKOTA – SOO LINE RAILROAD CO.** - To abandon a 28.35 mile line of railroad between milepost 446.0 in Devils Lake, Ramsey County, ND, and milepost 474.35 in Harlow, Benson County, ND. Effective on November 23, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 54X, decided October 18, served October 22, 2004)
- NORTH DAKOTA – BNSF** - To abandon a 6.50-mile line of railroad between BNSF milepost 0.00 near Hannah Junction and milepost 6.50 near McCanna, in Grand Forks County, ND. Effective November 23, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 418X, decided October 12, served October 22, 2004)
- NORTH DAKOTA – RED RIVER VALLEY AND WESTERN RAILROAD CO.** – To abandon approximately 27.76 miles of rail line from approximately milepost 21.4 in or near Carrington, ND, to the end of the line at approximately milepost 29.16 in or near Bowdon, ND. RRVW states that it has used the subject line to store cars for off-line shippers during the preceding 2 years. RRVW points out that use of a rail line to store rail cars for the convenience of off-line shippers or the railroad is not traffic originating or terminating on the line within the meaning of 49 CFR 1152.50(b). Effective on December 3, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-391 (Sub-No. 10X, decided October 27, served November 3, 2004)
- MICHIGAN - LAKE SUPERIOR & ISHPEMING RAILROAD COMPANY** – To abandon a segment of a line of railroad known as the Republic Subdivision, extending from Humboldt Jct. (milepost 85.6) south approximately 8.9 miles to the end of track at Republic Mine (milepost 94.5), in Marquette County, MI. The line includes the stations of Humboldt Jct., Humboldt, and Republic Mine. A final decision will be issued by January 14, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-68 (Sub-No. 4X, decided October 26, served November 5, 2004)
- MONTANA – BNSF** - To abandon a 43.41-mile line of railroad extending between milepost 7.00 near Glendive and milepost 50.41 in Circle, in Dawson and McCone Counties, MT. Effective on December 7, 2004. (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 424X, decided October 27, served November 5, 2004)
- WISCONSIN – SOO LINE RAILROAD CO.** - To abandon a 5-mile line of railroad known as the West Allis Line, extending from milepost 88.2 +/- near the State Highway 41 crossing in Milwaukee to milepost 93.2 +/- near North 123rd Street in Wauwatosa, in Milwaukee County, WI. A final decision will be issued by February 8, 2005. (STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 55X, decided November 3, served November 10, 2004)

ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

\$30 MILLION AWARD STANDS

A \$30 million jury award to a man partially paralyzed in a railroad crossing collision in 1998 was upheld by the Arkansas Supreme Court on October 12, 2004. In February, the Arkansas Supreme Court upheld a lower court's decision that the railroad company did not adequately clear brush near the eastern Arkansas railroad crossing despite being told several times the overgrowth obstructed motorists' view of the tracks. On Jan. 19, 1998, Barber, then 30, was partially paralyzed when a train collided with the garbage truck in which he was riding through the crossing. Charles Rolfe, 40, died in the accident.

The damage award in the case was believed to be the largest ever upheld by the state Supreme Court. When the railroad appealed to the high court, pro-business groups urged justices to consider it. Barber's lawyer, Robert L. Pottroff, said the decision was a victory both for his client and the people of Arkansas, a state he said is the most dangerous in the country for motorists negotiating railroad crossings.

From Lynn Gaines: From the 'Other Days' column of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: *September 27, 1904 – Two Pulaski Heights streetcars collided head-on on a curve just below Oak Street station yesterday afternoon shortly after 5 p.m. and Motorman J. E. Hewitt of car No. 266 was knocked back over the front seats by the force of the collision.*

Also: *June 5, 1904 – A burro traveling from Little Rock to Pine Bluff in a baggage car has made a lunch on tags and leather handles nipped from trunks and crates within his reach. There was something doing at the depot when the passengers called for their baggage.*

GENERAL RAIL NEWS

U.S. railroads moved more freight during the week ended October 16 than during any previous week on record, according to this release issued by the Association of American Railroads (AAR). Total volume of 33.1 billion ton-miles broke the previous record of 32.7 billion ton-miles set just one week earlier. It also represented a 2.2 percent increase over total volume during the comparable week last year.

AMTRAK NEWS

DOWNGRADED TO FLAG STOPS

As of Nov. 1, 2004, the Texas Eagle stops at Malvern and Arkadelphia, Arkansas became "flag stops"...meaning that the train will only stop if a person has made an advance reservation, or is on the platform "flagging" the train to stop. Supposedly if no one is seen on the platform, and if no advance reservations have been noted, that while The Texas Eagle will slow for the station, it will not stop. *(Thanks to Daryl Stout)*

AMTRAK'S RECORD RIDERSHIP IN 2004

For the second year in a row, Amtrak has posted its highest ridership ever. Amtrak, carried 25,053,564 passengers nationwide in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. That's a 4.3 percent increase over the previous year's ridership of 24,028,119 - the previous record-setting total for the 33-year-old Amtrak system.

EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

CONWAY, ARKANSAS – FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH -CENTRAL ARKANSAS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB meets from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Faulkner County Museum, Court Square, Conway. They usually have updates on the museum project, model train videos, maybe an actual module. Any railroad enthusiast is invited.

To join/renew membership in the Arkansas Railroad Club (Little Rock Chapter National Railway Historical Society), fill out the form below. **Annual dues are \$20** for local dues (plus **\$20** for the national NRHS dues if you want to join the NRHS through our chapter, a total of **\$40** for both local and national dues). Send to: Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Send check, made out to the Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. Call 501-758-1340 for more information or visit us on the web at <http://www.trainweather.com> and click on *Arkansas Railroader*. Our email is trains@trainweather.com.

CAMP THORNTON, GOODBYE!

by: P. B. Wooldridge, retired Cotton Belt Railroad employee

With apologies to the women, we have never seen anything as beautiful, or as fascinating, as a steam locomotive. Especially when it was struggling up a 3 or 4 percent grade with a heavy train.

Back in 1935, I was stationed at the Civilian Conservation Camp at Camp Thornton, Arkansas, way back in the piney woods, earning \$30 a month. In all, I worked in five CCC Camps.



Whenever I got a weekend pass, I'd make my way to Thornton Hill on the Cotton Belt, and catch a freight to Camden, Arkansas, my home.

The Union Pacific had Sherman Hill, but the Cotton Belt had Thornton Hill. Southbound freights would chug up this grade, and top it, if they were lucky, at a speed of 5 or 10 mph. Occasionally they would stall, and have to double into Thornton. One January day, with drizzle and freezing rain falling and ice on the rail, I was on an 800-engine with a tonnage train and it was quite apparent we were losing the battle. With the 8 drivers slipping and spinning, we slowed to about 5

MPH. The fireman ran ahead of the engine with a bucket of sand on one side, and I on the other. But it was to no avail. We stalled, had to double into Thornton.

Later Camp Thornton was abandoned and we local men were moved to Camp Ivan, on the other side of Fordyce. On the last day, army trucks conveyed the enrollees, some 200 from Iowa, and their equipment to Fordyce, where a Cotton Belt passenger extra was in place, awaiting their arrival.

Camp Thornton, as the other CCC camps, had an Army First Lt. in charge. We were very isolated, and occasionally on weekends a dance would be held, with Army trucks conveying girls from Fordyce.

On this final day, the station platform at Fordyce was very crowded and chaotic as the train awaited departure. Some of the girls, who were expecting, would walk up and down the train, with their mothers, and occasionally their fathers, trying to locate and converse with the girl's boyfriends.

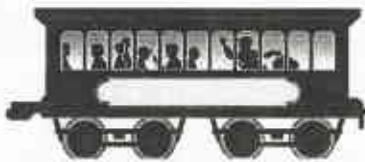
Finally the train departed, amid a sea of hand-waving farewells, and an ocean of flowing tears, headed back to Iowa. It was over, and all that remained were the goodbyes.

Camp Thornton was no more.

'POLAR EXPRESS' MOVIE THOUGHTS

Ken Ziegenbein

I went to see the animated Christmas movie *Polar Express* recently and highly recommend it to train-liking adults and children alike. It combines the magic of Christmas with the magic of trains. One boy in the movie is a railfan, who explains exactly what type of steam locomotive is on the train (a Berkshire), etc. Plus the movie has great music, much of it Christmas music as you can imagine. Anyway, with this movie as a backdrop, here are a couple of real train stories related to the movie:



1 - (*Palentine, Texas*) - A children's story came to life Saturday, November 13, 2004 in Palestine as youngsters clad in pajamas boarded a train and took a journey to the 'North Pole.' It was run on the Texas State Railroad from the Palestine station, put on by Anderson County Champions for Children and the Texas State Railroad. Activities began at 4:30 p.m. with the train leaving at 5:30 p.m.

On board, children and adults "The Polar Express" written by and published in 1985, the subject of the advertising for the train we're going to drink hot chocolate and we're going to have reindeer-



Strominger, director of Anderson Passengers on board will sing Christmas carols, hear the story of "The Polar Express" read aloud and be entertained by some characters unrelated to the children's book as they take the more than hour long journey from Palestine to Rusk back to Palestine again. "We're trying to recreate the childhood magic of Christmas," Ms. Strominger said.

The train ride ended back in Palestine at 7 p.m. Although the depot looked like it normally does when the train departed, when the passengers returned it was transformed into the North Pole - complete with fake snow, elves who were testing toys and Santa Claus. Upon arrival at the 'North Pole', passengers received a silver bell (just like in the movie) and got to keep their hot chocolate mugs.



relived the story of Chris Van Allsburg of the movie. Part stated: "Just like in the storybook, as thick as melted chocolate bars, shaped cookies to eat," said Joan County Champions for Children.



Much work was done to prepare for the event. A recipe for "the most awesome hot chocolate" was obtained from a local French restaurant, and a local bakery colored cookie dough for the reindeer cookies, which had cinnamon noses. The Palestine Community Theater as well as students from the All Saints Episcopal School Choir in Tyler and youth from St. Phillips Episcopal Church also were involved with the production.

The Texas State Railroad also was glad to be involved with the journey and in the community. "We're very blessed to have such a fun state park," said Mark Price, operations superintendent at the Texas State Railroad. "Every four-year-old that comes here, they are just absolutely beside themselves about riding the train. You bring in Santa Claus and Christmas, and it just absolutely is a ball."

Ms. Strominger said as the fundraiser, she hopes families will She hopes those who board the "North will walk away feeling closer to their good family time, just the pleasure of "Because I don't think there's anything what you share with them."

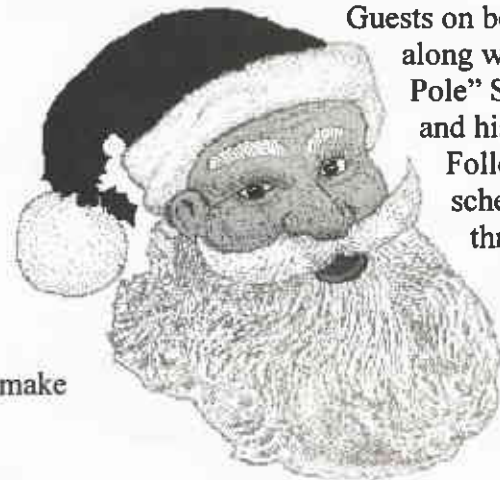


organization makes this an annual make this a holiday tradition as well. Pole Express," as it is being called, families. "I hope that they just enjoy a being with their family," she said. more important than your family and

Tickets for the event were \$35 for under two-years-old are considered "free lap riders.

adults and \$25 for children. Children

2 - (*Great Smoky Mountains Railroad – North Carolina*) - The Great Smoky Mountains Railroad will partner with Warner Brothers Studios to bring the blockbuster movie "The Polar Express" to life on the tracks November 18. In celebration, The GSMRR will add The Polar Express nighttime train excursion as a new event to its holiday line-up. The train departs the Bryson City depot for a journey to the "North Pole" with Santa Clause.



make

Guests on board will enjoy hot chocolate and cookies while listening and reading along with the magical story. When the Polar Express arrives at the "North Pole" Santa will greet each child and hand them their own sleigh bell. Santa and his helpers will lead train riders in Christmas Carols on the trip home. Following the inaugural event, The Polar Express will begin the holiday schedule with runs on Friday, Nov. 19, with a total of 30 departures throughout the months of November and December leading up to Christmas. Rates are \$24 for adults and \$12 for children. The Great Smoky Mountains Railroad will continue to operate the "Santa Express" Holiday trains, Dec. 1 to 24. For more information or to reservations call 800.872.4681 or 828.586.8811.



APPLICATION FOR EXHIBIT SPACE



Annual
RAILROADIANA AND MODEL TRAIN SHOW
PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2005
Show 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
ARKANSAS RAILROAD MUSEUM HIGHWAY 638 AND PORT RD.

SPONSORED BY
THE COTTON BELT RAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Set-up times: Friday, 3-10 p. m. Saturday 7-9 a.m. Take down Sat. 4-8 p.m.

- Only railroad/model railroad related merchandise, please.
- Vendor table prices (\$8-foot) table \$15 each.
- Show to be announced in all major national model railroad magazines, and advertised by local media.
- Door prizes awarded hourly during show.
- Space allocated on a first come/first served basis.
- No refunds after 3/25/2005
- Admission charges: Adults, \$4.00; children under 12 Free

-For more information call or write:

Darrel Cason Home (870) 536-1229
CDRHS Museum (870) 535-8819
P.O. Box 2044 Pine Bluff, AR. 71613-2044

Return completed portion below with check to: CDRHS P.O. Box 2044, Pine Bluff Ar. 71613-2044

RAILROADIANA AND MODEL TRAIN SHOW, PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS Briefly Describe Type of merchandise to be offered;

Please Print or Type:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
PHONE NO. (DAY) _____ (EVENING) _____
NO. OF TABLES _____ ELECTRICITY NEEDED Y W
NUMBER OF I.D. BADGES NEEDED _____
SIGNATURE: _____ DATE _____

Footnotes:

- Registrants will receive the registration and ticket package before all other registrants
 - The registration fee is \$10 for the NRHS member; their spouse, children, or other household members living at the same address.
 - The registration fee IS NOT REFUNDABLE
 - Registration fee entitles member household to one registration package
 - Registration forms must be postmarked by January 31, 2005
 - Registration payment will be credited against the registration fee
 - Only one address per form please
 - Registered members may only purchase tickets for those listed with their registration
 - Hotel reservation information for discounted convention rates will be sent with the registration packages
 - CONVENTION EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE and cancellation
 - For updates, see web site: www.nrhs2005.com
 - A \$35 penalty charged for returned check or credit card non-payment
- Mail to: Go By Train 2005
PO Box 6212
Aloha, OR 97007-0212



Go By Train
2005 Annual Convention
National Railway Historical Society
Hosted by the
Pacific Northwest Chapter
July 5-9, 2005
Lloyd Center
DoubleTree Hotel
Portland Oregon
www.nrhs2005.com

- 50th year of helping preserve northwestern railroad history
 - Local steam locomotive operations on the Clatsop-Columbia Railroad
 - Local streetcar and light rail including the first modern streetcar for North America
 - Banquet Speakers who are specialists in restored steam operation
 - Main line excursion in beautiful Pacific Northwest Scenery
 - Events with the two operating City of Portland owned steam locomotives: 3P 4449 and SP&B 700
 - Shortline trips: Part of Tillamook Bay Railroad, Mt Hood Railroad, Lewis & Clark Explorer to Astoria
 - Non-railroad sites: Mt. St. Helens National Volcano Monument, Antelope Powerplant Museum (site of historic steam powered equipment as well as historic streetcars), the End of the Oregon Trail, and the beautiful Columbia River Gorge
 - Portland is easily accessible by major airlines and Amtrak
- The headquarters hotel:**
- Direct airport to hotel transportation on MAX light rail Red Line
 - Hotel is located within the downtown Portland no-fee public transit area
 - Special hotel rate available 3 days before or 3 days after convention dates
 - Hotel Rates \$41/night (+ tax) single/double occupancy
- Don't miss this special opportunity to enjoy a National Railway Historical Society convention and related events set in the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

Name _____	Additional Registrants Living at the same address:
Address _____	1 _____
City, State, Zip _____ Country: _____	2 _____
Phone: Day _____ Evening _____	3 _____
E-Mail Address: _____	4 _____
NRHS Member Number: _____	5 _____
Payment Method: <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 check payable to: Go By Train 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to pre-register, but instead mail me the registration package when it is available. For this option: • Registration packages will be sent no less than 15 days after being mailed to pre-registrants. • Ticket orders will not be filled until 30 days after pre-registrants making full registration fee will be required with order.
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge the \$10 fee to my Visa / Mastercard	
Name on Credit Card: _____ Exp. Date: _____	
Credit Card #: _____ Signature: _____	
<small>Required for Credit Card Payment</small>	
Office Use: ID# _____ PR# _____ CC# _____	



TOP - A wintry day in February 1985 at Union Station in Little Rock, Arkansas shows two Missouri Pacific freights passing, one northbound and one southbound (the one with the red caboose). **BOTTOM** - Red MKT units (nos. 171 and 203) compass eastbound (toward Houston) through New Ulm, Texas in March of 1974. *(Ken Ziegenbein photos)*



This photo was taken at Kingsville, Texas on June 13, 1962 and shows the Missouri Pacific's *Valley Eagle* arriving to pick myself and my grandfather up at the depot there, taking us back to Houston. I recall the train had a diner (because we ate on it) and one coach. It looks like it had two head-end cars, but not sure. According to *Missouri Pacific Diesel Power* by Kevin EuDaly, the locomotive is a PA-3, built as MoPac 8030 in August 1952, renumbered to 73, retired in April 1965, sold to PNC. The reason I re-published this photo: MoPac 8030 was the PA on the front cover of the *October Railroader* (photographed by Gene Hull in 1953), which was renumbered 73. Small world, right? (Ken Ziegenbein photo).

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**