

A R K A N S A S   R A I L R O A D E R  
The Arkansas Railroad Club Newsletter  
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NEXT MEETING IS MARCH 8 . . The regular monthly meeting will be Sunday, March 8, 1970, at 2:30 p.m. The place is Room 305, Missouri Pacific Union Station, Markham and Victory Streets, Little Rock.

CLUB RECEIVES 1885 BRIDGE PLATE . . On February 26, Clifton E. Hull, Vice-President of the Arkansas Railroad Club accepted one of the builders plates from the Missouri Pacific Railroad's Junction Bridge. The bridge was opened in 1885 to connect the Little Rock & Ft. Smith and the Little Rock, Mississippi River & Texas Railroads. Both these lines were shortly after absorbed by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern which in turn became part of the Missouri Pacific. The old bridge is being replaced as part of the Arkansas River Navigation Project. The plate is occupying a place of honor in the clubroom of the Arkansas Valley Model Railroad Club until the prototype club has permanent facilities.

STEAM FANTRIP IS PROPOSED . . At the February meeting, President Jim Wilson announced the possibility of a steam excursion over the MoPac Norman branch. The Reader Railroad's #1702 and passenger equipment would be used. Inquiries have been made to Missouri Pacific but no definite information is yet available. If it is run, the excursion would be sometime this summer, probably about mid-June.

THE FIRST PACIFICS by Walter M. Adams

It is generally accepted by students of steam motive power that the name "Pacific" for the Whyte classification 4-6-2 wheel arrangement was due to the first of this type locomotive being built for the Missouri Pacific Railway by the Brooks Locomotive Works at Dunkirk, New York, in 1902. In 1886 a large experimental locomotive with a 4-6-2 wheel arrangement was built by the Lehigh Valley Railroad at their Wilkes-Barre Shops. This massive (for the day) engine was equipped with a large corrugated twin tube firebox designed to burn anthracite coal. The locomotive, numbered 444 and named "Duplex", was apparently not successful and was withdrawn from service. In 1895 the Rhode Island Locomotive Works built a large 4-6-0 for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway. Due to excessive weight on the drivers it was later equipped with a trailing truck and was technically a 4-6-2. This locomotive had the narrow fire-box common to Ten-wheelers and the name "Pacific" was not applied at this time. In fact, the Milwaukee had not been extended to the Pacific at this time and that name was not part of the corporate title. In 1901 the Baldwin Locomotive Works built a group of true 4-6-2 locomotives for the narrow gauge New Zealand Railways. It has been suggested that the name "Pacific" was applied to this series of locomotives since they were shipped across the Pacific Ocean. Railroad writer and historian Edward Hungerford in his authoritative work, "The Modern Railroad", published in 1911, credits the name to the engines built for the Missouri Pacific. For our purposes, rationalizing that he was on the

scene and a keen student of railroads, we will go along with his statement and take the credit for the Missouri Pacific also.

At the time these locomotives were built the Missouri Pacific was the Western and Northern part of the large railroad empire that had been built and/or bought by the infamous Jay Gould and still in control of his family. The other major segment of this railroad empire was the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern. All motive power for the Gould system was built in duplicate for each railroad and the first 'Pacifics' were no exception. These trim little locomotives were turned out by the Brooks Works in 1902 and the Missouri Pacific engines were numbered 1115 to 1119 while those for the Iron Mountain became numbers 1616 to 1620. Initially five were built for each road. In 1903 five more engines, 1120 to 1124, were built for the Missouri Pacific and six, 1621 to 1627, were built for the Iron Mountain for a total of twenty-one of these pace setters in service. As built these locomotives had 20x26 cylinders, 200 pounds boiler pressure, 69 inch drivers, weighed 122,000 pounds on drivers and had a total engine weight of 183,200 pounds. They were equipped with tenders carrying 5,000 gallons of water and 10 tons of soft coal. They were very neat and graceful locomotives with the characteristic sloping Brooks cylinders and the roomy steel Brooks cabs. Actually several railroads had in service ten-wheel or 4-6-0 type locomotives that were larger and heavier but the generous 42.5 square foot grate area of the Pacific quickly pointed out its advantages and there was an immediate move by all major railroads to the Pacific type for fast heavy passenger service. A total of 6,800 locomotives of this wheel arrangement were built in the United States.

The Missouri Pacific engines were immediately placed in passenger service between St. Louis and Kansas City while the Iron Mountain counterparts operated between St. Louis and Texarkana. At that time there was great competition between railroads for the lucrative U. S. Mail contracts and I like to think these locomotives were part of the contract 'races' held and were perhaps instrumental in helping the Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain secure and hold the mail contracts enjoyed for so many years. In 1904 Engine 1123 was withdrawn from service and given a brilliant paint job, tastefully striped and placed on exhibition at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis. In 1905 all of the locomotives of the Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain were renumbered to bring a common series into use and apparently to pave the way for eventual consolidation as in 1917 the corporate title, Iron Mountain and Southern, was discontinued. All of the locomotives were renumbered into the 6500 series, 6501 to 6521. They bore these numbers to the scrap line.

In the early 1920's all of these locomotives were rebuilt with piston valve cylinders, superheaters and Baker valve gear. At least one, however, the 6520, was equipped with Walscharet valve gear. About 1907 steel came into general use for passenger car construction and this materially increased the weight of passenger trains. In 1910 the Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain ordered a much larger Pacific, the 6400's, and the 6500's were gradually replaced on the fast heavy main line trains and relegated to secondary main lines and local passenger service. The last service in which they were regularly

operated was on Trains 821-822 between Gurdon, Arkansas and Monroe, Louisiana. Engine 6512 was the last steam engine in service on this run and had the dubious honor of being the last 6500 to the scrap line

In the early 1920's the writer was a small boy living in the railroad town of Cotter, Arkansas. At that time Cotter was a division point on the White River Division of the Missouri Pacific and had a busy yard, roundhouse, car repair facilities and also the dispatcher's office. At this time my father was clerk in the office of the Chief Dispatcher. I remember well the day my father drove the old Model "T" home just before noon and picked me up and took me down to the depot. He wanted to show me the "big" engine coming in on Train 214, the northbound passenger. I was thrilled and recall that this was the first locomotive I had ever seen on the Missouri Pacific with the headlight centered on the smokebox front. This engine, Number 6514, was for years my "favorite" locomotive and the regular engineers between Cotter and Carthage, Missouri were my heroes. In the fall of 1927 the train dispatchers were moved from Cotter to Aurora, Missouri and my father was transferred as well. Since both of my grandparents lived near the Marion County town of Yellville and my father could secure unlimited passes, I made literally hundreds of trips behind these charming little locomotives. They had a sharp exhaust and were beautifully maintained. I cannot remember any train delay due to failure of one of them. In the "good old days" before air conditioning it was my special pleasure to open the coach window and actually "hang my head out the window and watch the drivers roll"! My grandmothers were not too happy with this youthful exuberance since I always arrived looking as if I had actually fired the locomotive.

Many of these fine little steamers were converted to oil and worked just about all of the secondary lines of the Missouri Pacific in later years. By 1949 only five remained in active service and as their numbers dwindled they had spanned nearly a half-century of activity, when the 6512 went to the torch in 1953 these little beauties owed the Missouri Pacific nothing.

THANK YOU, MIKE ADAMS for our first very fine feature article. We hope others will follow Mike's excellent lead. We would like to have at least one such article per issue.