

ARKANSAS RAILROADER
THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB NEWSLETTER
VOL. 1 NO. 7 JULY 1973

JUNE MEETING: THE June meetin was held June 17 at Scott, Arkansas on the property of the Scott & Bearskin Lake Railroad. Engines #1 and #2, both woodburners formerly owned by the W. T. Carter Brother Lumber Co at Camden, Texas were fired up. The #1 with President Jim Wilson at the controls and John Martin as fireman (bothe periodically releived by other willing souls) spent the day pulling the L & NW caboos and the two coaches built from truss-rod flats around for the pleasure of the company.

The annual picnic was well attended by members and guests. The Arkansas Gazette and KTHV-Chanel 11 were both represented so some publicity should result.

SUMMER SCHEDULE: The membership voted to dispense with the formal business meetings for the months of July and August. Informal meetings will be held the 2nd Sunday of July and August at Scott. Wear your old clothes as there is much work that needs doing.

RESTORATIONS: Funds were voted at the last meeting to begin the restoration work on our railcar. Hopefully we will have this piece of equipment operational in the near future.

Work is progressing on the Georgia Northern #115 but much remains to be done. Any and all help will be accepted and appreciated by all concerned.

THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN: Motorists entering downtown Little Rock by way of Cantrell Rd. June 14th, 15th or 16th were treated to asight not seen since the advent of Amtrack. Passenger coaches, to be exact two rails of them, lined up under the sheds of Missouri Pacific Union Station. Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey, "The Greatest Show on Earth" was in town.

The arrival, June 13th at 1:45 p.m. of the 22 car circus train climaxed a three day trip that began at Hershey, Pennsylvania and moved over the lines of the Reading, N&W, L&N and finally Missouri Pacific. The train consisted of streamlined baggage and passenger equipment, mostly of the 85 ft. length and 85 ft. flat cars. One car specially built contained animal cages on the lower level and carried automobiles on the upper level. Other cars had been modified by installing doors in the ends of the coahhes.

Sometime during the night of June 18th the train was reassembled and interchanged to the Rock Island to continue on its way to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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READER RAILROAD: Mr. T. W. M. Long, President of the Reader Railroad has issued the following information; "This line made its last run from Reader to Waterloo and return on Saturday May 19, 1973, with the return of Extra 1702, North.

Effective Sunday, June 3, 1973, this line embargoed all traffic from and to its three southernmost stations; i.e., Anthony Swithh, Ames and Waterloo. Dismantling of the line northward from Waterloo toward Dills Mill commenced Tuesday, June 12."

ABANDONMENTS: Missouri Pacific has applied for permission to abandon approximately 16.2 miles between Marvell and Holly Grove, Arkansas

MEMORIES ALONG ARKANSAS RAILS

By
CLIFTON E. HULL

There are many old structures in various places around our state which evoke memories of the days when the railroads were far more active than at the present time. Some of them bring to mind incidents experienced by the author during his railroading days of World War II. Some are the recorded memories of other railroad men long since departed from this vale of tears.

These memories sometimes bring a sense of loneliness, nostalgia, humor, and sadness. Nevertheless, it is the fullness of life from which these memories are made, and they are worth passing on before they are forever lost as our older railroaders pass on.

At the southern edge of Dardanelle, there is a dilapidated, weatherbeaten old depot building, the walls of which still bear a trace of red paint and across the south end, just below the projecting roof, are the faint letters DARDANELLE. The building is now used as a storage shed.

Quite a few old-timers would be reminded of the day of March 12, 1906, when Mrs. C. C. Godman turned the first shovelful of earth to celebrate the beginning of the Dardanelle, Ola & Southern Railroad. There never was anything truly outstanding about the D.O. & S. but it did bring a surge of prosperity to the merchants and farmers of the area. The rails were pushed southward to a connection with the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad at Ola.

New farms were put into production and the value of real estate increased considerably when the rail service became available. At Centerville, Dr. McCarthy subdivided forty acres into lots and made them available to home builders.

The D.O.&S. rails were joined at Dardanelle by those of the Ft. Smith, Subiaco & Eastern. The new company was known as the Ft. Smith, Subiaco, and Rock Island as access to Ft. Smith was made available

In March, 1938, the little streak of rust fell victim to the wrecking crew of Hyman-Michalls Company of Chicago and the rails were pulled up. The forlorn little depot sits as if still waiting for train No 2 which is more than 30 years late.

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A crumbling, "moth-eaten" brick building at Plummerville on the Missouri Pacific just west of Conway recalls a bit of embarrassing excitement. More than 25 years ago, the author was a brakeman on this road running between North Little Rock and Van Buren. I was in passenger service as well as freight. During World War II, passenger service was really booming.

On one particular run in the summer of 1941, I was in charge of the baggage car on train No. 117, the "Rainbow Special", on its return run to Little Rock. As a good-will gesture I had agreed to lend a helping hand to the clerk in the mail car. He was generally over-worked as was everyone at that time and he asked if I would toss off a few sacks of mail for him. I agreed. One of the stations to receive a sack was Plumerville. This was not a regular stop for the train so I would have to kick off the heavy sack "on the fly". This phrase happend to be very appropriate.

We approached the station on a downward grade and usually the engineer had the train rolling at a pretty good clip through Plumerville. The station agent usually was out front to look the train over for any visible defects as we flashed by.

I opened the door of the baggage car, laid the heavy, locked canvas sack on the floor and got a good grip on a safety grab-iron beside the door. Looking out through eyes squinted against the wind-blown dust, I saw the depot rushing toward me. The agent was standing out front and several local fellows were sitting on a long bench before a store just beyond the depot. Everything was exactly as I had seen it a hundred times before. The time was about 20 minutes before noon.

The locomotive's whistle began to bellow for a road crossing and a faint plume of coal smoke estended straight back from the roaring stack. About 75 feet before we reached the depot, I kicked the sack as far out the door as I could get it, to prevent it rolling back under the train.

It hit the gravel platform, bounced, jumped and skidded toward the depot just exactly as it shoud have. Then that sack seemed to go completely crazy. No self-respecting mail sack was ever supposed to act like that one did. It tried to slide end-way, the forward end dug into the gravel and the sack gracefully leaped into the air and plunged headlong through the window of the telegraph bay of the depot.

Just beyond the depot, the train canted to a long right-hand curve and the last thing I saw was the depot agent frantically scrambling away from the disintegrating bay window while the half-dozen men in front of the store leaped off the long bench and wer running toward the depot.

I was completely certain that crazy mail sack had cost me my job. There would be a message waiting for me at the Union Depot at Little Rock. "You are out of service pending investigation."

We rolled into the station on time at 1:00 p.m. No one was looking for me; there was no message and I never heard from the incident. This is the first time I have mentioned it to anyone. What damage was done by that idiotic mail sack I never knew.

CONTINUED

Arkansas Railroad Club is a not for profit organization that meets the second Sunday of each month. For further information, write P. O. Box 5584, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

- No. 404 leave Little Rock 8:30 a.m., arrive Dallas 10:30 a.m.
- No. 404 leave Dallas 11:30 a.m., arrive Little Rock 1:30 p.m.
- No. 783 & 784 through, Thursday and Saturday
- No. 784 leave Pine Bluff 8:30 a.m., arrive Dallas 10:30 a.m.
- No. 785 leave Dallas 10:30 a.m., arrive Pine Bluff 12:30 p.m.
- No. 404 through, Wednesday and Friday
- Leave North Little Rock 8:30 a.m., arrive Dallas 10:30 a.m.
- No. 404 through, Wednesday and Saturday
- Leave Stuttgart 8:30 a.m., arrive North Little Rock 10:30 a.m.

Passengers and baggage will be handled by the conductors. Ticket agents, who will be in the car and have service as follows:

Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock
 Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock

The following through trains will also operate on the line:

Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock
 Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock

Passengers and baggage will be handled by the conductors. Ticket agents, who will be in the car and have service as follows:

Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock
 Little Rock - Dallas
 Dallas - Little Rock

St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company

GENERAL PASSENGER DEPARTMENT

ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

St. Louis, Mo., December 3, 1926.

Agents, Representatives,
Conductors and Baggage-men.

Effective December 9, 1926, passenger train service will be discontinued-

Between North Little Rock and Pine Bluff
" England and Gillett

Except for local freights as shown below, there will be no trains for handling passengers North Little Rock-Pine Bluff and England-Gillett.

Local freights will be operated as follows:

Nos. 464 & 463 Daily except Sundays

No. 464 leave Gillett 8:30 a.m., arrive Stuttgart 11:00 a.m.
No. 463 leave Stuttgart 11:30 a.m., arrive Gillett 2:00 p.m.

Nos. 753 & 754 Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

No. 754 leave Pine Bluff shops 8:30 a.m., arrive England 9:56 a.m.
No. 753 leave England 10:35 p.m., arrive Pine Bluff shops 12:33 p.m.

No. 467 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

Leave North Little Rock yard 8:30 a.m., arrive Stuttgart 12:30 p.m.

No. 468 Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

Leave Stuttgart 8:55 a.m., arrive North Little Rock yard 1:15 p.m.

Passengers and baggage will be handled by the Southwestern Transportation Company, who will provide bus and truck service as follows:

Little Rock - Stuttgart
Stuttgart - Gillett
England - Pine Bluff

The Southwestern Transportation Company will also operate bus and truck service-

Stuttgart - Pine Bluff
Pine Bluff - Camden
Camden - Texarkana

Tickets of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company's issue or foreign line tickets reading via the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company will be honored on trips of the Southwestern Transportation Company except that no reduced fare tickets, such as Employe, Clergy, Excursion, etc. will be honored by the Southwestern Transportation Company.