



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Arkansas Railroader



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JUNE, 1975

JUNE MEETING: June is Museum Show month. There will be no regular business meeting. Instead we will hold our first Museum Show at the Club's new Building on Riverview Drive in North Little Rock. The show will open at 1:00p.m. on Sunday, June 8th and remain open until 5:00 p.m. There will be no admission charge. Chairman Paul Moon has lined up what should be an impressive display of Railroadiana, Memorabilia and Artifacts from the collections of the membership. In addition, some of the photographs from our recently acquired collection will be on display.

MUSEUM SALES: Working with a limited budget, Naomi Hull and her Museum Sales Committee has assembled quite a creditable array of souvenirs for sale at the show. Several items of jewelry have been obtained to go with our ashtrays, patches and a few other items. This will be the only source of income from this show so come prepared to take home a souvenir.

JULY MEETING: Again there will be no business meeting for the month of July. Chairman David Nixon advises that plans have been firmed up for the annual picnic to be held at Scott on July 13th from 1 to 5:00 p.m. Bring your own lunch and soft drinks will be available for purchase. Fare on the Scott & Bearskin Lake Ry will be \$1.50 for adults and \$1.00 for children.

ANOTHER 1776 ENGINE: Richard Campbell of Riverdale, Illinois reports that EMD at LaGrange has turned out a Bi-centennial paint job for the St. Louis-Southwestern/Southern Pacific Lines. SSW/SP 9389, Spirit of 1776, SP System Locomotive is painted red, white, blue and gold. The Frame, underbody and Bell are gold, nose and back red, lower body blue, hood and road name (COTTON BELT) red & blue as are number boards. There are stars above the number boards and the length of the running boards. The SP on the nose is encircled by stars. Pictures are available from Richard at 458 W. 137th Place, Riverdale, Ill., 60627. \$1.50 for 8x 10 BW .50 for color slide. It is classed as EMD SD45T-2

A STRANGE TRAIN IN ARKANSAS

BY

CLIFTON E. HULL

CONCLUSION) "Open House" was scheduled to begin at 2:00 pm and several hundred persons stood in line waiting for a chance to see first hand, and "ye author and spouse" were among them.

The train arrived in charge of engineer John Engster, fireman J. C. Eler, Conductor Grover Pierce and brakeman Gene Rothwell, all of Little Rock. A couple of honored guests were Wm. E. Hayes, assistant to the president of the Rock Island and C. G. Adams, superintendent of the Little Rock Division. The General Motors personnel included W. J. Davidson, administrative engineer from Detroit, N. L. Arrington, chairman of the G. M. Club of Little Rock, Phillip G. Rozelle, public relations manager from Atlanta, Edmond S. Fish and Robert Johnson, public relations department at New York and Roland Seward train manager.

Little Rock was the 80th stop for the train and more than two million visitors had paraded through the cars. They were expecting about 1,000 visitors an hour between 2.00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. in Little Rock.

The admiring crowd began entering the train from the last car. This was a tavern-observation-lounge car. There were two cocktail lounges furnished much like their counterparts in the elite supper clubs. A writing desk was provided in a semi-private nook where you could dash off a quick note to an envious friend while enjoying your trip. A special communication unit gave radiophone service by which you could call your wife at home or even if she were on the Queen Elizabeth in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. There was also a plug in system for use at railroad stations. The rear observation compartment gave a magnificent view of the landscape from wide picture windows. The three lounge sections provided seats for forty-four persons.

One special feature was included on each of the four cars--the Astra Dome. This was the most conspicuous feature and the most radical departure from the standard heavy steel passenger car. This view-viewing bubble was made of two inner layers of glass with a sheet of transparent plastic between. Next was a space of dehydrated air to eliminate fogging as the temperature inside and outside varied. The outer layer of glass was heat and glare resistant. The dome of the observation lounge seated 24 persons.

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The next car forward was a truly luxurious sleeping car with three compartments under the dome, two drawing rooms at the forward end, and eight duplex roomettes at the rear. There were accommodations for 20 passengers. There were full-length mirrors and wardrobes, full size lounges and restful chairs.

Next came the dining car (My favorite on any train). There were separate dining rooms - an 18 seat section in the dome, a 10 seat private dining room below the dome and a 24 seat room on the main floor level. Meals in the dome were lifted by a dumbwaiter from an all-electric kitchen on the floor below. "Mr. Schwartz", the Filipino chef, had prepared more than 4,000 meals on board the train. Joseph Schneiderbauer, the dining car boss, said that while the train was in Washington on June 18-22, 1947, five luncheons were arranged on board for groups from the White House, Army & Navy, Congress and the Cabinet and Foreign Embassy Legations. There were fine foods, glamorous atmosphere and a superb view. A variety of table shapes were arranged to afford plenty of moving around space for diners and waiters.

The ultra-modern chair car would accommodate seventy-two passengers in fine comfort. It was equipped with restful reclining seats, each individually lighted. Three rooms under the 24-seat dome were semi-private, ideal for family traveling.

Each of the four cars was named. The chair car was "STAR DUST"; the dining car "SKY VIEW"; "DREAM CLOUD" was the sleeping car; and the observation car was "MOON GLOW"

The entire train was air conditioned, each car having its own diesel engine and compressor-generator unit to keep it comfortably cool, even when standing in stations. Soft, pastel colors were featured in the plastic-coated wall covering, easily cleaned with soap and water. All car doors opened automatically at the mere touch of a button. The entire train was started as a single unit, without the usual jerking of slack between individual cars. There were so many new and fabulous ideas incorporated in the train, it was difficult to comprehend them as a total.

Last but not least of the new features was the diesel locomotive on the head end. Two 12-cylinder diesel engines furnished 2,000 horsepower designed for a top speed of 117 miles per hour, and the locomotive was 71 feet long. The outer casing of the locomotive was smoothly rounded at all edges in the most modern streamlined fashion. Already this

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TYPE of motive power was in use on more than 150 of America's crack passenger trains. The blue and silver colors of the train's exterior resembled closely the color scheme of the later TEXAS EAGLE on the Missouri Pacific through Little Rock on its way from St. Louis to Texas with connection to Mexico City.

For three days we were given the privilege of seeing and examining this fabulous train, which the railroads were to provide for our comfort and enjoyment. There were so many innovative features we have space to describe only the more outstanding ones as noted here.

From Little Rock the train went to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Wichita, Topeka and eight other scheduled stops. For four cars were sold to the Union Pacific in March, 1950 and were operated between Portland and Seattle in a train which included several heavyweight chair cars.

The Train of Tomorrow is now the train of Yesterday, only a memory. A promise of things to come has already passed into history.

NOTE!!! There will be no publication of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER for the months of July and August

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