The LINERDALE NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD just west of Batesville, Arkansas hauling calcium carbonate (limestone) between the Arkansas Lime Company's quarry and its' kilns, a distance of 2.7 miles. See story by Frank A. Brooks, Jr. beginning on the next page. Photo taken by Ken Ziegenbein on May 16, 1985.
Sitting fortuitously in Riverside Park in Batesville, Arkansas, this steamer once worked on the Limedale Narrow-Gauge Railroad near Batesville. It was donated to the Park in 1950.
(Photo by Ken Liegenstein).

THE LIMEDALE NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD

A talk given by
Frank A. Brooks, Jr.
to the
Independence County Historical Society
April 22, 1983

The Limedale Railroad, a 2.7 mile main line narrow-gauge railway which operates trains between the Arkansas Lime Company's quarry and kilns, is almost certainly the last narrow-gauge line still running in Arkansas. It is located to the west of Batesville at the Arkansas Lime Company, a subsidiary plant of Ranger Corporation. The distinguishing characteristic which makes a narrow-gauge railway different from a standard-gauge one is that the distance between the rails on a narrow-gauge is 3 feet, whereas on the standard-gauge it is 4 feet 8 1/2 inches.

The production of commercial lime began in this area in 1887 when a small operation was begun at Denileveille, on the Cushman Branch of the Missouri Pacific Lines. From that beginning the present operation at Limedale is directly descended, although the plant's precise location as we know it today dates only from 1924. During that year the new plant was built exactly 2.3 miles from where the Cushman Branch left the White River Division of the Missouri Pacific's main line. At the time the plant was built, the three-foot gauge railroad was also built. It's first locomotive was a gasoline powered engine.

Early in 1925 the plant's three vertical kilns were completed, equipment was installed to produce hydrated lime, or "quick lime" as it is commonly called, and George Weigart became president and general manager of operations. By the end of 1927 there were 150 employees working at an operation near Sylamore called "Ruddale" and the one near Batesville. The Ruddale plant shut down in 1930, at which time the equipment was dismantled and largely moved to Batesville. By 1933 there was a total of six kilns in operation at the Batesville plant, which we shall refer to hereafter in these remarks as "Limedale". These kilns were fired with wood. A newspaper article from the 1940's stated that the company was using 50 cords of oak wood in "burning" the line. All of the wood was purchased from individuals locally. Therefore many area men provided work by cutting wood and hauling it directly to the plant. Coal was tried as fuel in 1941, but it wasn't as efficient as wood. In 1942 the system changed over to natural gas for its fuel. With natural gas, production increased significantly.
The Bangaire Corporation first started buying stock in the Limestone plant in the mid-1950's. In 1962 the Limestone operation, Batesville White Lime Company, became a subsidiary of Bangaire. Today the plant is officially the Arkansas Lime Company, a subsidiary of Bangaire.

The raw stone which is mined at Limestone is calcium carbonate. The area where it is deposited in the earth is drilled, blasted and then hauled to a crusher where the stone is loaded onto the narrow-gauge train and hauled the 2.7 miles from the quarry site to the vertical kilns, dumped into the kilns, and over a 24-hour period, the rock is heated to an extreme heat which causes the driving away of carbon dioxide and moisture.

The Limestone pits at Limestone where the raw stone is mined and shipped to the crusher.

What then remains is calcium oxide - "quick lime". This substance has been around at least since the Roman times. When mixed with water, it immediately generates an extremely hot temperature. . . . In former times, much quick lime was sold in pebbles for the purification of water. Now it is used widely for soil stabilization, in aluminum processing and by paper mills as a part of their log de-barking process.

Quick lime is also commonly reduced to a fine talcous consistency and used extensively by chemical factories, notably as fillers in plastic products.

With regards to the quarry process, the blasting and fracturing operations also create an abundance of small material which is undesirable for putting in the kilns. This material is rock 4 inches or less in diameter. It is either disposed of or processed to become such things as paint fillers, asphalt fillers and additives for animal feeds. It is possible to see several miniature "mountains" of this material fairly near the quarry at Limestone.

Trains operate frequently on the narrow-gauge Limestone Railroad. There are an average of three trips each way over the 2.7 mile main line between the quarry and the kilns every hour. Actually, there are two distinctive trains in regular operation. One train normally hauls 15 cars of raw limestone to the kilns, while the other one normally pulls 8 cars of the smaller rock. The raw limestone becomes calcium oxide or "quick lime" at the kilns. The smaller rock is fed into the hammer mill for processing into the other products we've mentioned. Loads on the 15-car train average two tons per car, while loads on the 8-car trains average seven tons per car.

One of the little trains arriving at the kilns on May 16, 1985

View of the kilns after a load of crushed stone arrived.
There is a railroad foreman who oversees the general operation. There are five engineers and five brakemen currently running the trains. It is obvious that the Limedale Railroad is an efficiently managed facility. While narrow-gauge railroads have been generally phased out in America, Arkansas Lime has no current plans for doing away with its operation. The company is proud of its 60-pound rails, sturdy trestles, clean right-of-way, fine repair shop, impressive fleet of diesel locomotives and good, dependable rolling stock. There are two passing tracks which bring the total mileage up to about 3.5 miles. There are also 4 or 5 switches.

A study was made a few years ago to investigate the possibility of replacing the railroad, but it was determined that the railroad was the most efficient way to transport the stone to the kilns. As it happens, the Limedale Railroad crosses the same creek five times and each trestle is more than 100 feet in length. The management concluded that it would be very expensive to build a roadway for heavy dump trucks to parallel essentially the same route the railway already travels. Therefore the future for the "pint size" three-footer seems good, at least for the foreseeable years to come.

Since steam locomotives are of particular interest to me, I have been interested in the era when steam was king on the Limedale narrow-gauge. One of the persons who was associated with the Limedale railroad for many years during its steam operation was the late J.T. "Carl" Low of Bethesda. Before his death, Mr. Low told me that in the late 1920's he began some trial work for the MoPac by firing on a couple of runs. Before full-time employment was started, prospective workers back then were required to experience a 30-day waiting period after the trial work was completed. It was during this waiting period that he came into contact with the narrow-gauge line of the Batesville White Line company and decided to take a job with it. The time was June, 1928.

Mr. Low remembered that at that time, most of the equipment was secondhand. Over the years there were 2 steam locomotives bought new which were built in Davenport, Iowa. The company also purchased a new Whitcomb diesel at one point, and during the 1940's an 18 ton diesel was bought from the Iron Mountain Mining Company in Chattanooga and brought to Batesville for overhauling. Mr. Low led me to believe that in the late 1920's he began some trial work for the MoPac by firing on a couple of runs. Before full-time employment was started, prospective workers back then were required to experience a 30-day waiting period after the trial work was completed. It was during this waiting period that he came into contact with the narrow-gauge line of the Batesville White Line company and decided to take a job with it. The time was June, 1928.

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About 1934 Mr. Low remembered the employees of Limedale working 13 hours every day of the year, with the exceptions of taking ½ day off for Christmas and ½ day off for a funeral. He himself worked 13 hours every day by serving as engineer 12 hours and cleaning the locomotive and getting it ready for the next day the 13th hour.

Prior to that time, during the "depression years" things weren't always so busy, Mr. Low recalled that there were times when employees worked only 1 or 2 days a week. But conditions could have been worse, he said, because, at that time, many of the employees lived in company housing at Limedale and they supplemented their income by curring wood, helping local farmers, and even doing such odd jobs as cutting hair! At one time there were approximately 30 houses in which employees lived. There was also a commissary from which employees purchased groceries and supplies.

Mr. Low remembered that the first steam locomotive came to Limedale from the Bauxite operation at Sweet Home in Saline County. It was brought here on a truck and had to have extensive work including the firebox rebuilt, new flues, rusted iron replaced, new pistons and rings in the steamchest. All of this work was done at Limedale and mostly by Mr. Low and Ollie McGuflie. There were times when 3 steam locomotives were in operation at once. Their whistles were like whistles on regular standard gauge steam locos, Low recalled. However, certain local narrow-gauge engineers sometimes hunted up their own whistles for their engines. Mr. Low remembered going to the North Little Rock MoPac shops once and getting a whistle. Those whistles were usually made of brass.

Mr. Low ran a steam locomotive 8 to 10 years. Part of that time he was the engineer, and part of that time he was the "second man". The second man had to fire and do other chores related to the locomotive - like when the sandbox was not working properly, he had to ride the front end to distribute sand on the tracks! Wet sand was always a problem in the sandbox, but when it was good and dry, it would reach the tracks properly to insure good traction.

- 4 -
Carl Low said the grade on the line between the quarry and the plant just past the creek bridge on the approach to the kiln is a 4½ to 5% grade. That is true, during steam days. It was not unusual at all for the second man to sit on the front bumper routinely and distribute sand on the tracks by hand as the loaded train tried to accomplish that grade. Engineers tried to have the little steamers "battling" pretty well when they approached that hill. Nevertheless, there were plenty of times when the engine and part of the train would have to go on to the kiln, then back up and pick up the rest of the train in a second effort.

In addition to the problems of the actual grade, the tracks sometimes got slippery from oil which drained from the car journals onto the rails. Therefore, sand was a much-needed commodity on the little engines. The steamers were retired in the 1950's. Mr. Low retired in 1972.

Another retired locomotive engineer I enjoyed visiting is Mr. Ralph Mitchell who lives just outside Batesville. He started working on the Limedale narrow-gauge line in 1933 and his first locomotive was the Whitcomb diesel engine we referred to earlier. He piloted that engine for 7 or 8 years. Mr. Mitchell said it was about 1940 before the first steam engines arrived on the scene. Therefore we have a fairly unusual situation in that diesels preceeded steam! There was also a little gas powered locomotive used as the yard switcher in the 1930's. It was brought to Limedale when the Ruddells plant ceased operations.

It appears that four steam locomotives were bought and put into service to inaugurate the steam era. Three of them were second-hand engines which had worked previously on logging railway operations in Louisiana. The fourth one was one of the ones Mr. Low mentions being built by the Davenport Locomotive Works. All four of these engines were "water tank" affairs. They did not have separate tenders for carrying coal. Instead, each engine was a self-contained unit which carried its water supply and about 400 pounds of coal.

Although Mr. Mitchell was an engineer on gasoline and diesel powered locomotives he worked over his working years, he was emphatic in his preference for steam and said they could "out twine as much" as the gasoline locomotives. As for diesels, Mr. Mitchell said he "wouldn't give one steam engine for all the diesels you could tie together". He conceded that diesels were "nice", but they "just didn't get the job done!" When I asked Mr. Mitchell how he remembered what the whistles on the steam engines sounded like, he said they sounded " kinda like a Frisco whistle - a three-tone sound". Mr. Mitchell owned one of the bells from a Limedale steam locomotive and had it mounted proudly on a sturdy post in front of his house. A passerby once offered $200.00 for the solid brass bell, but Mr. Mitchell didn't want to sell it. A few days later somebody stole the bell.

Everyone who visits Batesville's Riverside Park sees on display there the little steam locomotive sleeping away the years. This locomotive is one of the ones which worked on the narrow-gauge Limedale Railroad. It happens to be one of the ones which worked previously on a logging railway in Louisiana and which came to Limedale second-hand in the early 1940's. Mr. Mitchell said, "It wasn't much good when it arrived. The flues leaked and there were other problems. Nevertheless, it was used some. Finally a tractor-trailer trucking rig moved it from Limedale to the park, probably about 1950".

Mitchell recalls that the steam locomotives were kept in good repair and all the work was done right there at Limedale. This work included repairs to flues, boilers and tires. Boilers were required to pass a full inspection every 30 days. The coal which fired the engines was normally shipped to Limedale from Texas mines, although Arkansas-mined coal was used occasionally. Coal arrived at the plant in hopper cars via the old "Cushman line". It was then unloaded into dump trucks and stored in coal houses on the site.

As far as Mr. Mitchell remembers, there has been only one bad train wreck. Quarry "B" had been opened in addition to the regular quarry. Mr. Mitchell and his brakeman, Harry Rowlett, had taken the quarry foreman and shovel operator to "B". It was about 11:45 and John Griffin, who was operating another locomotive, got on the radio and said that he had time to make the run to "B" with a full car loaded with lumber, being pushed in front of his engine. Mitchell and Rowlett were ready to return but before leaving "B" they asked were Griffin was. They were advised, that, due to the hour, he was probably at his noon meal. The
inevitable happened - the two trains wrecked! The flat car between them caused the two engines not to meet head-on, but Griffin tried to jump anyway. His pants' cuff got entangled and he suffered the loss of a leg. Mitchell's locomotive left the tracks and went through an adjoining fence. It was wonderful that nothing more serious happened. Mr. Rowlett lives in West Batesville today.

It is probable that only another railroad enthusiast would understand the joy I experienced when I discovered the little steam locomotive in Riverside Park shortly after moving to Batesville in 1969. My joy turned into ecstasy when I learned that the narrow-gauge railway on which that locomotive worked is still nearby and actively hauling tonnage every single day. It was a dream too good to be true! In my opinion, the narrow-gauge Limesdale Railroad is a most unusual bit of history which has defied trend and tradition by continuing to live on and on into our day and time. It is a unique and delightful phenomenon.

END

THE AUTHOR: Dr. Brooks is a minister of Batesville's First Presbyterian Church.

The Whitcomb and Plymouth engines at the quarry.

A General Electric engine at the kiln.

GOLD COAST RAILROAD MUSEUM TO SOON BEGIN EXCURSION SERVICE

by: Daryl Stout, Arkansas Railroad Club member

The Gold Coast Railroad Museum is planning to soon begin passenger excursion service between Homestead and Miami, Florida. The service is planned to run three months in both Summer and Winter each year; and it's scheduled to begin as soon as they receive their operations permit from the Seaboard System Railroad.

Formerly located in Fort Lauderdale, the facility is now on the site of the former Richmond Naval Air Station, located adjacent to the Miami Metrorail in southwest Miami. The Gold Coast Railroad Museum primarily does the work of restoring old railroad passenger cars, steam engines, etc. After the restoration work is completed, the cars are rented back to Amtrak, private railroad clubs for use in excursion runs, etc.

Some of the equipment on display at the Museum included the "Ferdinand Magellan" private car (used by President Reagan in his whistle-stop election campaign last year); an observation car from the "California Zephyr"; a classic "Southern Railroad" Pullman car; and an old "Seaboard Air Line Railroad" red caboose.

(Mr. Stout recently completed a trip to Miami via Amtrak from Little Rock)
GENERAL NEWS

FORDYCE ON THE COTTON BELT SUCCESSFUL - With the help of Gene and Naomi Hull, Dusty Rhodes, Bob McManus, Russell Tedder, Phil Schueth, Don Puckett, Joe McCullough, Peter Smykla, Jake Comer, Bill Bailey, Lynn Gaines and Jim Wakefield, we had a very successful show and sale at the Fordyce on the Cotton Belt Festival April 26 and 27. The gross at the sale was $225,00. We had very nice facilities and much help from the employees of the Fordyce and Princeton Railroad. We do appreciate the efforts made to insure our having an enjoyable weekend. (Thanks to Elizabeth Gaines)

COTTON BELT FAMILY DAYS JUNE 1 - The Family Days will be held at the Cotton Belt Shops in Pine Bluff, the same place as last year. The Arkansas Railroad Club will have displays in the same building with the B&I. The club cannot sell at this event, only display.

NBC TODAY SHOW TAKES THE TRAIN - The week of May 20-24, NBC's TODAY SHOW travelled by train from Houston to New Orleans to Memphis to Indianapolis to Cincinnati. The show was reminiscent of the "Real People" Express which crossed the country years ago, with hometown interviews across the land. The consist was three P40 Amtrak locomotives, four Superliner sleepers, Superliner diner, Superliner lounge, Superliner coach-baggage, transition dorm car, baggage car and an Amtrak business car. (RAIL TRAVEL NEWS)

AMTRAK IN PROSPECTIVE - $13 billion is in the Federal budget in 1986 for highways (that would support 22 Amtraks); Aviation interests are getting $5 billion (enough to support 7 Amtraks). Perhaps it's easier for budget cutters to cut small, weak targets than it is to cut the giants, right? (RAIL TRAVEL NEWS)

NEW STEAM ENGINE TO BE RENOVATED - Jim Bistline, General Manager of Steam Operations of Norfolk Southern, announced that Bob Clayton has decided to take N&W Class A (2-6-6-4) No. 1218 out of the Roanoke Transportation Museum and rebuild it for excursion service at the Southern's steam shop in Birmingham, Alabama. This locomotive was built in 1943 in the N&W shops in Roanoke (sort of the same generation as the B&I). (NRHS NEWS)

OBIIT - Arkansas Railroad Club member Lee O'Banion died May 12. He was from Pine Bluff and is survived by his wife, 3 sons, 6 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson.

FREIGHT AGENCY CLOSED - Missouri Pacific has closed their freight agency at Springfield, Missouri effective February 12, 1985. The freight station was built in 1910-1911 and will be torn down unless a new user can be found. Since abandonment of MP's Crane Branch in the early 1970's MP's entry into Springfield has been via the Frisco/Burlington Northern from Aurora, Missouri. (THE MIXED TRAIN)

819 IN TRAINS MAGAZINE? - David F. Morgan, editor of TRAINS Magazine, the magazine of railroading, has asked for the cover shot of the May issue of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER to possibly be included in that magazine's "Railroad News Photos" spread in a future issue. I gladly said O.K., so be watching future TRAINS.

READER RAILROAD TO BEGIN NIGHT EXCURSIONS SOON - The Reader Railroad, near Prescott, Arkansas, set the following dates for its night excursion through the woods: June 6, July 20, August 3, August 17, September 7, October 5 and November 2. A dinner of some sort will be included with each trip, which leaves at 6:30PM from Camp De Woody each of those nights. The adult fare is $15. If interested, contact the Reader Railroad at P.O. Box 79, Malvern, Arkansas 72104.

BURLINGTON NORTHERN BANS STEAM ENGINES - Burlington Northern officials in Vancouver, B.C. told officials of Expo 86 that they will not accept steam locomotives being worked or towed over its system. Burlington Northern said they couldn't take steam locomotives because their weight and configuration can damage signals, switches and equipment detectors. In addition, there is the real risk of mechanical breakdown on the road with equipment this old. "There is also the drawback that this equipment tends to delay other trains and we won't tolerate that. Our primary responsibility is to provide a transportation service using modern equipment". (THE TRAINMASTER and NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE)

SUNBELT '85 NRRA CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN NORTH LITTLE ROCK - The dates are June 6-9, 1985 and the place will be the Community Center Complex at Pershing & Willow Streets. The convention will begin at 6PM on Thursday, June 6 at the Holiday Inn (Main & 1-40). For more information, contact the convention chairman, Tom E. Shook at 501-225-8955 after 5PM.

COAL SHIPMENTS UP - Coal shipments were up on the UP in the first quarter of 1985 compared with the same period last year. Nearly 200,000 carloads were hauled in 1985's first three months, up 21% from last year. (INFO MAGAZINE)
RAILROADS AT WAR
by: W.M. "Mike" Adams

With the current emphasis on the termination of World War II a long 40 years ago, it might be of interest to review the part played by the nation's railroads - one in particular.

In World War I the government took over the railroads and operated them, after a fashion, at a cost of $2,000,000 a day. Instead of expediting traffic, government red tape caused traffic jams and bottlenecks that took weeks to overcome. In World War II the government left the railroads strictly alone and they paid the government $3,000,000 a day in taxes! With one-third fewer locomotives than in World War I, one-fourth fewer freight cars and one-fourth fewer employees, in World War II the railroads moved 97 percent of all army and navy equipment and supplies - in time of emergency the nation fell back on the railroads!

The Missouri Pacific put 6,106 stars on its service flag of which 84 were destined to become gold. It served 43 army air bases, 31 major Army-Navy air training establishments, 26 camps, 4 large military hospitals, 8 war plants classified as "heavy" manufacturing and a large number of refineries, synthetic rubber plants, chemical plants and aircraft factories. The Missouri Pacific carried 6,964,613 members of the armed forces travelling on orders. Its diners served 2,594,351 meals on government meal orders. These impressive figures do not include personnel travelling on leave or furlough... The Missouri Pacific sponsored the 759th Railway Operating Battalion and helped train nine other such units as well as two railway shop battalions and the 706th railway Grand division.

Six days after Pearl Harbor the Missouri Pacific was called on to move the entire 35th Infantry division from Camp Robinson. In an unprecedented display of operating efficiency the division was moved in a total of 69 trains, dispatched at the rate of one every two hours! The writer was stationed at Camp Robinson at this time and on duty in Camp headquarters less than 100 yards from the Missouri Pacific's line into the area. I well remember the constant parade of double-headed SPOT engines fighting the two percent grade into the cantonment with long strings of passenger cars.

On one urgent occasion in 1942 the Missouri Pacific was called on to handle a troop train every thirty minutes for 48 continuous hours on a secondary main line... It was necessary to strip all branch lines to come up with the 22 extra telegraph operators needed to handle this staggering movement. On another occasion 300 soldiers showed up in St. Louis bound for Kansas City - with no warning at all. The Missouri River Eagle had just arrived and it was immediately dispatched back to Kansas City full of soldiers and then returned "dead-head" to St. Louis in time to be serviced and out on its regular run the next morning.

When the German submarines threatened to stop all oil out of the southwest to the east coast the railroads stepped in. In 1940 the Missouri Pacific handled 5,360,501 tons of petroleum and petroleum products. In 1944 this had built up to 17,161,654 tons, a daily average of 691 cars and with a like number of empties returning. At times the Missouri Pacific handled nearly 20 percent of all the oil cars in the United States.

Near Alexandria, Louisiana there were three large camps and an air base with another large camp 60 miles to the west near Leesville. On one memorable day, the Missouri Pacific handled 10,000 soldiers out of Alexandria in 24 hours! I was stationed at Camp Polk, near Leesville, most of 1943 and came to Alexandria on one occasion to catch the Missouri Pacific home for the weekend. It was one of those days - soldiers were lined up for blocks trying to buy tickets. The Missouri Pacific just added six coaches to Train 132 and put the ticket clerks on the train and had them set up an office in the dining car. By the time the train reached Little Rock they had sold every person proper transportation.

When you read of the exploits and hardships of World War II - just try to remember our railroads - all of them. The Rock Island, the Cotton Belt, the Frisco, the Kansas City Southern and the Louisiana and Arkansas and even the little Reader.... They all had a part in VICTORY!

Sic gloria transit......

END
Scenic Passenger Train to Make Last Run Through Ozarks Monday

By NORMA CONNER. (Democrat Correspondent)
BATESVILLE—A 64-year era of railroad passenger train service for Batesville came to an end early Monday morning, according to the Baltimore Sun.

However, Batesville's civic leaders are hoping to bring back passenger train service in the future. They are exploring options such as private rail companies and Amtrak.

The city, through co-operation with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, is now handling all of its passenger trains through the city on a regular basis. Batesville has been the terminus of the line for nearly 60 years.

Passenger business on the train had dwindled to a bare trickle. The train's equipment consisted of a baggage car and a passenger coach.

The schedule terminated as dead-end at both Newport and Pleasant Hill, with passengers having a long wait at both points for other trains that would take them in four directions.

Batesville Stranded

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT—SA
Sunday, March 30, 1960

traffic, the railroad operated three sets of Pullman cars, including a sleeper from Kansas City to Little Rock, one on Saturday and Sunday from St. Louis to Hot Springs, and one from Memphis to Hot Springs.

From a scenic standpoint, the White River route was a natural for diagram runs. The railroad line passes through some of the most rugged, remote and beautiful country of the Ozarks.

The route runs through Batesville, Cotter, Bergey, Hollister, Mo., and Crane to Carthage. From there it goes to Nevada and Pleasant Hill.

The railroad, incorporated in 1899, was finished in 1900 when the stretch between Red Springs, Mo., and Bergey was put in service. Within two years, the Missouri and North Arkansas to the south reached Helena with a line from Joplin, Mo., starting a long competitive battle between them for traffic.

Ultimately, the Missouri Pacific route went out with the final decision in 1946 when the M&NA was shot down by a benefit. For four years, Missouri Pacific supplied Horizon through its station at Bergey.

The Missouri was expected to be little more than a "farewell ceremony" here for the last run tomorrow.

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<td>151</td>
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<td>155</td>
<td>Pine Bluff</td>
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<td>Newport</td>
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<td>94.1</td>
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1. Stops on signal.
2. Stops to receive or discharge revenue passengers.

MOPAC TRAIN 221's last trip through Batesville, Arkansas March 31, 1960. ABOVE TWO—Batesville depot and crowd on last day. (Photos by C.H. Warner from Frank Brodnick's collection). LEFT - 25 years later, a freight crew is still stationed at Batesville. Scene shows engine 4666 next to the freight depot on May 16, 1985. (Photo by Ken Ziegendick). The March 30, 1960 clipping from the AR DEMOCRAT is used by permission.
THE LEGENDARY 819 STEAM WHISTLE

by: Bill B. Bailey

Any simple sound, such as a musical note, may be completely described by specifying three characteristics: pitch, loudness (or intensity), and quality. By general definition, a steam whistle is a device through which steam is forced into a cavity to produce a loud sound note or notes.

It's hard to say when whistles were first used on locomotives, but probably around 1833, when bells were introduced. It is a coincidence that the mounting base of the whistle is named the bell. The diameter of the SLSW 819 Steam whistle is six inches by seventeen inches in length. It is a fact that diameter of the steam whistle affects the sound volume, while the body length of the respective tube affects the pitch of its note. In conclusion, the 819 whistle will produce a long audible, low to medium note operating with 250 pounds per square inch (superheated steam) pressure.

The average steam used by a steam whistle is 280 to 420 pounds of steam per hour. To test the steam whistle, supply piping should constitute a separate supply line, used for no other purpose. It should be at least equal in size to the inlet connection of the whistle and proper operating pressure applied.

The law of physics establishes the speed of sound in dry air at a temperature of 32 degrees F at 1088 feet per second (about one-fifth of a mile per second). If the temperature is increased the speed of sound increases; thus at 68 degrees F the velocity of sound is 1129 feet/second. I estimate that a person down wind can hear the 819 whistle at a distance of seven miles with the 819 working in normal weather conditions.

Contrary to a number of persons' beliefs, a whistle that will blow satisfactorily on air may not do well on steam since steam is more dense than air and also, saturated steam isn't always dry, and if not superheated it often contains much free moisture. This has the tendency to spoil the voice of any whistle.

The throat is critical as to opening and adjustment, and a few thousandths either way can make quite a difference in the tone of the whistle. The best instrument used in steam whistle imitations is the harmonica. The lower notes of the harmonica approximates the locomotive whah-whah whistle sound effect.

Some of the famous manufacturers of whistles and types used on USA railroads are: Nathan MFG. Co. - 5 chime whistle, single bell whistle, improved chime whistle; Ashcroft's - four tone chime whistle; Crosby - single bell chime whistle; Star Brass MFG. Co. - chime whistle; The Lunkenheimer Co. - chime whistle; The Kinsley 1892 - 4 chamber bell; The Powell - single chamber; The Lonergan - single chamber; Buckeye Brass Works - single chime. Other types that are unusual are the Casey Jones famous hand made whip-poor-will whistle and the Kansas City Southern Ry. Flying Crow whistle.

Many makes of locomotives whistles were unmarked, the 819 three-chamber whistle being one of them.

END

PROGRAM

The June program of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held Sunday, June 9 at 2 PM at the usual place, the Twin City Bank (TCB) building on Main Street in North Little Rock (just across the Arkansas River from Little Rock). The program will be given by Eacles A. Hille on TRAIN ORDERS, how to collect them, read them, have fun with them, etc.

Let's have a good turnout, as usual. (As you read in the last news-letter, your editor will be out of town for this meeting, so anything you wish to donate for future publication in the RAILROADER has to be mailed to me. Thanks).
The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization of railroad and train lovers who meet once a month on the second Sunday of the month. This month's meeting place is listed under the "PROGRAM" notice elsewhere. The ARKANSAS RAILROADER is the monthly publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club and is generally mailed one or two weeks before the monthly meeting. In order to receive this monthly newsletter, you must be a member of the Arkansas Railroad Club. Current dues are $10/year for Arkansas residents and $7.50/year for out of state. The publication is mailed automatically to all members. If you would like to join, send your check, made payable to the Arkansas Railroad Club, to Dick Byrd, 12 Flintwood Dr., Little Rock, AR 72207. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through the club by paying $9.00/year more.

Editor of the ARKANSAS RAILROADER is Ken Ziegenbein. News items, full-length stories, smaller stories and photos all accepted gladly! Photos can be any size, color or black and white. Please have captions on the pictures. Mail any such contributions to:

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905 VALERIE DRIVE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR 72118
(501)-758-1340

-- HAPPY RAILROADING!! --

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