



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Arkansas Railroader



VOLUME ELEVEN NUMBER THREE MARCH 1980 W. A. "BILL" MEROK EDITOR

EDITOR'S ADDRESS: 5007 HAWTHORNE RD. LITTLE ROCK, ARK. 72207

**MARCH MEETING:** Our meeting for this month will be held on the 9th starting at 2 PM at the Missouri Pacific Office Building in North Little Rock. The program will be announced at the meeting. So--bring yourself and those visitors. We need to get some additional new members.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT AND LOCATION OF THE FIRST TELEGRAPH LINE INTO LITTLE ROCK

By: BILL BAILEY

On Jan. 11, 1853 Arkansas Geverner Conway approved an Act of the Arkansas Legislature granting a charter to construct a railway from the Mississippi River, Memphis to Little Rock, a distance of 133 miles. This was the second railroad incorporated under the laws of Arkansas, and the first company to place a railroad in operation in the state.

The difficulty I encountered in trying to follow the history and development of the area and the railroad we now know as the Rock Island is worth passing on to our club membership. I encountered the following owners:

The Memphis and Little Rock Railroad Company, Inc., Jan 11, 1853, sold to Memphis and Little Rock Railway Co. March 17, 1873.

The Memphis and Little Rock Railway Co. was sold to the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad Co. No. 2, April 27, 1877.

The Memphis and Little Rock Railroad Co. No. 2 was sold to the Little Rock and Memphis Railroad Co. May 23, 1887.

The Little Rock and Memphis Railroad Co. was sold to the Chectaw and Memphis Railroad Co. Oct. 25, 1898.

The Chectaw and Memphis Railroad Co. was sold to the Chectaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Co. June 30, 1900.

The history surrounding the Memphisto Little Rock route had a start like most railroads but changed hands many times and the last spike was driven in front of the depot at DeValls Bluff, Arkansas by a Mr. Albert Ryan, who, at that time, was Mayor of the city.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Bill spent much time in running down the above and we congratulate him. Railroad histories are very interesting; as well as items supplementing the histories. Our state is rich in railroad history and all of them make for interesting reading. One of the best is the book written by our own Gene Hull, entitled; **SHORTLINE RAILROADS OF ARKANSAS**. If you don't have this book suggest you contact Gene as he may have a few copies left for sale. Its excellent reading.

**WANTED BY EDITOR:** Cotton Belt public timetables, any month, any year. See me, call me or write me. My phone number is AC 501 - 666-5621, LittleRock, Ark.

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See all of you at the March meeting. Our attendance at the first two meetings of this year has been excellent. Lets keep it up.

NEWS ITEMS

**IS TAKEOVER GETTING CLOSE?** Southern Pacific has rented two floors of office space in the former Southern Hotel in El Reno, Oklahoma. The Hotel, incidentally, is only one block north of RI's office building in El Reno. (FROM THE DISPATCHER CENTRAL OKLAHOMA RAILFAN CLUB LTD)

**ARKANSANS IN ILLINOIS;** Q&A 2-6-0, No. 26 and L&A 2-8-0 No. 99 now reside at the Illinois Railway Museum, Union, Illinois. The museum is also home to FRISCO 2-10-0 No. 1630. Chances are that the latter loco also worked in Arkansas at one time. We just wish that these former residents were still with us. (Information on these locos comes from SPIKE & TIE, Blackhawk Chapter, NRHS, Aurora, Ill.)

**SHADES OF THE OLD WEST;** On February 8th a wild chase ended for two Nashville, Tenn. outlaws at Clarendon, Ark. after the two not only shot up two houses but commandeered a train as well. After a night of terror the men plunged into the White River at Clarendon and the crew of a southbound Cotton Belt freight train spotted the men about 1:40 AM on the 8th and notified police of their position. Officers ordered the train to stop before crossing the Cotton Belt bridge just below the city of Clarendon. The men boarded the train before it reached the bridge and took the engineer, R. M. Waddington of Pine Bluff and the front brakeman, A. L. Brown also of Pine Bluff, hostage. Law enforcement officers jumped aboard the train when it stopped at the foot of the bridge with their guns drawn. The men finally surrendered to the officers. Sounds a little bit like the late Jesse James and his gang. You never know what is going to happen in this day and time.

**AMTRAK NEWS;** The Amtrak Board of Directors has approved the conversion of five Andinettes into Andinette/Lounges (there's got to be a catchy name for that). The coach seats and luggage racks would be removed to be replaced by lounge seats and tables. These would be for use on the Inter-American later this year. (From: THE BULLETIN BOARD, Trinity Valley RR. Club, Ft. Worth, Texas) Two or three of our members report very fine trips on the Inter-American lately and even stated that the food on the Am-Dinette was very good; not up to the old railroad dining car standards of course but still good. We also hear rumors that the Inter-American, a little later this year, will get a full dining car. This would be most welcome. Also rerouting rumors and schedule changes persist for this train. As long as we keep the train thru Little Rock they can route it any way they want; having a passenger train running thru your city now is something.

**STEAM EXCURSIONS;** Having been announced at our February meeting, you are already aware of T.V.R.M.'s steam trip from Chattanooga to Atlanta, Ga. on Saturday April 12th and Sunday, April 13th. In addition to the usual equipment this train will also contain 10-2-1 heavyweight Pullman LAKE PEARL, Dome Parlor Car No. 1602 and Deluxe coach "Man-O-War". Ex OP Royal Hudson No. 2839 will be on the smoky end. If you want additional information on this trip let me know. Now, another big one and somewhat closer to home is Sentimental Journey's MEMPHIS SPECIAL, from Memphis to Corinth, Miss. and return on Saturday, May 3 and Sunday, May 4. This one will be discussed further at our March meeting. A chartered bus may be in the making. Won't it be nice to see steam again; if only for a day. No. 4501 will again power this one. Get your cameras and tape recorders ready.

If I can go back down memory lane and complete a little research I hope to have another short article in a future issue of the newsletter (not sure what month yet) on a subject dear to my heart—Dining Cars.

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The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization. Regular meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month with exception of July and December. Visitors always welcome and refreshments usually available. Send all news items and exchange newsletters to Editor at 5007 Hawthorne Road, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72207.

PLEASE BRING THOSE VISITORS



EARLY PHOTO OF COTTON BELT "BLUE STREAK" PULLED BY 4-6-0 PASSENGER LOCO NO. 659.  
(CREDIT: COTTON BELT RAILROAD)

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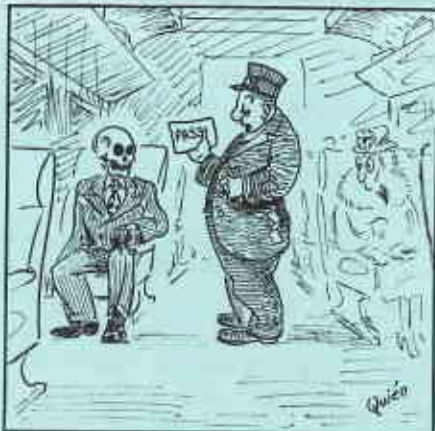
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"A deadhead, huh?"

A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOR  
(CREDIT: COTTON BELT NEWS)

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