



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Arkansas Railroader



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MAY, 1975

## NOTICE !!

MAY MEETING: The regular monthly meeting will be held Sunday, May 18, 1975 at 2:00 p.m. This the THIRD Sunday rather than the usual Second Sunday due to Mothers Day falling on the second Sunday. Also the meeting will be held at the club building for the first time.

APRIL MEETING: Fred Fillers presented an interesting program on the collecting of builders plates at the April meeting. He had a number of excellent examples on display and presented a talk tracing the evolution of the different types and styles of plates. Fred has also agreed to place a portion of his collection on display at our coming museum show in June.

Maomi Hull was authorized to purchase items of jewelry and souvenirs for sale at the coming show. This will of necessity be a limited start in the souvenir field but if all goes well, we should be able to increase our selection of items at future shows.

The availability of the Vernon Ivy photograph collection was made known and funds were voted to make a bid to his estate. Wayne Couch, who handled the matter for the club, reports that we were successful in our endeavor and now possess the collection.

It consists of 117 Framed pictures, some 5 or 6 albums containing 150-200 photographs of the 8 x 10 size of stations and locomotives and a sizeable number of unmounted pictures. This is our first major acquisition in this field.

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A STRANGE TRAIN IN ARKANSAS

by

CLIFTON E. HULL

In March, 1948, the people of Arkansas were invited to inspect some of the most sophisticated and luxurious passenger train equipment ever seen anywhere. The railroads of the country were either using or thinking of buying, equipment such as this. The folks in Arkansas were given a preview of the train, which they could look forward to riding not too long in the future.

This event is in sharp contrast to the situation less than 25 years later. Not only the luxury trains, but every passenger train in Arkansas was taken away from the people. And only after a long struggle was Amtrak persuaded to run a train through the state.

March 15, 1948, was a warm, early spring day at Little Rock. Large, fluffy white clouds sailed swiftly along on a brisk breeze. It was humid, and frequently it seemed as if there would be a real ground-soaking shower, but in a few minutes the sun fought its way out of the cloud blanket.

The noon hour was drawing near and a group of expectant spectators waited beside a spur track extending westward from the dark red brick passenger station of the Rock Island at Little Rock.

"I wonder what it looks like?"

"Hear tell 'taint never been anything like it!"

"Boy, it must really be somethin' to see!"

Speculation was running pretty freely. I was doing some fancy wondering myself.

Soon there was a flurry of movement down in the railroad yards, south of the depot, and the long, founded, peculiar looking passenger train came gliding smoothly onto the long spur track, running backward. The rear end of the train was smooth and blunt as a big lead bullet. There was a glass bubble on the roof of each of the four cars. A magnificent diesel locomotive was on the other end.

For sure, there never had been anything like it in Little Rock before! The TRAIN OF TOMORROW had already arrived.

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A group of 45 persons had been invited to come to Brinkley, board the fancy train, and ride back to Little Rock. At 9:20 on Monday morning, March 15, 1948, they stepped aboard, and had hardly begun to comprehend all the magnificence confronting them before they were rolling across the river into the Rock Island station.

The embryo idea for the train began at the headquarters of the Electro-Motive Division of the General Motors Corp. at LaGrange, Ill. This was the company which was quickly becoming the major builder of diesel locomotives, a radical departure from the accepted way of running a railroad. The company was not interested in building passenger trains, but if new trains were put in operation they probably would be pulled by diesel locomotives.

C. R. Osborn, vice-president of General Motors and General Manager of Electro-Motive, was riding the cab of a freight diesel engine through the Colorado Rockies in July 1944. He was studying wartime freight movements, but he also was enraptured by the panoramic view of this matchless scenic beauty as seen through the wide slanting windshield of a diesel.

"If people knew what they could see from here, they would pay \$500 just to sit in the fireman's seat from Chicago to the Coast!"

Why shouldn't the traveling public be given the opportunity to be thrilled by the majestic beauty of the world around them as they rode the gleaming rails of America's railroads after the agonies of war were over?

He took the idea to the engineering department of EMD, and the designers were told to design the finest passenger train their minds could conceive so long as it was practical to operate. The result was 1500 crayon sketches of what elegant passenger equipment should be. From these, one hundred were declared practicable and they were the basis for the TRAIN OF TOMORROW.

Models of the various cars were built and executives of some major railroads were invited to inspect them. They liked what they saw, and Ralph Budd, president of the Burlington, decided to incorporate one of the many features in a coach which was being repaired in his shops at Aurora, Ill. This was a Plexiglas dome elevated above the car roof, containing several seats from which passengers could view the landscape. It was called a vista dome and was placed in service in June, 1945, and the passengers were highly enthusiastic.

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Quite a few rail executives expressed their desire to see a full size train, similar to the model cars. Electro-Motive let a contract in the fall of 1945 to Pullman-Standard for the fabrication of the cars. Collaborating with Electro-Motive were 63 different companies in developing the various features-air conditioning, heating, lighting, styling.

In May 28, 1946, the TRAIN OF TOMORROW was ready.

The decision was made to show the magnificent train to the people of America. This would help the railroads attract more passengers. A travel schedule was worked out to visit nearly 100 major cities from coast to coast. This tour of America began May 29, 1947 from Chicago.

Ten months later this fabulous train arrived at Little Rock. There certainly was no lack of interest. The sun finally forced its way through the clouds and it was a most comfortable day.

(CONTINUED IN JUNE ISSUE)

SCOTT & BEARSKIN LAKE RY: The Scott & Beerskin Lake Ry has resumed operations for the season. Hours of operation are 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday of each week. Fares are \$2.00 for adults and 1.00 for children.

READER RAILROAD: The Little Missouri Corp which counts among its incorporators, Richard Griggsby and Phil Powledge, has acquired control of the Reader Railroad and is making plans to return it to operation. A charter has been Authorized by the Arkansas Transportation Commission making it once more a Common Carrier. Plans are being made for moving locomotives into the area. This publication will keep the membership abreast of late developments in the next issue.

AMTRAKING: Amtrak has ordered 435 new passenger cars at a cost of \$253 million. Pullman Standard will build 235 double decker cars and 200 standard single level cars for use on Eastern roads with clearance limitations. Budd will build 200 metroliner style cars, an extension of an existing order for 292 similar cars.

The double deck car order consists of 60 food service cars, 120 coaches and 55 sleeping cars. The cars will be heated electrically instead of by steam. Capacity will be 86 to 108 persons depending on the length of the trip.

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SOUTHERN STEAM:(CONT'D) On Saturday, May 3, engine #630 was scheduled to make its first trip since overhaul. The run was from Birmingham to Columbus, Miss and return. Other steam schedules are:

Sat., May 10	Eng. 722	Atlanta to Gainesville Ga & ret.
Sun., May 11	" 722	for Bpy Scouts of America Conv.
Sat., May 24	Eng. 630	Tentative trips each day from
Sun., May 28	" 630	Mobiell. ALABAMA GULF NRHS.
Sat., June 14	Eng. 4501	Louisville to Danville Ky & Ret.
Sun., June 15	" 4501	Run up Waddie Hill to Danville
Wed., July 2 to	INDEPENDENCE LIMITED III tentatively scheduled	
Sun., July 6	to operate between eastern Kentucky andk	
	Alexandria Va viaa route yet to be determined.	
	ROANOKE-NRHS Engine 4501	
Sat., July 12	Eng. 4501	Alexandria to Front Royal Va & Ret.
Sun., July 13	" 4501	One more time
Sat., July 19	" 4501	A third time!!
Sun., July 20	" 4501	And still again!!!
Sat., JJuly 26	" 4501	Richmond to Keysville Va & ret
Sun., July 27	" 4501	Again OLD DOMINION-NRHS.

CLINCHFIELD STEAM: Clinchfield Railroad has announced a steam schedule for the coming season using Engine #1. The schedule is mostly sponsored by clubs and chapters. Best wishes to all the sponsors and the Clinchfield RR.

Sun., May 11 Spartanburg, S.C. to Erwin, Tenn. & ret.  
Sat., June 14 Spartanburg, SC. to Erwin Tenn & Ret.  
Sun., June 15 Same route "Rhododendron Special"  
Sant. June 21 Erwin, Tenn to St. Paul Va & Ret.

Other runs are scheduled in the fall beginning in September.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC OFFER: After the nations railroads made their suggestions about the division of the Rock Island in the event that it is unable to continue operations, the Southern Pacific has now reportedly made an offer to purchase the line between Tucumcari, N.M. and Kansas City, Mo to preserve the GOLDEN STATE ROUTE which has existed since 1902 and also the portion from Brinkley, Ark., to Memphis, Tenn., over which the Cotton Belt is now operating.

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