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Arkansas Railroader

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LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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 SECRETARY.....ROSS HOLT
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 NRHS DIRECTOR.....GENE HULL
 NEWS EDITOR.....BILL MERCK

*****I N M E M O R I U M*****
CHARLES OST

Charles Ost, Vice President of our club and one of its most popular members passed away on April 13th and services and burial were held at Hot Springs, Ark. on April 16th. Charlie had a host of friends throughout the state and every railroad in the state knew him. He was a fine gentleman and we will all miss him.

MAY MEETING

A reminder that our regular meeting date of May 9th falls on Mother's Day and we will meet instead on Sunday, May 16th at our club building on River Road in North Little Rock. Please come prepared to do some work to try and get things together for our Museum Show on the following Sunday, May 23rd. Above all wear work clothing. We need all members to help us get the building ready for our show.

AMERICAN FREEDOM TRAIN

The American Freedom Train has

AMERICAN FREEDOM TRAIN CONTINUED

come and gone from our area and what a wonderful sight it was, especially that Loco #4449. A short ceremony was held at Vestal Park in North Little Rock at 7:30 PM the evening of April 14th at which time our club was honored. President Walker and NRHS Director Hull were recognized and a copy of Gene's book, "Short Line Railroads of Arkansas" was presented to Mr. John E. Manning, Vice President of the Freedom Train. There were many dignitaries present at the ceremony including Arkansas Governor David Pryor, Lt. Governor Joe Purcell, Atty. General Jim Guy Tucker, Mayors Eddie Powell of North Little Rock and George Wimberly of Little Rock. A National Guard band played patriotic music and a men's barbershop ensemble provided some fine harmony. The attendance for the three day visit of the train was a total of 53,579 people.

BOOK REVIEW

We very seldom do a book review in this newsletter; however one has come to our attention that merits writing about. It is RAILROADS YOU CAN MODEL from KAIMBACH BOOKS, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Edited by Mike Schafer, cost per copy \$3.50. It is every bit worth the price

BOOK REVIEW CONTINUED

and it is appealing not only to the model rail fan but to just plain rail fan as well. The book covers a historical synopsis, geography and physical plant, operations and equipment used, detailed maps and many photos. The following rail lines are featured: NYO&W, DM&IR, WABASH (N&W Mixed Train Branch Line) ABERDEEN & ROCKFISH, BATH AND HAMMONDSPORT, V&T, GM&O Doodlebug line, StJ&IC, SP's TEHACHAPI LOOP. If you like interesting reading and photos don't fail to get this one. It is up to the usual Kalmbach standards.

P.S. * Your Editor found the chapter on the WABASH (N&W) Mixed Train Branch Line most interesting due to the fact that my home town is Moberly, Mo. which is 24 miles north-west of Centralia; Moberly being at one time a division point on the WABASH, now (N&W). I have witnessed this branch line operation from Centralia to Columbia many times even back in the days when steam power was used. A very, very colorful branch line operation it was. The branch is now operated with a single round trip each day, Monday thru Friday, this train being freight only. **

OUR COMMITTEES

Our club committees are functioning in great style and we are having a great year. With the Freedom Train and others going it is THE YEAR for the railroads. While we are at it we want the ladies in our club who furnish those wonderful refreshments at our coffee breaks to know how we appreciate it. Those refreshments go right along with the programs, "bull sessions", etc. Thank you ladies.

OLD TIMERS GET TOGETHER

On May 27th there will be held the 1st annual organizational meeting of Friends & Ex-Employees of the M&NA-M&A and A&O Railways, this to be a Re-Union and Luncheon to be held at the Crescent Hotel at Eureka Springs, Ark. This meeting will have an outstanding railroad speaker and a visit to the site of the New Eureka Springs Railroad at Beaver, Arkansas (former M&NA point) All of this is at a cost of \$4.25 for adults and \$2.25 for children under 10 years of age. In addition a ride on the E.S. R.R. is included. These folks at Beaver deserve our attention and help and this now gives our state another tourist hauler in addition to the Scott and Bearskin Lake and the Reader. The luncheon at Eureka Springs starts at 1:00 PM, May 27th. If interested write to Roscoe C. Migliore, Banquet Chairman, 4037 E. 25th, Tulsa, Okla. 74114. If you plan on a vacation trip this summer in the Eureka Springs area be sure and go to Beaver and see the Eureka Springs R.R. in operation.

MUSEUM SALES COMMITTEE

The group of fine fellows, including our own Phil Powledge, voted to donate 100 post cards made by Johnnie Gray of the new READER R.R. for sales at our Museum Show. These cards show READER ENGINE No. 7. This will give our show as well as the READER some good publicity, and the money from sales of the post cards will go into Museum Sales Committee funds. Thanks Phil and all the other fine fellows of the READER. Latest information available is that both the READER and SCOTT & BEARSKIN LAKE started operations for the season on April 24th. Our Club's best wishes for both lines to have a successful season.

FROM THE PAST

For your Convenience  there is a

De Luxe Lounge Car on this Train

SPECIAL MIDNIGHT SERVICE

Sandwiches - - - - Beverages - - - - Etc.

SELECTIVE CLUB BREAKFAST

MENU

50c - 65c - 85c Per Person

ALSO A LA CARTE SERVICE

VALET SERVICE

Trousers	\$0.35	Suit	\$1.00	Ladies' Suit.....	\$1.25
Vest .....	.25	Overcoat	1.00	Ladies' Skirt.....	.75
Coat .....	.65	Ladies' Coat	1.00	Ladies' Dress.....	1.00

The porter of your car will gladly take your clothes to the valet and return them when desired.

The above was given to all Pullman passengers on the Chicago & Alton's Midnight Limited running from St. Louis to Chicago. Look carefully at those prices. Those were truly the good old days.

STEAM EXCURSION

Ex-SOUTHERN Ry. No. 4501 runs this Saturday and Sunday, May 1st and 2nd, Memphis, Tenn. to Corinth, Miss. and return with the usual consist of heavy weight cars. Many in our club are looking forward to the trip. Sure would be nice to have this Engine and consist to come over to Arkansas sometime. If a trip was run out of Little Rock there would be a sell out. Folks in Arkansas are "hungry" to ride trains as it has been proven time and time again on our tourist haulers.

BITS OF THIS AND THAT

Understand Rock Island is laying welded rail out of West Memphis toward Brinkley. The Cotton Belt received excellent publicity on the "Johnny Cash" Special. The MOP was congratulated on their excellent job with the FREEDOM TRAIN, which was well deserved. CON RAIL is now in operation; it will take time to see how this Government operation works out. Good luck to them.

SOUTHERN-MO.PAC. SPECIAL

On April 29th a special train of SOUTHERN RY. officials arrived in North Little Rock from Ft. Worth, Texas. Train arrived 6:45 PM and departed 9:00 PM for Memphis. Consist of train was as follows: MP 2131 - GP 38-2 Loco SOU. RA-11 Royal Arch, 11 Bedroom Sleeper, formerly obs.-lounge car on Crescent Limited. GA-8 Georgia - Bedroom support car. This car also SOU. SOU. BV-7 Buena Vista, Inspection car with rear facing seats, plate glass observation window in rear. The Train Number was IFM-129. Officials of MP and SOU. are talking merger. If it happens what would be the name of the new line????

THE FAST MAIL - PART 2

By: W. M. "Mike" Adams

Here Engineer Mike Cronin and the 7519 took over. Mike had been selected for the run due to his well deserved reputation for speed and he had a fireman, Jack Griffith, that was equally famous and efficient. Now the 7519 had been recently equipped with a pneumatic firedoor, one of the first on the Iron Mountain. These doors were operated by a convenience footpedal and Mike tapped his fireboy on the chest as they prepared to head down the high iron and said: "Jack, my boy, pat your foot and pat it fast, we are going to Little Rock". Jack was so recall later that it was the fastest ride he ever enjoyed on a locomotive. They had a slow order through the Black River near Corning, stopped at Hoxie for the Frisco crossing and to unload mail and they stopped at Newport to unload mail and take a tank of water. They stopped once more at Higginson and took a half tank of water and arrived at Little Rock just two minutes late running the 180 miles in just three hours and fifteen minutes including what must have been nearly fifteen minutes of standing time. Considering the condition of the track prevailing in those halcyon days this was nothing short of a miracle. Mike, although blessed with great imagination and an artful story-teller, never mentioned this run in his stories leaving it up to the dispatchers and trainmen to tell all who would listen.

Time consumed in unloading mail and express again put No. 7 late out of Little Rock, in this instance 15 minutes behind but Engineer Ed Fitzgerald and his pet, the 7528, made this up and passed Hope, 115 miles to the southwest on time. Going around the curve and down the hill into Fulton, Ed's fireman, a tall raw-boned fellow named Dick Younts, saw smoke from a local freight standing in the siding. Dick was a good fireman but rather excitable, he thought the local was on the main track and yelling at Ed, ran right out of the gangway while the train was running a good 40 miles per hour. Fitzgerald was sure he was killed and stopped to back up and gather up the remains. They met Younts running down the track, yelling for them to wait for him. He had landed on his shoulders in a soft cinder fill and while his face and head was cut and bleeding he got on the engine and fired the remaining 19 miles into Texarkana where they arrived 10 minutes late. The T&P went to work and made this up but the Katy matched the performance and it was still a tie. Younts resigned shortly afterwards and went to work as engineer in a sawmill, the second fireman to renounce his job on No. 7.

On January 26, the third trip of No. 7, Engineer Christopher with the 6521 left St. Louis on time and came to the foot of Gads Hill on schedule. Again fate intervened, this time it was a southward freight train broken in two halfway up the north side of the hill. Fifteen minutes were lost and Christopher could only pick up five arriving in Doplar Bluff at 7:00 AM, forty-five minutes off the advertised. Here Homard and the 7513 again took over but the pesky slow order along the Black River kept him from making any time and he left Hoxie, 120 miles north of Little Rock still forty-two minutes late. From there to Little Rock the nervy Homard showed his mettle running the 120 miles in exactly 120 minutes which included a stop at Newport to take a tank of water and unload mail and at Higginson to take a half tank of water which was all he needed to come in.

THE FAST MAIL-CONTINUED

This was no mean feat and would be considered good running a half-century later. Coming down McAlmont Hill south of Jacksonville at sixty-five miles per hour a farmer with a team of unhitched horses dragging their double-trees drove onto the track at a road crossing squarely in front of the on coming train. This on straight track, in broad open daylight and in spite of repeated whistly signals. The engine hit the horses and threw them over by the right of way fence jerking the reins out of the farmers hands and leaving him standing by the track. Homard did not stop, there was no use, the horses were killed but the man was un-injured, at least bodily.

Faster work in handling the mail and express at Little Rock enabled Steve Mullen to get out of town just twelve minutes late. Steve and the 7514 had this made up before passing Gurdon and went into Texarkana at 1:55 P.M., right on time. The T&P managed to put the train into Fort Worth five minutes ahead of time while the Katy went in right on time also.

The fourth trip, January 27, seemed doomed almost from the start. Engineer William Brennan left St. Louis Union Station on time. Just after passing Tower Grove and about one-half mile from where the 6521 blew out the washout plug, Brennan's handsome Pacific, the 6110, was derailed and partly overturned, blocking the main line. Our old friend Johnny Rabbit then became the hero of the day and the legend of the Iron Mountain. Johnny was a senior freight engineer and doing extra passenger running and his fireman, Joe Reid, had been called for a freight train for 2:30 A.M. They were quickly removed from this run and boarded the 7505 at the roundhouse. A switch engine then drug No. 7's train, none of which was derailed, back to the Union Station. Here the 7505 was coupled on, the air tested, and Rabbit left one hour and thirty-five minutes late moving down the old original Iron Mountain tracks through the Esperance Street Yard and out onto the main line at Carondelet.

The conductor on No. 7 that morning was the venerable Polk Elkins and keeping him company was the trainmaster, J. T. Nedwideck. Both became aware that Rabbit was really getting down to business along the bluffs below Jefferson Barracks. It was a bright moonlight night and the large white marked boards on every fifth telegraph pole were plainly visible. They both claimed that just north of Riverside Rabbit made a mile and a half in just 54 seconds! If so, this was a cool 100 miles per hour. Not only an amazing but positively dangerous speed for the track that would in sinuous curves on a narrow bench carved out of the foot of precipitous rock bluffs with the muddy Mississippi lapping at the embankment forty feet below. Nedwideck got off at De Soto vowing he had had enough. It is also said that one of the mail clerks unloaded at DeSoto vowing he had had enough. It is also said that after unloading he tendered his resignation on the spot, he wasn't a devotee of high speed. Be that as it may, Rabbit made up an incredulous one hour on the schedule and came into Poplar Bluff just thirty-five minutes late. Here Mike Cronin and Jack Griffith were waiting with the 7519. It was no problem for them to make up the remaining thirty-five minutes and they rolled into Little Rock right on the money. Unloading and handling and handling mail and express again consumed fifteen minutes and Ed Fitzgerald and his 7528 left twelve minutes late but ran this off easily before passing Arkadelphia and went into Texarkana on time. The T&P made Fort Worth on time, the Katy did likewise and the score still stood even.

THE FAST MAIL - CONTINUED

After the second humiliating fiasco on Gads Hill the Missouri Division arranged the running of their freight trains so none of them would be in the vicinity when No. 7 was due. The remaining eleven trips were made without serious delays and the minor ones easily overcome. Based on the splendid performance of Howard and Cronin the schedules on the Arkansas Division were shortened several times. Three new timetables were issued on three succeeding Sundays. Unfortunately, the story of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas performance is not available and cannot be given. It is not known at this far remove the points upon which the contest was decided. Suffice to say the Iron Mountain-Texas & Pacific were awarded the mail contract after the fifteenth trip on February 7th and kept it for over sixty years. Train No. 7 operated on practically the same schedule for this entire period. In addition to the R.P.O. cars there were several storage mail cars as well as numerous bulk express cars plus coaches, a diner and Pullmans. In later years No. 7 was given the name "The Southerner" but the earlier timetables, both public and operating, notified everyone that this was the "Government Fast Mail" and intimated that it was not to be dealt with lightly.

A word about the fine locomotives involved - all products of the Brooks Locomotive Works at Dunkirk, New York. The old Iron Mountain and the affiliated Missouri Pacific went in heavy for Brooks power and in later years stayed with the American Locomotive Company which absorbed Brooks. The 7500's were classic Ten-wheelers with 19 x 26 inch cylinders, 69 inch drivers, 200 lbs. boiler pressure and weighed 145,000 lbs. Engines 7501 - 7508 were built in 1901 as Missouri Pacific 1101 - 1108 and renumbered in December 1905. Engines 7509 - 7514 were built in 1902 as Missouri Pacific 1109-1114 and likewise renumbered in December 1905. Engines 7515 - 7529 were built as St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Nos. 1601 - 1615 in 1902 and were also renumbered in December 1905 at which time all Missouri Pacific and Iron Mountain locomotives were renumbered into a common series. The 6500's were the first examples of the Pacific type locomotive to be constructed for an American railroad and most authorities credit the type name to their use on the Missouri Pacific. They were equipped with 20 x 26 inch cylinders, 69 inch drivers and operated at 200 lbs. pressure, weighing 185,000 lbs. The first built, in 1902, were Missouri Pacific Nos. 1115 - 1119 renumbered in 1905 to 6501 - 6505 and the Iron Mountain Nos. 1616 - 1620 later the 6510 - 6514. In 1903 the Missouri Pacific received the 1120 - 1123, later the 6506 - 6509 while the Iron Mountain placed in service the 1621 - 1627, later the 6515 - 6521. The actual ownership meant little and the locomotives were used wherever needed over the combined Gould systems. Both series were graceful, clean lined locomotives. The 6500's lasted right up to dieselization serving over a half century.

Now let us review for a moment that blating 100 miles per hour trip on a careening ten-wheeler down the shores of the Great River. Mr. Anderson talked at length with the Fireman Joe Reid. In his later years Joe ran an engine out of McGehee, Arkansas on the Little Rock and Louisiana Divisions. He told Andy he had no trouble keeping the engine hot and all he could remember of the trip on No. 7 was that it was just a rough ride. "I knew by the rocking and swaying of the engine we were making fast time and hitting those curves like going around street corners but had no idea what our speed was...". Hal Galbreath

THE FAST MAIL - CONTINUED

who later became trainmaster and superintendent on the Iron Mountain, was the dispatcher on duty at De Soto that morning. He compared Nedwideck's figures with the OS on his train sheet passing Sulphur Springs and Riverside and said there was no doubt that almost all of the three and one-half miles between the two stations were made at 100 miles per hour.

I am sure they made a fabulous trip - far, far faster than the usual speed or even reasonably safe speed but at this late date I am inclined to doubt that they actually made 100 miles per hour with this ten-wheeler with only sixty-nine inch drivers. However, much more has been claimed and accepted for a similar 4-6-0 with seventh-to inch drivers which on the old Plant System was alleged to have made one hundred twenty miles per hour just short years before. We must agree to this though - those old-time runners were a courageous dedicated and withall reckless breed of men, a credit to their railroad and profession. Truly representative of the era of "wooden cars and iron men".

THE END

P.S. Along with this fine article wouldn't it have been interesting if we could have had the experiences, locomotives used, time, etc. of the Katy crews who were in the race for the U.S. mail. (Editor)

The ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB is a non-profit organization that meets the second Sunday of each month in the Missouri Pacific Office Building, 1000 West 4th St. North Little Rock, Ark. For information write P. O. Box 5584, Little Rock, Ark. 72205.

Before this letter goes to our printer have time to get in a few words about the SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY-SOUTHERN RY. Steam Excursion, Memphis to Corinth on May 1st. No. 4501 and heavy weight consist departed Buntyn Station, Memphis, on time at 8:00 AM. Due to two meets and taking water at Grand Junction train arrived a little late at Corinth; 1:00 PM. Turning took longer than usual and departure from Corinth was approximately 3:30 PM. The usual run-by was observed on the going trip but was dispensed with on the return due to late departure from Corinth. Train arrived Buntyn at approximately 6:40 PM. The trip was super deluxe is the way to describe it. The sounds of that whistle and exhaust on the 4501 is just "Sweet Music" to a rail fan's ears. Everyone enjoyed it and SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY and SOUTHERN RAILWAY deserve nothing but praise for a very wonderful trip. We hope it runs again in 1977.
