



# Arkansas Railroader



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MAY 1979

W. A. "BILL" MERCK EDITOR

10TH ANNIVERSARY

**MAY PROGRAM:** Our May program will be given by Jim Wilson who will show slides of Bi-Centennial diesels; also slides of some rare diesels. This should be an interesting program and we urge all of you to come out and fill up our meeting room and bring those visitors. The date is May 13th starting at 2 PM at the Missouri Pacific Building in North Little Rock. Wish to extend our thanks to Ken Combs for that very interesting slide presentation at our April meeting.

Prez Bill Bailey and ye ed were in Pine Bluff on April 11th for a short visit with Cotton Belt superintendent, Bill Reed. Found that C.B. biz car SAN JOSE arrived back at its "home berth" on the 10th completely renovated and repainted. We still hope to have Bill Reed for a future program at our club. Bill is a very busy individual. We were advised that only damage suffered by Cotton Belt in the recent tornado that hit Camden, Arkansas and some other towns in the vicinity were falling trees across the main line which was cleared up quickly by section crews out of Camden.

**MALL SHOW - MELLOR PARK MALL - E L DORADO, ARK. JUNE 2ND:** As most of you know on June 2nd our club will have both sales of railroad items and a private collection showing at the Mellor Park Mall in El Dorado. This date falls on a Saturday and Friday, June 1st can be utilized for setting up, etc. El Dorado, is, as you know, a railroad town with three lines serving it; namely MOP, THE ROOK, and the EL DORADO & WESSON. This event will be given much publicity by the newspaper at El Dorado as well as others and we hope as many of our members can be in the city for our showing. Local merchants will cooperate with window space donated for our showing of private collections and with plenty of security promised/ and our own Naomi Hull in charge of rail item sales; souvenirs, etc. inside the mall. The event should be a good drawing card and undoubtedly many citizens from the small towns in the El Dorado vicinity will be on hand. The event will be discussed in detail at our May meeting.

The Family lines have leased ex-O&O 2-8-4 2716 from the Louisville, Ky. railroad museum and work on renovating it will be done at the Clinchfield R.R. shops, it having been moved there the first part of April. Excursion trips with the modern Berkshire may begin in the fall. And, all is not lost in the West; information is to the effect that ex-SP 4449 (The Freedom Train Queen) will pull excursions during the Rose Festival from Portland to Wishram, Washington. (This information from The Bulletin Board, Trinity Valley R.R. Club, Ft. Worth, Texas). Sounds mighty good to us.

In our April newsletter we listed Southern Railway steam excursion schedule April thru June. On Page 2 we are listing additional trips which should be of interest.

Southern Railway Steam Excursion Schedule July and August

<u>Date</u>	<u>Trip</u>	<u>Engine</u>
	INDEPENDENCE LIMITED - sponsored by Roanoke Chapter, NRHS will operate as follows:	
Wed. July 4	Lexington to Ashland, Ky. via C&O Ry.	2839
Thur. July 5	Ashland, Ky. to Johnson City, TN., C&O-Clinchfield	
Fri. July 6	Johnson City, Tn., Asheville, N.C. Southern Ry.	
Sat. July 7	Asheville to Greensboro via Winston-Salem, Sou. Ry.	
	Tickets for all or portions of this trip should be purchased through Roanoke Chapter.	
Sat. July 14	Round-trip excursion Greensboro and return sponsored by Greensboro Chapter, NRHS .	2839
Sun. July 15	Greensboro, N.C. to Alexandria, Va., one way	2839
Sat. July 21	Alexandria, Va. to Charlottesville, Va. and return	2839
Sun. July 22	each day, Sponsored by Washington area Chapters,	
Sat. July 28	NRHS and Railroad Enthusiasts.	
Sun. July 29		
Thu. Aug. 9	Lexington, Ky. to Louisville, Ky. and return for opening of Kentucky State Fair.	610
Sat. Aug. 18	Richmond to Keysville, Va. and return each day.	722
Sun. Aug. 19	sponsored by Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS .	
Tues. Aug. 28	Atlanta, Ga. to Salisbury, N.C. one way	750
Wed. Aug. 29	Salisbury, N.C. to Alexandria, Va. one way	750
	Sponsored by Atlanta Chapter, NRHS.	
Fri. Aug. 31	Alexandria, Va. to Strasburg, Va. and return. Double header. Sponsored by NRHS National Convention/ Washington Area Chapters.	722-750

Note: Engine 610 will not operate until August 9 due to the time-consuming job of renewing rod brasses and bushings. Royal Hudson #2839 is performing magnificently and is operating at maximum track speeds allowable.

Amtrak's Inter-American will start daily service between Chicago and Laredo, Texas on June 15th and the daily service will be in effect until the day after Labor Day when the service will return to three times a week. Time is getting short and unless Congress intervenes with a positive NO, the Inter-American will go the way of the do-do bird in October. Late information received is that the Arkansas congressional delegation may have had a change of heart and will do all possible to keep the train on. Too bad that its all in politics. With the gascrunch wouldn't the old days of the passenger train be nice now??

Membership cards for 1979 have been mailed out to all dues paying members. If you paid your dues and did not receive your card let Ross Holt know at the May meeting.

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The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization. Regular meetings are held the second Sunday of each month at the Missouri Pacific office building in North Little Rock. Visitors are always welcome and refreshments usually available. (Coffee-Cokes-Cookies) Send all news items and exchange newsletters to editor at 5007 Hawthorne Road, Little Rock, Ark. 72207.

LETS HAVE A FULL ATTENDANCE AT OUR MAY MEETING.

EAT HEARTY'

By: W. M. "Mike" Adams

From about 1941 to 1950 the late Robert Carl Williams was superintendent of the Arkansas Division of the Missouri Pacific. Short and stocky - completely bald, "Old man Williams" was a fine gentleman and a first class railroad man, still fondly remembered by veteran employees around the greater Little Rock area. Prone to put on excessive weight, in his later years, Mr. Williams eschewed the more robust eating places and when on the road was wont to make out a meal or more than one meal on a sack of salted peanuts and a bottle of Coke. This to the disgust of younger and hungrier members of his entourage.

It was told to me by John Toler, and I believe him implicitly, that during World War II when they were planning on putting in a OTC control board at Gurdon that they were in a quandry as to where to locate it. Now in the waiting room of the depot at Gurdon was a newstand handling the usual articles found in such places plus a cooler of soft drinks and literally stacks of peanuts, cookies, candy bars, chewing gum, etc., etc. This facility, run by a pair of brothers named Casey was a part of the Van Noy chain which was to the Gould railroads what the Fred Harvey establishments were to the Santa Fe. It was finally suggested that a wall be knocked out between the telegraph office and the waiting room and put the OTC board in the enlarged space created. This, naturally, would have meant <sup>putting</sup> out the brothers Casey and their delectables. "NO - absolutely not", cried Mr. Williams, "why lots of people LIKE TO EAT THERE!"

So - the Casey's remained in their little corner of the Gurdon waiting room and this situation still existed in 1954 when I went to Gurdon as Assistant Trainmaster. Mr. Williams had retired as General Manager by this time and Mr. John Treadwell was boss of the Arkansas Division. About the middle of 1955 old John Cranford, veteran roadmaster on the lower end of the division applied for annuity and an appropriate party was held at the Ledra Hotel at Gurdon. Naturally Mr. Williams was invited and he and Mr. Treadwell journeyed to Gurdon on Number 7. I met them at the train and since Number 7 carried a diner, assumed they had supped enroute; however, as we were walking up the platform towards the depot, Mr. Williams turned to Mr. Treadwell and said, "John - lets go up to Casey's and EAT DINNER!"

A gentle, soft spoken person, Mr. Treadwell displayed just a little irritation as he curtly told Mr. Williams, "Now Carl, you just go on and eat your peanuts - I'm going over to the hotel and eat some of Mrs. Epperson's cornbread!"

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Our thanks go to Mike Adams for the fine article above. If any of you have an article that can be gotten on one page, single spaced, let your editor have it and I will do my best to run it. Long articles are taboo account high cost of printing, postage, etc.

Rumors abound about plans for rebuilding some additional miles of the old M. & A. R.R. in the vicinity of Eureka Springs, Ark; even plans of rebuilding thru the tunnel; a new tourist line to be created, etc. If these rumors are true how wonderful it would be to take a ride again in this area. Its just a natural for a scenic ride. Perhaps some definite information will be forthcoming a little later on. Hope its true.

It seems that old faithful ex-Southern Ry. 4501 is getting a "breather" this season on the excursion circuit. She will be used for quite a few trips but not like she did in the past. She is, of course, pulling the Sentimental Journey trip from Memphis to Corinth, Miss. and return on May 5th and 6th same as the past few seasons. In spite of her age she is still a beauty.