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10TH ANNIVERSARY
EDITOR'S ADDRESS: 5007 HAWTHORNE RD. LITTLE ROCK, ARK. 72207

NOVEMBER MEETING; Our November meeting will be held on Sunday the 11th, starting at 2 PM at the Missouri Pacific office building in North Little Rock. Information not definite at this time on the program; however it could be one of two persons; either Bill Reed of the Cotton Belt at Pine Bluff or; our own Gene Hull. Will try and advise something definite before the newsletter goes to press. A program is guaranteed.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR; Its not too early for you to mark your calendar for our Christmas party which will be held at the home of Prez Bill Bailey on Saturday, December 8th. Announcement will be made at our November meeting and full details will be announced in the December newsletter.

ELECTION OF 1980 OFFICERS; Election will be held at our November meeting and officers installed at our Christmas party. The slate should look something like this: **PRESIDENT;** Dr. Bill Pollard; **VICE PRESIDENT;** Bill Alessi; **Secretary;** Ross Helt; **Treasurer;** Dick Byrd and **NRHS Contact,** Gene Hull. Your editor will continue with the newsletter if you want me for another year.

AMTRAKING; With the recent restructuring of the Amtrak system, much equipment has been released for possible placement on existing trains. With this in mind we are thinking of our own INTER-AMERICAN being restructured equipment wise. Note that the LONE STAR, one of the discontinued trains, carried a full dining car and a Hi-Level Coach (understand this equipment was former Santa Fe). Now how about Amtrak putting a full diner and one of these hi-level cars on the Inter-American. The remaining trains in the system should be made as fine as possible and we cannot see that Amtrak has any excuse now for the song and dance story about not having enough equipment. The main thing the Inter-American needs is a full diner to replace the JUNK DINETTE. Also, we have information that Amtrak has again looked into the possibility of constructing a new 2,400-square-foot station at track level at the existing station in Little Rock. We hope this is true since existing facilities now used by Amtrak here are totally unsuitable. They were of course very nice when Mo. Pacific ran all their passenger trains in and out of Little Rock but the place now is in somewhat of a shambles.

Speaking of the discontinuance of the LONE STAR—we wonder if this name will ever again be used on a passenger train; first used by the Cotton Belt and then by Amtrak.

News items are short in this issue due to running Jim Bennett's fine article on Cotton Belt Lone Star and Morning Star Passenger Trains. Due to space limitations we could not run it in its entirety; however most of it we did run with a little addition to it by your editor. Wish to congratulate Jim on this fine article and knew you will enjoy it.

The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization. Regular meetings are held on Second Sunday of each month. Visitors always welcome and refreshments usually available. Send all news items and exchange newsletters to Editor.

COTTON BELT 'LONE STAR' AND 'MORNING STAR' PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE

-by Jim Bennett - Stuttgart, Arkansas

Beginning in the 1930's the Cotton Belt Route's principal passenger train services were all called 'Lone Star Trains' and ran out of St. Louis and Memphis to Dallas and Fort Worth, with connecting services to Shreveport and Texas cities such as Tyler, Waco and others. Generally, one train was operated from and to St. Louis, with two trains into and out of Memphis. At various times, short-haul service was available on different parts of the system---in Texas, the one-car 'Gas Electric' trains were used quite successfully; and a notable experiment about 1934 saw the Cotton Belt convert 3 highway busses to rail use and inaugurate rail-bus service between Dallas and Jonesboro, daily. This service was very short lived, and little is known about these units, except they were novel and did help win some traffic back to the rails during the middle 30's. The connecting train to Shreveport always operated from Lewisville (Arkansas) on the branch to oil-drenched Shreveport.

About 1937, following the depression, passenger traffic began to show and increase, and Cotton Belt management wisely purchased ten modern and light-weight, streamlined chair coaches from the Pullman Standard Car Manufacturing Company for its principal passenger services. The cars soon became known as the 'AMERICAN FLYER' cars, reason being they and sister cars on the New Haven (and other roads) had served as the 'prototype for a line of toy trains put out by the A.O. Gilbert Company, manufacturer of the famous AMERICAN FLYER Toy Trains. The Pullman-Built cars (Worcester, Mass. plant) were distinctive for their design: low skirts, smooth sides, with very large picture windows trimmed in aluminum, which gave them a modern, racy appearance (and after the depression the traveling public was ready for a change). Inside the cars were quite modern, with individual reclining, rotating, rubber cushioned chairs, modern lighting, clean rest-rooms, sound-proofing, and new (in 1937), air-conditioning. To comply with the 'Jim Crow' requirements, the cars had separate 'white' and 'colored' sections. Cotton Belt officials were quite pleased with their purchase and advertised the cars widely and operated a good, but standard passenger service in the late 1930's. They even worked with the Southern Railway in Memphis and advertised 'close connections' between Cotton Belt trains and the Southern Railway's new streamlined TENNESSEAN which went from Memphis to Washington. No thru cars, but close connections at Memphis' Union Station. The Cotton Belt 'American Flyer' cars were the FIRST REALLY MODERN passenger cars to operate within the state of Arkansas.

GENERAL MAKE UP OF COTTON BELT TRAINS

LONE STAR TRAINS (#1 and 2)
MEMPHIS TO SHREVEPORT AND DALLAS

Pullman Sleeper (Open Platform Observation)
Pullman Sleeper
Dining Car
American Flyer Chair Car
Coach (Early Steel-type)

Memphis to Shreveport
Memphis to Dallas
Texarkana to Dallas
Memphis to Dallas
Lewisville to Shreveport

MAKE UP CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



MORNING STAR TRAINS (# 5 and 6 --- # 7 and 8)

ST. LOUIS TO DALLAS
MEMPHIS TO DALLAS

Pullman Sleeper
Dining Car
American Flyer Chair Car

St. Louis to Texarkana
Jonesboro to Pine Bluff
St. Louis to Dallas

American Flyer Chair Car
Dining-Lounge Car

Memphis to Dallas
Memphis to Dallas

The MORNING STAR trains generally consolidated (southbound) at Brinkley, Ark. for the run into Texas. (Northbound the situation was reversed). The St. Louis section would arrive at North Brinkley Yard a few minutes prior to the Memphis section's arrival. Upon the Memphis train's arrival, Cotton Belt crew members would consolidate the two trains, proceed to the station stop at Brinkley, then onto Pine Bluff where the Jonesboro diner was taken out, then onto Texas for its termination. Northbound this procedure was reversed. Only knowledgeable travelers on either train at Brinkley were generally aware of the switching done there--it was done quickly and smoothly by the well-trained Cotton Belt crews.

During the middle war years (1943-45 or so) due to extremely heavy freight traffic on the Cotton Belt and Rock Island, and congestion at Brinkley, (as you know the Cotton Belt has for years used Rock Island tracks from Brinkley to Memphis) Cotton Belt management consolidated the St. Louis and Memphis sections at the Pine Bluff Yards.---believe it or not; Thus for this period of time, they ran the two sections about 40 minutes apart. The St. Louis Section (southbound) would run ahead of the Memphis section and wait on it at the Pine Bluff Yards (Shops), where the two trains consolidated, then moved the short distance to the downtown Pine Bluff Station for discharge and receiving of passengers, mail, baggage, and express. It is not known how many Pine Bluff folks stayed on the train during its 'heels-cooling' in the yards; likely many get off and walked, or had someone meet them in the yards. Northbound, the procedure was reversed--the consolidated train arrived at the Pine Bluff Station, moved on to the Yards, then was split up, with the Memphis section being dispatched immediately and the St. Louis equipment waiting about 40 minutes to move out. What St. Louis passengers thought about this 40-minute 'lay over' in the Pine Bluff yards is not known. They were used to being side-tracked for so many freights and troop-trains in these days, it was not probably much of a problem for Cotton Belt crew members to handle.

The passenger diesels came in 1950 (3 of them) and they were able to handle most of the passenger trains. At first they turned at Pine Bluff, with the steam locomotives handling the trains south of there, but then they ran all the way to Texas. Alco-GE furnished two of them (#300 and # 301) and EMD furnished the #306, which made the last run on November 30, 1959, of a Cotton Belt Passenger Train. By this time the run had been fore-shortened St. Louis to Pine Bluff. Sometime before they had cut it back to St. Louis-Texarkana, and even prior to that time (in a highly successful effort to eliminate their Pullman service) had cut the Pullman run to 3-times weekly. Thus the end of a very interesting passenger service on the Cotton Belt. They did rather well, considering the relatively small pool of passenger cars they owned and the rather long runs they protected. They kept their equipment in good shape and ran good trains until the end.

"COTTON VALLEY"
HEAVY WEIGHT COACH - COACH
SLEEPER - COACH PART IN MIDDLE



All photos, unless otherwise credited, Pullman-Standard.

A FEW ADDITIONS BY YOUR EDITOR TO JIM BENNETT'S EXCELLENT ARTICLE

Since your editor was a long time Cotton Belt man thought a few additions to Jim's article would be in line. It was my pleasure to ride the Lone Star's many times. In the make-up of Trains Numbers 1 and 2, Memphis to Shreveport and Dallas; during years 1936-37-38 and possibly thru 1939, the Pullman on these trains that ran thru from Memphis to Dallas was a Cafe-Coach-Sleeper containing 8 sections. Picture of one of the cars, COTTON VALLEY, is shown above. Its twin was named COTTON LAND. (Photo credited to PULLMAN STANDARD) With the coming of World War II these cars were withdrawn from Cotton Belt service and replaced with 12 Section, 2 Compartment, 1 Drawing Room cars. This was necessary due to limited berth space in Cotton Valley and Cotton Land. As sure many other railroads used cars like Cotton Valley and its twin; however the Cotton Belt was the only line I ever saw this equipment operated. They were both very beautiful cars and operating on the Cotton Belt they certainly had appropriate names--COTTON VALLEY AND COTTON LAND. After their service on the Cotton Belt the two cars operated for a time on the GM&O GULF COAST REBEL. What happened to them after their stint on the GM&O is not known.

In Paragraph 3 of Page 3 regarding Cotton Belt trains using Rock Island rails from Brinkley to Memphis. It might be interesting to note that a few years ago the Cotton Belt spent several million dollars in rehabilitating this stretch of Rock Island track and it is your editor's understanding that the Cotton Belt has been maintaining it for several years. With the present condition of Rock Island roadbed in Arkansas, this section is possibly the only part where a train can make reasonable speed.

Also in Paragraph 3 of Page 3 wherein Cotton Belt passengers were used to being side-tracked for so many freights--this was somewhat of a common practice on the Cotton Belt; the freights had to come first. In this respect it was interesting to your editor in that a certain troop train that I acted as an escort on, our train went into the hole twice between Brinkley and Texarkana--and what were we in the hole for? The first time to let the Lone Star by and the second time for the Morning Star. How about that? It just happened that way I guess. You never know about the OTC and/or the dispatchers.

Your editor naturally agrees with Jim that the Cotton Belt did operate an interesting passenger service. It was certainly no 20th CENTURY, no BROADWAY, no DAYLIGHT, no SUPER CHIEF or many others; however the Lone Stars and the gas-electrics served their territory well and during World War II the Cotton Belt like most other lines was literally running over with passenger business. In fact I had a hard time finding space on their trains. (I was lucky to even get an upper) *****