



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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W.A. "BILL" MERCK EDITOR



NOVEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM; Our meeting for November will be held at the Missouri Pacific Office Building in North Little Rock on Sunday the 9th starting at 2 PM. The program will be given by genial Ken Combs who will show slides from various lines across the country. Should be very interesting and trust we will have another good attendance. Bring those visitors.

We extend a cordial welcome to new members, Carole Sue Schafer, Little Rock, Jeff Westbrook, Benton, and Mr. & Mrs. Lynn Gaines Jr. of Pine Bluff.

1980 is slipping away fast so, make your plans now to attend the club's Christmas party on Saturday, December 13th, which will be held at the home of President Bill Pellard's parents at 7400 Rockwood in Little Rock. Price will be \$3.50 per person. More on this in the December announcement letter.

The Arkansas Valley Model Railroad Club will hold another open house at the club house on River Road in North Little Rock on November 22-23, from 12 Noon to 5 PM. If you like model railroads in action don't fail to attend. In addition we understand movies will be shown. Last year's open house was a huge success with a long line of people waiting outside in a line to get in. You will see some familiar faces if you attend with many of the members of our club also being members of the model club.

Quoted in part is an interesting item from the BULLETIN BOARD, Trinity Valley Railroad Club, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas, as follows:

"The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad and the lower Colorado River Authority are considering running MKT trains on electricity rather than diesel fuel. The study cost will be split by both MKT and LCRA and is expected to be finished by mid-December. Reginald N. Whitman, MKT board chairman stated "If it's cheaper and cost effective in the long term then the MKT is for running their railroad on electricity. This will help reduce America's dependence on foreign oil". If the studies conclude the idea that it is practical for both companies, MKT and LCRA will consider an electrification project in which a 325 mile section of MKT's main line from Fort Worth to Houston would be converted to receive electric energy. The route runs through Waco, Taylor, Smithfield and La Grange. MKT would provide the trains and their needed equipment, while LCRA would sell electricity to MKT and build the necessary substations plus accessory equipment. The cost would be between \$150 million and \$250 million." Editor's Note; You have to admire the spunky Katy. This road has had its good years and certainly many bad ones. Several other roads have studied electrification which includes UP, SP, SOUTHERN and others; however nothing has been done yet. To electrify a railroad is a very costly project to say the least.



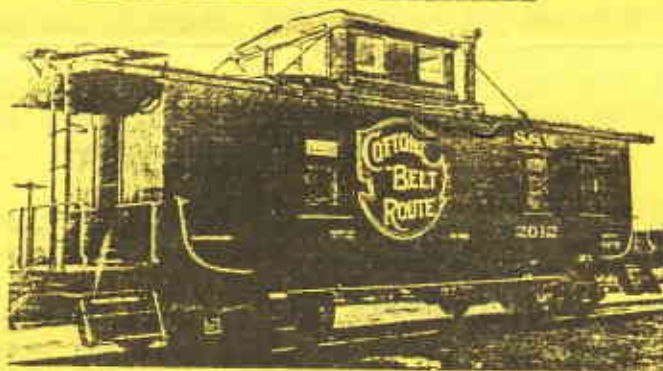
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OUT OF THE PAST



SSW wooden caboose with yellow grabirons and large herald.

Some of you I am sure will remember the great ILLINOIS TRACTION SYSTEM, and of course you know about its successor, the ILLINOIS TERMINAL, the latter still operating. The Illinois Traction was a project of former great utility magnate, Samuel Insull. What you may not remember about the Ill. Traction and Ill. Terminal is that the lines had a daily midnight train between St. Louis and Peoria and Peoria and St. Louis known as "THE OWL". The Owl was a parlor and sleeping car train; however what made it different is that the sleeping cars had windows in the upper berths, something that Pullman never had. Many passengers said these cars were superior to Pullman. The Owl was a "fastie" to be sure. I.T. never used the former great St. Louis Union Station but had their own station not far from the downtown section of St. Louis. There was never any overhead operation out of St. Louis Union Station. I had the pleasure of seeing "The Owl" once or twice while roaming around St. Louis but never got to ride it. And to think at one time I had a pass on the Illinois Terminal and never used it. Its enough to make a guy go bananas thinking about the trains he could have ridden and didn 't.

The following former Presidents of the United States used the railroads in campaigning, the campaigns known as Whistle Stops: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, William Howard Taft, Andrew Johnson, Warren Harding, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and thrifty Calvin Coolidge, who in 1924 cut costs by coupling a single car to the rear of regular trains. No one made better use of the railroads however than Harry Truman who, in 1948, made a total of seven trips over 31,000 miles, a single-year record. Truman gave 350 speeches to an estimated six million Americans. Why a campaign whistle stop train? It's hard to shake hands from a jet.
CREDIT: NRHS NEWS EXTRA, October, 1980.

The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization. Regular meetings (with some exceptions) are held on the second Sunday of each month. Members are encouraged to bring visitors who are always welcome, and refreshments are usually available. Send news items and exchange newsletters to Editor at 5007 Hawthorne Rd., Little Rock, Ark. 72207.

See you all at the November meeting.