



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Arkansas Railroader



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SEPTEMBER MEETING: Regular monthly business meetings will begin again on Sunday, September 14, 1975 at 2:00 p.m. The meeting which will be a swap session will be held at the MISSOURI PACIFIC office Building 1000 N. 4th St. North Little Rock, Ark.

FIRST MUSEUM SHOWING: Thanks to Paul Moon and his committee, the first annual museum showing was a great success. In excess of 300 people went through the exhibits during the afternoon. Coverage was provided by all three television channels. Displays of Builders Plates, Insulators, Lanterns, and miscellaneous artifacts of our railroad heritage were displayed. Naomi Hull and her sales committee had a concession area where jewelry and other souvenir items were available. A very successful show that will give us a goal to equal for the next one.

ANNUAL PICNIC: The annual picnic was held on the property of the Scott and Bearskin Lake Railway on July 13th. David Nixon and his committee did a commendable job of arranging things this year and the gathering was attended by around 50 people. This was one of the better picnics inasmuch as tables are now available for lunches and the tracks have been extended about another half mile into the woods making for a more interesting ride. Plans are still in the making for turning the engine at the end of the trip but this has not yet been accomplished. Perhaps by next year.

AMTRAKING: Reliable sources report that Malvern, Arkansas will be added as a stop for the INTERAMERICAN effective September 15th if certain facilities are provided by then. This will give Arkansas one more stop for her train and ridership is holding up very well.

CENTENNIAL ENGINES: Reports have it that Missouri Pacific GP-9 # 325 will be repainted in the Bi-centennial colors and be renumbered 1776.

The Cotton Belt/SP Bi-centennial engine passed through this territory and spent a short time at Pine Bluff before going to the West Coast. It remains on the SP at this writing. Possibly it will return to this area sometime within the year.

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TEXAS DATE NAIL ASSN. On August 9 & 10, The Texas Date Nail Collectors Assn. held a Wildcat & Hobby show at the Velda Rose Towers in Hot Springs. John H. Long was Chairman and Charlie Ost was Asst. Chairman. Both are from Hot Springs.

Several members of our organization were in attendance and found it to be a very interesting show. A wide array of date nail collections were displayed and trading and selling was brisk. Other items such as locks and lanterns were also in evidence both on display and for sale. A good crowd was in evidence and hopefully this organization will choose to meet in Arkansas again in the future.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Yes,, History does repeat itself. While viewing our recent show in June, I could not help but marvel at the accomplishments of another era of the recent past wherein quality rail service was provided for both freight and passengers with basicly simple tools. What is the difference between then and now? I think the answer was personal service. A commitment by individuals. Today we must use computers and automaton of all types, yet service should be foremost if we are to ever balance the books

Your president has traveled some 4,000 miles by rail since June and can report that history is indeed repeating itself, that service is foremost in the industry mind whether it be MoPac, Santa Fe, Amtrak or Penn Central. We are returning to the standards of yesteryear through upgrading of trackwork, new equipment, abandonment of excess trackage and structures, and employees whoe care. A Freight or Passenger train can again run from St. Lousi to Columbus, Ohio at near speeds of yesteryear and deliver the goods from the West to the East.

Amtrak will soon reduce running time to Laredo and connect with the AZTEC EAGLE to Mexico City thus allowing service to once again be sold thru the travel agencies. A second Passanger train to Canada! Your president recently stood in the aisle from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore because the demand for service was so great. Yes, Mexoco to the US service will again flourish when there is service. Goods delivered from the sound Union Pacific or MoPac to the East are not considered quality service by the shipper if say Penn Central is not capable. Again, total service is the key.

I think that in time we will see trackwork (With taxes on trackwork) a federal program in line with highways, airports, etc. This is the direction railservice is heading, so that service can again be accomplished where service is so badly needed.

Yes, History does repeat itself and you, the rail historian, have an active role in the future in improving the quality of service whether it be business or pleasure. The old railroads knew that both business and pleasure type service were one. How we administer it in the future is open to all forms and ideas, however, to the public, quality rail service is one.

Tom Shook

THE COTTON BELT LONE STAR
BY

BILL MERCK

Back in the days of name passenger trains, one of the better known trains in the southwest was the Cotton Belt's LONE STAR LIMITED. Readers may be interested in a few facts about this train and the author gathered his information from personal experience in riding the train many times and from public timetables in my possession, the oldest dated in the year 1920. In this year, the name LONE STAR had not yet been used on Cotton Belt passenger trains. The line operated many passenger trains in this year and it is interesting to note that branch lines were operated with several gas-electric motor trains. The North Little Rock Branch operated trains 431-432 and 437-438; however these trains were steam operated and carried in addition to the usual head end traffic, chair cars and coaches.

The inauguration date of the LONE STAR is not known to the author but in public timetables for the years 1929 onward, the train from Memphis to Dallas, Ft. Worth, Shreveport, etc was known as the LONE STAR. Equipment consisted of heavy-weight PULLMANS, Chair cars, Coaches, Dining Cars and Observation-Cafe-Lounge cars. In the late thirties the Cotton Belt purchased some new air conditioned lightweight chair cars. These cars had beautiful interiors and were equipped so that tray meal service could be obtained by the passenger at his seat.

Dining and Cafe Car service on the Cotton Belt was known far and wide for its excellent food and service. As an example of the meals served in dining cars at stated periods; Breakfast consisting of eggs, bacon, toast with jelly and either coffee or milk could be obtained for a cost of 35¢. Luncheons were priced at 40¢ and Dinner at 50¢. In these times of economic recession and inflation, these prices seem almost unbelievable; nevertheless it was true.

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At Memphis the Cotton Belt used the Union Station along with trains of the Southern, NC&StL, L&N, & MoPac. The LONE STAR always carried a brightly illuminated tail sign reading COTTON BELT LONE STAR. It was always a great delight to go out on the station concourse at night and see the LONE STAR and name trains of the other roads ready for departure. The Union Station was torn down some time ago to make room for a new building.

Although the Cotton Belt LONE STAR has been gone for many years, the name LONE STAR is now used by AMTRAK on its trains number 15 & 16 between Chicago and Houston and Houston to Chicago.

The Cotton Belt LONE STAR was a fine train in every respect and not only had good equipment, good meals and good service but operated on a super-smooth roadbed second to none.

As a tribute to a fine train let me close by simply saying, "Farewell LONE STAR, your light will always remain bright in my memory"./

BOOK REVIEW: COACH TRAINS AND TRAVEL, Patrick C. Dorin, 192 pgs Illustrated. Superior Publishing Co. \$14.95.

In his sixth picture-history on railroading, Patrick C. Dorin elevates coach service to its proper place in railroading as he traces its history from the DEWITT CLINTON to the METROLINERS and TURBOLINERS of 1975.

Photographs abound as the chapters move from the development of coach travel through the "Doodlebug" era into some of the "Name" coach trains. Comuters, Milk Trains and Expresses, AMTRAK and AUTO-TRAIN are covered.

Of particular interest is the coverage of Missouri Pacific's DELTA EAGLE on pages 94 thru 96. The IC's CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, NC&StL's CITY OF MEMPHIS, Santa Fe's EL CAPITAN, SP's STARLIGHT, they're all there. There's even a chapter on fan trips.

Mr. Dorin does his usual excellent job of writing on a subject that he obviously loves.