



LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER
N.R.H.S.

ARKANSAS RAILROADER



VOLUME 25 NUMBER 4 APRIL 1994



An empty Union Pacific coal train ready to leave the coal-fired electric generating plant near Redfield, Arkansas in December 1993. You can barely make out one of the generating exhaust stacks in the fog just to the left of center, to the left of the string of cars. (Ken Ziegenbein photo)



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(Above Pennsylvania Railroad ad from Leon Enderlin)

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NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Arkansas Railroad Club will be held on SUNDAY, APRIL 10 - WALTER WALKER will have a program on railroad china. Time will be at 2 p.m. at our usual place, the Twin City Bank on Main Street in North Little Rock. Refreshments will be served.

Future programs include MEETING IN PINE BLUFF at the Union Station on May 15 with a program of Cotton Belt stories, using the Cotton Belt singers (Willie McClendon, Samuel Rice, Washington Ficklin and Theo Rodgers). The June program will be given by David Johnston on the GM&O, and the July program will be a report on the NRHS Convention in Atlanta held in June by Dick Davis. Thanks to our V.P. TOM SHOOK, for getting these programs set up.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS - This month we welcome:

QUIN GODSEY, 2005 Cedar Creek Rd, N Little Rock AR 72116
 HARVEY H. RAY, 1623 Barber, Little Rock AR 72202



SHOW & SALE - Our 14th annual Show and Sale will be held on SATURDAY, APRIL 30 at the Hall of Industry, State Fairgrounds, Little Rock. Pick up some flyers at our April 10 meeting and distribute to area stores. WE STILL NEED HELP in setting up tables, ticket sales, and other things related to this event. To volunteer, contact our club president, MATT RITCHIE at 967-6627 or JOHN HODKIN at 945-2128.

1994 CALENDAR SALE!! - We still have some 1994 Arkansas Railroad Club calendars for sale and we are selling them at HALF PRICE (\$5, including postage). Pick some up at our April meeting or send in your request to "Arkansas Railroad Club," PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119 - this price is well below cost, by the way. They will be collectors items.



1995 CALENDAR PHOTOS WANTED - We WILL have a 1995 calendar. The format and picture types will be similar to last years . . . that is, we will have a contest of photo entries, picking 13 to go into the 1995 calendar (there will be a cover photo this time).

Photos can be either color or black and white, 3½ x 5 inches or larger. Photos only, please. If you have a slide, have a print made first. You must be a member of the Arkansas Railroad Club to enter the contest. If you are not a member, you must join before we will accept your photo. Like last year, photos can be of any railroad-related subject in Arkansas, past or present. Photos in your collection, but not taken by you, may also be entered, but must be of Arkansas subjects (the actual photographer must then give his/her permission to publish the photo).

Like last year, there will be a committee to pick the 13 winners (the cover shot will be voted on by our membership at the July 10th meeting). DEADLINE for entries will be JULY 10 at the club meeting. Judging will be done that day.

Send your entries to Photos, Arkansas Railroad Club, PO Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. They will be returned after the calendar is printed.

NOTES FROM BART - Dr. Jennings? Bart recently defended his dissertation proposal, meaning he can become a PhD after he finishes his project. Congratulations, Bart! - Want a possible rare-mileage trip? Bart says the Tennessee Southern will be running excursions in the Columbia area April 6-9. The train is the dinner train out of Nashville, and there may be trips where meals are served. The TS uses the former L&N line south of Nashville to Florence, Alabama. If you're interested in riding, call 615-781-0262. - Barton has a complete list of a recent World Bank ranking of countries with steam engines. Write to him at 1600 Capitol Ln, Knoxville TN 37931 if you'd like the list. - More news from Bart is located in other rail news sections.

BILL CHURCH UPDATE - Bill's wife, Polly, said that Bill had another stroke in early February and as of February 14 was in the VA Hospital in North Little Rock, Room 3E, Bed 19. He tires easily, and visits need to be short. He had two CT Scans and EKG's, etc. The upper heartbeat is not in rhythm with the rest of his heart. Bill, we will keep you in our prayers. God bless you.



CHARTER MEMBERS UPDATE - SHARON RITCHIE, our secretary, gave me this list of Charter members from a 1972 newsletter. I will consider this as accurate as possible:

W.M. ADAMS -- DAVID B. BOGARD -- C.R. BYRD -- WENDELL CHESSHIR --
 BILL CHURCH -- POLLY CHURCH -- W.E. COUCH -- LeROY GARRISON, JR. --
 ANTHONY GRIGSBY -- RICHARD GRIGSBY -- JOHN BASKIN HARPER --
 GEORGE HOLT, JR. -- RUBY HOLT, JR. -- CLIFTON E. HULL -- NAOMI HULL --
 JOHN L. KEMPLE -- LOUIS R. KOEPPE -- T.W.M. LONG -- JOHN MARTIN, JR. --
 R.W. McGUIRE -- JOHN A. MILLS -- PAUL F. MOON -- WALTER J. O'ROURKE --
 C.H. OST -- WARREN H. PELTON -- BILL POLLARD -- PHIL POWLEDGE -- BOYD
 T. PYLE -- WILLIAM K. ROBBINS, JR. -- JERRY RUSSELL -- EARL SAUNDERS --
 JACK F. SEE, JR. -- THOMAS E. SHOOK -- JIM WAKEFIELD -- J. HARLEN WILSON
 -- STANLEY WOZENCRAFT -- ROBERT B. WRIGHT -- RICHARD R. RYKER --
 BRUCE L. YOUNG.



ATLANTA CONVENTION will be held June 20-26 in Atlanta. \$20 registration fee. Contact the Atlanta Chapter NRHS, PO Box 66, Decatur GA 30031. You must give your NRHS number to register.

MEETING CHANGES - It was voted on at the March 13 meeting to once again start our Sunday get-togethers with our business meeting, have a break, then have the program. We have been having the program first the past couple of years.

PLAQUE TO BE GIVEN - Up to \$80 will be spent to purchase a plaque honoring the late Hazen, Arkansas mayor KATHERYN ORLICEK for her work in preserving the Rock Island depot in Hazen as well as keeping some original Rock Island track through the town. Member L. T. WALKER, a former Rock Island conductor, made the suggestion. The plaque will be given to the Hazen mayor's office, to be placed in the restored depot.

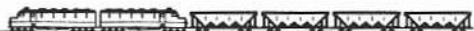
ARKANSAS RAIL NEWS

OUACHITA SCENIC PLANS - (Hot Springs) - The Ouachita Scenic Railroad wants to use a steam engine and travel to Mountain Pine this summer, Jody Williams, VP of operations, said February 7. He says the train won't run again without steam (it ran last year between Hot Springs and Jones Mill over the Arkansas Midland (ex-Rock Island), using diesel engines). Riders wanted a more scenic route and a steam engine.

The Ouachita Scenic wants to lease the 70-ton 1913 Prairie-type locomotive from Richard Grigsby, the OSR's vice president for safety, and Reader Railroad owner. The railroad also is negotiating with the Arkansas Midland for use of the tracks to Mountain Pine. Owner of the OSR is Phipps Enterprises of Kiowa, Oklahoma. (*The Sentinel-Record, Hot Springs, February 9 by John Archibald - story also ran in at least 11 other newspapers in the state*)



CROSSING ACCIDENTS - Here are some crossing accidents I heard about this month: ** **HARRISBURG** - occurred about 3:30 p.m. on March 7. Sarah Yarbrough, 74, was driving a 1988 Lincoln east on Griffin Street when she crossed the tracks and was struck and killed by a Union Pacific freight. It was raining. ** **MORRILTON** - occurred about 9:15 a.m. on February 27. Marian Gordon, 29, was killed and her 5-year old daughter injured when Mrs. Gordon drove over a



Union Pacific crossing near U.S. 64 east of Morrilton. She apparently didn't see the train. ** **VILLEFRANCHE-DEROUERGE, FRANCE** - occurred February 13. Killed was an 89-year old Roman Catholic cardinal and former archbishop of Paris, Francois Marty, when his small car stopped on the tracks. (This goes to show that age or occupation makes no difference in fatal crossing accidents). ** **FULTON** - occurred February 22. Boyd Wayne Brown, 21, was killed when he and a woman were walking on a Union Pacific bridge near Fulton. They both had stepped aside, but the train, moving at 60 mph, created a vacuum that sucked Brown into the train, then slammed him against the bridge railing. He died of massive head injuries. ** **SEBRING, FLORIDA** - occurred February 25. A two-year old boy, Willie Kinsey III, died when Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* hit him as he tried to free his scooter from the tracks. He and another two-year old were playing on the tracks. (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, various editions, via Jonathan Royce and the Hope Star, February 22*)

SAME TRAIN HAS TWO FATAL CROSSING ACCIDENTS - (Pine Bluff and Bearden) - On February 24, a Southern Pacific train was involved in two fatal crossing accidents. The first occurred southwest of Pine Bluff on Sorrells Road about 7:15 a.m. James Dallari, 43, was killed when his truck, parked too close to the track, was tossed by the engine. About 4½ hours later at Bearden, the SAME TRAIN hit a car, killing Roderick Miguel Daniels, 21, of Bearden. After the first accident, the train was allowed to proceed, but the engineer was too upset to continue, so another engineer was brought in. The train was bound for Shreveport. (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, February 26 by Ray Pierce via Jonathan Royce*)

Fun course titles: Wellness 1100 - "*Creative Suffering*"; Wellness 1101 - "*Overcoming Peace of Mind*"; Wellness 1108 - "*Whine your way to Alienation*"; Business 102 - "*I Made \$100 in Real Estate*"; Health 113 - "*Creative Tooth Decay*"; Health 121 - "*Sinus Drainage at Home*"; Health 130 - "*Optional Body Functions*"; Crafts 101 - "*Bonsai Your Pet*"

OZARK MOUNTAIN RAILROAD UPDATE - (Berryville) - The proposed Ozark Mountain Railroad has been ordered to reveal the sources of the project's \$1 BILLION financing. The expensive project would be based in Oak Grove with rail lines running to Harrison, Eureka Springs and Branson, Missouri. (The 75-mile rail construction portion of the expenses is "only" \$300 million, with the other costs being three amusement parks and facilities). The railroad, developed by L. D. Stordahl, has until April 22 to reveal the money's sources. Many landowners along the proposed routes are against the railroad. Some say that it is only a ploy to obtain land using eminent domain then sell it at huge profits to finance the other projects. As a result, the Ozark Property Rights Association opposes the development. (*The Star-Progress, Berryville, February 24 by Pam Soetaert*)

GENERAL RAIL NEWS



KCS POWER - (Mississippi) - David Hurt of Columbus, Mississippi recently spotted (in February) KCS power coming through Columbus on a daily basis on the old Southrail line from Meridian to Artesia and over to Tuscaloosa. KCS power is also used on the Tuscaloosa to Birmingham train. Normal power is 3 KCS GP38-2's or 2 KCS GP38-2's and a MidSouth GP10 or 2 KCS GP40-2's, most in grey paint.



BN SUPER BOWL CONSIST: BN FPA 1, FPB 2, BNA 30 (baggage/power 'Snowqualmie Pass'), BNA 4 (business 'Yellowstone River'), BNA 8 (business car 'Canadian River'), BNA 3 (business car 'Red River'), BNA 1 (business car 'Mississippi River'), BNA 2 (business car 'Columbia River'), BNA 12 (sleeper/power 'Deschutes River'), BNA 21 (sleeper 'Jefferson Pass'), BNA 22 (sleeper 'Stevens Pass'), BNA 23 (sleeper/power 'Stampede Pass'), BNA 10 (lounge 'Como'), BNA 26 (diner 'Lake Superior'), BNA 24 (theater observation-lounge 'Glacier View').



The special ran on January 26 and 27, 1994 from Kansas City to Memphis to Birmingham over the BN (through Arkansas) and from Birmingham to Atlanta over NS. (*David Hurt, Columbus Mississippi*)

FREIGHT STATISTICS - The following Association of American Railroads statistics comes via the St. Louis Chapter's *Gateway Railletter* gotten from *Railway Age*:

- Railroads move 40% more traffic today than during World War II with 44% less track, 85% fewer employees, 42% fewer freight cars, and half as many locomotives. Rates average 71% lower than in World War II (adjusted for inflation).
- Track utilization has increased 84%; equipment utilization has improved 81%; and labor productivity has increased 157%.
- Cost of capital is still about 12%, like it was in the 40s.

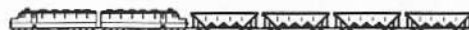
EX-ROCK ISLAND LINE SOUGHT - (Leeds Junction, Missouri) - The Union Pacific apparently is trying to buy the SP (ex-RI) line from Leeds Junction to Pleasant Hill, Missouri. This is designed to reduce the grade for eastbound trains. The line hasn't been used for many years so the line will have to be greatly repaired. The SP recently applied for and received permission to abandon most of this line toward St. Louis. (*Barton Jennings*)

According to the February UTU NEWS, the cost of using public transportation averages about \$6,000 less a year than the cost of operating a new car. Annual costs of using buses and light rail averaged between \$504 and \$1,224 for passholders; average costs for driving a 1993 automobile 15,000 miles a year averaged \$7,127.

UTU/BN CONFLICT RINGS - The United Transportation Union is fighting Burlington Northern's attempts to ban most workers from wearing rings (wedding or otherwise). The ban started out with shop workers, but on February 1 spread to engineers, switchmen and conductors. The union says there are no statistics regarding the danger of wearing rings. (*UTU NEWS, March 1994*)

TOURIST LINE CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN - (Shreveport) - Construction of a scenic railway and museum along Fant Parkway in Shreveport was to begin in March. Gary Fox of the Red River Valley Railroad Historical Society says that they spent 8 years obtaining engines and cars for the route. The turn-of-the-century depot from Caspiana will be moved to the site at Veterans Park. There will be one mile of track and first rides should begin in late 1994. (*The Times, Shreveport, February 26 via T.W.M. Long*)

"DEPOTS OF BRICKTOWN" PROPOSAL - (Oklahoma City) - The Central Oklahoma Railfan Club is aiding the city of Oklahoma City in obtaining grants to acquire and stabilize the condition of four railroad structures. The structures are the Santa Fe Depot (18,000 square feet, built 1934 - last passenger train, Amtrak's *Texas Chief*, stopped there in October



1979), the Rock Island Freight Depot (1920), the MKT Freight Depot (1906) and the Wells Fargo Livery Stables (1906). (*The Dispatcher, March 1994*)

WISE INVESTMENT - Back in the early 1980s, the state of Oklahoma purchased \$24 million worth of mostly Rock Island track (697 miles), making the state the fourth largest railroad owner there, behind UP, BN and ATSF. The rail lines are now earning Oklahoma \$9 million per year. (The state of Arkansas also had this opportunity to buy the Rock at that time, but by a close vote failed in Arkansas's House of Representatives). (*The Dispatcher, March 1994*)

LIABILITY LAW - Since CSX now requires liability insurance of \$200 million per trip, the Tennessee Central Railroad Museum and the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum are cooperating with the Tennessee Public Service Commission to sponsor legislation in Tennessee to limit liability requirements to \$5 million. Other states having this in review are Kentucky and West Virginia. Should this come up in Arkansas, we should support it individually, otherwise excursions may be in jeopardy. (*Bart Jennings*)

SHORT STRIKE ENDED - A strike by brakemen and conductors on March 1 against Union Pacific only lasted 4½ hours, being halted by a federal judge. The strike was called to protest a rule requiring workers to drive company cars in rail yards, keeping in radio contact with engineer-only operated trains. (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, March 2, via Jonathan Royce*)

NS STEAM SCHEDULE - There will once again be many steam fan trips this year on NS, beginning April 9, ending November 13. I don't have the official listing yet from Carl Jensen, but will try to print it when received.

AMTRAK NEWS



CLAYTOR CONCOURSE - (Washington D.C.) - The concourse at Washington Union Station was recently named for Grayham Claytor, past-president of Amtrak, during his retirement party. (*Barton Jennings*)

AMTRAK'S SENIOR CONDUCTOR - Amtrak conductor Dennis Corsale is the nation's longest-tenured railroad conductor, according to his and Amtrak's records. Corsale hired on with the Delaware & Hudson on July 19, 1941, becoming a passenger conductor in 1951. He started out as a freight brakeman. "I just love my job and meeting interesting people, so why stop now?," he said. Currently, he is conductor on Amtrak's Rensselaer-New York City *Maple Leaf*. Mr. Corsale is 70 years old. (*UTU NEWS, February 1994 via L.T. Walker*)



CLINTON BUDGET INCREASES AMTRAK - President Clinton's 1995 federal budget increases Amtrak's funding by 12% over 1994. Also, intercity passenger trains got prominent treatment in the DOT's Strategic Plan. The Office of Management and Budget wanted less for Amtrak, but apparently the Clinton Administration argued to keep the budget figure in tack. Amtrak operations would increase from \$351.7 million in 1994 to \$380.0 million in 1995, up 8.1%. (*NARP News, February 1994. The National Association of Railroad Passengers has a booklet for \$3 called Get America On Track which explains the benefits of promoting rail use in this country. Write to NARP, PO Box 96827, Washington DC 20077-7344 for your copy*)



EXCURSIONS/SHOWS/EVENTS OF OTHER CLUBS

☞ ...note...these are listed sequentially by dates, earliest dates being first...

SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS - Beginning April 2 through next Fall - Passenger trips on the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad between Springdale and Van Buren over the former Frisco line. - trains run Wednesdays and Saturdays, leaving Springdale 8 a.m., arriving in Van Buren 11 a.m., returning to Springdale by 5 p.m. - roundtrip is \$32.50 Wednesdays, \$38 on weekends - runs on Fridays should begin in summer - for the latest schedules and fares, call the A&M in Springdale at 501-751-8600. Credit cards accepted.

WATONGA, OKLAHOMA - Weekends through May beginning April 9 - Watonga Chief River and Dinner trains running at various times - call 405-737-3518 to make reservations.

LAWRENCEBURG, TENNESSEE - April 9 - Spring excursion train from Lawrenceburg to Columbia through Middle Tennessee, 72-mile round trip. Passengers de-board at Columbia for the annual Mule Day Parade. - departs 7:30 a.m. on April 9, returns about 3:34 p.m. - fare is \$25 (dome \$45) - contact the Cumberland Division, Inc., Terry Bebout, 709 North Lake Circle, Brentwood TN 37027, or call 615-781-0262.

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA - April 9 - "The North Alabamian" one-day roundtrip excursion between Huntsville, Alabama and Chattanooga, Tennessee using Southern #4501 - departs Huntsville 8:30 a.m., returns at 7:30 p.m. - fare is \$75 all ages - order tickets from North Alabama Railroad Museum, PO Box 4163, Huntsville AL 35815-4163.

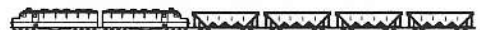
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS - April 16 - The seventh annual New Braunfels Model Railroad Jamboree, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. - admission is \$3 for adults - contact the Bluebonnet Chapter NRHS, PO Box 310475, New Braunfels, TX 78131-0475 or call 210-935-2517.

AUSTIN, TEXAS - April 15 - 17 - Katy Railroad Historical Society spring meeting - Two fantrips will be offered, one on the Georgetown Railroad and one on the Hill Country Flyer - registration is \$33 - contact: Tom Balzen, 4212 Prickly Pear, Austin TX 78731 before April 1.

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI - April 23 - Springfield Model Railroad Meet, 3319 North Grant Ave, Hillcrest High School - Clinics, swap meets - tables: \$12 - admission \$5 adults and \$1 6-12 - contact: Al Clair, 2366 S Dollison, Springfield MO 65807.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA - OGDEN, UTAH - May 4 - May 8, 1994 - Union Pacific 3985 excursion to mark the 125th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike - Train departs May 4 from Council Bluffs at Mile Post 0.0 (beginning of the Union Pacific mainline), arriving in Ogden at Union Station on May 8 at Mile Post 993 (historical junction with the Southern Pacific). There will be many stops for passengers and night layovers in route and special activities in Utah May 9 and 10. - Prices: one-way coach Council Bluffs to Ogden is \$699 with lesser amounts for intermediate stops. - To order tickets: Pacific Limited Group, PO Box 27081, Salt Lake City UT 84127-0081 or call 801-355-5871 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mountain Time.

PADUCAH, KENTUCKY - August 11-14, 1994 - Illinois Central Railroad Historical Society's 15th annual convention and show. The dealer show will be August 13, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. - There will be tours of rail locations around Paducah August 12 and a banquet will be held at 7 p.m.



August 13. - Tables are \$20 - For more information or to order tables, contact Mark L. Miller, 1204A West Central, Marion IL 62959-1022 or call 618-997-5788.

The following article is from the March 9, 1994 edition of the *Eagle Democrat* of Warren, Arkansas:

Church Street was once "Railroad Avenue" Arkansas' first railroad was to have been built through here

Warren people are sometimes fascinated with the phrase, "It Might Have Been . . ."

Two instances of thinking like this include the following:

--The fact that the late Judge David A. Bradham insisted that, if Warren had "played its cards right", it could have had the fourth district agricultural school. Instead, the school was located at Monticello, later becoming Arkansas A&M.

--The fact that aides to Judge J. Marion Futrall, governor of Arkansas some three generations ago, said Warren merchants came to Futrall and actively opposed the building of State Highway 167 from El Dorado to Little Rock through Warren - for fear that it would cost them business. The road went through Hampton, of course, with the high bridge for the route being built at Calion rather than Moro Bay.

But one of the most fascinating of the "It might have been . . ." stories revolves around the fact that a railroad -- the first in Arkansas -- was almost built across South Arkansas from Gaines Landing on the Mississippi to Fulton on the Red River.

And it would have passed right through Warren.

As a matter of fact, early maps of the town have what is now Church Street marked as "Railroad Avenue" -- the line was supposed to come right along this route.

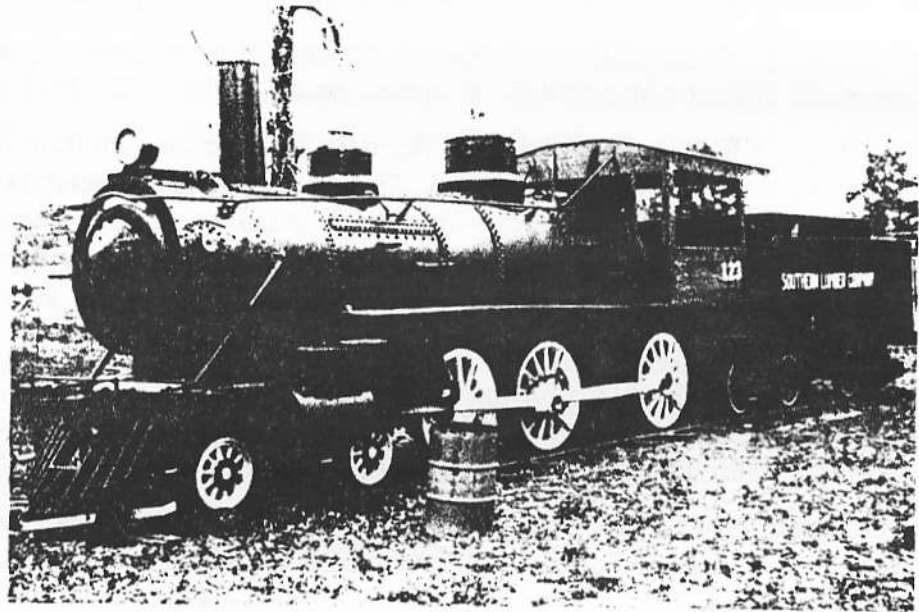
Old settlers tell of a time when Church Street, particularly in the area just west of Turner, was much lower than the rest of the land around -- because of a "cut" made for the railroad about 120 years ago.

The railroad, grandly named the "Mississippi, Arkansas and Red River", was given a charter in August, 1852.

Construction was well under way early in 1854, with the building of roadbed starting near Gaines Landing, moving across Bayou Bartholomew to a point just south of the Campus of Arkansas A&M College -- where faint traces of the bed can still be seen, by the way.

From this point, a perfectly straight line, to Warren and through it to the Moro Creek, was constructed. Crews reached the Moro early in August, 1854, but were forced to abandon their work because of excessive heat.

Later, the road was built on to



REMINDER - A reminder of the old days in Bradley County railroading is Southern Lumber Company's Engine 123, placed in the city park through the generosity of the late W. R. Warner and the Kiwanis Club a number of years ago. Oldtimers said the engine chronically couldn't keep up steam pressure, and consequently was used in reserve roles.

Camden and beyond.

With the roadbed almost done, the time for construction was at hand.

Contracts for grading, building culverts and bridges, and placing ties and rails were let - on bids - to most respected parties.

The twenty miles on the road's eastern end were contracted to John Wilson Martin, M. D., of Warren with the understanding that some of the work would be let out to subcontractors.

Dr. Martin, a dominant figure in Warren life for the last half of the 19th century, was one of the early settlers. His granddaughters, Miss Dorothea Martin and Mrs. Arthur E. Haegler, resided in the home he built on Warren's Ash Street.

In the early fall of 1854, the swamplands near the Mississippi River were the scene of frenzied activity. Brawny men of the bayou country assailed the dense forest with brute force. Vast wildernesses of canebrakes were cleared. Lusty, cursing mule skinnners moved the heavy black earth with their Fresno scrapers to build up embankments

across wide stretches of stinking, stagnant swamps.

The heat was bad enough -- but then there were the mosquitoes.

Their assaults were awesome.

They totally clogged the nostrils of defenseless mules during the night. These animals, dead from strangulation, were buried in the swamp. Many of the men were debilitated from the malarial chills and fever brought on by mosquito bites. Several died from the rigors of the fever. Along with the beasts of burden, they gave their lives for the little twin ribbons of iron marching slowly through the swampland.

By the end of November, 1854, the entire route had been cleared and grubbed, and a four-mile strip from the Mississippi was graded and ready for rails.

But work went along with terrible slowness. The financial panic of 1857 brought things to a halt - and they were just moving again when the War Between the States started three years later.

Work was then abandoned completely. After the war, a little more work was done. In 1871, a contem-

porary newspaper account said one locomotive and several cars were operating over some 18 miles of completed road and that 68 miles of road had been graded.

Little else was done.

But the Mississippi, Arkansas and Red River Railroad was not dead yet.

Some 30 years later, when the Arkansas and Southern lumber companies got together to build a spur railroad from Warren to a connection with the Rock Island at Banks, some of their track was placed along the never-used right of way of the earlier railroad.

What if the building of the pioneer railroad had been successful?

Clifton E. Hull, well-known Little Rock railroad authority, has this opinion: "When the railroad failed, the favors of State government shifted toward the northern section of Arkansas. If the rails had joined the Mississippi and Red Rivers, Arkansas' cities, colleges, and highways might have been earlier and more evenly distributed between the northern and southern sections of the State."





Situated in the peaceful Arkansas Ozarks valley town of St. Joe, the little red depot of the former Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad was still standing this November day in 1974. In fact, the old depot is still there today. It has seen various uses recently, such as an oil company, feed store and craft shop. In November of 1991, while it was a craft shop, the owner showed me the original M&NA scales in a back room. The tracks were taken up in the late 1940s and ran on the townside of the depot. (Ken Ziegenbein photo, November 1, 1974, looking north from US 65, 12:30 p.m.)

THE OLD DEPOT

*I walked down to the depot, Tom
 I sat down at the key,
 Of that same old railroad, Tom,
 That hired and fired both you and me.
 But few were left to greet me, Tom,
 And few were left to know,
 Who pounded brass upon that pike,
 Some fifty years ago.*

(Anonymous)

Today there are no local railroad stations one can walk down to. Once they spread the length of the Cotton Belt, often less than 7 miles apart. Back then, entering the depot, you immediately noticed the clatter, the clicks and clacks, of several telegraph instruments, connecting your town to that vast outside world. The railroad station was a community center, especially at train time, again connecting your community with the outside world. In my youth I was told that the only

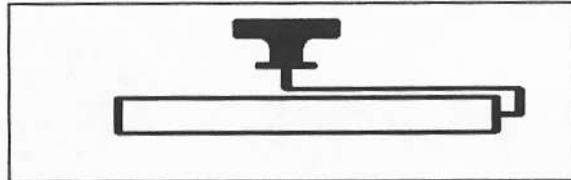
good thing ever to come out of Texas was a passenger train. Those dots and dashes originating from those telegraph instruments could bring grief as well as joy, especially on the Western Union circuit. I recall especially one night back in 1938 when I copied a death message. It was 2 a.m., and I hesitated briefly, debating whether I should awaken someone from peaceful slumbers for such bad news. But, of course, I had to.

The gentleman responsible for telegraph was, of all things, a portrait painter and artist, Samuel Finley Breese Morse. Returning from Europe on a boat in 1832, Morse had

overheard a fellow passenger discuss sending electricity instantly over any length of wire. He was fascinated by the idea, and worked eleven years on the project without finding any financial support. Others thought it nothing more than an interesting and amusing idea. But Congress on the last night of its session in 1843 voted \$30,000, and wire was strung from the Supreme Court room in Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, Maryland. From that room on May 24, 1844 Morse sent his first message, "What hath God wrought."

The millions of telegraph operators, worldwide, who followed, owe a debt of gratitude to a portrait painter and artist, Samuel F. B. Morse., a most unlikely inventor. His invention, obsolete now for some 40 years, was the first improvement of man's ability to communicate, and was a great benefit to mankind for over 100 years.

- P. B. WOOLDRIDGE



THAT CONFOUNDED BELL ROPE - ITS GENESIS & USE

by: Gene Hull

In the infancy of railroads in America the locomotive engineer was the master of his train, truly the "king of the road." The train was run according to his judgement. The conductor was in charge of collecting fares, loading and unloading freight, and shouting "All Aboard!" He was not a very important person.

In those early days the New York & Erie Railroad was organized by the New York legislature on 24 April 1832. There was no rail connection between New York and Jersey City, and river boats carried passengers up the Hudson River from New York to Piermont on the west bank. The NY&E (becoming the Erie Railway in January 1861) began to lay rails westward from Piermont and in September 1841 had reached Turner's, 47 miles from New York.

It was at this time that Captain Ayers was conductor on the only train (mixed) running on the NY&E. There was no way the engineer could know what the heck was going on behind his locomotive, and Capt. Ayres could not understand how the engineer could be in charge under these conditions. It just wasn't proper.

Conductor Ayers frequently encountered an obstreperous passenger who insisted on riding without paying. It was very unseemly to toss a passenger off a moving train, and there was no way to signal the engineer to stop the train. This meant the conductor had to take the non-paying passenger to the next regular stop.

Capt. Ayers began studying ways and means, and he finally devised a satisfactory solution. He procured a length of heavy cord sufficient to reach from the locomotive to the rear car. {An extra freight car might have presented a

problem.} A piece of wood was attached to the engine cab wall with a hinge near the engineer. The end of the cord was attached to the stick of wood. Ayers explained the device to the engineer, a German named Abe Hammil. If the conductor desired the train to be stopped, he would pull the cord and the stick would be raised as a signal. Simple and effective.

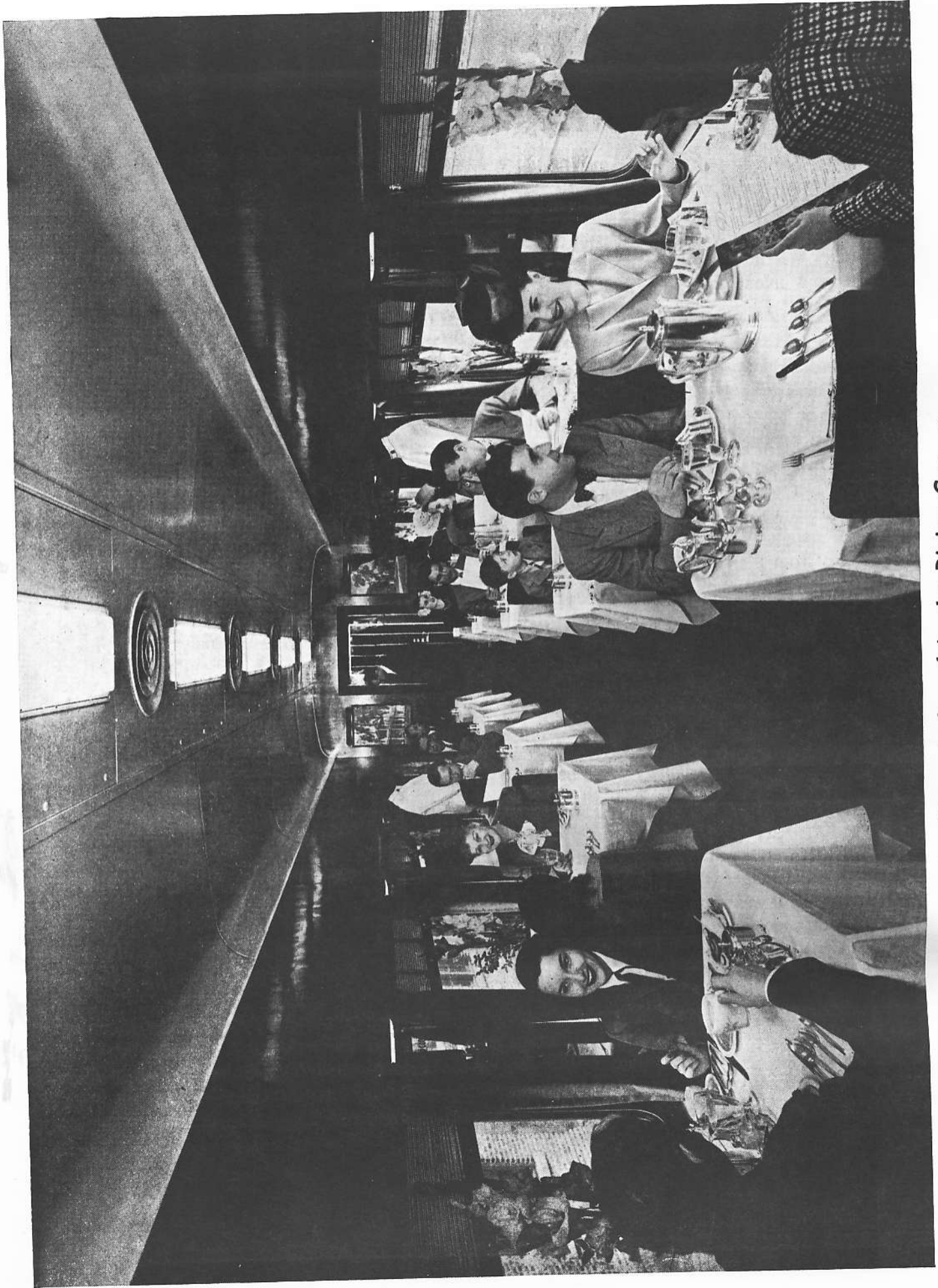
The next trip, when the train was ready to leave Piermont, Abe simply cut the cord. No one was going to question his operation of the train. At Turner's, the western terminal, he explained THIS to the CONDUCTOR. The next morning, before leaving Piermont, Capt. Ayers rigged up his string-and-stick signal again.

"Abe, if that stick of wood ain't fastened to that cord when we git to Turner's, I'm gonna whip you, or you're gonna have to whip me."

When the train reached Turner's the cord had been cut. Capt. Ayers pulled his coat off and told Hammil to get off the engine. He refused. Ayers scrambled up into the cab, and Hammil was ready to jump from the gangway. Ayers hit him behind the ear and saved him the trouble of jumping.

From that day forward the conductor's stick and cord governed the operation of that little train. The device evolved through the years to a bell or gong in the engine cab. With the advent of air brakes, the system became known as the communication signal, operated by air pressure.

Capt. Ayers retired in 1880, and died in Owego, New York the next year at the age of 78. ~~1880~~



~ Dinner Is Served in the Dining Car ~

UPCOMING CLUB & AREA RAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>APRIL 10</u> - Regular Club meeting, Twin City Bank. | <u>APRIL 23</u> - Model Train Show, Springfield, Missouri. |
| <u>APRIL 30</u> - Our club's annual Show & Sale at the Fairgrounds, Little Rock. | <u>MAY 15</u> - Club meets in PINE BLUFF, Union Station, 2 pm. |
| <u>JUNE 12</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank. | <u>JULY 10</u> - Regular club meeting, Twin City Bank. |

See inside for more detailed information on some of these activities. Please keep me informed on what is going on rail-wise in and around Arkansas so I can put it in the table. Thanks.

HAPPY
EASTER



The Arkansas Railroad Club is a non-profit organization that meets on the second Sunday of the month. This month we will meet on Sunday, APRIL 10 at the Twin City Bank Building on Main Street in North Little Rock. We are a chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Programs are presented.

The **ARKANSAS RAILROADER** is the monthly publication of the Arkansas Railroad Club and is generally mailed in time to be received before the monthly meetings. In order to receive this publication, you must be a member of the Club. Current dues are \$15/year for Arkansas residents and also \$15/year for out-of-state. The **RAILROADER** is mailed to all members automatically. Family memberships are \$20, but only one newsletter sent.

If you would like to join, send your check made out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" to: ATTN:Treasurer, ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB, P.O. Box 9151, North Little Rock AR 72119. You may also join the National Railway Historical Society through our Club by paying \$14/year more.

Editor of the **ARKANSAS RAILROADER** is Ken Ziegenbein. Everything having to do with the **ARKANSAS RAILROADER** should be sent to the address below, ATTN:Editor. Please let me know if your address changes, as NEWSLETTERS CANNOT BE FORWARDED.

Arkansas Railroad Club mail should also be sent to the address below..



ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB
P. O. BOX 9151
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

Newsletter phone: (501)-758-1340
(Leave message on recorder if I'm not there)
24-HR FAX: (501)-753-6830 - indicate To:Arkansas Railroad Club

JOIN THE ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB

Dues are \$15/year per individual or \$20/year for family membership (only one newsletter will be sent to a family unless each member pays the individual \$15 fee). Dues are always due JANUARY 1ST of each year and apply to the calendar year. You may also join the National Historical Railway Society through our club by paying \$14/year more (total payment for both club membership and NRHS membership would be \$29 per year).

Membership entitles you to receive the **ARKANSAS RAILROADER** for the term of your membership. It is published monthly.

RENEWAL NEW MEMBER CHANGE OF ADDRESS

YOUR NAME _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ___ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER () _____

Make your checks out to the "Arkansas Railroad Club" and mail to:

ARKANSAS RAILROAD CLUB - Treasurer
PO BOX 9151
NORTH LITTLE ROCK AR 72119

WELCOME ABOARD!!!